

Introduction to Religion

Course Text

- Molloy, Michael. *Experiencing the World's Religions: Tradition, Challenge, and Change*, 6th edition, McGraw-Hill, 2013, ISBN: 9780078038273

Course Description

This course provides students with a comprehensive overview of cultural religious phenomena in a global world. Commonalities and differences among religious traditions and contexts are analyzed, and various religious traditions and points of view are compared and contrasted. Philosophical formulations, sacred writings, religious experiences, ethics, rituals, and art are also discussed.

Course Objectives

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Analyze the sources, characteristics, and patterns across religions, and explain the approaches and reasons for studying world religions.
- Analyze the influences that shaped the history of Judaism such as the Hebrew Bible, other cultures, and historical events and examine Jewish beliefs and practices that have influenced Jewish culture and the world.
- Evaluate the birth and spread of Christianity; and its influence on the arts and world cultures; and evaluate the influences and challenges of the modern world and international cultures on Christianity.
- Evaluate the beginning and spread of Islam, its basic principles, beliefs, and practices and its contributions and influences on the world, and evaluate the challenges faced by Islam in modern times.
- Examine the origins and development of Hinduism; its basic principles; contribution and influences on the world; and evaluate the challenges faced by Hinduism in modern times.
- Examine the origins and development of Buddhism; its basic principles; contribution to and influences on the world; and evaluate the challenges faced by Buddhism in modern times.
- Contrast the growth and development of Jainism and Sikhism and their influence on the arts; and examine the worldview of these two religions.
- Contrast the growth and development of Taoism and Confucianism and their influence on the arts; and examine the challenges faced by these two religions in modern times.
- Examine the origins and development of Shinto; its belief system; contribution on the world, and evaluate the factors that have contributed to the existence of Shinto to the

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present day.

- Evaluate the discoveries, study, practices, and contributions of Oral Religions; and examine the significance of artistic expression and the growth of Oral Religions in modern times.
- Evaluate the significance of archeological data to the study of Traditional American Religions; and the influence of sacred stories, beliefs, oral traditions, practices, and interactions with other cultures on Native American Spiritualities.
- Analyze the influence of environmental factors on the sacred stories and beliefs of the African people; and explain their concept of humanity according to the ancient African viewpoint.
- Analyze the influence of environmental factors on the sacred stories and beliefs of the people of Oceania; and explain their concept of humanity according to the traditional religions of Oceania.
- Analyze the growth, principles, practices, and characteristics of New Religions; and evaluate the status of the New Religious Movements in the modern world.

Course Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites to take Introduction to Religion

Important Terms

In this course, different terms are used to designate tasks:

- Proctoring: all final exams require proctoring which can be completed conveniently from your home. A webcam is required.
- Tutoring: memberships include online tutoring for students to access with any content/subject related questions in the place of faculty. If your tutor is not able to answer your questions please contact a student advisor.
- Review Activities: A non-graded assignment to assist you in practicing the skills discussed in a topic.
- Homework: non-graded quizzes that help highlight the content which will be assessed on graded exams.
- Graded Exam: A graded online assessment.

Course Evaluation Criteria

StraighterLine provides a percentage score and letter grade for each course. See [Academic Questions](#) section in FAQ for further details on percentage scores and grading scale. A passing percentage is **70%** or higher.

If you have chosen a Partner College to award credit for this course, your final grade will be based upon that college's grading scale. Only passing scores will be considered by Partner Colleges for an award of credit.

There are a total of 1000 points in the course:

Topic	Assessment	Points Available

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3	Graded Exam #1	125
6	Graded Exam #2	125
	Cumulative Graded Midterm Exam	200
9	Graded Exam #3	125
12	Graded Exam #4	125
13	Cumulative Graded Final Exam	300
Total		1000

Course Topics and Objectives

Chapter	Chapter	Lesson(s)	Objectives
1	Understanding Religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sources of Religion • Patterns Among Religions • Approaches to the Study of Religion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the sources, characteristics, and symbolism of religion. • Analyze the patterns of beliefs, worldview, and the role of men and women in various religions. • Compare and contrast various approaches to the study of religion. • Review the reasons for studying world religions.
2	Indigenous Religions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Origins and Sacred Practices • Sacred Oral Traditions: Stories and Beliefs • The Significance of Artistic Expression in Oral Religions • Oral Religion in the Modern World • Origins and Cultural Developments North of Mexico • Sacred Oral Traditions: Stories and Beliefs • Beliefs and Practices in Native American Religions • The Evolution of Native 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the discoveries of oral religions in the modern times. • Justify the study of oral religions. • Compare and contrast the sacred practices of oral religions. • Examine the significance of artistic expression in oral religions. • Analyze the contribution of sacred practices of oral religions in the absence of written scriptures. • Assess the spread and growth of oral religions in the modern world.

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		<p>American Spiritualities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Origins of African Religions • Sacred Stories, Scriptures, and Practices of the African People • The Concept of Humanity in Traditional Africa • Origins of Traditional Religions of Oceania • Sacred Stories, Scriptures, and Practices of the People of Oceania • The Concept of Humanity in the Traditional Religions of Oceania 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the archaeological data that explains the lives of the Native Americans. • Correlate the influence of sacred stories and beliefs with the lives of the Native Americans. • Examine the significance and uniqueness of the oral tradition and how it was handed down across generations. • Inspect how the beliefs and practices of the Native American people have influenced their life and culture. • Analyze the impact of interactions with other cultures on the Native American spiritualities. • Explain the influence of environmental factors on the African religions. • Connect the sacred stories and beliefs of the African people with their way of life. • Explain the concept of humanity according to the ancient African viewpoint. • Analyze the influence of environmental factors on the traditional religions of Oceania. • Connect the sacred stories and beliefs of the people of Oceania with their way of life. • Explain the concept of humanity according to the traditional religions of Oceania.
3	Hinduism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Origins of Hinduism • Beliefs, Practices, and the Role of Humanity in Hinduism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect the influences that shaped the earliest stages of Hinduism in India. • Critique the development of

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Contribution of Hinduism • Hinduism in Modern Times 	<p>the Hindu belief system, its practices and role of man in Hindu society.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correlate the impact of world cultures, arts, and architecture on Hinduism. • Examine the influences and challenges of the modern world and international cultures on Hinduism.
4	Buddhism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Origins of Buddhism • Beliefs, Practices, and the Role of Humanity in Buddhism • The Development of Buddhism • Buddhism in Modern Times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine the influences that shaped the earliest stages of Buddhism. • Critique the development of the Buddhist belief system, its practices and role of man according to Buddhism. • Correlate the impact of world cultures, arts, and architecture on Buddhism. • Examine the influences and challenges of the modern world and other cultures on Buddhism.
5	Jainism and Sikhism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Origins of Jainism, its Beliefs, Practices, and the Role of Humanity • The Origins of Sikhism, its Beliefs, Practices, and the Role of Humanity • The Contribution of Jainism • The Development of Jainism • The Development of Sikhism and the Modern Challenge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the influences that shaped the origins of Jainism. • Review the influences that shaped the origins of Sikhism. • Discuss the influences of Jainism on art and architecture. • Explain the development of Jainism. • Explain the development of Sikhism and inspect the modern challenges that it faces.
6	Taoism and Confucianism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Origins of Taoism and Confucianism • The Development of Taoism and Confucianism • Beliefs, Practices, and the Role of Humanity in Taoism and Confucianism • The Contribution of Taoism and Confucianism • Taoism and Confucianism in Modern Times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deduce the influences that shaped the origins of Taoism and Confucianism. • Compare and contrast the beliefs of Taoism and Confucianism. • Discuss the influences of Taoism and Confucianism on arts and literature. • Compare and contrast the development of Taoism and Confucianism.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine the impact of the modern world and international cultures on Taoism and Confucianism.
7	Shinto	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Origins of Shinto Beliefs and Practices in Shinto The Contribution of Shinto The Development of Shinto Shinto in Modern Times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpret the influences that shaped the origins of Shinto. Assess the development of the Shinto belief system and its practices. Discuss the influences of Shinto on art and architecture. Evaluate the development of Shinto in the absence of an institutional structure. Analyze the factors and conditions that have allowed Shinto to survive to the present day.
8	Judaism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Overview of Jewish History Biblical History Cultural Influences on Judaism Beliefs, Practices, and the Role of Humanity in Judaism The Contribution of Judaism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the growth and development of Judaism. Correlate the influence of the Hebrew Bible and the history of the Jewish people on each other. Draw out the influences of other cultures and historical events on the development of Judaism. Inspect how the beliefs and practices of the Jewish people have influenced Jewish life and culture. Review the contribution of Judaism on the arts and humanities.
9	Christianity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Beginning of Christianity and its Basic Principles Beliefs, Practices, and the Role of Humanity in Christianity The Spread of Christianity Christianity in Modern Times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critique the life and teachings of Jesus, in the light of the religious environment of that time. Examine the development of the Christian canon, and its influence on the Christian worldview. Correlate the impact of world cultures, arts, and architecture on Christianity. Appraise the impact of the modern world and international cultures on Christianity.

10	Islam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Beginning of Islam and its Basic Principles • Beliefs, Practices, and the Role of Humanity in Islam • The Spread of Islam • Islam in Modern Times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critique the life and teachings of Muhammad in the light of the religious environment of that time. • Examine the development of beliefs and practices in Islam and its influence on the Islamic worldview. • Correlate the impact of world cultures, arts, and architecture on Islam. • Appraise the impact of the modern world and international cultures on Islam.
11	Alternative Paths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Origins of New Religions • Contemporary Religions • New Religious Movements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine the growth of new religions. • Compare and contrast the principles and practices of different contemporary religions. • Predict the status of the new religious movements in the modern world.
12	The Modern Search	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modern Influence on The Future of Religion • The Recurring Challenge of Change • Naturism: A New Religious Phenomenon? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze the role of religion in the modern world, and the influences that are impacting the future of religion. • Examine the challenges and adaptations occurring in traditional religions. • Evaluate Naturism as a new religious phenomenon. • Inspect the spread of Naturism through its various aspects such as eclectic spirituality, interrelatedness, reverence and respect for nature, and contemplative practices.
13	Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a review of key content covered in this course.