**Syllabus**

**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 Texts (available in the bookstore):**

Mary Pat Fisher, *Living Religions, 8th edition* (Prentice Hall, 2010), packaged with 'myreligionkit' (available in the University Bookstore or directly from MyPearsonStore.com).

Also available as electronic text (saving you half the cost of the print version at CourseSmart:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CourseSmart</th>
<th>Living Religions, Eighth Edition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>by Mary Pat Fisher</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Price to Student $47.50</td>
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**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:**

20%  **Attendance and Active Class Participation** – which may include in-class quizzes on the assigned readings and lectures, surveys or other graded in-class activities. Please note that you have to complete the assigned readings BEFORE class.

80%  **4 Section Tests of 20% each**

The Plus and Minus Grading System will be used.

**Grading Scale:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93.50-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90.0-93.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83.5-86.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80.0-83.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70.0-73.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63.5-66.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60.0-63.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>66.5-69.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63.5-66.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-69.99</td>
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**Policies:**

**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. There will be no opportunity for extra credit work. Prepare well for the assigned work and you will not need it!

Class Room Academic Behavior: Class starts 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 test 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.

**The syllabus and course schedule may be changed at any time by the instructor.**
REL 2300: World Religions
Fall 2011 - MWF 9:30 – 10:20 am - VAB 132
Dr. Claudia Schippert
Office: PSY 241 - 407-823-4624
Office Hours: Monday 11:00-12:00 and Wed 2:00-4:00pm
Email: claudiaschippert@gmail.com

Schedule

8/22 First Class, Introduction to the course, requirements, and the study of religion
8/24 The academic study of religion. Why are there religions? (Chapter 1)
8/26 (Chapter 1 continued)

8/29 Indigenous Sacred Ways (Chapter 2)
8/31 Indigenous Sacred Ways continued
9/2 Hinduism (watch movie in class – take notes and answer questions)

9/5 Labor Day – no class
9/7 Hinduism- Origins and Vedic Age (chapter 3: 73-85)
9/9 Hinduism – Theistic Paths (85-96)

9/12 Hinduism – Way of Life, Puja, Symbols (97-110)
9/14 Hinduism – Modern Movements and contemporary issues (111-118)
9/16 Jainism (Chapter 4)

9/19 Jainism continued
9/21 Test 1 (Chapters 1-4)
9/23 Buddhism – Life and Teachings of the Buddha (Chapter 5: 135-148)

9/26 Buddhism - Spread of Buddhism, Theravada + Mahayana, meditation (148-160)
9/28 Buddhism - Vajrayana, Zen Buddhism and other schools, practices (160-171)
9/30 Buddhism in the West, contemporary issues (171-180)

10/3 Daoism and Confucianism (Chapter 6)
10/5 Daoism and Confucianism (Chapter 6)
10/7 Shinto (watch movie in class – take notes and answer questions)

10/10 Shinto (chapter 7)
10/12 Test 2 (chapters 5-7)
10/14 Judaism – History- Biblical to Rabbinic (Chapter 8: 239-259)

10/17 Judaism- Medieval history, Kabbalah, Hasidism, Holocaust (259-273)
10/19 Judaism – development of branches, sacred practices and holy days (273-286)
10/21 no class meeting

10/24 Judaism – contemporary branches and issues (286-294)
10/26  Christianity- Life + teaching of Jesus, Bible, early Church (Chapter 9: 298-322)
10/28  Christianity- Councils, Monasticism, Mysticism (322-334)

10/31  Christianity – Reformations, Eastern Orthodoxy, Sacred Practices (334-360)
11/2  Christianity –Contemporary Trends (360-376)

11/4  **Test 3 (Chapters 8 and 9)**

11/7  Islam- Prophet Muhammad and Qur’an (Chapter 10: 381-391)
11/9  Islam- Central Teachings, Five Pillars, Sunni-Shi’s split and Sufism. (391-410)
11/11  Veterans’ Day – no class meeting

11/14  Islam- Spread, relationship with West (411-421)
11/16  Islam – Resurgence and Contemporary Issues (421-436)
11/18  no class meeting

11/21  no class meeting
11/23  Sikhism – (chapter 11: 440-462)
11/25  **Thanksgiving break - no class**

11/28  New Religious Movements (Chapter 12: 465-497)
11/30  Religion in the 21st Century (Chapter 13: 500-524)
12/2  Conclusion to the course, review

12/10  **8:30am. Test 4 (Chapters 10-13)** Please note that the exam will begin at 8:30am and you will have until 9:20am to complete it. (The UCF wide exam schedule lists 7:00-9:50am, but you will only have a 50 minute test.)