

**RELS 105 Introduction to World Religions
Fall 2007**

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Course Description: This course is designed to be an introduction to the study of religion and of the world's major religious traditions including Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Our study will include each tradition's historical development, sacred text, ritual, concept of the divine and soteriology. The methodology will include analysis through historical, literary, comparative and feminist criticisms. Primary and secondary texts will be implemented.

Required Texts: World Religions Today, John L. Esposito, Darrell Fasching, et al.
Select readings on eReserve

Course EReserve Password: doire

Course Requirements:

3 Exams (300 points)

1 Paper (4-5 pp.) (100 points)

5 X 1-2 page reflection papers (100)

Note: Reflection papers are indicated on the syllabus according to subject and due date by two asterisks (**).

Grading:

Each set of 100 points will be worth 20% of the final grade.

Numerical and letter grades will be based upon the following scale:

	A	100-92	A-	91-89	
B+	88-86	B	85-82	B-	81-79
C+	78-76	C	75-72	C-	71-69
D+	68-66	D	65-62	D-	61-59
F	-58				

Attendance Policy:

More than 4 unexcused absences may result in a lower letter grade for the course.

Honor Code:

The Code of Honor found on pages 10-11 in the Student Handbook will be strictly enforced.

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments:

“What you see depends upon where you stand.” Elisabeth Schussler-Fiorenza

“Gotta get up near the teacher if you can, if you wanna learn anything.”

Bob Dylan, “Floater (Too Much to Ask),” 2001

Introduction and Methodology

“When the student is ready, the teacher will come.” Ancient Chinese Proverb

8/ 22-24 “Introduction” 3-33 (WRT)

8/27-29 Methodology

****8/31 ----Reflection #1** Selection from Sexism and God-Talk, Rosemary Radford-Ruether (ERES)

Hinduism:

“Any conduct that is contrary to truth and ahimsa is to be eschewed and any book that violates these principles is not a shastra [sacred scripture].” Mohandas K. Gandhi

9/3-5 “Hinduism: Myriad Paths to Salvation” 271-337 (WRT)

9/7-10 Selection from the *Bhagavad-Gita* (ERES)

Buddhism:

“Please call me by my true names, so I can wake up and open the door of my heart, the door of compassion.” Thich Nhat Hanh “Call Me by My True Names”

9/12-14 “Buddhism: Ways to Nirvana” 341-413 (WRT)

9/17-21 Selections from Buddhist Scripture (ERES)

9/24 First Exam

Confucianism

“Do not do to others what you would not have done to you.” Confucius, 6th century BCE

9/26-28 “East Asian Religions: Traditions of Human Cultivation and Natural Harmony” 417-452 (WRT)

Daoism

10/01-03 453-492 (WRT)

****10/05 -----Reflection #2** “Mothers and Daughters, Writers and Fighters,”

Kwok Pui-Lan (ERES)

Fertility Idols and Goddess Worship

“Sweet Goddess born of a blinding light and a changing wind,

Now, don't be modest, you know who you are and where you've been.”

Bob Dylan, “Tough Mama,” 1974

10/08-12 35-45 (WRT)

10/15 **No class meeting/ Fall Break**

****10/17 -----Reflection #3** “In the Beginning: The Paleolithic Mother Goddess,” Baring, (ERES)

Judaism

“Well, the Book of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, the law of the jungle and the sea are your only teachers. In the smoke of the twilight on a milk-white steed, Michelangelo indeed could've carved out your features.” Bob Dylan, “Jokerman,” 1983

10/19, 22-24 “The Many Stories of Judaism: Sacred and Secular” 65-128 (WRT)

Selections from Hebrew Scripture (ERES)

****10/26--- Reflection #4** “Jewish Memory from a Feminist Perspective,” Judith Plaskow (ERES)

10/29 Second Exam

Christianity

“I am up a sycamore Looking through the leaves, a sinner of some position. Who in the world can this heart healer be? This magical physician.”

Joni Mitchell, “Passion Play,” 1991

“Always hoped that I'd be an apostle. Knew that I would make it if I tried. Then when we retire, we can write the Gospels, So they'll still talk about us when we've died.”

The apostles, in the rock opera, Jesus Christ Superstar

10/31, 11/02 “*Christian Diversity and the Road to Modernity*” 131-164 (WRT)

11/02 Paper Due

11/05-07 *Ibid.* 164-192 (WRT)

Selections from Christian Scripture (ERES)

11/09-14 “*Jesus of Nazareth,*” 73-86, H. Koester (ERES)

“*The Earliest Christian Communities,*” 86-94, H. Koester (ERES)

****11/16----- Reflection #5** “*Reconstructing ‘Real’ Women from Gospel Literature: The Case of Mary Magdalene,*” 105-125 (ERES) **OR** “*Paul on Women and Gender,*” 221-235 (ERES)

Islam

“I could see from this, that perhaps if white Americans could accept the Oneness of God, then perhaps, too, they could accept in reality the Oneness of Man-and cease to measure, and hinder, and harm others in terms of their ‘differences’ in color.” Malcolm X

11/19 “*Islam: The Many Faces of the Muslim Experience*” 195-231 (WRT)

11/21-23 No class meetings/ Thanksgiving Break

11/26-28 *Ibid.* 231-267 (WRT)

11/30 Selections from the Qur`an (ERES)

12/03 Last Day of Class

Third Exam: 11:00 class 12/10 12:00-3:00

12:00 class 12/08 12:00-3:00

*This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.