

# RELS101

**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.

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## Course Summary

**Course :** RELS101 **Title :** Introduction to the Study of Religion

**Length of Course :** 8

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

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## Description

**Course Description:** This introductory course explores the basic nature of religion, both historical and contemporary, and familiarizes the student with a multidisciplinary approach to religious study. Students examine the importance of religious thought and expression, from the viewpoints of both a participant and a critic.

### Course Scope:

This eight week course explores the basic nature of religion, both historical and contemporary, and familiarizes the student with a multidisciplinary approach to religious study (eg. the use of literary criticism, anthropology, psychology, phenomenology and other tools). As religion and spirituality are powerful motivators in both ancient and contemporary society, students in this course will examine the importance of religious thought and expression, and also the central elements of a religious worldview (eg. deity, cosmogony, theodicy, eschatology), from the viewpoints of both a participant and a critic.

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## Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Define "religion",
2. Express the importance of studying religion today,
3. Articulate and evaluate the scholarly methods used in the study of religion,
4. Identify and give examples of the universal forms of religious expression (eg. sacred places, symbols, ethics, rituals),
5. Describe the basic concepts that make up a religious world view (eg, creation of the world, good and evil, salvation, suffering),
6. Specify the various forms of religious life (eg. social, political) that are evident in different societies over

time, and

7. Determine and report on the diversity of human religious expression and belief.

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## Outline

### **Week 1: What is religion and how can we study it?**

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#### Learning Outcomes

Define "religion" and describe its importance, both historically and currently.  
Summarize and evaluate the major academic methods used in the study of religion.  
(Course Objectives 1-3)

#### Required Readings

Livingston, chapters 1-2  
Rodrigues, chapter 1

#### Assignments

Introduction Forum  
Week 1 Forum

### **Week 2: The nature of the sacred**

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#### Learning Outcomes

Define "sacred" and "holy".  
Summarize the religious significance of symbols.  
Describe the "truthfulness" of religious beliefs and experiences.  
Articulate the relationship between ethnicity, nationality and religion.  
(Course Objectives 3-4)

#### Required Readings

Livingston, chapters 3-4  
Rodrigues, chapter 2

#### Assignments

Week 2 Forums

### **Week 3: Sacred ritual and scripture**

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#### Learning Outcomes

Define "ritual", "rite", "sacrament" and "scripture".  
Describe the purposes of religious rituals and scripture.  
Explain the challenges and rewards of interpreting religious rituals and scripture.  
(Course Objectives 3-4)

#### Required Readings

Livingston, chapters 5-6

Rodrigues, chapter 3

Assignments

Week 3 Forum

Website Evaluation due by Sunday

## **Week 4: Social formations and concepts of the divine**

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Learning Outcomes

Describe the nature of natural and voluntary religious communities.  
Explain what gives rise to sects, cults, and new religious movements.  
Identify and describe the major concepts of divinity.  
Explain the relationship between religion and politics.  
(Course Objectives 5-7)

Required Readings

Livingston, chapters 7-8

Rodrigues, chapter 4

Assignments

Week 4 Forums

## **Week 5: Cosmogony and Anthropology**

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Learning Outcomes

Identify and describe the cosmogonies of the major world religions.  
Identify and describe the four classic diagnosis of the human problem.  
(Course Objectives 4-7)

Required Readings

Livingston, chapters 9-10

Rodrigues, chapter 5

Assignments

Week 5 Forums

## **Week 6: Theodicy, morality and ethics**

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Learning Outcomes

Describe the major religious theodicies,  
Identify and describe the source(s) of morality and ethics.  
Discuss the modern implications of religious morality and ethics (as both individuals and communities).  
(Course Objectives 4-7)

Required Readings

Livingston, chapters 11-12

Rodrigues, chapter 6

## Assignments

### Week 6 Forum

Integrated Paper Outline due by Sunday

## **Week 7: Soteriology and Eschatology**

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### Learning Outcomes

Identify and explain the four classic "paths" to salvation.  
Describe the most significant religious concepts the end of life and/or time.  
(Course Objectives 4-7)

### Required Readings

Livingston, chapter 13

### Assignments

Week 7 Forums

## **Week 8: The Future of Religion**

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### Learning Outcomes

Discuss the impact of secularization and pluralism upon modern religious thought and expression.  
(Course Objectives 2, 6-7)

### Required Readings

Livingston, chapters 14-15

### Assignments

Week 8 Forum

Integrated Paper due by Sunday

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## **Evaluation**

### **Grading:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Grade %</b>
Forums	40.00 %
Week 1: Introduction & Expectations	4.00 %
Week 1: Defining Religion	4.00 %
Week 2: Religious Symbols	4.00 %
Week 3: Religious Rituals & Scripture	4.00 %
Week 4: Sects, Cults, & New Religious Movements	4.00 %
Week 4: Integrated Paper Thesis	4.00 %
Week 5: Cosmogonies	4.00 %
Week 6: Morality & Ethics	4.00 %
Week 7: Paths to Salvation	4.00 %
Week 8: Future of Religion	4.00 %

Week 3 - Website Evaluation	20.00 %
Week 3 - Website Evaluation	20.00 %
Week 6 - Integrated Paper Outline	15.00 %
Week 6 - Integrated Paper Outline	15.00 %
Week 8 - Integrated Paper	25.00 %
Week 8 - Integrated Paper	25.00 %

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## Materials

**Book Title:** Introduction to the Study of Religion - e-book available in the APUS Online Library

**Author:** Rodrigues

**Publication Info:** Taylor & Francis Group

**ISBN:** 9780415408899

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**Book Title:** Various resources from the APUS Library & the Open Web are used. Links provided inside the classroom in the Lessons section.

**Author:**

**Publication Info:**

**ISBN:** N/A

**Important:** To access any e-books that are required for this course, please search the Resources section in the classroom, the Online Library, and also read this FAQ - [http://ezproxy.apus.edu/login?url=http://ebooks.apus.edu/E-book FAQs.docx](http://ezproxy.apus.edu/login?url=http://ebooks.apus.edu/E-book%20FAQs.docx)

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## 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. However, for students who are not majoring in religion, APA is also acceptable for use within this course. Please be sure to notify your instructor you will be using APA if this applies.
- 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.

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## University Policies

### [Student Handbook](#)

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