



REL2300.001: Introduction to World Religions

Department of Religious Studies
College of Arts and Sciences, University of South Florida

COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructor:	Miss Philippa Meek BA (Hons) Grad Dip	Term:	Summer B 2015
Office:	CPR470	Class Meeting Days:	Mon/Wed/Fri
Phone:	(813) 974 2221	Class Meeting Hours:	1230-1450
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Website:	http://religious-studies.usf.edu/		
Office Hours:	Wednesday 1000-1200		

I. Welcome!

I am a second year MA student in the Department of Religious Studies. My previous degrees are a BA in Ancient History and Egyptology from University of Wales, Swansea and a Graduate Diploma in Theology and Religion from Durham University.

II. University Course Catalog Description

This is an introductory course in world religions, covering; indigenous religions, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

III. Course Overview

This course aims to provide an introduction to the major world religions that exist today; indigenous religions, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

IV. Course Objectives

By the end of this course students will demonstrate knowledge, through assigned assessments, of the major world religions of today in a cultural and historical context. Students will develop skills in thinking and writing critically on issues in world religions. Students will feel confident discussing and understanding major world religions and will have developed a vocabulary adequate for critical religious discussion.

V. Course Prerequisites

There are no pre-requisites for this course.

VI. Course Credits

This is a 2000 level three credit course. This course is approved for the Foundations of Knowledge and Learning Core Curriculum and meets the requirements for the core area of Human & Cultural Diversity in a Global Context, and the dimensions of Inquiry, Critical Thinking, Human Historical Context and Process, and Global Context.

VII. Required Texts and Materials

The required text for this course is *Invitation to World Religions* by Jeffrey Brodd, Layne Little et al. Oxford: Oxford University Press (2013). ALL students are required to buy a copy of this text and bring it to every class. Additional readings will be uploaded to Canvas. Students are required to complete the readings assigned before each class, at the beginning of each class some time will be devoted to discussing the readings set. Students may find making brief notes while reading either in the margins, or on a separate sheet, will be helpful for these discussions.

VIII. Supplementary Materials

All students should ensure they come to class prepared with pens, pencils, note paper etc in order to take notes in class. Additionally students should bring a pack of 3x5 note cards for quizzes.

IX. Basis for Final Grade

Assessment	Percent of Final Grade
Attendance and Participation	10%
In-class Quizzes	15%
Midterm Exam	25%
2000 Word Essay	25%
Final Exam	25%
	100%

Essays should be within 10% +/- of the specified word count. A list of topic options will be provided in advance for students to choose from.

Grading Scale (%)	
91-100	A
89-90	A-
87-88	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
63-66	D
60-62	D-
0 - 59	F

X. Grade Dissemination

Grades will be uploaded to Canvas throughout the course. In-class quiz grades will be available within 24 hours of the quiz. Exam and essay grades will be uploaded within seven days of the submission deadline. Extra credit points will be communicated to students via email and added to the final overall score at the end of the course. Students are encouraged to visit me during my office hours to receive constructive feedback on their work. Please note that scores returned mid-semester are unofficial grades.

XI. Course Policies: Grades

Late Work Policy: There are no make-ups for in-class quizzes, the midterm, or the final exam without documentation detailing a medical reason for missing the assignment deadline. Student athletes may make-up in class quizzes so long as details of classes that will be missed for genuine USF games etc are provided at the beginning of the semester. Essays turned in late will be assessed a penalty: a half-letter grade if it is one day late, or a full-letter grade for 2-7 days late. Essays will not be accepted if overdue by more than seven days.

Extra Credit Policy: Extra credit assignments will be made available during the course of the semester. Students will have the opportunity to write a short 400 word observation paper on a recent news article relevant to the course. Each paper will be worth up to 2% of extra credit, students may submit up to five papers (worth up to 10% of the final grade), and no more than one paper in any given week. Extra credit points awarded will be added to the final grade.

Grades of "Incomplete": The current university policy concerning incomplete grades will be followed in this course. Incomplete grades are given only in situations where unexpected emergencies prevent a student from completing the course and the remaining work can be completed the next semester. The instructor is the final authority on whether you qualify for an incomplete. Incomplete work must be finished by the end of the subsequent semester or the "I" will automatically be recorded as an "F" on your transcript.

Essay Commentary Policy: Essays should be submitted both via turnitin on Canvas and in hard copy. The deadline for online submission will be 1130 on the due date; hard copies should be brought to class. Essays are not considered submitted unless both of these deadlines are adhered to. Students will be able to collect the hard copy during my office hours once all papers have been graded. Essays will contain detailed written comments and notes in the margin. Students are encouraged to collect their papers in order to use the feedback to improve in the future.

XII. Course Policies: Technology and Media

Email: I will aim to respond to emails within 24 hours, if an email is received over a weekend or holiday; expect a reply the next working day.

Canvas: PowerPoint presentations will be available for students on Canvas once the topic has been covered in class. Students with SDS accommodations who feel they would benefit from having the slides in advance of class should contact me to discuss their requirements.

Laptop Usage: Laptops and tablets are allowed in class for note-taking purposes ONLY, students caught using laptops or tablets for other purposes e.g. using social media, will have this privilege revoked.

Classroom Devices: Only students with applicable SDS accommodations may record lectures, these recordings should be used for personal study only and should not be shared or sold, lecture content remains the property of the instructor.

CELL PHONES SHOULD BE SWITCHED OFF OR PLACED IN SILENT MODE/DO NOT DISTURB BEFORE CLASS. STUDENTS CAUGHT USING A CELL PHONE IN CLASS MAY BE ASKED TO LEAVE.

XIII. Course Policies: Student Expectations

Disability Access: The University of South Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services before requesting accommodations. A memo outlining specific student accommodations should be provided by the end of the first week of class.

Attendance Policy: Attendance is required at all classes and students should be aware that missing class can seriously affect the grade they receive. An attendance sheet will be passed out at the beginning of every class. Two late arrivals = 1 absence. Please turn up to class five minutes before class is due to begin in order to unpack and be prepared to take notes, class will begin promptly. Students with two or more unexcused absences will see an impact on their attendance and participation grade. The more unexcused absences, the lower the grade will be. Participation in class is actively encouraged both in small group and class discussion and students who participate will see this reflected in their grade. Summer classes are intensive; missing one class can in some cases mean missing an entire religion discussed in this course.

Professionalism Policy: Please arrive on time for all class meetings. Students who habitually disturb the class by talking, arriving late, using iPods or cell phones *etc.*, and have been warned, may suffer a reduction in their final class grade.

Academic Conduct Policy: Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. If you are uncertain as to what constitutes academic dishonesty, please consult the University of South Florida's Student Handbook for further details. Violations of these rules will result in a record of the infraction being placed in your file and receiving a zero on the work in question AT A MINIMUM. At the instructor's discretion, you may also receive a failing grade for the course. Confirmation of such incidents can also result in expulsion from the University.

End of Semester Student Evaluations: All classes at USF make use of an online system for students to provide feedback to the University regarding the course. These surveys will be made available at the end of the semester, and the University will notify you by email when the response window opens. Your participation is highly encouraged and valued. The results of student feedback are sent to departments and faculty members only after semester grades are already submitted, and student responses are reported only anonymously and in the aggregate to faculty.

Turinitin.com: In this course we will utilize turnitin.com, an automated system which instructors can use to quickly and easily compare each student's assignment with billions of web sites, as well as an enormous database of student papers that grows with each submission. Accordingly, you will be expected to submit all assignments in both hard copy and electronic format. After the assignment is processed, I receive a report from turnitin.com that states if and how another author's work was used in the assignment. For a more detailed look at this process visit <http://www.turnitin.com>. Essays are due for electronic submission one hour before class meets on the deadline day. Hard copies should be brought to class.

University Writing Center: The University Writing Center is a free resource for USF undergraduates and graduates. At the UWC, a trained writing consultant will work individually with you on anything you're writing (in or out of class), at any point in the writing process from brainstorming to editing. Appointments are recommended, but not required. For more information or to make an appointment, visit the UWC website at <http://www.lib.usf.edu/writing>, stop by LIB-125, or call 813.974.8293.

XIV. Important Dates to Remember

Deadline for online submission is one hour before class meets.

Independence Day holiday (No class):	Fri, 3 rd July 2015
Drop/Add Deadline:	Mon, 6 th July 2015
Midterm Exam:	Fri, 17 th July 2015
Withdrawal Deadline:	Sat, 25 th July 2015
Essay Deadline:	Wed, 29 th July 2015

Religious Observances

Students are expected to notify me in advance if they intend to miss class to observe a holy day of their religious faith. For a current schedule of major religious holidays, contact the Office of Diversity & Equal Opportunity at 813-974-4373.

XV. Essay and Assignments

Attendance and Participation will make up 10% of the overall grade. A general guideline for students interested in how this will be graded follows. Students who turn up to every class and contribute to discussions will be awarded 100% for attendance and participation. Students with some unexcused absences and/or contribute rarely will receive 85%. Students who miss a number of classes and/or do not contribute to class discussions and/or flout rules regarding cell phone use etc will receive 60%. I reserve the right to grade outside of this guideline at my discretion.

In-class Quizzes (15%)

Due Date: Periodically at the end of each topic covered (see class schedule)

A short quiz of around 10 questions will take place periodically to assess student understanding of the material. Some quiz questions may come up on exams.

Midterm Exam (25%)

Due Date: 17th July 2015

The midterm exam will take place in class on the due date. Students should revise all material covered before this date in preparation for the exam. The exam will consist of 73 multiple choice questions and 10 short answer questions of which 9 should be answered. The multiple choice questions are worth 1 point each, the short answer questions are worth 3 points each, totaling 100 points. The exam will last 1hour 15minutes.

2000 Word Essay (25%)

Due Date: 29th July 2015 turnitin: 1130, hard copy: 1230 (beginning of class)

The paper should be approx. 2000 words, plus or minus 10% (i.e. it should fall between 1800-2200 words), excluding footnotes. A list of suggested topics will be made available in advance of the due dates, students should choose a topic and email me to have the chosen topic confirmed to ensure that there is an even spread of students taking each topic. Topics will be assigned on a first come first served basis and should be finalized by 10th July 2015, at which time students will share their finalized topic with the class.

Essays should be proof-read and free from grammatical and spelling errors. Student name, the course title and Summer B 2015 should be added as a header at the top of each page. Pages should be numbered. The paper should include a cover sheet listing the essay title, student name, course title, Summer B 2015, instructor name, and the word count. Additionally the word count should be included at the end of the paper. Students should reference using footnotes in Chicago style. A bibliography should be included at the end of the paper. Papers should be written in 12 point Times New Roman font, double spaced, justified, with one inch margins. The bibliography should not be double spaced. Students will have marks deducted if they do not follow these strict formatting guidelines.

Final Exam (25%)

Due Date: 7th August 2015

The final exam will take place on the last day of class. It will follow the same format as the midterm exam. Students should revise material covered from the class after the midterm exam until the last day of class.

XVI: Class Schedule

The assigned readings including in the class schedule should be completed before the date on which they are listed in order for students to be prepared for the class.

Class schedule is subject to change.

Week One:

29th June 2015: Readings: Invitation to World Religions pages 3-25, 'Dialogue Decalogue'.
Introduction to the class, syllabus review, essay writing requirements, introduction to world religions

1st July 2015: Readings: Invitation to World Religions pages 29-79.
Indigenous Religions

3rd July 2015: NO CLASS

Week Two:

6th July 2015: Readings: Invitation to World Religions pages 83-139.
QUIZ ONE (Introduction and Indigenous Religions), Hinduism

8th July 2015: Readings: Invitation to World Religions pages 237-259.
Hinduism, Sikhism

10th July 2015: Readings: Invitation to World Religions pages 145-205.
QUIZ TWO (Hinduism and Sikhism), Buddhism, essay topic discussion

Week Three:

13th July 2015: Buddhism

15th July 2015: Readings: Invitation to World Religions pages 263-308.
QUIZ THREE (Buddhism), Daoism

17th July 2015: MIDTERM EXAM

Week Four:

20th July 2015: Confucianism

22nd July 2015: Readings: Invitation to World Religions pages 341-394
QUIZ FOUR (Daoism and Confucianism), Judaism

24th July 2015: Judaism

Week Five:

27th July 2015: Readings: Invitation to World Religions pages 401-452.
QUIZ FIVE (Judaism), Christianity

29th July 2015: ESSAY DEADLINE, Christianity

31st July 2015: Readings: Invitation to World Religions pages 515-551
Christianity, New Religious Movements

Week Six:

3rd August 2015: Readings: Invitation to World Religions pages 459-510
QUIZ SIX (Christianity and New Religious Movements), Islam

5th August 2015: Islam
QUIZ SEVEN (Islam)

7th August 2015: Final thoughts and open discussion, **FINAL EXAM**