

**World Religions: REL 2020 A  
Fall 2009**

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**“If we take the world’s enduring  
religions at their best, we discover  
the distilled wisdom of the human  
race.”**

**Huston Smith**

**Course Description:**

This is a study of the major religious traditions in their historical and cultural contexts. During this process we will examine concepts of the Holy, sacred stories, rituals, symbols, ethical codes, and sacred communities in pre-literate cultures, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

**Educational Outcomes:**

An investigation of the historical and cultural contexts of the world religions; Learn the basic themes, beliefs, and practices of the world religions; Develop critical skills for analyzing religious beliefs and practices; Understand the influence of the world religions upon values and practices in public life; Analyze the similarities and differences in the major religious traditions; Think critically about the concepts of personal experience, ethnocentricity, and pluralism in the field of religion. Demonstrate cross-cultural perspectives; Use computer technology; Learn to use clarity, logic and precision in writing and speaking; Demonstrate the use of ethics and resolution of moral problems.

**Required Texts:**

Michael Molloy, Experiencing the World’s Religions

**Supplementary Texts:**

Eknath Easwaran (trans), The Bhagavad Gita

Walpola Rahula, What the Buddha Taught

**Course Requirements:**

You are expected to attend class regularly and to participate in class discussions in a mature and courteous manner. You will be allowed one excused absence during the term. For each unexcused absence you will lose one percentage point from your final grade. There will be four major grades during the term. Each will count 25% of your final average. The first grade is the average of weekly quizzes (objective questions on the week’s reading). Then a second grade will be an essay written in class. Finally, the last two grades will be in-class exams—a mid-

term and a final. The weekly quizzes will be given each Friday; the mid-term—Sept. 28; the essay written in class: Nov. 23; and the final exam—Dec. 10 (8:00-10:00). The grading scale is as follows: A=90-100; B=80-89;C=70-79;D=60-69; F=Below 60.

**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 Special Services office in Nevins Hall, Room 1115. The phone numbers are 245-2498 (voice) and 219-1348(tty).

**SOI Pilot Project:**

This course is part of a pilot project, testing a new online Student Opinion of Instruction procedure. Student evaluations are very important. Rather than completing them in class, you will need to access BANNER and complete the form at the announced time at the end of the semester. Please take the time to do this during the designated period.

**Course Schedule**

Week 1	Introduction to the course & Introduction to the study of religion	Week 8	Shinto Read: MM, 265-288
	Understanding Religion Read MM, 1-29	Week 9	Judaism Read: MM, 293-345
Week 2	Indigenous Religions Read MM, 31-71	Week 10	Judaism continued
Week 3	Hinduism Read MM, 71-121	Week 11	Christianity Read: MM, 351-435
Week 4	Hinduism continued Reading the Bhagavad Gita Read Easwaran: 1-213	Week 12	Christianity continued
Week 5	Buddhism Read MM, 123-180	Week 13	Islam Read: MM, 437-490
Week 6	Buddhism continued Read: Rahula, 1-138	Week 14	Islam continued
	Jainism & Sikhism Read: MM, 191-210	Week 15	Alternative Paths & The Modern Search Read: MM, 501-572
Week 7	Daoism & Confucianism Read: MM, 215-258		<b>Final Exam: 12/10 @ 8:00</b> Midterm Exam (9/28)

