World Religions

Dharma assignment

40 marks

Introduction to Dharma

Dharma is a key concept in Hinduism which has no single definition in English. It can mean

‘religion’, ‘duty’, ‘law’, ‘piety’, ‘ethical practice’, and ‘conformity with the truth/Truth’. It is divine law prevailing on every level of existence – the physical, mental, spiritual and cosmic. Hindus believe that they should (ideally) try to perform their dharmas as best as they can. Excellence in performing one’s dharma is considered a spiritual practice which will purify one’s karmas and one’s mind and bring them in tune with the divine. It creates mental strength, will power, self-control and reduces the power of desire and selfishness which keeps one unenlightened.

Usually the word ‘dharma’ means ‘the appropriate manner of acting/behaving’ and it refers to one’s duties and obligations. In this sense, all Hindus try to follow their dharma. Each Hindu has several different dharmas depending on who they are and what particular duties and obligations they have, and these dharmas change as one’s situation changes.. For example a person may, at different stages of life, have the dharmas of a son/daughter, student, club or team member, volunteer, employee, citizen, parent, grandparent, etc.: however, the greatest dharma is practice ones’ religion and to know God and become enlightened.

**The Assignment**

This assignment has four distinct parts. Using labelled headings, you should;

1. Identify and describe five different kinds dharmas that you have. These should not be five activities pertaining to the same dharma, e.g. that of a parent. But completely separate ones like ‘parent’, ‘soldier’, ‘husband’.
2. Analyze the degree to which you perform your dharmas well.
3. Analyze how you could improve the performance of your dharmas.
4. Analyze what the effects of performing your dharmas to the best of your ability would be on you, on others and on society.

Length 600-800 words

Writing

Write clearly. Organize you response using the four parts mentioned above. Include an Introduction and a Conclusion. Use topic sentences. Make sure that one sentence logically follows another one. Write a brief conclusion. You should consult the handout on Clarity in Writing on the Weebly website.

Due: Monday, 12 December, 2011

**Dharma assignment – rubric**

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| **Criteria** | **Level 1** | **Level 2** | **Level 3** | **Level 4** |
| **Thinking/Inquiry**  Identification and Description of the different kinds of dharmas that you have.  **8 marks** | Limited identification and description of personal dharmas. | Some identification and description of personal dharmas. | Considerable identification and description of personal dharmas. | Extensive identification and description of at least 5 personal dharmas. |
| **Thinking/Inquiry**  Analysis of the degree to which you perform your dharmas well.  **8 marks** | Limited analysis of the degree to which you perform your dharmas well. | Some analysis of the degree to which you perform your dharmas well. | Considerable analysis of the degree to which you perform your dharmas well. | Extensive analysis of the degree to which you perform your dharmas well. |
| **Application**  Analysis of how you could improve the performance of your dharmas.  **8 marks** | Limited analysis of how you could improve the performance of your dharmas. | Some analysis of how you could improve the performance of your dharmas. | Considerable analysis of how you could improve the performance of your dharmas. | Extensive analysis of how you could improve the performance of your dharmas. |
| **Application**  Analysis of the effects of performing dharmas to the best of one’s ability on yourself, others and society.  **8 marks** | Limited analysis of the effects of performing dharmas to the best of one’s ability on yourself, others and society. | Some Analysis the effects of performing dharmas to the best of one’s ability on yourself, others and society. | Considerable analysis the effects of performing dharmas to the best of one’s ability on yourself, others and society. | Extensive analysis the effects of performing dharmas to the best of one’s ability on yourself, others and society. |
| **Writing**  **8 marks** | Limited clarity: numerous errors in structure, organization, consistency, language conventions, etc. Weak of missing Introduction and Conclusion. | Some clarity: quite a few errors in structure, organization, consistency, language conventions, etc. Fair Introduction and Conclusion. | Considerable clarity: some errors in structure, organization, consistency, language conventions, etc. Good Introduction and Conclusion. | Excellent clarity: Almost no errors in structure, organization, consistency, language conventions, etc. Strong Introduction and Conclusion. |

**Total marks /40**