



# religions of the world

RELS 1020 Section 04

T/TH 11:00am-12:15pm

Spring 2018

## Details

Instructor:

Dr. Michael Graziano

Email:

michael.graziano@uni.edu

Office:

BAR 2083

Office Hours:

Tuesday (3:30-4:30pm) and by appointment.

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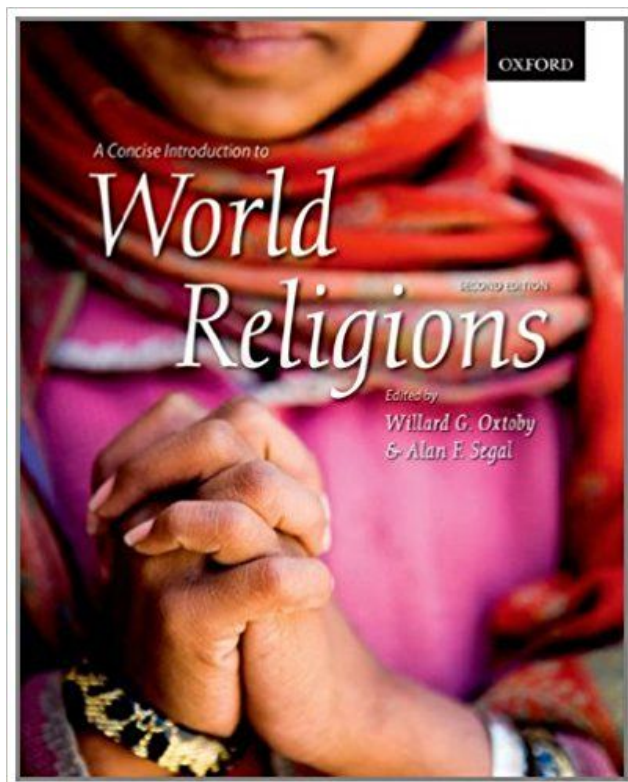
## Course Description

This course is an introduction to the study of world religions. Over the course of the semester, we will consider a number of religious traditions from various times and places in human history. A major goal of this class is to encourage students to think critically about cultural traditions different from their own.

## Course Objectives

This course is intended to:

- Familiarize students with a variety of global religious traditions.
- Introduce students to college-level work.
- Improve communication skills, both written and oral.
- Develop students' ability to make arguments about interpretations.



## Assigned Texts

(1) Oxtoby and Segal, *A Concise Introduction to World Religions*, 2nd Edition (Oxford, 2011).

(2) All other required readings will be posted on eLearning. Other editions are acceptable, but may have different page numbers and/or be more expensive.

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The disciplined study of any subject is, among other things, an assault on self-evidence, on matters taken for granted, nowhere more so than in the study of religion.

-Jonathan Z. Smith

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## Expectations and Grading

In this course the following grading format will be used:

A: 930-1000; A-: 900-929; B+: 880-899; B: 830-879; B-: 800-829; C+: 780-799; C: 730-779; C-: 700-729; D+: 680-699; D: 630-679; D-: 600-629; F: below 600.

Midterm Exam	300 points
Final Exam	300 points
Religious Literacy Test #1	100 points
Religious Literacy Test #2	100 points
<u>Quizzes</u>	<u>200 points (200+ will be available)</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1000 points</b>

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## Quizzes

There will be at least 200 points worth of quizzes during the semester. In-class quizzes may not be announced in advance. Online quizzes will be taken through eLearning, and they will be announced in class (to be due before the following class). For example, a quiz may be announced in class on Tuesday to be completed before class on Thursday. No make-up quizzes will be given, but there will be more than the required quizzes assigned. If you score more than 200 points on your quizzes, the additional points will count toward extra credit.

## Discussion & Review Meetings

Our course TA will offer extra meetings outside of normal class hours to provide discussion and review opportunities. More information will be announced in class and a schedule will be posted on eLearning.

## Exams

The midterm and final exam may include multiple choice, matching, short essays and fill-in the blank questions on the material covered up to that point in the semester. Additionally, one or both exams could consist of a single take-home essay. A study guide may be provided. The final will not be cumulative. A missed exam may only be made-up if the absence is excused, and a different exam from the one that the class took will be given to the student. Using technology during an exam (without the instructor's prior permission) will result in an exam grade of zero.

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## Tests

There will be two religious literacy tests during the semester. These will be shorter than the Midterm and Final Exam. Each test is designed to assess your understanding of basic terms and concepts in preparation for the exams.

## Writing Assignments

All writing assignments are required to be submitted via Turnitin (on eLearning) in order to receive a grade. Paper copies will not be accepted. Late papers will be penalized 10% per day, beginning immediately after the paper is due. Be advised that technology sometimes breaks or performs in unexpected ways. Technological problems will not be a valid excuse for failing to submit your papers to Turnitin on time.

## Attendance

Attendance will not be tracked. However, students who choose not to attend class regularly will find it difficult to do well on exams or earn participation points.

## Participation

The importance of contributions is not that they are "correct" but rather that they represent an attempt to engage with classroom material. Classroom discussion is designed to be an important component of this course. It is vital that you read each day's assigned texts. Not only does this benefit you and enhance your understanding of course materials, but it will also have a direct effect on your grade. Attendance is not the same as participation.

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## Grading Disputes

In order to ensure that each student's work is graded in accordance with standards that apply to the entire class, if you have a question regarding a grade, you must meet with the instructor within one week after the work in question is graded. No exceptions will be made to this policy. If the exam or assignment is re-scored, the entire exam or project will be graded again. This means that your score may increase or decrease.

## Civility Statement

Students are expected to communicate in a civil manner in academic interactions at all times, both in and out of the classroom. This means that interactions are to be carried out in a polite, courteous and dignified manner. Class discussion should be respectful and understanding towards both peers and professors.

The academic study of religion does not seek to persuade persons to join a particular religious group. Students may not proselytize in class. Recitations from religious scriptures offered as "proof" of derogatory views of other religions (e.g., "Group X is inferior because it says in [Religious Text Y] that ...") are not constructive in this classroom.

## Other Policies

- Any student with a disability requiring accommodation should contact the instructor at the beginning of the course so that appropriate arrangements can be made.
  - Plagiarism and other forms of cheating are serious academic offences, and will be treated as such in this course. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please contact
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me before submitting assignments. I am more than happy to work with students on this issue.

- I encourage you to use the Academic Learning Center's free assistance with writing, math, science, and college reading and learning strategies. UNI's Academic Learning Center is located in 008 ITTC. Visit the website at [uni.edu/unialc/](http://uni.edu/unialc/) or call 319-273-6023 for more information and to set up an appointment.
- The course schedule is subject to change with advance notice.
- I want every student to do well. Most problems (late assignments, plagiarism, confusion about what's covered on a particular exam) can be avoided by simply talking to me.

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Where there is dirt, there is a system.

-Mary Douglas

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# COURSE SCHEDULE

## Part I: The Category of "Religion"

### Week 1

1/9 Introduction to the Course

1/11 What is "Religion"?

George Carlin, "Euphemisms," (on eLearning)

Russell McCutcheon, "What's in a Name?" (on eLearning)

## Part II: Southern and Eastern Asia

### Week 2

1/16 Hinduism I: Vedic Religion in Ancient India

p.273-280

1/18 Hinduism II: The Upanishads & The Bhagavad Gita

p.281-292

### Week 3

1/23 Hinduism III: Modern Hinduism

p.323-327

1/25 Buddhism I: Stories of the Buddha

p.373-384

### Week 4

1/30 Buddhism II: The Buddha's Dharma

p.384-392

2/1 Buddhism III: Buddhism in the Modern World

p.415-417; 426-431

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Week 5

2/6

**RELIGIOUS LITERACY TEST #1**

2/8

**Confucianism**

P.475-480, 482-487

Week 6

2/13

**Shinto: Religion & the State**

p.537-547; 556-561

2/15

**Midterm Review Day**

Please come with questions!

## Part III: Southwest Asia

Week 7

2/20

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2/22

**Zoroastrianism**

p.4-6

Week 8

2/27

**Judaism I**

p.81-90

3/1

**Judaism II**

p.90-103

Week 9

3/6

**Judaism III**

(1) p.115-132

(2) “Waterloo Synagogue Vandalized” from the *Courier*

(3) JTA, “A Small Town in Iowa Isn’t New York, but  
People Figure out Ways to Be Jewish”

3/8

**RELIGIOUS LITERACY TEST #2**

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Week 10

Spring Break

Week 11

3/20

**Bridging Judaism and Christianity: Making Distinctions**

Burton Mack, excerpt from *Who Wrote the New Testament?*  
(on eLearning)

3/22

**Christianity I**

p.142-149

Week 12

3/27

**Christianity II**

*Gospel of Thomas* (on eLearning)

3/29

**Christianity III**

p.154-167; p.167-178

Week 13

4/3

**Christianity IV**

p.188-193; 197-200

4/5

**Islam I**

p.209-219; 242-248

Week 14

4/10

**Islam II**

p.221-225; 252

4/12

**Islam III**

p.227-228; 235-242

Week 15

4/17

**Islam IV**

p. 256-264  
Zaina Arafat, "Wrap Star"

4/19

**Sikhism**

p.437-449; 453-454; 464-469  
Burton, "A Tragic History of Hate Crimes Against Sikhs  
in the U.S." (on eLearning)

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## Part IV: Final Examples

Week 16

4/24

**Jonestown**

No reading

4/26

**Scientology**

p.598-692

**Final Exam: Thursday (May 3) from  
10:00am-11:50am**

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