

COURSE CODE T4P1 (M) 2012

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

FINAL EXAMINATION PAPER 2012

THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES

B.A / B.ED IV / IDE

TITLE OF PAPER: RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD

COURSE NUMBER: T4P1

TIME ALLOWED: THREE HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS: 1. ANSWER ANY FOUR (4) QUESTIONS

2. ALL QUESTIONS CARRY EQUAL MARKS.

TOTAL MARKS : 100

THIS PAPER IS NOT TO BE OPENED UNTIL PERMISSION HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
THE INVIGILATOR

1. "Religion is a human interaction with a culturally postulated non-falsifiable reality" (Walter van Beek, & Thomas Blakely, 1994). Write a critical comment on this definition, with special reference to the Traditional Religions of North America and Shintoism. [25 marks]

2. "What people really want is liberation (**moksha**) – release from the finitude that restricts us from the limitless being, consciousness, and bliss that our hearts desire" (Smith, H., 1991). Explain this statement in the context of the main paths to liberation advocated by Hinduism.

3. Describe and explain the first sermon delivered by the Buddha to his disciples at Benares, and comment on its relevance or irrelevance in our day and age.

4. "Because of its largely ethical and social emphasis, Confucianism has often been regarded more as moral system than a religion" (Smart, N., 1975). Explain this observation and indicate whether or not the said observation would apply to Taoism.

5. "Islam . . . is at the same time a religious tradition, a civilization, and as Muslims are fond of saying, a 'total way of life'" (Welch, A. T., 1998). Explain this assertion with special reference to the major doctrines, rituals, ethical, moral and social teachings of Islam.

6. "The founder of Baha'ism . . . claimed to be a new prophet and expounded his religion as the latest in a long line of divine revelations" (Maceoin, D., 1998). Write a critical comment on this statement, showing the extent to which the Baha'i Faith stands out as an independent religion in its own right.

7. "The chief reason I find myself returning to the world's great wisdom traditions is for help on issues I have not myself been able to circumvent. Given the essential similarity in human nature - we are all more human than otherwise - I assume that the issues engage the readers of this book as well" (Smith, H., 1991). Write a critical comment on the above claim, paying particular attention to ethical teachings of two religions of the world regarding the common good and peace.

8. Is there a universally acceptable model of relating the world's religions to each other? Write a critical essay in response to this question.