

Class Time: TuTh 9:00-10:15AM | Location: NSC Room 108

Instructor: Jeanine E. Viau, Ph.D. | Email: jeanine.viau@ucf.edu
Office Hours: TuTh 1:30-2:30PM or by appointment | Location: PSY 224

Course Description

In this class, we will look at the five major world religions and several minority traditions, seeking a basic literacy of the central tenets and practices of each tradition, as well as deeper engagement through field visits, films, and discussions. Across cultures and global contexts, religion plays a significant role in shaping interpersonal and social values, and subsequently, public life. For example, consider the significance of abortion and same-sex marriage debates in the U.S. or the tide of violence besetting Buddhist and Muslim communities in Sri Lanka. These issues and others, and the religious ideologies that seem to fuel these tensions require careful reflection. We will adopt an academic posture in our considerations of the entanglement between religious identification and social life. This means breaking-down assumptions and working toward understanding through critical engagement – critical engagement of our own beliefs and social contexts, as well as those of others. The textbook is meant to provide a backdrop, and the field visits are meant to take us into the intimate worlds of religious practitioners. These immersions should reveal the interesting and surprising, heartrending and ecstatic ways that people are religious in historical and contemporary societies.

Required Texts

- Brodd, Jeffrey. *Invitation to World Religions*. 2016.
The textbook is available in both print and digital formats.
- Various readings available through Webcourses

Learning Objectives

- To develop an understanding of the distinctive nature of several major world religious traditions through intellectual inquiry into their beliefs and practices in their specific historical and socio-cultural context
- To analyze the challenges faced by religions in the modern and postmodern periods and some characteristic responses of religions to those challenges
- To develop a cross-cultural awareness and openness that is a mark of the global citizen and which will enable the student to engage in informed and respectful dialogue with other religious traditions
- To introduce students to some of the main themes and issues involved in the academic study of religion

Evaluation & Grading

Your course requirements will count for the following percentages of your final grade:

- | | | | |
|-------|--------------------|-----|--------------------|
| (i) | GEP Assessments | 1% | |
| (ii) | Syllabus Quiz | 2% | |
| (iii) | Participation | 12% | |
| (iv) | Exams | 60% | (average of three) |
| (v) | Site Visit Project | 25% | |

Total 100%

Grading Scale.

A	100-94%	B	85-80%	D+	69-66%
A-	93-90%	C+	79-76%	D	65-60%
B+	89-86%	C	75-70%	F	59-0%

*****You must have a 70% or higher to pass this class.**

Attendance. Your participation grade is based on class attendance, preparation, and documented participation in class activities and discussions. I will take attendance or assign unannounced in-class exercises. These exercises may include group-work, pop reading quizzes, in-class writing, etc. Every absence after the first two will result in the loss of 2 percentage points from your final grade. Failing quizzes, nonparticipation, or coming unprepared to participate in activities will carry the same penalty as an absence. Arriving more than ten minutes late and leaving early will carry the same penalty. I do not excuse absences in this course. Two absences should be sufficient to accommodate general emergencies, illness, and extenuating obligations.

*****IMPORTANT** - As of Fall 2014, all faculty members are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete the Syllabus Quiz no later than Friday, August 26 at 11:59PM. **Failure to do so will result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.**

Emergencies. Make sure that any health or personal emergencies are properly documented, and please come and talk to me ***as soon as possible*** if difficulties arise during the semester.

Late Work. Ten percentage points will be deducted for each day an assignment is late.

Writing Assessment. The quality of your writing for this course will be evaluated across three criteria categories as indicated in the assessment rubric below and four evaluative classifications. The four evaluative classifications include Unsatisfactory, Satisfactory, Good, and Exceptional. See the second chart below to understand how these categories correspond to particular grades for assignments.

Criteria	U	S	G	E
I. Form <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language, grammar, and style Structure and organization Quality of editing and transitions Readability or accessibility, clarity, and cohesion 				
II. Content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate reference to sources and experts Accuracy Contextualization and citation style Efficacy in supporting the project's arguments and/or objectives 				
III. Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfies the requirements of the assignment Execution Level of daring, creativity, innovation, and/or originality Contribution to the larger issues and questions that the project addresses 				

Category	Description	Grade Assignment
Unsatisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not meet assignment requirements Significant grammar and style problems Inadequate, ineffective and/or inaccurate use of sources Unsound structure and organization 	D+ and below
Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets most or all assignment requirements May have some grammar and style 	C+, C

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> problems Somewhat adequate, effective and accurate use of sources May have some problems with structure and organization 	
Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets all assignment requirements Zero to minor grammar and style errors Demonstrates adequate, effective, and accurate use of sources Employs sound structure and organization of ideas and arguments 	B+, B
Exceptional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfies all criteria for a Good evaluation and also shows exceptional creativity, innovation, or insight 	A, A-

Course Requirements

GEP Assessments. These are ungraded assessments in the form of a pre-test due at the beginning of the course and a post-test due at the end of the course. Both of these assessments will be available through Webcourses in the GEP section of REL2300. You will receive full credit as long as you complete them within the respective windows.

Syllabus Quiz. The Syllabus Quiz is located in Webcourses under Quizzes. The Syllabus Quiz is due on Friday, August 26 at 11:59PM.

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Participation. As is noted above, your participation grade is based on class attendance, preparation, and documented participation in class activities and discussions. I will take attendance or assign unannounced in-class exercises. These exercises may include group-work, pop reading quizzes, in-class writing, etc. Every unexcused absence after two will result in the loss of 2 percentage points from your final grade. Failing quizzes, nonparticipation, or coming unprepared to participate in activities will carry the same penalty as an absence. Arriving more than ten minutes late and leaving early will carry the same penalty. I do not excuse absences in this course. Two absences should be sufficient to accommodate general emergencies, illness, and extenuating obligations. If emergencies arise during the semester that result in more than two absences, please talk to me as soon as possible.

Exams. Course exams will combine objective style questions, including multiple-choice, matching, and true/false formats. Exams will be administered using scantron forms. **You are required to bring your own scantron form to each exam along with your student ID card.** You must purchase the pink/raspberry form with the UCF logo from either the campus bookstore or pick-up one free from the Technology Product Center. Scantrons must be filled out with pencil, blue or black ink.

Site-Visit Project. In groups of no less than five, you will visit a religious site and observe a religious ceremony or event of your choice. However, it cannot be a site that any of you have practiced in previously or part of a tradition that you belong to. Your group member lists are due by Tuesday, September 27 by 11:59PM via the Group Member List discussion in Webcourses. Ten percent will be deducted from your final grade on the Site Visit Project if your name is not included in one of the member lists. As a group, you will submit a write-up of your site visit using the Field Notes Template available with the assignment prompt in Webcourses. Your write-up should be 3-5 pages double-spaced with 1-inch margins and 12-point Times New Roman font. You are required to engage at least one primary source in your write-up. A primary source is something particular to the site that you visit, such as the website, publications, or an interview with a leader or member. You may want to engage other sources to help with definitions, explanation, etc. However, all secondary sources must be peer-reviewed. Please use Turabian style

guidelines for your source citations and bibliography. The write-up is due via Webcourses by Tuesday, November 22 at 11:59PM. You will submit one write-up for the entire group.

*****What is 'peer-reviewed'?** A good indicator of academic rigor is that a source is designated peer-reviewed. This means that the source has been reviewed and approved for publication by other scholars in the field. Academic sources include academic journal articles, books (also, book chapters or essays from collected volumes), and/or peer-reviewed reference texts. Be very careful using online resources! For example, Wikipedia may be a starting point for research, but it is not an acceptable source.

Etiquettes

Communication. In this class our official mode of communication is through email. Please include the course and section number in the subject line of all email communications. All communication between student and instructor and between student and student should be respectful and professional. As of 2009, Knightsmail is the only official student email at UCF. Class rosters list Knightsmail addresses rather than external email addresses, and all official class communications will be sent only to the Knightsmail addresses. Students are responsible for checking their Knightsmail accounts regularly.

Be prepared for class. You need to have the assigned readings done before class so that you are prepared to participate in discussions and activities. Also, you need to bring your textbook and other assigned readings to class with you. Not having your course materials for discussions and activities will result in a loss of participation credit.

Technology. Cell phones must be turned off and put away before class begins. Laptops and digital reading devices are allowed for class related activities only. If I find that you are using them in class for any other reason, you will not be allowed to use any devices in class for the duration of the semester.

Accommodations. It is my goal that this class be an accessible and welcoming experience for all students, including those with disabilities that may impact learning in this class. If anyone believes the design of this course poses barriers to effectively participating and/or demonstrating learning in this course, please meet with me (with or without a Student Accessibility Services (SAS) accommodation letter) to discuss reasonable options or adjustments. During our discussion, I may suggest the possibility/necessity of your contacting SAS (Ferrell Commons 185; 407-823-2371; sas@ucf.edu) to talk about academic accommodations. You are welcome to talk to me at any point in the semester about course design concerns, but it is always best if we can talk at least one week prior to the need for any modifications.

R-E-S-P-E-C-T. In order to learn, we must be open to the views of people different from ourselves. Each and every voice in the classroom is important and brings with it a wealth of experiences, values and beliefs. In this time we share together over the semester, please honor the uniqueness of your fellow classmates, and appreciate the opportunity we have to learn from each other. Please respect your fellow students' opinions and refrain from personal attacks or demeaning comments of any kind.

The University of Central Florida recognizes that our individual differences can deepen our understanding of one another and the world around us, rather than divide us. In this class, people of all ethnicities, genders and gender identities, religions, ages, sexual orientations, disabilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, regions, and nationalities are strongly encouraged to share their rich array of perspectives and experiences. If you feel your differences may in some way isolate you from UCF's community or if you have a need of any specific accommodations, please speak with the instructor early in the semester about your concerns and what we can do together to help you become an active and engaged member of our class and community.

Academic Integrity. 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 (<http://osc.sdes.ucf.edu>) for further action. See the UCF Golden Rule (<http://goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu>) 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.

Many incidents of plagiarism result from students' lack of understanding about what constitutes plagiarism. However, you are expected to familiarize yourself with UCF's policy on plagiarism. All work you submit must be your own scholarly and creative efforts. UCF's Golden Rule defines plagiarism as follows: "whereby another's work is used or appropriated without any indication of the source, thereby attempting to convey the impression that such work is the student's own."

Turnitin. In this course we will utilize turnitin.com, an automated system which instructors can use to quickly and easily compare each student's assignment with billions of web sites, as well as an enormous database of student papers that grows with each submission. Accordingly, you will be expected to submit all assignments in electronic format. After the assignment is processed, as an instructor I receive a report from turnitin.com that states if and how another author's work was used in the assignment. For a more detailed look at this process, visit www.turnitin.com.

Keep calm and read the syllabus. Please take the time to read the syllabus at the start of class and note important deadlines, procedures, and policies. Also, before sending me an email, please take the time to check to see if your question is answered in the syllabus.

Course Schedule

*****All deadlines and exam dates are firm. However, please be advised that additional readings may be posted in Webcourses, and adjustments to the reading schedule may be made at the start of each unit. Additions and adjustments will be announced in class and in Webcourses.**

UNIT I – THE ACADEMIC STUDY OF RELIGION & INDIGENOUS RELIGIONS		
DATE	READINGS	DUE
Tuesday, August 23	Syllabus; Introductions	
The Academic Study of Religion		
Thursday, August 25	<i>Invitation to World Religions</i> , Chapter 1, pp. 3-21	Syllabus Quiz due by 11:59PM on Friday, August 26
Tuesday, August 30	<i>Invitation to World Religions</i> , Chapter 1, pp. 21-30; Fieldwork materials available on Webcourses	
Thursday, September 1	Creationism vs. Evolution debate materials linked through Webcourses	
Indigenous Religions		
Tuesday, September 6	<i>Invitation to World Religions</i> , Chapter 2; Robert Davidson and Haida materials linked through Webcourses	
Thursday, September 8	<i>Invitation to World Religions</i> , Chapter 3	
Tuesday, September 13	Musa Dube's "Fifty Years of Bleeding linked through Webcourses	
Thursday, September 15		Exam I
UNIT II – HOUSEHOLDERS, RENUNCIATION, & OTHER LIFE WAYS		
Hinduism		
Tuesday, September 20	<i>Invitation to World Religions</i> , Chapter 4, pp. 89-119; The Myth of the Cosmic Man from the Rig Veda in Webcourses	

Thursday, September 22	<i>Invitation to World Religions</i> , Chapter 4, pp. 119-142	
Jainism		
Tuesday, September 27	<i>Invitation to World Religions</i> , Chapter 6	Group Member Lists for Site-Visit Project due in Webcourses discussion by 11:59PM
Thursday, September 29	Satish Kumar materials linked through Webcourses	
Buddhism		
Tuesday, October 4	<i>Invitation to World Religions</i> , Chapter 5, pp. 143-163; Heart Sutra translations linked through Webcourses	
Thursday, October 6	<i>Invitation to World Religions</i> , Chapter 5, pp. 163-188	
Tuesday, October 11	Materials for Nati Baratz' film <i>Unmistaken Child</i> (2008) linked in Webcourses	
Daoism & Confucianism		
Thursday, October 13	<i>Invitation to World Religions</i> , Chapter 8	
Shinto		
Tuesday, October 18	<i>Invitation to World Religions</i> , Chapter 9	
Thursday, October 20	Exam Review	
Tuesday, October 25		Exam II
WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE – MONDAY, OCT 31st!!		
UNIT III – THE MONOTHEISTIC TRADITIONS		
Judaism		
Thursday, October 27	<i>Invitation to World Religions</i> , Chapter 10	
Tuesday, November 1	<i>Invitation to World Religions</i> , Chapter 11, pp. 351-371	
Thursday, November 3	<i>Invitation to World Religions</i> , Chapter 11, pp. 371-410	
Religion & Violence		
Tuesday, November 8	Materials linked through Webcourses	
Thursday, November 10	MLK's "Letter From Birmingham Jail" and Omid Safi's "Where Does It Hurt, O City of Light" linked through Webcourses NO CLASS MEETING - Be sure to complete the assigned discussion in Webcourses for participation credit.	Religion and Violence Discussion in Webcourses Initial post is due by Thursday, November 10 at 11:59PM, and responses to classmates are due by Sunday, November 13 at 11:59pm.
Christianity		
Tuesday, November 15	<i>Invitation to World Religions</i> , Chapter 12, pp. 411-439	
Thursday, November 17	<i>Invitation to World Religions</i> , Chapter 12, pp. 439-468	
Islam		
Tuesday, November 22	<i>Invitation to World Religions</i> , Chapter 13, pp. 469-495	Site-Visit Write-Up due via Webcourses by 11:59PM
Thursday, November 24	NO CLASS – Thanksgiving!	
Tuesday, November 29	<i>Invitation to World Religions</i> , Chapter 13, pp. 495-524	
New Religious Movements		
Thursday, December 1	<i>Invitation to World Religions</i> , Chapter 14	

*****FINAL EXAM – THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8, 8:30-9:50AM**