

Introduction to World Religions

PHIL 2130-01, Fall 2019

Contact info and meeting times

Instructor Dr. Rosemary Kellison

Office hours in TLC 2245: Tues./Thurs. 8:40–10:10 am, 12:20–1:10 pm, & 3:20–3:50 pm

See CourseDen Announcements for additional office hours every other Wednesday, as well as for any changes in usual office hours. We can also set up appointments for online phone/IM conversations using Google Hangouts.

Email rkelliso@westga.edu

Phone 678.839.5514

English & Philosophy Department 678.839.6512, TLC 2255

Classroom Pafford 208

Meeting time Tues./Thurs. 11:00 am –12:15 pm

Course website <https://westga.view.usg.edu>

What this course is about

This course revolves around two central questions: how has the world shaped religion(s), and how have religions shaped the world? As we move through an introductory survey of some of the world's major religious traditions, including indigenous religious traditions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and selected new religious movements, we will pay special attention to the ways in which these traditions have been shaped by historical, political, and geographical changes in the world—and will also consider how these traditions and their communities have influenced these changes. Over the course of the semester, we will seek to better understand both the significance and relevance of religion in world history and some of the important philosophical questions addressed within religious communities as well as by those who study them.

What you will learn in this course

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- define basic concepts of the discipline of religious studies.
- describe and compare the discourse, practices, communities, and institutions of selected religious traditions.
- provide examples of both diversity and continuity within religious communities and traditions.
- analyze historical and contemporary political issues around the world in terms of their connection to religious discourse, practice, communities, or institutions.

These course-specific learning outcomes contribute to the Core Area E learning outcomes by enabling students better to:

- demonstrate understanding of political, social, and cultural dimensions of world history.
- demonstrate knowledge of the fundamental concepts of a discipline examining the social world.

These course-specific learning outcomes contribute to the departmental learning outcomes of the Philosophy Program by enabling students better to:

- discuss the general historical development of the discipline of philosophy, including the views of at least three major historical figures of philosophy.
- incorporate a philosophical position in oral and written communications.
- critically outline and analyze philosophical issues.
- exhibit critical thinking skills.

COURSE MATERIALS

REQUIRED TEXTS

All readings are listed on the course calendar below and are posted as PDFs on CourseDen. You should complete the assigned reading prior to arriving to class each day.

ASSESSMENT

GRADING OVERVIEW

Engaged Attendance (12%) Regular attendance is expected in this course. I will take attendance each day. Documentation must be provided for an excused absence. After two unexcused absences, each additional absence will result in a ½-point deduction from your final course grade. Repeated late arrivals will also result in deductions. To earn an excellent grade, you should:

- come to class on time each day and stay the entire class period.
- avoid talking to others; using phones, tablets, and laptops (except to reference assigned readings or take notes); or engaging in other distracting behaviors.
- be attentive, take notes, and ask questions when you have them.

Your engaged attendance will be assessed three times over the course of the semester; each of these attendance periods is worth 4% of your final grade.

Weekly Review Quizzes (33%) These open-book, open-note quizzes consist of multiple-choice and/or short-answer questions regarding the course materials (slides, videos, readings, and class discussions) from the previous week. They are intended to help you review and critically reflect on the materials, and prepare you for success on your essays. Your highest 11 (out of 14 total) quiz grades will count toward your final grade; each is worth 3% of your final grade. Review quizzes must be completed alone and are submitted online through CourseDen. Review quizzes are due every Friday by 5 pm; no late quizzes will be accepted.

Midterm Essays (40%) In each of these four short essays, you will respond to a prompt asking you to reflect on broad themes of our course using examples from our course and references to our course readings. Each essay is worth 10% of your final grade.

Final Essay (15%) Your final essay will be formatted similarly to your midterm essays, but will be longer and will reference materials from throughout the semester.

Late essay policy: A 10% deduction will be assessed immediately when an essay is late. An additional 10% deduction will be assessed for each consecutive day your submission is late. *To avoid a late penalty, if you need an extension for any reason, you must discuss it with Dr. Kellison in person or via email prior to the deadline.*

Grading Scale: A: 90-100; B: 80-89; C: 70-79; D: 60-69; F: 0-59

COURSE POLICIES

POLICY ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Violation of the honor code will incur serious consequences. Please review the academic honor policy at the link below and consult with Dr. Kellison if you have any questions. If you commit a violation of the honor code, you will receive a minimum penalty of a 0 for the assignment. The violation will also be reported to the Student Conduct Specialist in the Division of Student Affairs. A second offense will result in a grade of F for the course. There will be no exceptions to this policy.

UNIVERSITY EMAIL POLICY

For privacy and security reasons, you must email professors only from your MyUWG email account. You are expected to check that account regularly.

UNIVERSITY CLOSURE POLICY

Should UWG cancel classes for any reason, our course will continue. You are responsible for checking CourseDen and your UWG email for information on how our course will proceed.

FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a documented disability, you are entitled to accommodations. Contact UWG Disability Services for more information, and email Dr. Kellison your SAR immediately in order to obtain accommodations.

FOR HONORS STUDENTS

Any student wishing to receive honors credit for this course must bring the appropriate paperwork and ask Dr. Kellison for approval immediately; Honors Contracts are due by the end of the second week of classes.

For more details on these and other UWG policies, see <https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpaa/common-language-course-syllabi.php>.

COURSE CALENDAR subject to change with advance notice

Date	Topic	Reading (found on CourseDen)
Introduction		
R 8/15	Introduction	Course syllabus
T 8/20	Colonialism and the early study of religion	David Chidester, "Animism"
R 8/22	The academic study of religion today	Russell McCutcheon, "What Is the Academic Study of Religion?"
F 8/23	<i>Review Quiz #1 due by 5 pm</i>	
T 8/27	Defining religion	Bruce Lincoln, "The Study of Religion in the Current Political Moment" (<i>part III, pgs. 5–8</i>)
Indigenous Religious Traditions		
R 8/29	IRTs of Africa Religious adaptation: Santeria	Paxtyn Merten, "In Cuba, Santeria Flourishes Two Decades After Ban Was Lifted"
F 8/30	<i>Review Quiz #2 due by 5 pm</i>	
T 9/3	Religious adaptation: Santeria, cont. IRTs of North America	Raymond A. Bucko, "Lakota"
R 9/5	Religious adaptation: New Age and Lakota religion	Johnny P. Flynn, "New Age Tragedy in Sedona: Non-Indians in the Sweat Lodge"
F 9/6	<i>Review Quiz #3 due by 5 pm</i>	
Hindu Traditions		
T 9/10	Hindu textual traditions <i>Essay #1 due by 11 am</i>	Selections from the Upanishads
R 9/12	Hindu devotional traditions	Selections from <i>Bhagavad Gita</i> "Hindu Festivals" photo essay
F 9/13	<i>Review Quiz #4 due by 5 pm</i>	
T 9/17	History of "Hinduism" The Indian Independence movement	P. Mishra, "How the British Invented Hinduism" Mohandas Gandhi, "The Gospel of Selfless Action"
R 9/19	The Indian Independence movement, cont. The rise of Hindu nationalism	Mohandas Gandhi, "The Gospel of Selfless Action," cont. Emily Schmall, "India's Sacred Cow, A Symbol of Rising Nationalism"
F 9/20	<i>Review Quiz #5 due by 5 pm</i>	
Buddhist Traditions		
T 9/24	Basic concepts of Buddhist texts	"The Four Noble Truths"
R 9/26	Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism	"Discourse on the Land of Bliss" "The Flower Sermon"
F 9/27	<i>Review Quiz #6 due by 5 pm</i>	
T 10/1	Vajrayana Buddhism in Tibet The Tibet–China conflict	Krithika Varagur, "The Coming Fight for the Dalai Lama's Soul" Jeffrey Bartholet, "Aflame"
R 10/3	<i>No class—Fall Break</i>	
T 10/8	The Tibet–China conflict, cont. Buddhist nationalism in Myanmar	Jeffrey Bartholet, "Aflame," cont. Hannah Beech, "Buddhists Go to Battle: When Nationalism Overrides Pacifism"

COURSE CALENDAR, cont.

Date	Topic	Reading (found on CourseDen)
W 10/9	Last day to withdraw with a grade of W	
Jewish Traditions		
R 10/10	Hebrew Bible tradition Second Temple Judaism	Genesis 12, 15, 17 excerpts 2 Maccabees 5–8 excerpt
F 10/11	Review Quiz #7 due by 5 pm (note: this quiz covers material from 10/1, 10/8, & 10/10)	
T 10/15	Rabbinic Judaism and Jewish law Essay #2 due by 11 am	Dominic Pettman, "Working Around God: Technology, the Pace of Life..."
R 10/17	Antisemitism and modern Jewish responses	J. D. Michaelis, "Arguments Against Dohm" Theodor Herzl, <i>The Jewish State</i> excerpt
F 10/18	Review Quiz #8 due by 5 pm	
T 10/22	The state of Israel	"The Arab–Israeli Conflict" timeline Mona Boshnaq et al., "The Conflict in Jerusalem Is Distinctly Modern"
Christian Traditions		
R 10/24	Jesus and early Christianity	Matthew 5–7 ("Sermon on the Mount")
F 10/25	Review Quiz #9 due by 5 pm	
T 10/29	Development of Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism	Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologiae</i> excerpts
R 10/31	The Reformation and development of Protestantism	Martin Luther, "The Freedom of a Christian" excerpt
F 11/1	Review Quiz #10 due by 5 pm	
T 11/5	Contemporary charismatic Christianity in the Global South	Mac Margolis, "Father Marcelo Rossi, Brazil's Celebrity Priest" Samantha Shapiro, "Child Preachers of Brazil"
Islamic Traditions		
R 11/7	Muhammad and the early Muslim community	Daniel Brown, "The Life of Muhammad"
F 11/8	Review Quiz #11 due by 5 pm	
T 11/12	Muslim practices and the five pillars Essay #3 due by 11 am	Quran excerpts
R 11/14	Islamic law (sharia)	Noah Feldman, "Why Shariah?"
F 11/15	Review Quiz #12 due by 5 pm	
T 11/19	Islamism and the Arab Spring	Robin Wright, "A Short History of Islamism"
New Religious Movements		
R 11/21	NRM #1 TBD by class vote	TBD
F 11/22	Review Quiz #13 due by 5 pm	
T 11/26	No class—Happy Thanksgiving!	
R 11/28		
T 12/3	NRM #2 TBD by class vote Essay #4 due by 11 am	TBD
R 12/5	NRM #3 TBD by class vote	TBD
F 12/6	Review Quiz #14 due by 5 pm	
T 12/10	Final Essay due by 11 am	