

Religion 102 Course Syllabus
Religions of the Western World - Online
Fall 2016 / 3 Credits

Instructor Information

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Office Hours: By appointment.

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Course Description

Investigates religion in the Western World. Includes discussion of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Focuses on how the outward forms of religion integrate with other cultural traditions.

Overview and Introduction

This course covers three religions which have often seemed to be in conflict in the western world. Ironically, these religions share a familial heritage as well as certain ideas about the nature of the universe. Many of you may be coming from a Christian heritage and will likely be inclined to view the Christian Bible as a source of ultimate authority. It is indeed one of the many sources from which we'll be drawing, but not the only document we'll be referencing. We will be relying on our critical thinking skills to approach each subject and source from an academic standpoint. Please keep this in mind throughout our discussions and in your research papers.

Course Learning Outcomes

- Articulate an awareness of the varieties of religious expression and the dynamic nature of religious traditions.
- Demonstrate a broad knowledge of the core tenants, practices, and institutions of Western religious traditions within their historical and contemporary contexts.
- Analyze the interaction of religious traditions with political, economic, social, and cultural institutions, groups, and individuals.

Learning Activities

Interactive Lecture/ Discussion

Watching and Commenting on Film, DVD, and PowerPoint Presentations

Group-learning activities

Self-directed Reading (Text and Moodle), Writing, and Research

Prerequisite Course(s):

Reading 90 and Writing 115 or above are *strongly* recommended.

Required Text:

Molloy, Michael. *Experiencing the World's Religions*, 6th edition. New York, NY. McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

Course Requirements

The final grade in this class will be determined by performances on assignments and activities shown below.

- **Reading/ Writing/ Online Participation:**
 - *Forum Discussions / Weekly writing assignments* (10 points per week, 100 points total): Each week you will write a short essay on the assigned readings and the lecture commentaries. You will be answering questions on the material and adding your own personal thoughts. You will then reply to two of your classmates' forum discussion posts. It is your responsibility to carefully read the 'forum post guidelines' PDF at the top of the course page and each week's specific instructions.
 - *Schedule:* Unless otherwise stated, weekly Learning Modules can be accessed by 8pm the Friday before (Ex. Week 2 learning modules will be posted by Friday evening of week 1). Assignments and discussions need to be completed by Thursday at 8pm of each week.
- **Exams:** There will be 3 exams, worth 90-110 points each. These will be given over the course of the term using a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay-type questions.
- **Research Paper:** During the 8th week of the course, a 4-5 page research project will be due. This will be worth 100 points. Instructions are posted at the top of the course page.

Grading

Final letter grades will be assigned based on the total number of points earned divided by the total possible points (see chart below). It is possible that the total number of points will change during the term (to include extra assignments, snow days etc.). I reserve the right to curve the grading scale positively if deemed necessary.

Work	Points available	Your points
Discussion Forum Work	~100	
Exam 1	~100	
Exam 2	~100	
Research paper final draft	100	
Exam 3 (final)	~ 100	
Extra credit	(+8)	
Total:	~ 500	

Extra Credit (You may complete one of each activity)

If you are struggling in the class, and are worried about your final grade, there will be up to 8 points available for extra credit. If you have questions about your choice of activity / program you will use (or, if you have an idea of your own), please do not hesitate to ask me. *I hope you take advantage of the extra credit opportunities offered for this course. This is your chance to experience religion and the ongoing dialogue about religion happening presently in our community -- which can be easily accessed by the curious-minded!*

Attend a lecture / event (5 points): If you would prefer to attend a lecture or event *about* religion (for example, a debate on Jesus hosted by the Socratic Society at OSU would be a great option), I will accept a 2-page, double-spaced paper outlining the main points of discussion and your thoughts on the subject. Please get approval for your choice of event before turning in an extra credit report.

Listen to a Podcast (3 points): You may enjoy streaming a radio program or watching a documentary while earning extra credit. I will accept a full 1-page, double-spaced, paper outlining the main points of discussion and your thoughts on the subject.

On Being, hosted by Krista Tippett

<http://onbeing.org/>

(Click on *Archive*, pick a program that interests you personally. This is one of my favorite radio programs.) Please choose a program that coincides with the course material (i.e. topics that discuss forms of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism).

Philosophy Talk, hosted by Ken Taylor and John Perry of Stanford University

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

Subscribe free to podcast in itunes, or, click on *past programs*. These are not all specifically related to western religions *per se*, so here are a few that will meet the religion requirement: St. Augustine; Faith, Reason and Science; Islamic Philosophy; Worship; Challenges to Free Will; Believing in God; The Problem of Evil; Jewish Philosophy; The Existence of God.

Frontline – The Mormons (video)

<http://www.pbs.org/mormons/>

(Click on *watch online*, scroll down to April 30, 2007, *The Mormons*)

This is a very interesting documentary on the historical and modern Mormon traditions. I wish I could show this in class, but it is quite long. So, if you have an interest in learning about this rapidly growing religion, have at it!

Tentative Course Schedule

Week/Class	Textbook Readings	Material to be covered:	Exams / Homework due dates/ Documentaries
<u>Week 1</u> 9/26-10/2	Ch. 1, pp. 7-8; 31 Ch. 8, pp. 281-295	Studying Religion... Judaism: Biblical History 1 Ch. 8, pp. 289-306	See forum guidelines, syllabus, e-mail etiquette, research project handouts at top of course page
<u>Week 2</u> 10/3-10-9	Ch. 8, pp. 295-304 Ch. 8, pp. 305-309	Judaism: Biblical History 2, 2 nd Temple Judaism: Dev. of Rabbinic	
<u>Week 3</u> 10/10-10/16	Ch. 8, 313-320 Ch. 8, pp. 309-313, 320-328	Judaism, Practice & “Belief” Judaism: Modern Forms and divisions, Holocaust & Zionism	Study Guide Handout: Exam 1
<u>Week 4</u> 10/17-10/23	Review for Exam	<i>Documentary: Anti-Semitism in the 21st century</i> Exam 1: Judaism	Exam 1: Judaism Research Project: Know which topic you will be doing by the first exam.
<u>Week 5</u> 10/24-10/30	Ch. 9, pp. 333-352, Ch. 9, pp. 352-370	Christianity: Jesus, <i>Paul and the early years (Documentary)</i> Christianity: Spread of x-ianity and the Catholic Church	
<u>Week 6</u> 10/31-11/6	Ch. 9. pp. 370-385 Ch. 9 pp. 385-402	Christianity: The Reformation Christianity: Modern Forms and Divisions, Ethics and Practice	Study Guide Handout: Exam 2
<u>Week 7</u> 11/7-11/13	Review for Exam	Then...Exam 2 <i>Muhammad and the Quran</i>	Exam 2: Christianity
<u>Week 8</u> 11/14-11/20	Ch. 10. pp. 407-426 Ch. 10. pp. 427-435	Islam: the five pillars Islam: Rise of Islam, Sunni and Shiite	Research Project Due, Extra Credit Due Tuesday November, 15th at 11pm.
<u>Week 9</u> 11/21-11/27	Ch. 10. pp. 436-454	Islam: Sufism, Law, Philosophy and Theology <i>Islam documentary – The moors</i>	
<u>Week 10</u> 11/28-12/4	Ch. 10. pp. 454-467	Islam: Modern Islam, prep for, start exam...see below.	Study Guide Handout: Exam 3
<u>Finals Week</u> Done by 12/5	Review for Exam	Exam 3	Exam 3: Islam - Completed by 11pm, Monday Dec. 5th.

Class Policies:

Plagiarism: I reserve the right to issue an “F” grade for an assignment or the entire course if a student is found to have cheated or plagiarized. I do not allow students to re-write research papers for a higher grade. All direct quotes *and* information from outside sources must be cited within the text *and* in a bibliography or reference page. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism. If you are unsure, please seek help in the writing lab.

READ ALL Inclusive community / constructive discussions: This material is inherently interesting, but it can also be a sensitive subject to discuss. As a class we must welcome participation, open discussion, and insight from all. Please remember to keep an open mind, and be respectful to me as your instructor and to your peers. The field of religious studies is incredibly vast and we simply do not have time to delve deeply into each topic. You are expected to engage positively, and even critically, with the material presented. However, using online class forums to complain or to be consistently negative towards another’s traditions or culture will not be tolerated. I reserve the right to delete posts if necessary.

Late work: I do not accept late work (research papers, exams, weekly assignments etc). I do not allow students to re-take exams, or to re-write research papers (this is why the calendar is so specific). Please talk to me in the case of severe medical emergencies.

E-mail: Read the e-mail etiquette guidelines posted at the top of the course. I will respond to your e-mails within **2 business days**. Please plan accordingly.

College Policies:

Disability Services: Students who may need accommodations due to documented disabilities, who have medical information which the instructor should know, or who need special arrangements in an emergency, should speak with the instructor during the first week of class. If you have not accessed services and think you may need them, please contact Disability Services, 917-4789.

Institutional Withdrawal / Waitlist Policy: There is no waitlist for this course. Students who do not participate in week 1’s discussion boards will be dropped from the course.

Drop Policy: Students are responsible for knowing the last day to drop the course for a full refund. Also, be aware of the last day to officially withdraw from this course for transcripts to show a ‘W.’

Incomplete Grades: You may be eligible for an ‘Incomplete’ grade if you have finished 90% of the class work. Should you receive an ‘Incomplete,’ all course work must be finished by the end of the next term. Please contact the instructor prior to term’s end with appropriate documentation for requesting an ‘Incomplete.’