



REL 011: Religions of the World

Term: 2020 Winter Session

Instructor: Staff

Language of Instruction: English

Classroom: TBA

Office Hours: TBA

Class Sessions Per Week: 6

Total Weeks: 4

Total Class Sessions: 25

Class Session Length (minutes): 145

Credit Hours: 4

Course Description:

This course serves as an introduction to five of the world's religious traditions – the Hindu, the Buddhist, the Jewish, the Christian, the Muslim – as well as Chinese Confucianism and Taoism and Yoruba Religion. Focusing more on the content of these religions, this course provides students with information on the background of the formation, main beliefs, current development, and favorite characters of different religions. Providing students with information about the content of different religious traditions and their adaptations in the modern days, this course requires students to think more about their own faiths and the concept of religions diversity in a deeper level.

Learning Objectives:

The objectives of the course will be achieved by means of finishing required readings, listening to lectures, participating in the in-class discussions, and finishing assigned homework.

By taking this course, the students are supposed to acquire 1) a solid understanding of the contents and the development of different religious traditions, 2) the ability to identify the main beliefs and main characters of different religions, and 3) the ability to present their result of critical thinking in writing.



Course Format and Requirements:

The format of the course is mainly lecturing, the materials of which will be designed and handed out by the instructor before each class. The contents of the lectures are based on the textbooks, and supplemented reading materials will be given by the instructor. In order to get a thorough understanding of the knowledge presented, students are supposed to finish all the assigned readings before the class and write down their own thoughts and questions for in-class discussions.

Attendance:

Students are required to be presented at all class sessions. Notifications about absence reasons to the instructor should be done in advance if students are not able to attend classes. Active participation in all classroom activities is also very important for students to achieve success in this course.

Course Materials:

1. **Required Texts:**

The World's Religions

Huston Smith, 2009

God Is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions That Run the World

Stephen Prothero, 2012

2. **Other materials:**

Students will be provided with supplemented reading material selected by the instructor. During the lecture, in-class handouts and PowerPoint slides will also be provided by the instructor.

Course Assignments:

Quizzes: 10%

There will be 5 quizzes during the entire course. Students will be informed the time and the content of the quizzes. The grades of the quizzes consist of 10% of students' final score, and each quiz consists of 2%.

**Homework: 15%**

Students would be assigned two pieces of homework each week, the forms of which include question sets, short case reports, open-ended questions and so on. Students are encouraged to work with their classmates to combine ideas from different individuals, improve the accuracy of the answer, and enhance the learning efficiency. Though encouraged to work in groups, each student is supposed to hand in his/her work individually. No late work will be accepted, and for each late work there will be 10 points (100 points in total) taken off.

Short Essays: 20%

There will be 1 essay assigned to the students, the topic of which will be chosen by the instructor later. Students are supposed to discuss about the topic based on the content of the textbook and supplement reading materials. Guidelines about the paper will be handed to the students. Students should present their ability of critical thinking and their familiarity with the content learned in class as well as their language accuracy. Once assigned, students will have two weeks to complete their paper.

The paper should be from 4 to 6 pages long. The appendix and references are not included in the page count. The paper should be double-spaced, using Times New Roman size 12 with 1-inch margins.

Exams: 55%

There will be 2 midterm exams and 1 final exam for this course.

The midterm and final exams are both closed-book in-class exams. The forms of the questions include multiple choices, right-or-wrong questions, definitions, and open-ended questions. Exams will cover most of the materials used in class, including textbooks, handouts and reading materials. Classes before the midterm exams and the final exam will be left for review and Q&A.

Course Assessment:

Quizzes	10%
Homework	15%
Short Paper	20%
Midterm Exam 1	15%
Midterm Exam 2	15%
Final Exam	25%



Total	100%
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Grading Scale:

A+: 98%-100%

A: 93%-97%

A-: 90%-92%

B+: 88%-89%

B: 83%-87%

B-: 80%-82%

C+: 78%-79%

C: 73%-77%

C-: 70%-72%

D+: 68%-69%

D: 63%-67%

D-: 60%-62%

F: Below 60%

Course Schedule:

Week	Topics	Assignments
Week One (Class 1-6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the course (Suggested reading: The World's Religions, Ch 1) • Hinduism (Reading: The World's Religions, Ch 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What people want - What people really want - The beyond within - Four paths to the goal - The way to God for knowledge - The way to God through love - The way to god it through work - The way to God through psychophysical exercises - The stages of life - The stations of life - "Thou before whom all words recoil." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 1 • Homework 1



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coming of age in the universe - The world–welcome and farewell - Many paths to the same Summit • Buddhism (Reading: The World’s Religions, Ch 3) - The man who woke up - The silence sage - The rebel Saint - The four noble truths - The eightfold path - Basic Buddhist concepts - Big raft and little - The secret of the flower - The diamond thunderbolt - The image of the Crossing - The confluence of Buddhism and Hinduism in India 	
Week Two (Class 7-12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confucianism (Reading: The World’s Religions Ch, 4) - The first teacher - The problem Confucius faced - Rival answers - Confucius’ answer - The content of deliberate tradition - The Confucian project - Ethics or religion? - Impact on China • Taoism (Reading: The World’s Religions, Ch 5) - The old master - The three meanings of Tao - Three approach us to power and the Taoism that follow - Efficient power: philosophical Taoism - Augmented power: Taoist hygiene and yoga - Vicarious power: religious Taoism - The mingling of the powers - Creative quietude - Other Taoist values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 2 • Homework 2 • Midterm Exam 1 • Quiz 3



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Islam (Reading: The World’s Religions, Ch 6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The seal of the prophets - The migration that led to victory - The standing miracle - Basic theoretical concepts - The five pillars - Social teachings - Sufism - Whither Islam? 	
<p>Week Three (Class 13-18)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judaism (Reading: The World’s Religions, Ch 7) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meaning in God - Meaning in creation - Meaning in human existence - Meaning in history - Meaning in morality - Meaning in justice - Meaning suffering - Meaning in messianism - The hallowing love life - Revelation - The chosen people - Israel • Christianity (Reading: The World’s Religions, Ch 8) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The historical Jesus - The Christ of faith - The end and the beginning - The good news - The mystical body of Christ - The mind of the church - Roman Catholicism - Eastern orthodoxy - Protestantism • Yoruba Religion (Reading: God Is Not One, Ch 6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The way of connection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework 3 • Midterm Exam 2 • Homework 4 • Quiz 4



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Orishas - Ashe - A global religion - Mae Stella, Oyotunji, and Africanization 	
Week Four (Class 19-25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yoruba Religion (Reading: God Is Not One, Ch 6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desi Arnaz and DC comics - Elasticity - Ifa Divination - Spirit (and body) possession - New World transformations - Flourishing • A brief coda on Atheism (Reading: God Is Not One, Ch 9) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the way of reason <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angry atheists • Fundamentalism by another name • But is it a religion? • Brantley atheists • The Primal Religions (Reading: The World's Religions, Ch 9) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Australian experience - Orality, place, and time - The primal world - The symbolic mind • A Final Examination (Reading: The World's Religions, Ch 10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The relation between religions - The wisdom traditions - Listening <p>Review for the Final Exam</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 5 • Homework 5 • Short Essay • Final Exam

Academic Integrity:

Students are encouraged to study together, and to discuss lecture topics with one another, but all other work should be completed independently.

Students are expected to adhere to the standards of academic honesty and integrity that are



described in the Shanghai Normal University's *Academic Conduct Code*. Any work suspected of violating the standards of the *Academic Conduct Code* will be reported to the Dean's Office. Penalties for violating the *Academic Conduct Code* may include dismissal from the program. All students have an individual responsibility to know and understand the provisions of the *Academic Conduct Code*.

Special Needs or Assistance:

Please contact the Administrative Office immediately if you have a learning disability, a medical issue, or any other type of problem that prevents professors from seeing you have learned the course material. Our goal is to help you learn, not to penalize you for issues which mask your learning.