

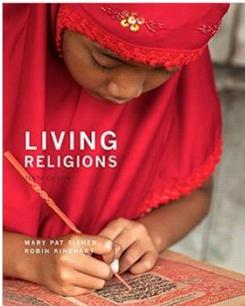
REL 2300: World Religions
Fall 2017 - Tuesday and Thursday 10:30 - 11:45 am - CB2-106
Dr. Claudia Schippert
Office: PSY 241
Office Hours: Thursdays 12:30-2:30 and by appointment
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Syllabus

Course Description:

This course introduces students to basic features (including the historical background, texts, ritual practices, and modern manifestations) of major religious traditions such as Hinduism, Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Required Text (please note different available formats and pricing):



Mary Pat Fisher and Robin Rinehart, *Living Religions* 10th edition (Prentice Hall, 2017.)

This text is available in the University Bookstore (\$172.60) or directly from MyPearsonStore.com (ISBN 9780134168975, \$165.26). You may also purchase it through **instant access to the electronic text at a much lower price**, either through the Revel instant access (on pearson.com, use ISBN 9780134169231 or click [here](#) for \$ 49.95) or by purchasing the access card through the bookstore (\$ 54.65). Once you have purchased the electronic version through Pearson Revel, you can order the unbound printed copy of the textbook for an additional \$19.95 directly from Pearson. (During your registration for Revel you are given the option to also get the printed loose-leaf copy of the textbook.)

Goals and Objectives:

As part of the General Education Program, the course has among its goals:

- To identify basic concepts and to deepen appreciation of common themes in diverse religious traditions.
- To demonstrate knowledge of the chronology and significance of major events and movements in World Religious traditions.
- To demonstrate familiarity with and knowledge of central features in non-Western religious traditions (including Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Sikhism.)

More specifically, the Course Objectives are as follows:

- To gain knowledge of basic elements of religion in order to analyze specific religious traditions.
- To become aware of the analyses and critiques of religions and responses to these in order to develop critical thinking skills that can be applied to studying other traditions and religions.

- To gain knowledge of religious traditions other than those the student brings to the class and to understand them as more than ancient belief systems but as living traditions.
- To gain familiarity with pre-institutional religious practices among non-western peoples.
- To become knowledgeable regarding Eastern religious traditions focusing primarily on Confucianism, Taoism, Shinto, Hinduism and Buddhism.
- To become knowledgeable regarding Western religious traditions focusing primarily on Judaism, Christianity and Islam. To gain a sense of how religious practice may be developing in the 21st Century.
- To critically reflect upon one's own thoughts, feelings and beliefs regarding religion and develop informed scholarly insights about religion.

Requirements and Grading (percentage of final grade):

- 15% Attendance and Active Class Participation. You may be called upon in any given class to discuss aspects of the assigned reading. Please note that you have to complete the assigned readings BEFORE the start of each class in order to be prepared for class discussion.
- 30% The ten best scores from 13 Weekly Quizzes (on Canvas.) Each week you take an online quiz that is based on specific assigned readings and may also include questions about videos and other supplemental material to be completed as preparation of class.
- 40% 2 Section Tests (see schedule); each is worth 20% of final grade
- 15% Final Exam (See available options for the Final Exam, as some options require early planning. More explanations about the options will be given in class.)

Grading Scale:

A	93.5 - 100 %
A -	90.0 - 93.49 %
B +	86.5 - 89.99 %
B	83.5 - 86.49 %
B -	80.0 - 83.49 %
C+	76.5 - 79.99 %
C	73.5 - 76.49 %
C -	70.0 - 73.49 %
D+	66.5 - 69.99 %
D	63.5 - 66.49 %
D -	60.0 - 63.49 %
F	less than 60%

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory and important. You have to be present and participate in class in order to succeed in this course. Active participation need not mean constant vocal involvement, although students are encouraged to engage classroom discussion. Active listening, paying attention, and thinking in the classroom, including involvement in class exercises are appropriate and important participation. Absence from class will result in a lower grade. Possible exceptions regarding absences include university business and religious holidays. Please discuss any absence in this category with me in advance. In general, there will be no make-up exams, except in verified cases as noted above or in cases of documented illness or documented family death or illness. You need to notify me of such cases with documentation within one week of return to class. There will be no opportunity for extra credit work. Prepare well for the assigned work and you will not need it!

Quizzes, Exams, and other graded exercises: Throughout the semester, students have to take weekly online quizzes on material reviewed in class or material assigned in preparation for class.

You will be asked to take a number of different kinds of exams and tests:

- **Syllabus Quiz** during the first week. You must take this quiz! You will earn some very easy points. You also have to take the “**Are you here?**”- **quiz** in the first week of classes.

- **Weekly Reading Comprehension Quizzes:** Short quizzes about the assigned readings and related classroom lectures or assignments. Taken online (through Canvas). Your **best 10** grades will count toward your final grade. These quizzes are available online generally for two days (from end of Tuesday class until beginning of Thursday class,) but please note that once you begin a quiz you only have 30 minutes to complete it. Do all your reading and assignments related to the covered material before you start the weekly quiz!

- **Two Section Exams** (covering the first and the second half of the course): These tests are taken online, but are time-limited to the class-meeting time, so you can take them from anywhere, as long as you have access to a computer.

- **Final Exam:** You have several options for your final exam.

Option 1: Know your Terms (in class scantron/multiple choice). This exam is on the Glossary at the end of the textbook (this is a great exam option for people who like to memorize terms. If you anticipate pursuing this option, start working on the glossary throughout the semester!)

Option 2: Comprehensive Examination (in class scantron/multiple choice): In this multiple choice test, you will answer questions about material from throughout the semester; you will have encountered approximately half the questions previously in weekly quizzes or other exams, with the other half potentially new questions (although all questions will concern the material covered in the course readings, assignments, and lectures.)

Option 3: Critical Analysis of an issue (in-class written examination): This option entails the critical analysis of a contemporary issue that is related to some aspect of the study of religion. You will write an evaluative essay during the final exam period in which you

demonstrate your grasp of some key concepts of the religious traditions we studied throughout the course.

Option 4: Fieldwork Exam: (Visit to a religious site, brief report, short in-class test.) If you choose this option, you will prepare, conduct a visit, and analyze your visit in writing. You will turn in your documentation during the final exam period, where you will also take a very brief test on your experience.

Policies

Class Room Academic Behavior: Class starts and ends on time. Please be there from the beginning of class and stay until class is finished. Coming late or leaving early is very disruptive. Please be respectful of your peers and your instructor. Turn your cell phones etc. off prior to class! Take a look at the golden rule and especially the sections about conduct and academic behavior. The use of laptops and similar electronic devices is only permitted if you are using an electronic version of the textbook. You may not use a laptop for any other purpose in class. You may not send or receive text messages during class time. Please note that I will enforce this rule. Please note that in this course we are engaged in studying many diverse cultures and religious traditions. You are expected to learn critical thinking skills that will enable you to open your understanding of various religions. Speech or behavior that is discriminatory or singles out students or groups for negative personal comments is not acceptable.

Plagiarism and Cheating of any kind on an examination, quiz, or assignment will result at least in an "F" for that assignment (and may, depending on the severity of the case, lead to an "F" for the entire course) and may be subject to appropriate referral to the Office of Student Conduct for further action. If you have even the smallest doubt that you are familiar with these rules, please see the UCF Golden Rule for further information. I will assume for this course that you will adhere to the academic creed of this University and will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. In other words, don't cheat by giving answers to others or taking them from anyone else. I will also adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity, so please do not ask me to change (or expect me to change) your grade illegitimately or to bend or break rules for one person that will not apply to everyone.

Responsibility: It is each student's responsibility to come to class prepared. That means that you are expected to have read all the assigned readings prior to class. You may be prompted to answer quiz questions or be called upon in class to discuss your understanding of the material. Class discussions will assume that you have read the assigned material and have spent some time with critical reflection of it. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what happened and what assignments need to be turned in.

Communication with the Instructor: The best way to reach me is in person during my office hours. (Please note: Mostly I will not spend class time discussing test scores or other basic 'housekeeping' issues. I am happy to discuss these with you outside of class. Please make sure that you have read the syllabus carefully as it contains a lot, possibly most, relevant information.) If you wish to email me with a concern, please note that I cannot discuss grades with you over email. I consider 48 hours a

reasonable turnaround time for responses to student emails. I read and send email only during the hours of 9am- 5pm.

Disability Statement:

Each student should have the opportunity to learn and participate in class. Should a student have any hearing, visual, physical, or other condition that needs to be considered in enabling her/his learning process, please let me know. I will make every effort to facilitate her or his learning. Please contact SDS, and arrange for assistance, at the beginning of the semester.

Change: The syllabus and course schedule may be changed at any time by the instructor.

Schedule

- 8/22 First Class, Introduction to the course, requirements, and the study of religion
 - ▶ “Are you here?” Quiz (please complete by 8/25)
- 8/24 The academic study of religion. Why are there religions? (Chapter 1)
 - ▶ Weekly Quiz 1 (on the syllabus and course requirements, due 8/29)
- 8/29 Indigenous Sacred Ways (Chapter 2)
 - ▶ Weekly Quiz 2 (covers Indigenous Sacred Ways, available 8/29, 11:45am - 8/31, 10:30 am)
- 8/31 (Chapter 2 Continued)
- 9/5 Hinduism (Chapter 3) Origins and Vedic Age
 - ▶ Weekly Quiz 3 (covers Hindu philosophical systems and theistic paths; available 9/5, 11:45am – 9/7, 10:30 am)
- 9/7 Hinduism (Chapter 3 continued) Philosophical Systems, Theistic Paths, Way of Life)
- 9/12 Hinduism (Chapter 3 continued) Puja, Symbols, Modern Movements, contemporary Hindu movements
 - ▶ Weekly Quiz 4 (covers Jainism; available 9/12, 11:45am – 9/14, 10:30 am)
- 9/14 Jainism (Chapter 4)
- 9/19 Buddhism (Chapter 5) Life and Teachings of Buddha, Spread of Buddhism, meditation
 - ▶ Weekly Quiz 5 (covers different vehicles/expressions of Buddhism; available 9/19, 11:45am – 9/21, 10:30 am)
- 9/21 Buddhism (Chapter 5 continued) Theravada, Mahayana, Vajrayana, Zen Buddhism and other schools

9/26 Buddhism (Chapter 5 continued) Buddhism in the West, practices and contemporary issues
▶ Weekly Quiz 6 (covers Daoism and Confucianism; available 9/26, 11:45am – 9/28, 10:30 am)

9/28 Daoism (Chapter 6)

10/3 Confucianism (Chapter 6 continued)

▶ Weekly Quiz 7 (covers Shinto, available 10/3, 11:45am-10/5, 10:30 am)

10/5 Shinto (Chapter 7)

10/10 *Class-Timed SECTION EXAM 1 (covers chapters 1-7)*

10/12 *No class meeting – instructor away at academic conference.*

Recommended: read the chapter on Zoroastrianism.

10/17 Judaism (Chapter 8) History- Biblical to Rabbinic

▶ Weekly Quiz 8 (covers Judaism, available 10/17, 11:45am – 10/19, 10:30am)

10/19 Judaism (Chapter 8 continued) Medieval history, Kabbalah, Hasidism, Holocaust

10/24 Judaism (Chapter 8 continued) Development of branches, sacred practices and holy days, contemporary issues

▶ Weekly Quiz 9 (covers Jesus, early Church, and Bible, available 10/24, 11:45am – 10/26 10:30am)

10/26 Christianity (Chapter 9) Life of Jesus, teaching, Bible, early Church, Councils, Monasticism

10/30 is the Withdrawal Deadline

10/31 Christianity (Chapter 9 continued) Mysticism, Reformations, Eastern Orthodoxy,

▶ Weekly Quiz 10 (covers Christian practices and contemporary trends, available 10/31, 11:45am – 11/2, 10.30am)

11/2 Christianity (Chapter 9 continued) Sacred Practices, Contemporary Trends

11/7 Islam (Chapter 10) Prophet Muhammad and Qur'an, Central Teachings, Five Pillars, Sunni-Shi's split

▶ Weekly Quiz 11 (covers development of Islam and Sufism, available 11/7 11:45am - 11/9, 10:30am)

11/9 Islam (Chapter 10 continued), Sufism, Spread of Islam

11/14 Islam (Chapter 10 continued) Islam's Resurgence and contemporary Issues

▶ Weekly Quiz 12 (covers Sikhism, available 11/14 11:45am – 11/16 10:30am)

11/16 Sikhism (Chapter 11)

11/21 *Class-timed SECTION EXAM 2 (covers chapters 8-11)*

11/23 *no class meeting - Thanksgiving Break*

11/28 **Sign up for one of the available Final Exam Options by today!**

New Religious Movements (Chapter 12)

► Weekly Quiz 13 (covers New Religious Movements and Religion in 21st century, available 11/28, 11:45am – 11/30, 10:30pm)

11/30 Religion in the 21st Century (Chapter 13)
Conclusion to the course, review for Final Exam

12/5 NOTE EARLIER START TIME: 10:00am-12:50pm - Final Exam