

**Rel 2020 B (20437)**  
**World Religions**  
**Spring 2010**

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Office Hours: MW 12-2 pm  
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***Course Description:***

A study of the major religions in their historical and cultural contexts. Concepts of sacred stories, rituals, symbols, ethical codes, and sacred communities are examined in pre-literate cultures, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

***VSU General Education Outcomes:***

- #2. Students will demonstrate cross-cultural perspectives and knowledge of other societies.
- #4. Students will express themselves clearly, logically, and precisely in writing and in speaking and they will demonstrate competence in reading and listening.
- #6. Students will demonstrate knowledge of diverse cultural heritages in the arts, the humanities, and in the social sciences.
- #8. Students will demonstrate knowledge of principles of ethics and their employment in the analysis and resolution of moral problems.

***Religion Selected Educational Outcomes:***

1. To explain and interpret the world's religious traditions and their influence on values, norms, and public policies.
2. To apply critical and analytical skills in analyzing multiple religious perspectives.
3. To identify and evaluate their self-understanding in the context of diverse ideas that inform contemporary controversies and social conflict.
4. To create independent research, synthesizing sources including sacred texts, religious autobiographies, and other secondary sources.
5. To demonstrate a working familiarity with current research methods, citation styles, and presentation techniques.

***Course Outcomes:***

1. The student will demonstrate a basic knowledge of differing world religions including Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.
2. The student will demonstrate a basic historical knowledge of these religions.
3. The student will demonstrate an ability to rationally discuss and analyze various world religions as they involve cultural values, morals and socialization, both

historically and currently.

4. The student will demonstrate a basic knowledge involving the role of world religions in global issues of morality, politics and social issues.
5. The student will demonstrate a basic knowledge involving the role of world religions and current global political issues.

***Special Needs:***

Students requiring classroom accommodations or modifications because of a documented disability should discuss this need with me at the beginning of the semester. If you are such a student, but are not registered with the Special Services Program, you should contact the Access office in Farber Hall phone 245-2498 (V/VP) 219-1348 (TTY) or email [access@valdosta.edu](mailto:access@valdosta.edu).

***Academic Honesty:***

Students in this course are held to the highest levels of academic honesty. Academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to university policy found in the undergraduate catalog. <http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/AcademicHonestyPoliciesandProcedures.shtml>

***Attendance:***

Because of the nature of this course, attendance is required. Students missing more than two classes, without an approved excuse, may be subject to a drop in grade. The professor determines excused and unexcused.

***Reading List:***

The pace of this course will be determined by the abilities of the students. Assignments will be given in class. The dates of the exams will also be based on the pace of student understanding. These dates will also be given in class at least one week in advance. An initial schedule outline is given below for student reference.

***Late Work:***

Students must complete all homework on time unless approved by the professor. All quizzes and tests must be taken on time unless approved by the professor.

***Cell Phones:***

Because some students have family responsibilities, cell phones will be allowed in class. As the ring of a phone is disruptive, phones should be placed on silent ring. **NO** text messaging will be allowed in class. If you must communicate with someone by phone, you need to leave the classroom.

***Text:***

The Illustrated World's Religions: a guide to our wisdom traditions by Huston Smith

***Grades:***

Reading Quizzes 100 points

Test (2) 100 points each  
Final 100 points  
Writing assignments (2) 30 points each  
Total points 460 points

***Tests and Final:***

The tests and final will be take-home tests. The students will be given the questions a week before the test is due. Late tests will not be allowed without an approved excuse.

***Writing Assignments:***

For each assignment, the student will discuss one aspect of a religion and how that aspect influences a current social construction, moral dilemma, political crisis or inter-cultural issue. Besides the text, there must be at least one outside source to support the discussion. The source must be academically acceptable. The subject of these papers must deal with a religion discussed in this course.

***Evaluations:***

This course is part of a pilot project this semester, testing a new online Student Opinion of Instruction (SOI) form. Student evaluations are extremely important in helping faculty members plan and revise their courses. Rather than completing these evaluations during class time, students will need to access evaluation forms via BANNER and complete them.

***Reading List***

Week 1: Initial Concepts/Point of Departure pp. 8-17  
Week 2: Hinduism pp. 17-57  
Week 3: Hinduism pp. 17-57  
Week 4: Buddhism pp. 58-97  
Week 5: Buddhism pp. 58-97 ***Test 1 handed out Friday***  
Week 6: Confucianism pp. 98-121 ***Test 1 due Friday***  
Week 7: Taoism pp. 122-143  
Week 8: Islam pp. 144-177 ***Writing 1 due Friday***  
Week 9: Islam pp. 144-177  
Week 10: Judaism pp. 178-204 ***Test 2 handed out Friday***  
Week 11: Judaism pp. 178-204 ***Test 2 due Friday***  
Week 12: Christianity pp. 204-229  
Week 13: Spring break  
Week 14: African Religions TBA ***Writing 2 due Friday***  
Week 15: African Religions/Primal Religions pp.230-243  
Week 16: Primal Religions/Final Examination pp. 244-251 ***Final handed out***  
Week 17: *Final*