WORLD RELIGIONS
REL2300/ 20814

Basics

Location: ENG2  0203
Time:  M-W-F 10.30-11.20
Credit Hours: 3

Dr. Ann Gleig
Office: PSY 236
Office Hours:  M 11.30-1.00 (or appointment)
Email: Ann.Gleig@ucf.edu

Course Description

Most of us seldom think deeply and critically about our own religious worlds, much less about the religious worldviews of others, yet we live in societies of increasing religious diversity and relevance. From the transnational growth of religious fundamentalism, to national debates over gay marriage, religious issues and ideologies saturate public life. Religions are anything but irrelevant, be it politically, socially, culturally, or psychologically, yet a recent survey showed only 10% of American teenagers could name all five major world religions. This course will provide a basic “religious literacy,” an overview of the core beliefs and practices of the major world religions. Our explorations will include Indigenous religions, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, Shinto, and New Religious Movements, both in their classic and contemporary expressions. We will begin with a consideration of the academic study of religion, and then move into a descriptive overview of the major world religions and how they have responded to the challenges of modernity and postmodernity.

Course Objectives

I. 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.

II. To analyze the challenges faced by religions in the modern and postmodern periods and some characteristic responses of religions to those challenges.

III. 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.
IV. To introduce students to some of the main themes and issues involved in the academic study of religion

Course Requirements

(i) TWO EXAMS (30% each)

Mid term and a Final exam: Each exam will consist of 60 terms that you will be required to explain or define in a multi-choice format.

Include: Mid-term will cover key issues in the study of religion, the traditions of Indigenous Religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and Shinto. The final exam will cover the traditions of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and New Religious Movements. All of these terms will be taken from the review terms sheets we will do together in class, which will draw on the key term section of World Religions Today.

Purpose: To develop a basic religious literacy of the main concepts of world religions.

Mid-term Exam Date: March 15th 10:30-11.20
Final Exam Date: Monday April 29th 10.00 am -11.30 am.

(ii) ONE PAPER (20%)

Critical reflection and analysis on a visit to a religious site. You will be required to visit a local religious site and observe a religious ceremony or event of your own choice. However, it cannot be a site that you have practiced in previously or part of a tradition that you belong to.

Include: (i) A brief description of the religious site (main beliefs and practices of the religion and a short history of the specific religious site); (ii) a description of your visit and; (iii) a consideration of the difference between the academic study and lived experience of religion (4-5 pages). You should use 2-3 academic sources (books, articles etc) for section (i) and also section (iii).

Purpose: To deepen your understanding of one major world religion and its local expression and to reflect on differences and similarities between the lived practice and critical study of religion.

Due: Monday April 7th

Grading Rubric: There will be 3 possible grades for the final paper:
Pass with Distinction 20-15 points
Pass 10-15 points
Fail 0-5 points
Please note that I will include style formatting in my grading of the final paper. If you fail to format it according to my guidelines below, it will be penalized.

(iv) ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION (10%)

I will also consider class attendance and class participation in my final grading. If you miss over three classes without a legitimate reason you will receive a zero for the attendance-participation grade. If you have attended all of the classes minus 3 or less, you will receive the full 10%

The attendance sheet will circulate in the first 10 minutes of the class, if you come late and it has been returned to me, you won’t be able to sign in and that will count as one of your three allotted absences.

Style, Submission, Deadlines

Paper Format: Must be 1.5 spaced, written in a 12inch font, and have a one-inch margin. (Any attempts to use obvious spacing strategies to outdo the required length will be penalized). Each page should be numbered. At the top of page one include the following information: the name of the professor (me), the name of the class, the name of the author (you) and the title of the paper. Papers must be written in MLA, Chicago or APA style (including footnotes and references). For information on documentation styles, see

http://www.uwc.ucf.edu/Writing%20Resources/writing_resources_home.htm#documentation

WRITING HELP: The University Writing Center (UWC) is a free resource for UCF students. At the UWC, a trained writing consultant will work individually with you on anything you're writing (in or out of class), at any point in the writing process from brainstorming to editing. Appointments are recommended, but not required. For more information or to make an appointment, visit the UWC website at http://www.uwc.ucf.edu, stop by the first floor of Colbourn Hall, or call (407) 823-2197.

Paper submission: Papers should be submitted in hand during class on Monday April 7th.

Deadlines: Unless we have discussed and agreed on an alternative arrangement in advance, I will not accept any late papers. You will receive a FAIL for this assignment. The only exceptions will be in the event of an emergency and proper documentation will be required. Please note a sick note for a two-day cold does not constitute an emergency.

Exam Dates: Failure to take exams when scheduled will result in zero (“0”) credit for the assignment. Conflicts with schedule must be addressed before test dates and an alternative arrangement will be made. See above for exceptions.
GRADING:

Grade Scale: Grades:  A = 100-90, B = 89-80, C = 79-70, D = 69-60 F= 60- (0-2: minus. 7-9: plus)

Grade Submission: I will be using the system at UCF that allows me to report your grades to you when you log into your "MyUCF" page. The university follows the national FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) code, which does not allow the communication of grades to a student by email (including embedding them in documents, which means they cannot be placed on a paper emailed to me), or by posting them outside a professor's door. This is a confidentiality issue. Please do not ask me for your grade by email - by law I cannot send it.

Withdrawal Deadline is MONDAY MARCH 11TH

Class Rules of Engagement

Cell phones, I-pods ect, must be turned off before class begins and stored out of sight. Laptops will be allowed in class for class related activities only. If I find anyone using laptops for anything other than this, you won’t be allowed to use your laptop for the rest of the semester.

UCF Academic Integrity Code

All written assignments require strict adherence to the honor code and must include the following “I (print name) hereby certify that I have adhered to the UCF academic integrity code (signature)

UCF is committed to promoting a culture of academic integrity where faculty and students work together to meet our personal, professional, and social responsibilities. A degree from UCF is only valuable to the extent it reflects valid assessments of student learning. Misrepresenting your learning on texts, projects, reports, or papers invalidates your grades and tarnishes the credibility of UCF. While collaboration is encouraged in the learning and studying process, you should assume all tests, quizzes, ect. require your individual effort unless explicitly directed otherwise. Unauthorized collaboration, whether voluntary or not, is cheating. Unauthorized use of materials during a test, quiz or other assessment is cheating. Regarding papers and projects, one of the core fluencies that students need to demonstrate is the ability to discern information that is common to the public from the intellectual property of individuals. Use of protected ideas, processes or language without attribution or proper citation is plagiarism.

Disability: Any student with a disability requiring accommodations in this course must contact Disability Support Services.

REQUIRED READING
I will also provide a number of select articles. All readings must be done before the class assigned and brought to class.

**CLASS SCHEDULE:** (Tentative: We are covering a lot of material and it may “spill-over”).

**PROLOGUE: WHAT EXACTLY IS “RELIGION,” HOW SHOULD WE STUDY IT, AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?**

**JANUARY**

7th  Introduction: to the course: content, approach, syllabus, expectations
Reading: the syllabus

9th  Why Religious Literacy Matters:
“Religion Matters” 39-55

11th The Insider/ Outsider Dilemma in the Study of Religion
-Russell McCutcheon “Introduction” *The Insider/ Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion*
-Paul Cortright

14th Essential Elements in the Study of Religion
*WRT* Introduction 1-35
-Review Terms for The Academic Study of Religion.

**MAIN SHOWING: RELIGIOUS LITERACY: A SURVEY OF WORLD RELIGIONS**

16th Indigenous Religion
- *WRT* 37-61

18th Indigenous Religion
- *WRT* 37-61

21st Hinduism
- *WRT* 303-318
From the Chandogya *Upanishad* at [http://www.hridaya-yoga.com/articles/upanishads/tat_tvam_asi.htm](http://www.hridaya-yoga.com/articles/upanishads/tat_tvam_asi.htm) and compare with this translation at [http://www.easwaran.org/the-chandogya-upanishad-you-are-that.html](http://www.easwaran.org/the-chandogya-upanishad-you-are-that.html)

23rd Hinduism
- *WTR:* 318-327
Monotheism and Monism: Devotion and Philosophy
25th Hinduism
Monotheism and Monism: Devotion and Philosophy II
-WTR 327-332 and Bhagavad Gita Chapter two verse 47 at http://www.bhagavad-gita.org/Gita/verse-02-46.html

28th HINDU Practices and Challenges of Modernity and Postmodernity
--WTR 332-346 and 364-378

30th Hindu Review Class
--WTR 332-346 and 364-378
Challenges of Modernity and Post-modernity

FEBRUARY

1st Naked in Ashes (Documentary)

4th Sikhism
-WRT 328-332.

6th Buddhism
-WTR: 398-408

11th Buddhism
-WTR: 398-408

13th Buddhism
-WTR 412-419 and Foundation of Mindfulness at http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/nyanasatta/wheel019.html#found

Friday 15th No Class: Take-Home review terms for Sikhism

18th Buddhism: The Life of the Buddha (Documentary)

20th Buddhism
WRT 421-426 and 428-432
Mahayana

22nd Buddhism
WTR 425-426
Tantric Buddhism

25th Buddhism review terms

27th Taoism
WRT 493-499 and selections 1-9 from the *Dao De Ching* at  http://www.sacred-texts.com/tao/taote.htm

**MARCH**

1st  Confucianism  
*WTR 491-492 and 499-502*

**MID-TERM BREAK:  March 4th-9TH**

11th  Shinto (Video)  
*WRT 505-506*

13th  Review of Indigenous religions and East Asian religions.

15th  MID-TERM EXAM

18th  Judaism  
*WRT 83-101*  
The Formative Period

20th  Judaism  
*WRT 112-115*  
Medieval Judaism

22nd  Judaism  
*WRT 115-143*  
Modern Judaism

25th  JUDAISM DOCUMENTARY

27th  Christianity  
*WRT 147-152 and 157-172*  
Premodern Christianity: The Formative Era

29th  Christianity  
*WRT 182-199*  
Modernity and The Reformation

**APRIL**

1st  Christianity  
*WRT 152-157 and 199-213*  
Postmodern and Postcolonial Challenges

3rd  Islam
WRT 215-221 and 224-230 and 240-249
Formative Islam

5th WRT: 249-258
Islamic Golden Age

8th WRT: 258-265 and 265-280
WRT: 258-265
Islam, Colonialism and Modernity and Islamic Resurgence, Fundamentalism and the Hijacking of Jihad

10th Islam Speaker or Islam Documentary

12th Review of Islamic Terms

15th New Religious Movements
WRT 571-581

17th The New Age
WRT 581-595

19th Jonestown Documentary

APRIL 22nd (Away) Provide a review sheet for New Religions and the New Age

Final Exam Date: Monday April 29th 10.00 am -11.30 am in classroom.