



REL 1130: Religions of the World

2023 Summer Session	
Total Class Sessions: 25 Class Sessions Per Week: 5 Total Weeks: 5 Class Session Length (Minutes): 145 Credit Hours: 4	Instructor: Staff Classroom: TBA Office Hours: TBA Language: English

Course Description:

This course introduces students to the five major religions of the world today: Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Comparisons between those and other religions will also be drawn. Despite some commonalities, each religion is unique in its history and practice. Therefore, the objectives of this course are primarily: 1. To provide students with a critical thinking of how each religion evolved historically and spiritually; 2. To explore the contemporary practice of these major religions and how they shape the world. In addition, the interactions among different religions will also be examined.

Course Materials:

1. *God Is No One: The Eight Rival Religions That Run the World* by Stephen Prothero, 2012.
2. *A History of Religion in 51/2 Objects: Bringing the Spiritual to Its Senses* by Brent S Plate, 2015 (ISBN-10: 0807036706, ISBN-13: 978-0807036709)
3. *The World's Religions* by Huston Smith, 2009 (ISBN-10: 0061660183, ISBN-13: 978-0061660184)

Course Format and Requirements:

This course includes lectures, discussions and in-class discussions. You are responsible for all material and information from class. Attendance is required. Three or more unexplained absences will be lower your final grade.

Attendance:

Students are expected to attend class on a regular basis. Attendance will be taken throughout the semester. While attendance is not directly calculated into the student's course grade, it will be a factor in determining participation grades. After a student's 4th absence, each unexcused absences will result in an automatic drop in grade. With each unexcused absence your final letter grade will be dropped ½ a grade- NO EXCEPTIONS (e.g.: A to A-)

Course Assignments:

Homework:

Homework exercises should be done by the text class after they are assigned. It's important to



finish all assigned homework because some of the questions on exams and quizzes will be based on homework exercises.

Quizzes:

The quiz will consist of a series of short answer questions and multiple-choice questions about the contents described in class or mentioned in the class handouts from the instructor (which means it’s an assigned reading). There will be 5 quizzes administered through the whole semester. Quizzes will always be completed in the first 15 minutes of class. There are no make-up quizzes for any reason.

Critical Response Paper:

Students will write two paper in response to one topic selected from a given list of potential topics for the paper. For example: explain how your life would change if you converted to one of the five major religions. Detailed topic list will be handed out later in class.

Clarity of argument and critically engaging the text in response is an essential component to this assignment and students should refer to the below guidelines for clarification:

Paper General Guidelines:

Double-spaced and typed, using 12 font and one inch margins.

A clear introduction with a defined thesis; following by a well-structured body and conclusion.

Proof read for spell checking, grammatical and structural errors.

Paper Grading Policy

20%-Overall style and creativity of the work

40%-Structure and Argument

40%-Reading of Sourcing, use of evidence and proper citations

Exams:

Midterm Exam:

The two midterm exams will be based on concepts covered in class. They will be in-class, close-book and non-cumulative. Chapter information will be given by the instructor. Exams will cover all class notes and handouts, information from the textbook, and any new vocabulary words introduces in lecture. Exams may be multiple choices, true/false, matching, short answer, identification, document analysis, and essay.

Final Exam:

The final will be cumulative and close-book. Note that final will not be taken during the normal class times. Exact time and location for final will be announced later. Students are responsible for class notes and class handouts, chapter readings, and any new vocabulary words introduced in lecture. The exam will have multiple choices, true/false, matching, short answer, and/or identification and essays. Final exams cannot be made up.

Course Assessment:

Homework Assignments	10%
5 Quizzes	15%
Midterm Exams 1	20%
Midterm Exams 2	20%
Final Exam	35%



Total	100%
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Grading Scale (percentage):

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
98-	93-	90-	88-	83-	80-	78-	73-	70-	68-	63-	60-	<60
100	97	92	89	87	82	79	77	72	69	67	62	

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 Chengdu University of Technology'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.

Course Schedule:

Class 1:

Course Introduction;

Inspect the syllabus and textbooks;

Approaches to Religion/Traditions;

Developing religions Literacy.

Class 2:

Where did Western Religion Come from;

Roots of Western Religions-Egyptians, etc.;

Six ancient religions: Egyptian, Zoroastrian, Greek, Roman, Norse, and Celtic.

Class 3:

Introduction to Judaism;

When did Judaism Begin?

Keys to Understanding Judaism

Class 4:



Quiz 1

Jewish History;
The Jewish Exile and its Impact;
The Torah-reference of the religious Judaic tradition;
Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy

Class 5:

Torah and Judaism;
Law of Moses;
Rabbinic Judaism;
Written and Oral Law;

Class 6:

Role of the Talmud in Judaism
Judaism enters Modernity;
Jewish Denominations;

Class 7:

Quiz 2
Jewish Life Today: Holidays and Rituals
Origins of Christianity;
Original Sin and Augustine;

Class 8:

Who was Jesus?
Objections to Christianity;
St. Paul and the Church Fathers
Review for midterm 1

Class 9:

Midterm Exam 1

Class 10:

Christianity in the Middle Ages;
Threats to the Faith
A Violent Time: The Crusades;

Class 11:

Inquisition;
The Christian Sacraments
Introduction to Islam;

Class 12:

Quiz 3
Origins of Islam/Arabia;



Muhammad the Prophet;
The Qur'an and Allah

Class 13:
Islam after Muhammad;
The Rise of Islam;
Islam Splits-the Sunni Muslims and the Shiite Muslims;
Islam in the Middle Ages;

Class 14:
The Five Pillars of Islam;
Islam Worship and Ethics Today
Begin Indian Philosophy;
Summary of Hindu Principles;

Class 15:
Quiz 4
Hindu Origins and History;
Sacred Texts
The comparative practices of Asia: Hinduism, Sikhism, Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism;

Class 16:
The Social Caste System;
The Four Stages of Life;
The Four Aims of life

Class 17:
Paths to Moksha;
Hindu Workshop and the Gods;
Hindu Rituals and Festivals;
The Role of Women in Hinduism

Class 18:
Midterm Exam 2

Class 19:
Introduction to Buddhism;
Basic Buddhist Thought
The Four Noble Truths;

Class 20:
Suffering's causes and solution: Nirvana, Dukkha;
Noble Eightfold Path

Class 21:



The Story of Buddha;
Early Buddhism;
Timeline of Buddhism

Class 22:
Quiz 5
The Rise of Buddhist Denominations;
Buddhism today;

Class 23:
Buddhism ethics
Monastic life;

Class 24:
Culture and religion: terms with comparative religion;
Religions today
Culture and religion: Difference and Connection between Culture and Religion;

Class 25:
Course summary
Review for final exam

Final Exam (Cumulative): TBA