

RELS201

STUDENT WARNING: This course syllabus is from a previous semester archive and serves only as a preparatory reference. Please use this syllabus as a reference only until the professor opens the classroom and you have access to the updated course syllabus. Please do NOT purchase any books or start any work based on this syllabus; this syllabus may NOT be the one that your individual instructor uses for a course that has not yet started. If you need to verify course textbooks, please refer to the online course description through your student portal. This syllabus is proprietary material of APUS.

Course Summary

Course : RELS201 **Title :** Introduction to World Religions

Length of Course : 8

Prerequisites : N/A **Credit Hours :** 3

Description

Course Description: This course introduces the major religions of the world with attention to origin, history, beliefs and practices. The course provides a balanced consideration of both Eastern and Western religions. No force has influenced human life and civilization more than religion; no understanding of human affairs, on an individual scale or a global one, can succeed without comprehending it.

Course Scope:

The course explores the historical development and central beliefs and practices of each of the major world religions. Each religious movement is approached from both a chronological and geographical viewpoint. As religion and spirituality continue to be powerful motivators in society, students will examine the importance of religious thought and expression within each of the current major world religions.

Objectives

After successfully completing this course students will be able to:

1. Identify the influence that major world religions have on society and illustrate the importance of studying religion today;
 2. Describe and evaluate the key beliefs and characteristics of each major world religion and show how they are reflected in political and social structures and attitudes;
 3. Examine and summarize the universal and unique forms of religious expression found in the major world religions (e.g., sacred places, symbols, ethics, and rituals);
 4. Distinguish the basic concepts that make up a religious world view (e.g., creation of the world, good and evil, salvation, suffering);
 5. Articulate the historical development, and interaction among, the major world religions.
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Outline

Week 1: What is Religion and How Can We Study It?

Learning Outcomes

LO-1 Identify the influence that major world religions have on society and illustrate the importance of studying religion today

Required Readings

Rodriques, Hillary P. *The Study of Religion* - Chapters 1 - 6

Herling, Brad. Why Study Religion? American Academy of Religion, n.d. Web. <http://www.studyreligion.org/>

Week #1 Lesson

Assignments

Week #1 Forum Introduction

Week #1 Forum

Week 2: Hinduism

Learning Outcomes

LO-2 Describe and evaluate the key beliefs and characteristics of each major world religion and show how they are reflected in political and social structures and attitudes

LO-3 Examine and summarize the universal and unique forms of religious expression found in the major world religions (e.g., sacred places, symbols, ethics, and rituals);

Required Readings

Deming, Willoughby. *Understanding the Religions of the World* – Chapter 1

Wood, Ernest. Great Systems of Yoga. New York: Philosophical Library, 1954. Web book. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/gsoy/index.htm>

Week #2 Lesson

Video: "Hinduism." Religions of the World. Dir. Michael D'Anna. Greenstar Television, 1998. Online video. YouTube, 25 Apr. 2009. Web. <http://youtu.be/Dh7FDM2w-SA>

Assignments

Week #2 Forum

Week #2 Project: Travel Show Presentation

Week 3: Buddhism

Learning Outcomes

LO-2 Describe and evaluate the key beliefs and characteristics of each major world religion and show how they are reflected in political and social structures and attitudes

LO-3 Examine and summarize the universal and unique forms of religious expression found in the major world religions (e.g., sacred places, symbols, ethics, and rituals)

Required Readings

Readings:

Deming, Willoughby. *Understanding the Religions of the World* – Chapter 2

Read Open Web Resources:

Goddard, Dwight. A Buddhist Bible. Thetford, VT: Dwight Goddard, 1932. Web book. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/bud/bb/index.htm>

Week #3 Lesson

Video:

The Buddha: The Story of Siddhartha. Prod. David Grubin. PBS, 2010. Online video. VAST: Academic Video Online. Alexander Street Press. Web. <http://ezproxy.apus.edu/login?url=http://vast.alexanderstreet.com/view/1791803>

Assignments

Week #3 Forum

Week #3 Project: Video Newscast

Week 4: Daoism and Confucianism

Learning Outcomes

LO-2 Describe and evaluate the key beliefs and characteristics of each major world religion and show how they are reflected in political and social structures and attitudes

LO-3 Examine and summarize the universal and unique forms of religious expression found in the major world religions (e.g., sacred places, symbols, ethics, and rituals);

Required Readings

Readings:

Deming, Willoughby. *Understanding the Religions of the World* – Chapter 3

Week #4 Lesson

Assignments

Week #4 Forum

Week #4 Project: Informational Brochure

Week #4 Group Assignment Verification

Week 5: Judaism

Learning Outcomes

LO-2 Describe and evaluate the key beliefs and characteristics of each major world religion and show how they are reflected in political and social structures and attitudes

LO-3 Examine and summarize the universal and unique forms of religious expression found in the major world religions (e.g., sacred places, symbols, ethics, and rituals)

Required Readings

Readings:

Neusner, Jacob. *Judaism: The Basics* – Introduction, Parts 1,2, and 4

Read Web Resource: Cohen, Abraham. *Ancient Jewish Proverbs*. London: John Murray, 1911. Web book. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/ajp/index.htm>

Week #5 Lesson

Video: The Jews: History of a People. Online video. YouTube. YouTube, 13 June 2012. Web. http://youtu.be/B38t_Ua3_0Y

Assignments

Week #5 Forum

Week 6: Christianity

Learning Outcomes

LO-2 Describe and evaluate the key beliefs and characteristics of each major world religion and show how they are reflected in political and social structures and attitudes

LO-3 Examine and summarize the universal and unique forms of religious expression found in the major world religions (e.g., sacred places, symbols, ethics, and rituals)

LO-4 Distinguish the basic concepts that make up a religious world view (e.g., creation of the world, good and evil, salvation, suffering)

Required Readings

Readings: Deming, Willoughby. *Understanding the Religions of the World* – Chapter 8.

Read Web Resource: Emmerich, Anne Catherine. *The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ*. London: Burns and Lambert, 1862. Web book. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/pjc/index.htm>

Week #6 Lesson

Video: From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians. Dir. William Cran. Frontline. PBS, 1998. Online video. Web. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/video/flv/generic.html?s=frol02p584&continuous=1An>

alternate viewing link: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/watch/>

full transcript: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/etc/script1.html>

Assignments

Week #6 Forum

Week #6 Project: Current Affairs Worldview Essay

Week 7: Islam

Learning Outcomes

LO-2 Describe and evaluate the key beliefs and characteristics of each major world religion and show how they are reflected in political and social structures and attitudes

LO-3 Examine and summarize the universal and unique forms of religious expression found in the major world religions (e.g., sacred places, symbols, ethics, and rituals)

Required Readings

Readings: Nigosian, Solomon A.. *Islam* - Chapters 1 - 7.

Read Web Resource: Wollaston, Arthur N. *The Religion of the Koran*. London: John Murray, 1911. Web book. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/isl/rok/index.htm>

Week #7 Lesson

Video:

1. Armstrong, Karen. "My Wish: The Charter for Compassion." TED Talks, 2008. Online video. Web. Full transcript: http://www.ted.com/talks/karen_armstrong_makes_her_ted_prize_wish_the_charter_for_compassion.h
2. Islam: Empire of Faith. Prof. Robert Gardner. PBS, 2000. Online video. VAST: Academic Video Online. Alexander Street Press. Web. <http://ezproxy.apus.edu/login?url=http://vast.alexanderstreet.com/view/1791742>

Assignments

Week #7 Forum

Week 8: Religion in the 21st Century

Learning Outcomes

LO-1 Identify the influence that major world religions have on society and illustrate the importance of studying religion today

LO-5 Articulate the historical development, and interaction among, the major world religions.

Required Readings

Readings: Deming, Willoughby. *Understanding the Religions of the World* – Chapter 10.

Read Web Resources: Introvigne, Massimo. "The Future of Religion and the Future of New Religions." CESNUR: Center for Studies on New Religions, n.d. Web. http://www.cesnur.org/2001/mi_june03.htm

Week #8 Lesson

Assignments

Forum Participation

Week #8 Group Presentation Forum Week #8 Group Presentation Assignment

Evaluation

Forums:

Forum postings are a critical component of this course and will seek to guide the discussions in our study of World Religions. The requirements for your Forum will include your active participation with substantive responses to each of the assigned weekly Forum questions. To receive credit for your participation in the weekly Forum, each student will be required to provide a substantive response to the weekly question. **Both**

your Initial and Replies to Other Students should be relevant, can be academically supported, and demonstrates an understanding and application of the course material. Your Initial posting should consist of 250+ words. You will also be expected to reply to at least two (2) other students with a substantive reply that includes the same material as above with at least 100+ words.

Your grade for the Forum posting therefore includes both your initial posting and your replies to the other students. Please note that simply replying in the Forums as required does not necessitate (A) - Level work. Your Forums will be assessed in conformity with the APUS Grading Scale in terms of quality and content. While composing your answer, use proper English. Do not use abbreviations or contractions. Before you post the answer, check your grammar; please note that the way you talk is not the way you need to write your answer. Lastly, ensure that you do not have any spelling errors. We suggest composing your posting in a Word document and after you check it for grammar and spelling, copying it into the Forum, and saving a copy in your personal files. The submission of your Initial and Replies to Others are to be considered your Final Draft and ready for grading and should not be altered or edited in any fashion once they have been submitted.

You can find the Grading Rubric for your Forums posted in the Week #1 Forums.

In addition to the specific weekly Forum area, there will be ongoing general questions Forum area as well. In this general forum area, feel free to post any assignment-related questions, general topic question, comments or insights you may have. If it is content related, be sure you have completed all of the assigned reading prior to posting your question(s).

Other Work

In addition to weekly forum discussions (Initial posts due Thursdays, and 2 or more peer responses due Sundays each week), there are several individual assignment designed to help you apply your learning and stretch your thinking. Please visit the "Assignments" area for due dates and descriptions. A Group Project is also required and provides the opportunity for you to engage with others to meet learning goals, teach each other, and further cement your learning. Enjoy this activity, even if it pushes you out of your comfort zone a bit! Research indicates that by discussing with others and teaching them what you are learning, you will remember it much better long-term. :-)

Grading:

Name	Grade %
Forums	45.00 %
Week #1 Forum Introductions	5.00 %
Week #1 Forum	5.00 %
Week #2 Forum	5.00 %
Week #3 Forum	5.00 %
Week #4 Forum	5.00 %
Week #5 Forum	5.00 %
Week #6 Forum	5.00 %
Week #7 Forum	5.00 %
Week #8 Forum	5.00 %
Assignments	40.00 %
Week #2 Project: Travel Show Presentation	10.00 %
Week #3 Project: Video Newscast	10.00 %
Week #4 Project: Informational Brochure	10.00 %
Week #6 Project: Current Affairs Worldview Essay	10.00 %
Group Work	15.00 %

Week #4 Group Assignment Verification	3.00 %
Week #8 Group Presentation	12.00 %

Materials

Book Title: Islam: Its History, Teaching, and Practices - e-book available in the APUS Online Library. Links provided inside the classroom in the Lessons section.

Author: Nigosian, Solomon

Publication Info: Indiana University Press

ISBN: 9780253216274

Book Title: Judaism: The Basics - e-book available in the APUS Online Library. Links provided inside the classroom in the Lessons section.

Author: Neusner, Jacob

Publication Info: Routledge

ISBN: 9780415401753

Book Title: Introduction to the Study of Religion - e-book available in the APUS Online Library. Links provided inside the classroom in the Lessons section.

Author: Rodrigues, Hillary

Publication Info: Routledge

ISBN: 9780415408882

Book Title: Understanding the Religions of the World: An Introduction - e-book available in the APUS Online Library. Links provided inside the classroom in the Lessons section. Hard copy not available from the bookstore, please try other sources.

Author: Deming, Willoughby

Publication Info: Routledge

ISBN: 9781118767566

Multimedia Resources (Audio, Image, Video)

Armstrong, Karen. "My Wish: The Charter for Compassion." TED Talks, 2008. Online video. Web.

Full Transcript Link:

http://www.ted.com/talks/karen_armstrong_makes_her_ted_prize_wish_the_charter_for_compassion.html

From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians. Dir. William Cran. Frontline. PBS, 1998. Online video. Web.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/video/flv/generic.html?s=frol02p584&continuous=1eraction> among the major world religions.

An alternate viewing link:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/watch/>

Full Transcript link:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/etc/script1.html>

The Buddha: The Story of Siddhartha. Prod. David Grubin. PBS, 2010. Online video. VAST: Academic Video Online. Alexander Street Press. Web.

<http://ezproxy.apus.edu/login?url=http://vast.alexanderstreet.com/view/1791803>

The Jews: History of a People. Online video. YouTube. YouTube, 13 June 2012. Web.

http://youtu.be/B38t_Ua3_0Y

Open Web Resources

Cohen, Abraham. Ancient Jewish Proverbs. London: John Murray, 1911. Web book.

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/ajp/index.htm>

Emmerich, Anne Catherine. The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ. London: Burns and Lambert, 1862. Web book.

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/pjc/index.htm>

Goddard, Dwight. A Buddhist Bible. Thetford, VT: Dwight Goddard, 1932. Web book.

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/bud/bb/index.htm>

Herling, Brad. Why Study Religion? American Academy of Religion, n.d. Web.

<http://www.studyreligion.org/>

Introvigne, Massimo. "The Future of Religion and the Future of New Religions." CESNUR: Center for Studies on New Religions, n.d. Web.

http://www.cesnur.org/2001/mi_june03.htm

Wollaston, Arthur N. The Religion of the Koran. London: John Murray, 1911. Web book.

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/isl/rok/index.htm>

Wood, Ernest. Great Systems of Yoga. New York: Philosophical Library, 1954. Web book. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/gsoy/index.htm>

Course Guidelines

Citation and Reference Style

- Students will follow MLA format as the sole citation and reference style used in written assignments submitted as part of coursework to the Humanities Department.
- Please note that no formal citation style is graded on forum assignments in the School of Arts & Humanities—only attribution of sources (please see details regarding forum communication below).

Tutoring

- [Tutor.com](http://www.tutor.com) offers online homework help and learning resources by connecting students to certified tutors for one-on-one help. AMU and APU students are eligible for 10 free hours of tutoring provided by APUS. Tutors are available 24/7 unless otherwise noted. Tutor.com also has a SkillCenter Resource Library offering educational resources, worksheets, videos, websites and career help. Accessing these resources does not count against tutoring hours and is also available 24/7. Please visit the APUS Library and search for 'Tutor' to create an account.

Late Assignments

School of Arts & Humanities Late Policy

Students are expected to submit classroom assignments by the posted due date and to complete the course according to the published class schedule. As adults, students, and working professionals, I understand you must manage competing demands on your time. Should you need additional time to complete an assignment, please contact me before the due date so we can discuss the situation and determine an acceptable resolution.

Work posted or submitted after the assignment due date will be reduced by 10% of the potential total score possible for each day late up to a total of five days, including forum posts/replies, quizzes, and assignments. ***Beginning on the sixth day late through the end of the course, late work, including forum posts/replies, quizzes, and assignments, will be accepted with a grade reduction of 50%***

of the potential total score earned.

Turn It In

Assignments are automatically submitted to Turnitin.com within the course. Turnitin.com will analyze an assignment submission and report a similarity score. Your assignment submission is automatically processed through the assignments area of the course when you submit your work.

Academic Dishonesty

- Academic Dishonesty incorporates more than plagiarism, which is using the work of others without citation. Academic dishonesty includes any use of content purchased or retrieved from web services such as CourseHero.com or Scribd. Additionally, allowing your work to be placed on such web services is academic dishonesty, as it is enabling the dishonesty of others. The copy and pasting of content from any web page, without citation as a direct quote, is academic dishonesty. When in doubt, do not copy/paste, and always cite.

Submission Guidelines

- Some assignments may have very specific requirements for formatting (such as font, margins, etc) and submission file type (such as .docx, .pdf, etc). See the assignment instructions for details. In general, standard file types such as those associated with Microsoft Office are preferred, unless otherwise specified.
- It is the student's responsibility to ensure the all submitted work can be accessed and opened by the instructor.

Disclaimer Statement

- Course content may vary from the outline to meet the needs of a particular group or class.

Communicating on the Forum

- Forums are the heart of the interaction in this course. The more engaged and lively the exchanges, the more interesting and fun the course will be. Only substantive comments will receive credit. Although there is a final posting day/time after which the instructor will grade and provide feedback, it is not sufficient to wait until the last day to contribute your comments/questions on the forum. The purpose of the forums is to actively participate in an on-going discussion about the assigned content.
- "Substantive" means comments that contribute something new and important to the discussion. Thus a message that simply says "I agree" is not substantive. A substantive comment contributes a new idea or perspective, a good follow-up question to a point made, offers a response to a question, provides an example or illustration of a key point, points out an inconsistency in an argument, etc.
- As a class, if we run into conflicting view points, we must respect each individual's own opinion. Hateful and hurtful comments towards other individuals, students, groups, peoples, and/or societies will not be tolerated.
- Students must post a response to the weekly forums prompt and post the required number of replies to other students – refer to the grading rubric and/or forum instructions for specific expectations on number of replies and word count requirements.
- The main response to the forum is due mid-week – refer to the grading rubric and/or forum instructions for specific expectations. Late main response posts to a forum may not be accepted without prior instructor approval.
- Replies must be posted in the week due and replies after the end of the each week may not be graded.

Quizzes and Exams

- Quizzes and exams may consist of true/false, multiple choice, and short essay questions. Each quiz/exam is accessible only once. Once a quiz/exam is accessed, you will not be able to access it again if you disconnect. Therefore, allocate time to complete your quiz. Weekly quizzes must be submitted by midnight Eastern Time, Day 7 of the assigned week. Late quizzes or exams will not be

accepted without prior instructor approval.

University Policies

[Student Handbook](#)

- [Drop/Withdrawal policy](#)
- [Extension Requests](#)
- [Academic Probation](#)
- [Appeals](#)
- [Disability Accommodations](#)

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