

... WORLD RELIGIONS
REL2300-0W61
.. Spring 2019

Basics:

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Office Hours: Tuesday 1.00-2.00 (or by appointment)
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Credit Hours: 3

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, 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.

Required Texts

You are required to purchase one textbook for this class:

Pat Fisher, *Living Religions* (10th Edition)

<https://www.amazon.com/Living-Religions-10th-Fisher-2016-01-13/dp/B01FKUHKFM> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

You can purchase this either as a hardback text or as an e-text. UCF bookstore has both options. You can also use earlier editions of this textbook but it is ***your job*** to find the corresponding chapters or page numbers.

In addition, I will provide links to various articles or chapters available online directly or via UCF library.

Course Structure

This is a three-hour credit class (with readings you will be expected to work around 5 hours a week). It will be structured on the model of a face-to-face class that would meet once a week for 15 weeks. So, each week you will have one "class" that will typically consist of the following: a Powerpoint lecture, the class reading(s), video and audio links, the class assignment, and optional activities. At the start of each Powerpoint, there is a content page, which gives the list of the contents including the readings you must do for each class. Readings will either from the required textbook and possible addition provided as a PDF or weblink.

I strongly suggest that you follow this approach to the class:

Schedule two regular time periods of 2-2.5 hours a week for yourself to work through the class material. For each 2-2.5 hours, you should:

1. Open the weekly Powerpoint and locate the reading for the class on the content page
2. Do the allocated reading and any video/audio components first
3. After you have done the reading, read through the Powerpoint. The Powerpoint is basically designed to break down the chapter material and identify and unpack the most important information from that material.
4. Complete the review terms for the class.

Assignments Details There are three types of assignments:

1. **Weekly Review and Discussion Posts:** There will be weekly review and discussion posts required. These are to check that you have worked through and understood the class material. There are 15 of them and each one will be worth between 0-2 points. Each discussion/review post will open on Monday 7.00 am and close the following Sunday 11.59 pm. In total, they will make up 30% of your final class grade. Details are found under: [Review Term Instructions](#) on webcourse

2. **Exam Preparation:** There is a lot of material covered in this class and it is essential that you keep up with the weekly discussion review terms for exam success. To help you prepare for the exams, you will do an exam preparation activity called "You're the Professor," in small groups. Instructions for this are provided but essentially it involves writing and answering multi-choice

question exams from the discussion review terms to help you study and think about the material for the exams. You will have 4 of these activities over the course of the semester, one for each exam. In total, they will make up 10% of your final grade. Details are found under: [You're the Professor](#) on webcourse

3. **Module Exams:** This course is structured around four modules and at the end of each module, there will be either a 45 or 60 multi-choice question exam that will be taken as a timed exam of either 60 or 75 minutes. Exams are timed strictly to restrict cheating by looking up things on the Internet. The questions on this exam will all be drawn from the class discussion/review terms. Exams are designed to test your retention and understanding of the unit material. In total, the exams make up 60% of your final grade. Details are found under: [Module Exams](#) on webcourse

There is no extra credit in this class. However, your "Introduction Post" and your "Course Orientation quiz" will count towards an extra 1% on your final score if completed properly.

Deadlines: I follow a strict policy for late assignments. Unless we have discussed and agreed on an alternative arrangement in advance, grades will be dropped by half a letter grade for each day the assignment is late and will not be accepted after 3 days.

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.

GRADING:

Evaluation and Grading

Letter Grade	Points
A	94 – 100 points
A-	90 – 93 points
B+	87 – 89 points
B	83 – 86 points
B-	80 – 82 points
C+	77 – 79 points

C	70 – 76 points
C	70 – 76 points
D+	67 – 69 points
D	63 – 66 points
D-	60 – 62 points
F	59 and below

Academic Honesty

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. 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.

Student Accessibility Services

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accessibility for all persons. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students who need accommodations in this course must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. No accommodations will be provided until the student has met with the professor to request accommodations. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Accessibility Services <http://sas.sdes.ucf.edu> Ferrell Commons, 7F, Room 185, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.

Financial Aid: Please note that there is a new policy regarding financial aid. UCF must report attendance or non-attendance after the first week of class. So be sure to complete the first week introduction post by Sunday 20th January (11.59pm) as proof of class attendance

Email format: When writing an email to your Professor, please begin with (Dear) Dr. X (Gleig). If we have a continuous conversation on email, then you don't have to address me with every mail but all conversations should begin with the appropriate address. Please also check spelling

and grammar on emails. This is a habit that I really want to encourage you to cultivate as in some of the larger UCF classes in which your Professor

Course Schedule

(Readings for each class are given on the content page of the class Powerpoint)

UNIT ONE: Orientations

Week 1: The Academic Study of Religion: Orientation

January 7th-13th

Week 2: Indigenous Religions, Globalization and Cultural Appropriation

January 14th-20th

UNIT TWO: Religions of Asia

Week 3: Hinduism

January 21st-27th

Week 4: Hinduism

January 28th-February 3rd

Week 5: Buddhism

February 4th-10th

Week 6: Buddhism

February 11th-16th

Week 7: Sikhism and Shinto

February 18th-24th

Week 8: Taoism and Confucianism

February 25th-March 3rd

UNIT THREE:

Week 9: Judaism

March 4th-March 10th

Week 10: SPRING BREAK: No class

March 11th-17th

Week 11: Christianity

March 18th-24th

Withdraw Date: March 20th 11.59 pm.

Week 12: Christianity
March 25th-31st

Week 13: Islam
April 1st- 7th

Week 14: Islam
April 8th -14th

Week 15: New Religious Movements and Contemporary Issues
April 15th-21st

Last day of class: April 22nd
Exam Period: April 24th-30th

Grades due in MyUCF: May 3rd
Grades available in MyUCF May 6th