

REL 101: Introduction to the Study of Religion (D001) HU/IS

Instructor: Christopher D. L. Johnson
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Time: T/Th 11:00am-12:15pm
Room: C-112
Office Hours: T/Th 2:45pm-3:45pm

Course Description and Objectives

This course introduces students to a number of ways to approach the academic study of religion along with seven major religious traditions (Islam, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Daoism) and will provide opportunities for students to apply these scholarly approaches to diverse religious expressions.

Students who successfully complete this course should be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge, critical reflection, and empathetic understanding of the diversity of human religious experience, belief, and practice;
2. Articulate and evaluate various approaches and theories in the study of religion;
3. Apply these approaches in understanding diverse religious traditions;
4. Perform thoughtful analysis of the role of religions in the contemporary world.

Required Readings

1. Bradley L. Herling, *A Beginner's Guide to the Study of Religion*, 2nd ed. Bloomsbury, 2016. ISBN: 9781472512772 (abbreviated as 'H' on course schedule)
2. Stephen Prothero. *God Is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions That Run the World*. HarperOne, 2010. ISBN: 9780061571282 (abbreviated as 'P' on course schedule)
3. Free online readings and lectures on D2L

Grades

1. Quizzes (20%)

There will be regular short quizzes to ensure you are reading the course material. There is no set format or number of quizzes and assignments, but these could consist of multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and/or short essay questions and group work. These assignments will cover the reading materials assigned for a given day or a topic related to a film to class discussion. Some of these quizzes you will take on your computer or phone and will require an app / website called 'Socrative'. To find it, search the app store on your phone or go to <https://b.socrative.com/login/student/> and type in the room name 'RELFDL' and your name. Your lowest quiz will be dropped and there will be several opportunities to replace quizzes with bonus assignments.

2. Tests (40%)

There will be four take-home tests in this course (see 'Reading and Assignment Schedule' below). Each test will be worth 10% of your total grade. The tests will

cover all reading materials, lectures, and films and may consist of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and/or short answer questions that require several sentences or a paragraph.

3. Putting Ideas to Work (20%)

Throughout the semester there will be a number of in-class and take-home assignments in various formats done both individually and in groups. These are known as Putting Ideas to Work (PITWs) and their point is to put the ideas you are learning about into practice. Together these assignments will add up to 20% of your overall grade.

4. Group Wiki Page (20%)

You will sign up in groups to create a multimedia wiki page on Google Sites on a particular religion and lead a class presentation and discussion. You can access the class wiki site on the course content D2L page by clicking 'Wiki' under the 'Activity' tab, then the 'New Google Sites' button on the left. You will need to login to Google Sites with a special email that you will receive early in the semester. It will be your UWC username followed by '@gapps.uwc.edu'. Your site will summarize and illustrate a chapter from the Prothero book by incorporating brief text, images, short videos, and a discussion question for the class to bring the material to life. If you consult other sources they must be legitimate sources and must be cited on your wiki page. You will present a 30-minute presentation of the material in class using your wiki page and then help guide an additional discussion on the question you posted. Do not simply read your wiki but practice it so that you come across as natural and knowledgeable about the subject.

Grade Scale

A 94-100%, A- 90-93%, B+ 87-89%, B 84-86%, B- 80-83%, C+ 77-79%,
C 74-76%, C- 70-73%, D+ 67-69%, D 64-66%, D- 60-63%, F 0-59%

Note on Grading Policy

For the sake of fairness, no special requests for extra-credit, extensions on assignments, etc. will be considered except for documented health or family emergencies provided the next class attended. Final grades will be rounded up to the nearest point if they are above a 0.5.

UW Colleges Academic Integrity, Behavioral Intervention, Title IX, and Inclusive Learning Statements: <http://tinyurl.com/UWCSS17>

UW Colleges Accessibility Services: <http://uwc.edu/students/disability>.

REL 101 READING AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

(Subject to change with notification)

Part 1: Ways to Study Religion

September 5: Introduction

September 7 – H Preface and Ch. 1 p1-14, Miner article on D2L

September 12 – H Ch. 1 p15-25, Muesse article on D2L

September 14 – H Ch. 2 p29-45, Tylor lecture

September 19 – H Ch. 2 p45-54, Frazer lecture

September 21 – H Ch. 3 p57-71, James and Durkheim lectures

September 26 – H Ch. 3 p71-84, Weber and Geertz/Turner lectures, **Test 1 due midnight**

September 27

September 28 – H Ch. 4 p87-102, Marx and Freud lectures

October 3 – H Ch. 4 p102-120, Eliade lecture

October 5 – H Ch. 5 p125-138

October 10 – H Ch. 5 p139-154

October 12 – H Ch. 6, **Test 2 due midnight October 13**

Part 2: Seven Religions to Know

October 17 – P Introduction, Prothero introduction lecture

October 19 – P Ch. 1 p23-40

October 24 – P Ch. 1 p40-63, Islam Key Ideas

October 26 – P Ch. 2 p65-79

October 31 – P Ch. 2 p80-99, Christianity Key Ideas

November 2 – P Ch. 3 p102-115

November 7 – P Ch. 3 p115-130, Confucianism Key Ideas

November 9 – P Ch. 4 p131-150

November 14 – P Ch. 4 p150-168, Hinduism Key Ideas, **Test 3 due midnight November 15**

November 16 – P Ch. 5 p169-186

November 21 – P Ch. 5 p187-201, Buddhism Key Ideas

November 23 – No class (Thanksgiving Break)

November 28 – P Ch. 7 p243-260

November 30 – P Ch. 7 p261-278, Judaism Key Ideas

December 5 – P Ch. 8 p279-298

December 7 – P Ch. 8 p298-315, Daoism Key Ideas

December 12 – P Ch. 9 and Conclusion

December 14 – Review, **Test 4 due midnight December 15**

December 21 – Final Exam at 10:30am-12:30pm