

REL-2000: COMPARATIVE WORLD RELIGIONS

Cuyahoga Community College

Viewing: REL-2000 : Comparative World Religions

Board of Trustees:

March 2023

Academic Term:

Fall 2026

Subject Code

REL - Religious Studies

Course Number:

2000

Title:

Comparative World Religions

Catalog Description:

Study of origin, nature, and meaning of major world religions: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Daoism, and Confucianism.

Credit Hour(s):

3

Lecture Hour(s):

3

Lab Hour(s):

0

Other Hour(s):

0

Requisites

Prerequisite and Corequisite

ENG-1010 College Composition I or ENG-101H Honors College Composition I, or departmental approval.

Outcomes

Course Outcome(s):

Critically analyze and make distinctions between the cultural and historical customs, principles, terminology and practices of the world's major religious traditions, including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism, Confucianism, and Daoism.

Essential Learning Outcome Mapping:

Critical/Creative Thinking: Analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information in order to consider problems/ideas and transform them in innovative or imaginative ways.

Oral Communication: Demonstrate effective verbal and nonverbal communication for an intended audience that is clear, organized, and delivered effectively following the standard conventions of that language.

Cultural Sensitivity: Demonstrate sensitivity to the beliefs, views, values, and practices of cultures within and beyond the United States.

Written Communication: Demonstrate effective written communication for an intended audience that follows genre/disciplinary conventions that reflect clarity, organization, and editing skills.

Objective(s):

1. Discuss the overarching concept of religion from differing perspectives.
2. Explain historical developments, methodologies, language, and beliefs of major religions.
3. Evaluate and analyze various cultural customs and traditions through primary texts and religious canons.
4. Critically examine recurring factors and philosophical applications within rituals, customs and practices.
5. Identify commonalities and differences among cross cultural religious practices from an informed perspective.

6. Compare ethical, metaphysical or epistemological aspects of contemporary religious trends.
 7. Examine how religious beliefs inform and influence concepts of the self in cross-cultural contemporary societies.
 8. Address ethical, metaphysical and/or epistemological perspectives as incorporated in selected religious traditions.
 9. Discuss distinct religious perspectives including: myths, rituals, transformation, rites of passage, and the concept of the divine.
 10. Communicate orally and in writing about a selected religion from a philosophical and historically relevant perspective.
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Methods of Evaluation:

1. Essay discussion questions and substantive writing assignments
2. Minimum of two examinations
3. Midpoint quizzes
4. Comparative research project
5. Participation in reflective class discussion and oral presentations
6. Present a reflective synopsis of a religion of choice
7. Critical thinking and analytical questioning of ideas

Course Content Outline:

1. Religion: what is it and why study it?
 - a. Distinction between the history, anthropology, and philosophy of religion
 - b. Major concepts in religion
 - c. Study of religion versus comparative philosophy
 - d. Common ground and defensible difference
 - e. Deities and gods
 - f. Definition of what is not religion
 - g. Reason versus faith
 - h. Philosophical religious practices
2. Judaism
 - a. Hebrew religion as the idea and challenge of the One
 - b. Origin, background, and history
 - c. Hebrew religion as a theology and a way of life
 - d. Principal Jewish festivals: origin and meaning
 - e. Medieval thinkers versus Greek thought
 - f. 21st century Judaism
3. Christianity
 - a. Origin and earliest developments
 - b. Jesus of history
 - c. Christ of faith
 - d. Christianity as a philosophy and as a religion
 - e. Old Testament and New Testament eclecticism
4. Islam
 - a. Short history of the Semitic tribes
 - b. Old Testament and New Testament background
 - c. Origin of Islam
 - d. Life of Mohammed
 - e. The message of Allah
 - f. The sacred book of Islam, the Qur'an
 - g. The development and teaching of the movement
5. Buddhism
 - a. The life of Siddhartha Gautama (Kapilavatthu)
 - b. Entry of Buddhism in China (6th century B.C.)
 - c. Buddhism as a religion and as a way of life
 - d. Buddhism versus fatalism of Confucianism
 - e. Zen Buddhism as a blending of Taoist intuitionism and Buddhism (6th century A.D.)
 - f. Buddhism in China and Japan
 - g. The basic ideals of Buddhism
6. Hinduism

- a. The religious phenomenon of India
 - b. The wave of Nordics to India, circa 1700 B.C.
 - c. Religious development in India: various periods
 - d. Brahma as the creator
 - e. The gods of India
 - f. Varna or the Caste (religious and sociopolitical meaning)
 - g. Sacred literature (Veda and Upanishads)
 - h. The meaning of Karma
 - i. Eclecticism with modern religions
7. Confucianism
- a. The life of Kung-fu-tzu (Confucius), 6th century B.C.
 - b. Religion as philosophy
 - c. Confucius' and Lao-Tsu's ideas of the great Tao
 - d. The essential goodness of man as basic to Confucius' religious philosophy
 - e. The religious philosophy of Confucius
 - f. Neo-Confucianism of Chu His, 12th century A.D.
 - g. China and Christianity: 6th, 13th, and 17th centuries
8. Daoism: the Way of Flourishing
- a. At a Glance, Daoism 101
 - i. How to flourish
 - ii. The Dao
 - iii. Yin and Yang
 - b. Divinity in Daoism
 - i. Immortals and Perfected Persons
 - ii. "Three Pure Ones"
 - iii. Queen Mother of the West
 - c. History
 - i. Laozi and the Daodejing
 - ii. Zhuangzi
 - iii. Celestial Masters
 - iv. Highest Clarity
 - v. Way of Complete Perfection and Modern Daoism
 - vi. Ming, Qing and Dragon Gate
 - d. Daoist Rituals
 - i. Meditation
 - ii. Alchemy
 - iii. Offerings

Religious Accommodation

Before reviewing the course schedule, students should carefully review the following religious accommodation policy and other required instructional policies:

Religious Accommodation:

Students seeking an accommodation for absences permitted under Ohio's Testing Your Faith Act must provide the instructor with written notice of the specific dates for which the student requires an accommodation and must do so not later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of instruction. Please submit requests for accommodations at this link: <https://portal2.tri-c.edu/ReligiousAccommodation/ReligiousAccommodationForm>. Students with questions about their religious accommodations under Ohio's Testing Your Faith Act may contact the College's Office of General Counsel and Legal Services by phone at 216.987.4856 or via email at legal@tri-c.edu.

Other Required Instructional Policies:

<https://www.tri-c.edu/student-resources/curriculum/documents/syllabus-part-b.pdf>

Weekly Schedule

	Topics
Week 1	Introduction to the Academic Study of Religion, What is Religion, How Do We Define It, Why Should We Study it Academically
Week 2	Yoruba & Santeria & Voodoo

Week 3	Indigenous Native Original Religions Across the World
Week 4	Hinduism
Week 5	Buddhism
Week 6	Jainism & Sikhism
Week 7	Confucianism & Daoism
Week 8	Shinto
Week 9	Zoroastrianism
Week 10	Judaism
Week 11	Christianity
Week 12	Islam
Week 13	Modern Religious Movements
Week 14	Baha'i
Week 15	Atheism and Humanism
Week 16	Final Exam

The Course Schedule is subject to change due to pedagogical needs, instructor discretion, parts of term, and unexpected events.

Required/Recommended Readings

Readings may be selected from the following resources:

1. God is Not One, Stephen Prothero
2. Religion Matters, Stephen Prothero
3. Living Religions, Mary Pat Fisher
4. Experiencing the World's Religions, Michael Molloy
5. The Power of Myth, Joseph Campbell
6. The World's Religions, Huston Smith
7. Sacred Worlds, Terry Bilhartz
8. World Religions Today, John Esposito
9. An Invitation to World Religions, Oxford
10. Introduction to World Religions, Darryl Howard, Cognella
11. A History of the World's Religions, David Noss, Routledge
12. Introduction to World Religions, Christopher Partridge, Fortress Press
13. Many Peoples, Many Faiths, Rober Ellwood
14. The World's Religions, Ninian Smart

Resources for the Instructor

Fisher, Mary Pat. *Living Religions*. 10th ed. Prentice-Hall, 2016.

Molloy, Michael. *Experiencing the World's Religions: Tradition, Challenge, and Change*. 8th ed. McGraw-Hill, New York, 2021. <https://www.mheducation.com/highered/product/9781260813760>

Oxtoby, Willard G., Roy C. Amore, Amir Hussain and Alan F. Segal. *A Concise Introduction to World Religions*. 4th ed. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2019.

Prothero, Stephen. *Religion Matters: An Introduction to World Religions*. One. New York, New York W.W. Norton and Company, 2020. W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Prothero, Stephen. *God is Not One: the Eight Rival Religions that Run the World*. Harper One, 2011.

Robert E. Van Voorst. *Introduction to World Religions*. 4th ed. Cengage Boston, MA, 2018.

Additional Resources for the Instructor

Sacred Text Archive

Buddhism (<https://www.sacred-texts.com/bud/>)
Christianity (<https://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/>)
Confucianism (<https://www.sacred-texts.com/cfu/>)
Jainism (<https://www.sacred-texts.com/jai/>)
Judaism (<https://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/>)
Hinduism (<https://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/>)
Islam (<https://www.sacred-texts.com/isl/>)
Mormonism (<https://www.sacred-texts.com/mor/>)
Paganism (<https://www.sacred-texts.com/pag/>)
Shinto (<https://www.sacred-texts.com/shi/>)
Sikhism (<https://www.sacred-texts.com/skh/>)
Taoism (<https://www.sacred-texts.com/tao/>)
Zoroastrianism (<https://www.sacred-texts.com/zor/>)
<https://www.sacred-texts.com/index.htm> (<https://www.sacred-texts.com/>)

Instructional Services

OAN Number:

Ohio Transfer 36 TMAH

Top of page

Key: 5101