

Course Number, Title and Credits

RELU 327 - Comparative Religious Cultures - 3 credits

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to add a deeper understanding of the plurality of representative world religions to the student's evolving cultural literacy. From sectarian-based violence to seemingly innocuous public religious holiday celebrations, it will also map out notable exemplars of the many landmines that can detonate when religions encounter each other and secular entities both geo-politically and in the students' own communities. By comparing and contrasting a wide range of religious traditions, students will become more aware of the continuities and differences across them while also developing greater literacy of their various teachings, rituals, sacred texts, and leading pioneers within each of them.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Explain the origins and purposes of religion or humanitarian-based non-religion activities on a personal, communal and nation-state level.
2. Analyze the variety and complexity of world religious cultures both locally, globally and historically.
3. Compare the inter-relationships of religious cultures.
4. Identify points of religious contentions and internal divisions within and across religious traditions.

Required Textbooks

A Concise Introduction to World Religions (3rd Edition), 2015, by Willard G. Oxtoby, Roy C. Amore, Amir Hussain, and Alan Segal (eds.), Oxford University Press, ISBN: 9780199008551.

Additional material will be supplied by the professor.

Letter Grade/Percentage Equivalents

Grades are determined on a straight-scale basis using the following scales.					
A	94% to 100%	A-	90% to 93%	B+	87% to 89%
B	84% to 86%	B-	80% to 83%	C+	77% to 79%
C	74% to 76%	C-	70% to 73%	D+	67% to 69%
D	64% to 66%	D-	60% to 63%	F	59% and below

Methods of Evaluation for Determining Grades

Assignment Detail for Course:

Assignments	Possible Points
Midterm Exam	300
Research paper	300
Final Exam	300
Eight Module Quizzes	100
Total Points Possible in Course	1000

Course Outline (Tentative):

Module	Topics&Assignments
Module 1	<u>Studying Religion</u> ● Introduction to the course, what is religion, the sacred and the profane, basic patterns across religious traditions, key guidelines for studying religion ● "About Religion," pp. 3–28 Quiz 1
Module 2	● <u>Hindu Traditions</u> ● "Hindu Traditions," pp. 281–335 ● "The Creation Hymn, <i>Rig Veda</i> 10.129, p. 287 ● "Bhagavad Gita," p. 293 ● "Tiruvaymoli," p. 310 Quiz 2
Module 3	<u>Buddhist Traditions</u> ● "Buddhist Traditions," pp. 379–437 ● "The Dhammapada," p. 385 ● "A Woman's Compassionate Wisdom," p. 389 ● "Pure Land Buddhism: Honen's Testament," p. 409 Quiz 3
Module 4	<u>Chinese and Korean Traditions</u> ● "Chinese and Korean Traditions," pp. 479–538 ● "On the Mandate of Heaven," p. 485 ● "From the <i>Sutra in Forty-Two Sections</i>," p. 499 ● "The Holy Mother of Mount Fairy Peach," p. 531 Quiz 4 Midterm Exam
Module 5	<u>Jewish Traditions</u> ● "Jewish Traditions," pp. 91–146 ● "The Tanakh," p. 95 ● "The Decalogue (Ten Commandments)," p. 101 ● "From Maimonides, <i>Guide of the Perplexed: On Image and Likeness</i>," p. 119 ● "The Shema," p. 132 Quiz 5

Module 6	<u>Christian Traditions</u> • "Christian Traditions," pp. 174–209 • "Julian of Norwich," p. 179 • "Teresa of Avila, from the <i>Interior Castle</i>," p. 190 Quiz 6
Module 7	<u>Muslim Traditions</u> • "Muslim Traditions," pp. 219–275 • "A Hadith (Saying) of the Prophet Muhammad," p. 220 • "From the Qur'an: Abraham Destroys the Idols," p. 227 • "Rabi'a al-'Adawiyah," p. 248 • "Jalal al-Din Rumi," p. 250 Quiz 7 Research Paper
Module 8	<u>New Religious Movements</u> • "New Religions and Movements," pp. 579–612 • "Nichiren 'On Attaining Buddhahood in This Lifetime,'" p. 581 • "From <i>The Book of Mormon</i>, Chapter 1," p. 588 • "Elijah Muhammad on the True God and the Tribe of Shabazz," p. 594 • "L. Ron Hubbard in the Benefits of 'Clearing,'" p. 603 Quiz 8 Final Exam

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Submitting to faculty work completed by the use of any artificial intelligence tool without permission and/or when prohibited by class policy. When faculty require the use of technology, including artificial intelligence, as a part of an assignment for the course, there is no violation. Students are reminded to consult syllabi, assignment sheets/rubrics, program documents and their faculty. Use of artificial intelligence, when permitted, must be correctly cited in the assignment.

The UMass Global online library provides resources to support research, proper citation styles, and the safe and responsible use of generative artificial intelligence or Gen AI.

- The [Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Avoidance](#) page provides guidance to help students better understand academic integrity and includes tips on how to avoid plagiarism.
- The [Citing Sources](#) page offers guidance on how to properly cite using APA, MLA, and Chicago styles.
- The [Artificial Intelligence Resource Guide for Students](#) provides advice for understanding and appropriately using generative artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT and Bard.

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The CARES team is a campus-wide team of appointed staff and faculty responsible for identifying, assessing, and responding to concerns and/or disruptive behaviors by students, faculty/staff, and community members who struggle academically, emotionally, or psychologically, or who present a risk to the health or safety of the university or its members.

Individuals may refer themselves or other community members of concern by emailing cares@umassglobal.edu or by filling out a referral form [here](#). The CARES Team provides short term assessment, intervention, support, and recommendations of resources to those referred and engaged in the process.

UMass Global's Title IX Statement

The University of Massachusetts Global strives to maintain and foster a climate that promotes respect and human dignity. Sexual misconduct and relationship violence in any form is antithetical to the

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The University and Title IX's prohibition of sex discrimination also covers sexual harassment, sexual violence, and any other form of sexual misconduct. We offer options and resources to all students affected by these issues and are committed to providing a fair, thorough, and prompt investigation and adjudication process. If you or someone you know has been impacted by sexual assault, dating, and domestic violence, stalking, or sexual exploitation, please visit the [University's Title IX Resource Page](#) to access additional resources and information.

UMass Global's staff and faculty are tasked with reporting any possible sex or gender-based discrimination or Title IX violations to the University's Title IX Coordinator at civilrightscomplaints@umassglobal.edu.

[Click on this Link to our University Title IX Policy](#)