

**Religion 202 Course Syllabus
CRN # 43016**

**Introduction to Religious Studies
Spring 2018 / 3 Credits**

**Wednesday, 6-8:50 PM
Benton Center, Room 244**

About this Class:

This is our agreement with one another. I will generally follow this course outline, but might make changes if needed. I want you to succeed in this class and have a good time learning what I think is a very exciting subject. Religion is often very subjective, which is why it is important that we keep an open mind and respectful tone with one another. Remember, this class is much like the practice of religion; it has much to do with what you put into it. Also, I hope that this class will be a dialogue, not my monologue. Your input and participation is expected!

Instructor Information

Matt Gordon

Office: IA 220 (Albany campus)

Mondays and Wednesdays, 1-2 PM or by appointment. It is a good idea to email, call or text if you want to stop by and see me. I am on campus before class on those days, but may be at the library or the coffee shop, not in my office. My schedule is flexible and I can usually find a time to meet before class or other times during the week.

Instructor website: <http://goo.gl/qikjrs> You will find syllabus updates, classroom notes, my slides, and other helpful information on this site.

gordonm@linnbenton.edu -- a word about email: Please use your linnbenton email address for correspondence with me. The college takes your privacy seriously and I'm not allowed to share any information unless I know for sure it is you and the way to do this is by using your linnbenton email.

541-714-3521 – call or text, I will usually respond the same day.

Course Description

- Explores the nature of religion as experienced historically throughout the world.
- Examines the nature of religious experience with the divine and the relationship between science and religion.
- Discusses the roles of language, myths, and symbols in religion.

Course Learning Outcomes

- Articulate an awareness of the varieties of religious expression and the dynamic nature of religious traditions.
- Describe a variety of methodological approaches to the study of religion (e.g. anthropological, philosophical, sociological, feminist, postcolonial).
- Discuss and examine the diverse debates and issues related to the study of religion.
- Practice reflexivity, identifying and critically examining the source and content of one's own cultural perspectives and world-views.

Prerequisite Course(s):

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

Required Texts:

Novak, Philip, (1994). *The World's Wisdom: Sacred Texts of the World's Religions*. New York: HarperCollins.

Pals, D. L., (2006). *Eight Theories of Religion* (2nd Ed.). New York; Oxford University Press.

Course Requirements

Your final grade will be determined by your performance on assignments and activities:

Class Participation: Show up on time, stay awake, and be engaged in class discussions. This counts for 10% of your grade.

Exams: There will be 2 exams. The final exam will be cumulative. Both exams will be multiple choice and essay questions, study guides will be given for both exams. Each exam is 25% of your grade.

Quizzes: There will be a 4 short, 5 question quiz to test your knowledge on key terms. Each quiz is worth 5% of your grade, totaling 20%. **Quiz dates are on the calendar below.**

Research Paper: During the second half of the term, a 4-5 page research paper will require you to examine one major religion of your choice (outside of your own tradition). The research paper is worth 20% of your grade.

Extra Credit: There are some extra credit points available if you want to increase your percentages points, but these are optional and are due the last week before finals. Each extra credit opportunity is worth a maximum of 5% and two extra credit assignments are accepted. Extra credit is up to 10%. Extra credit assignments described below.

Grading

Final letter grades will be determined as follows.

Percent	Grade
90% or above	A
80-89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
59% or below	F

Class Participation: 10%

Weekly Quizzes: 20%

Mid-term Exam: 25%

Research Paper: 20%

Final Exam 25%

Optional extra credit up to 10%

=110%

Tentative Course Schedule

Week/Class	Textbook or other readings for the Week	Material to be covered: topics / lectures/ documentaries	Important dates: Exams / Research Paper due date
<u>Week 1</u> April 4		Introduction/Syllabus Defining Religion / Social Contexts/ Approaches to Studying Religion Timeline of Religion Key Terms	
<u>Week 2</u> April 11	Pals: Introduction and Chapter 1 (Tylor and Frazer) <i>Pew Research on Religion</i> —link on my instructor website Novak: <i>Creation Myths</i> 334-350	Anthropology Creation Myths and Indigenous Religions	Quiz #1
<u>Week 3</u> April 18	Pals: Ch. 7 (Evans-Pritchard) Novak: <i>The Bhagavad Gita</i> , 24-39	Anthropology Theology Hinduism	
<u>Week 4</u> April 25	Pals: Ch. 3 (Durkhiem) Novak: <i>The Torah</i> 175-191.	Sociology Judaism	Quiz #2 Study guide for Exam posted
<u>Week 5</u> May 2	Pals: Ch. 2 (Frued) Novak: <i>The Sayings of Jesus</i> , 239-253	Psychology Christianity	Mid-term exam

<u>Week 6</u> May 9	Pals: Ch. 4 (Marx) Novak: <i>The Legend of the Buddha's Life</i> , 49-63	Philosophy Buddhism	
<u>Week 7</u> May 16	Pals: Ch. 8 (Geertz) Novak: <i>Tao Te Ching</i> , 146-164	Philosophy of Religion Tao Te Ching	Quiz #3
<u>Week 8</u> May 23	Pals: Ch 6 (Eliade) Novak: <i>Introduction and Islam Tenants</i> 1-42 (281-330)	Religion and History Islam	Quiz #4
<u>Week 9</u> May 30	<i>No Reading!</i>	New Religious Movements	Research Papers Due
<u>Week 10</u> June 6	Novak: <i>The Story of the Jumping Mouse</i> , 373-379	Myths and Story Purpose and Meaning of Religion Conclusion and Discussion about Learning Process Final Exam Overview	Final Exam study guide given out Extra Credit assignments due.
<u>Finals Week</u>	<u>Final Exam will be cumulative and be held on Wednesday, June 13 during our normal class time.</u>		

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.

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. *Late work:* I do not accept late work (research papers, exams, weekly assignments etc). I do accept early work though.

Technology and devices in the classroom: There is no need to use your phone, tablet, computer, or other technological devices in the classroom. All of my slides will be posted online. Study guides for exams and quizzes will be given. Our class will be very interactive, engaging, and discussion focused and technological devices are distracting to our process. Also, I want you to use your brain to come up with answers, not google!

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.'

Extra Credit (10 points possible – one of each activity)

If you are struggling in the class, and are worried about your final grade, there will be up to 10 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 an event/service (5 points): You may attend a religious service or event (outside of your own tradition or closely related denomination) at any point during

the term and write a 2-page, double-spaced paper including your thoughts and impressions on the experience. If you would prefer to attend a lecture 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.

Listen to a Podcast (5 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

onbeing.org

(Click on *Archive*, pick a program that interests you personally. This is one of my favorite radio programs.)

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

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

(Click on *past programs*. These are not all specifically related to religion *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; Gandhi; Believing in God; The Problem of Evil; Jewish Philosophy; Concept of God; Confucius; Zen; The Existence of God; Religion and the Secular State; and, Has Science Replaced Religion?

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!

Or, find your own!