



Course Code: REL 2300 - 0W61

Course Name: World Religions

Credit Hours: 3.0

Semester: Fall 2018

Mode: Web (Fully Online)

Syllabus Table of Contents

1. Instructor Information
 2. Course Description
 3. Course Objectives
 4. Technical Competencies and Necessary Hardware/Software
 5. Required Text
 6. General Expectations in a Fully Online Course
 7. Description of Assignments and Tests
 8. Grading Scheme and Description
 9. Instructor Policies
 - E-mail Correspondence
 - No Extra Credit Policy
 - Missed Assignments and Tests Policy
 - Virtual Open Door Policy
 - Maintaining a Respectful Environment
 10. University Policies
 - Academic Integrity
 - Course Accessibility Statement
 - Campus Safety Statement
 - Deployed Active Military Students
 - Copyright
 - Third-Party Software and FERPA
 - UCF Cares
 - Diversity Statement
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1. Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Nick Shrubsole

Virtual Office Hours: Available By Appointment via Skype or Conferences (Webcourses)

E-mail: Nicholas.Shrubsole@ucf.edu (Preferred method of contact)



Biography

Hello everyone! My name is Nick Shrubsole and I am your instructor for this course. Professionally, I hold a Ph.D. in Religious Studies from the University of Waterloo (2013), which is located just outside of Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Yes, I am a Canadian living in Florida. How novel, right? I moved to Orlando in 2015 after teaching for a few years back in Canada. I have extensive teaching experience in a broad range of Religious Studies courses, including World Religions and Politics, Religion, and the Law, Religion and Popular Culture, Evil, and a number of others. I am not a traditional scholar of religion who studies one particular tradition. You'll find that out soon enough as we get into this course. Instead, I tend to focus on the intersections of religions and the secular. My specific area of research is Indigenous Religious Freedom claims. I'll have more to say on this subject in our unit on Indigenous Religions.

On a more personal note, I like to let my students know that I am a disabled person. I have had a visual impairment since I was quite young. In my face-to-face classes, this usually means that I need to tell students that they need to be a bit more assertive when they need a question answered, but that won't be the case here. Even though you could go this whole course without ever knowing I have a visual impairment, I think it's important to let you know when diverse experiences are leading the class. I also hope that my disclosure can make others with disabilities feel comfortable in this class and beyond. Every disability is unique, so it is important to share our stories and let people know that we are here.

Aside from my professional credentials and disclosure, I do have a life outside of work, although it is difficult at times in this kind of employment. I played a lot of music back in Canada, so I am actively trying to continue that here in Florida. I enjoy watching live music and try to get to at least one show every couple of weeks. I enjoy going out with the wonderful friends I have met in this city as much as I enjoy taking a break and watching any number of quality shows.

I look forward to learning more about you in the opening discussion! Please don't ever hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

2. Course Description

Instructor Description

This course examines the basic features and historical backgrounds of a variety of religious traditions (such as Buddhism and Islam) and collections of religious traditions (such as indigenous religions and new religious movements) with a particular emphasis on the local and the global in the modern world. For this reason, we will step beyond the traditional parameters of studying religions in isolation from each other to explore the intersections of mobile, transnational, publicly-engaged religions today. Additional subjects include religion and politics, religion and violence, religion and gender, and secularization.

Course Catalog Description

Basic features and historical background of Confucianism, Taoism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

3. Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able:

- To develop a critical perspective on the concept of "religion" and "world religions" (Introductory Module)
 - To demonstrate a basic knowledge of major religious traditions emerging from India, China, and Japan (Module 1)
 - To demonstrate a basic knowledge of the Abrahamic Traditions (that is Judaism, Christianity and Islam (Module 2)
 - To gain an appreciation for the very diverse religious traditions that fall under the broader category of Indigenous Religions (Module 3)
 - To demonstrate a basic knowledge of new religious traditions (Module 4)
 - To demonstrate an understanding of the contemporary, global religious landscape beyond the insular study of single traditions (Discussion Module)
 - To critically engage with others on relevant subjects such as religion and violence, religion and gender, and religion and politics (Module 5)
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4. Technical Competencies and Necessary Hardware/Software

The ability to use Webcourses is essential for any online course. Please review the [Webcourses Tour](#) for more information.

Students may want to become familiar with a Word processor such as Microsoft Word (available for free through UCF).

Aside from an internet browser and a computer/tablet, no other hardware or software is necessary.

5. Required Text

Please note that there is one (1) required textbook for this class. The required text is the following:

- Linda Woodhead, Christopher Partridge, and Hiroko Kawanami, eds. *Religions in the Modern World: Traditions and Transformations* 3rd Edition. New York: Routledge, 2016. ISBN: 9780415858816.
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6. General Expectations in a Fully Online Course

This is a fully online course. For this reason, students must develop their time management skills effectively. As an online course, you are still expected to dedicate the same amount of time you would in a face-to-face course. The major difference is that there is no scheduled class time. The work that you conduct outside of the classroom remains relatively the same, but the experience of the classroom is a little different. In a classroom, you may attend class at a scheduled time at which point you can listen to a lecture and engage with your fellow classmates in meaningful discussion. When you leave the class, you may independently set up study groups, but many students may just take that time to read their text, complete assignments, and make study guides for in-class tests. In an online course, you will continue to engage with your classmates, listen to some lectures, and participate in small group assignments. The difference is that this is completed online at a time that is more conducive for your schedule. Here are some helpful hints at the beginning of this course to make sure you stay on schedule:

- **Write down the critical dates for all assignments in the course.** You may choose to just use the calendar function in Webcourses, but I would encourage you to use a calendar that you encounter regularly (i.e., on your phone, laptop, tablet, or, wall calendar).
 - **Note the opening and closing dates for assignments.** In an online course, you have windows to complete assignments rather than a specific due date. Note both the opening and closing dates of all assignments.
 - **Ensure that you login at least twice a week.** Even if there is nothing scheduled that week, it is crucial that you stay engaged with the course.
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7. Description of Assignments and Tests

We operate on a Monday to Sunday week in this course. All quizzes are due by Sunday at 11:59 p.m. on their scheduled week. Late penalties are listed below.

Assignment	Percentage of Grade	Description
Syllabus Quiz and Introduce Yourself Discussion	Ungraded	Before you Begin in the Course, you are required to complete a syllabus quiz. You are also required to provide a brief introduction to your group members who you will be working with extensively over the semester.
Contemporary Issues Discussion	20%	<p>During the final module of the course, students are required to engage in an online discussion regarding the contemporary religious landscape (e.g., religion and violence, religion and politics). Each prompt will appear at the top of the discussion board for each week.</p> <p>Note that this is not an essay assignment. This means you are not expected to simply respond to the prompt in a single post and return the next week to do the same. This is a discussion so you are meant to engage with your classmates.</p> <p>You will be assessed based on the following rubric:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated knowledge of the reading material for the week (10 marks) • Engagement with Classmates (that is, your ability to engage in a discussion over the course of the entire discussion period) (5 marks) • Grammar and Spelling (3 marks) • Demonstration of Respect for other Perspectives (2 marks) <p>There is no need to post every single day. But, do not expect a good grade if you only post on the final day of the discussion. The best advice is to check the discussion every day or two and prepare to post at least three times. If someone asks you a question, respond! And, don't be too worried about posting early. Your professor will be actively engaged in</p>

		<p>these discussions so there will always be something to respond to within 24 - 48 hours of your post.</p> <p>Discussions run from Monday to Friday of the scheduled week. Get involved early! Once the discussion window closes, the discussion is over. No late submissions will be accepted.</p>
Public Awareness Projects	20%	<p>In each of the three content modules, students will have the opportunity to share something with their fellow group members. Each module will be a little different. Students are required to complete ANY TWO (2) of the following three assignments. Note that only two assignments will be graded so choose your assignments in advance. Do not complete all three assignments.</p> <p>All submission windows close on the final day of the module (at 11:59 P.M. EST). Late assignments will be assessed a penalty of 10% per day for up to three days.</p> <p>Module 1: Wiki Fix (Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, and Chinese Religions)</p> <p>Since you are reading such a new textbook, it might be a good idea to give Wikipedia an update! After reading your chapters on Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, or Chinese Religions, go to a related Wikipedia page and edit it! Ensure that you cite your textbook properly. When you're done, share your fixes with your group on the appropriate message board. More instructions on how to do all of this will be listed on the specific assignment discussion page.</p> <p>Module 2: Campaign Against Islamophobia</p> <p>Student will be responsible for creating a small poster and posting it for their group. This poster should utilize material from the textbook and lecture material to contribute to a more complex understanding of the world's second largest religion, Islam. Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, Islam has been categorized as backward, violent,</p>

		<p>and hateful toward women. This has led to the assault and death of many Muslims around the world, including here in the United States. While it is important to understand how extremist groups emerge within religious communities, it is imperative that we recognize that, in whatever community they arise, they do not represent the majority. Create a poster that speaks out against Islamophobia by offering some important facts about Islam. Keep the information on the poster short and to the point.</p> <p>Module 3: Religion on the Internet</p> <p>Were there any groups this module that you found particularly fascinating? If so, go find them on the internet! Provide a link to any official religious community's website. Then, in 250 words, offer a summary of who the group is and what can be found on their website. All of this information should be able to be found on that very website!</p>
Mini-Quizzes	30%	<p>Weeks 2 through 11 contain mini-quizzes that must be completed before a designated date. These short quizzes function to ensure that students keep up with their readings. Pay close attention to the due dates for each quiz. Quizzes will remain open for three days after they are due, but students will receive a late penalty of -1 for every day the quiz is late. For example, if a student submits a quiz three (3) days late, they will receive a -3 to their score for that quiz (that is, if you scored 10 / 10 you would receive a 7/10).</p>
Final Exam	30%	<p>The final cumulative exam will take place in the final week of class. There will be a five (5) day window in which the test can be completed. Once the window closes, students will no longer be able to take the exam. You are expected to use your notes for this test which will cover content from weeks 2 through 11.</p>
Total	100%	

8. Grading Scene and Description

Letter Grade	Percentage Range	Brief Description of Assigned Grade
A	94% – 100%	Reserved for excellence, far exceeds average understanding as evidenced in course work and goes significantly beyond basic understanding.
A-	90% – < 94%	Excellent, exceeds average understanding as evidenced in course work and goes well beyond basic understanding.
B+	87% – < 90%	Very good. Far above average, fully meets or exceeds average understanding as evidenced in course work, fully understands the basics and goes beyond that level.
B	83% – < 87%	Very good. Above average, fully meets average understanding as evidenced in course work, fully understands the basics and can engage material somewhat beyond that level.
B-	80% – < 83%	Very good. Just above average, fully meets expectations for basic understanding as evidenced in coursework and fully understands the basics and can engage material at that level.
C+	77% – < 80%	Slightly above average, fully meets expectations for basic understanding as evidenced in coursework and understands the basics.
C	73% – < 77%	Average, meets minimum expectations and satisfies course requirements.
C-	70% – < 73%	Slightly below average, meets bare minimum expectations and satisfies course requirements.
D+	67% – < 69%	Lacking in quality. Below average, meets most minimum expectations and satisfies all or most course requirements.
D	64% – < 67%	Lacking in quality. Below average, meets many minimum expectations and satisfies all or most course requirements.
D-	60% – > 64%	Greatly lacking in quality. Far below average, but meets most minimum expectations and satisfies most course requirements with minimal understanding evidenced in course work.
F	0% – < 60%	Fails to meet minimum expectations in understanding and course work as evidenced by performance and submission of graded elements.

9. Instructor Policies

E-mail correspondence

1. Please use the inbox located to the left of this page to correspond with your instructor.
2. Think of an e-mail as a formal letter when corresponding with instructors (as opposed to a text message). Begin with a salutation (a greeting) and conclude with your name. Be respectful and considerate in your language and re-read your e-mail before sending.
3. Review the course syllabus to ensure that your question is not answered there.
4. For technical support, contact Online@UCF by clicking the following link: [UCF Online Support](#).

No Extra Credit Policy

There is no extra credit available in this course.

Missed Assignments and Tests Policy

One important lesson you will learn at university is time management. Tests and Assignments must be completed within a predesignated time span. All assignments and tests must be completed by the closing date and time. No late discussions, assignments, or tests will be accepted. Of course, exceptions will be made for those with documented, extenuating circumstances. Please see assignment descriptions above for late policies for each assessment item. Generally, quizzes and projects will receive a -10% late penalty for three days for up to three days. Discussions and the final exam must be completed within a pre-designated window. No submissions will be accepted after the assignment window closes.

Virtual Open Door Policy

Your instructor is here to help! I encourage you to contact me at any time to discuss your questions and concerns about the course. .

Maintaining a Respectful Environment

This course will be guided by an ethic of mutual respect and responsibility. At times, the topics may become controversial and online debate rather tense. While disagreement is part of a healthy university environment, please engage your colleagues (including the instructor) with respect and in such a way to promote a response. Agreement should not be the task in online discussions, but rather education and, where possible, consensus.

10. University Policies and Important Information

Academic Integrity

Students should familiarize themselves with [UCF's Rules of Conduct](#). According to Section 1, "Academic Misconduct," students are prohibited from engaging in:

- *Unauthorized assistance*: Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study aids in any academic exercise unless specifically authorized by the instructor of record. The unauthorized possession of examination or course-related material also constitutes cheating.
- *Communication to another through written, visual, electronic, or oral means*: The presentation of material which has not been studied or learned, but rather was obtained through someone else's efforts and used as part of an examination, course assignment, or project.
- *Commercial Use of Academic Material*: Selling of course material to another person, student, and/or uploading course material to a third-party vendor without authorization or without the express written permission of the university and the instructor. Course materials include but are not limited to class notes, Instructor's PowerPoints, course syllabi, tests, quizzes, labs, instruction sheets, homework, study guides, handouts, etc.
- *Falsifying or misrepresenting* the student's own academic work.
- *Plagiarism*: Using or appropriating another's work without any indication of the source, thereby attempting to convey the impression that such work is the student's own.
- *Multiple Submissions*: Submitting the same academic work for credit more than once without the express written permission of the instructor.
- *Helping another violate* academic behavior standards.

For more information about Academic Integrity, students may consult [The Center for Academic Integrity](#).

For more information about plagiarism and misuse of sources, see "[Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: The WPA Statement on Best Practices](#)".

Responses to Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, or Cheating

Students should also familiarize themselves with the procedures for academic misconduct in UCF's student handbook, [The Golden Rule](#). UCF faculty members have a responsibility for students' education and the value of a UCF degree, and so seek to prevent unethical behavior and when necessary respond to academic misconduct. Penalties can include a failing grade in an assignment or in the course, suspension or expulsion from the university, and/or a "Z Designation" on a student's official transcript indicating academic dishonesty, where the final grade for this course will be preceded by the letter Z. For more information about the Z Designation, see <http://goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/zgrade>.

Course Accessibility Statement

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing access and inclusion for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need disability-related access in this course should contact the professor as soon as possible. Students should also connect with [Student Accessibility Services](#) (Ferrell Commons 185, sas@ucf.edu, phone (407) 823-2371). Through

Student Accessibility Services, a Course Accessibility Letter may be created and sent to professors, which informs faculty of potential access and accommodations that might be reasonable. Determining reasonable access and accommodations requires consideration of the course design, course learning objectives and the individual academic and course barriers experienced by the student.

Campus Safety Statement

Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise in our class, everyone needs to work together. Students should be aware of the surroundings and familiar with some basic safety and security concepts.

- In case of an emergency, dial 911 for assistance.
- Every UCF classroom contains an emergency procedure guide posted on a wall near the door. Please make a note of the guide's physical location and consider reviewing the online version at http://emergency.ucf.edu/emergency_guide.html.
- Students should know the evacuation routes from each of their classrooms and have a plan for finding safety in case of an emergency.
- If there is a medical emergency during class, we may need to access a first aid kit or AED (Automated External Defibrillator). To learn where those items are located in this building, see <http://www.ehs.ucf.edu/workplacesafety.html> (click on link from menu on left).
- To stay informed about emergency situations, sign up to receive UCF text alerts by going to my.ucf.edu and logging in. Click on "Student Self Service" located on the left side of the screen in the tool bar, scroll down to the blue "Personal Information" heading on your Student Center screen, click on "UCF Alert," fill out the information, including your e-mail address, cell phone number, and cell phone provider, click "Apply" to save the changes, and then click "OK."
- Students with special needs related to emergency situations should speak with their instructors outside of class.
- To learn about how to manage an active-shooter situation on campus or elsewhere, consider viewing this video. [You CAN Survive an Active Shooter](#)

Deployed Active Duty Military Students

If you are a deployed active duty military student and feel that you may need a special accommodation due to that unique status, please contact your instructor to discuss your circumstances.

Copyright

This course may contain copyright protected materials such as audio or video clips, images, text materials, etc. These items are being used with regard to the Fair Use doctrine in order to enhance the learning environment. Please do not copy, duplicate, download or distribute these items. The use of these materials is strictly reserved for this online classroom environment and your use only. All copyright materials are credited to the copyright holder.

Third-Party Software and FERPA

During this course you might have the opportunity to use public online services and/or software applications sometimes called third-party software such as a blog or wiki. While some of these could be required assignments, you need not make any personally identifying information on a public site. Do not post or provide any private information about yourself or your classmates. Where appropriate you may use a pseudonym or nickname. Some written assignments posted publicly may require personal reflection/comments, but the assignments will not require you to disclose any personally identity-sensitive information. If you have any concerns about this, please contact your instructor.

UCF Cares

We want all students at the university to know that UCF not only cares about their academic success, but their overall wellbeing. Life can get difficult at times, especially while in college. Many students are faced with stressors and challenges that begin to impact their success as a student. These stressors can appear in many different forms: difficulty adjusting to university life, family issues, financial difficulties, abusive relationships, etc. Our goal is to “build a culture of care, one knight at a time, where every UCF Knight cares about the health and safety of one another.” For support of these matters, please visit [UCF Cares](#).

Diversity Statement

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.