



Exploring the World's Religions

REL 225 – Wesleyan College

Syllabus

Summer 2024, May 13 - June 14

Professor Contact Information

Professor: TBA

Office Hours: by appointment

Contact Information: TBA

Text/ISBN: *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

Any additional material (cf. handouts, essays) will be supplied by the professor.

Policies and Procedures

Course Goals

Students will learn the basic ideas and practices of some of the world's most significant religious traditions and come to understand the multiple, contextual ways that religious traditions intersect and interact with one another and with secular social-political formations. As such, students will develop a sense of religion's impact on the world, including challenges and opportunities, and articulate such sense clearly in written form. Students will also reflect critically on different approaches to interreligious dialogue and engagement.

Credit Hours

3

Student Learning Outcomes

To Be Expanded on in Collaboration with the Class

1. Describe the basic ideas and practices of some of the world's most significant religious traditions.
2. Understand what is complicated, potentially problematic, and perhaps useful about the term religion.
3. Identify the regions of the world where major religious traditions historically emerged and where they are practiced in significant numbers today.
4. Appreciate the breadth and variety of means by which any given religion may be practiced, internally and in relationship to other religious, spiritual, and secular traditions.
5. Compare and contrast different approaches to interreligious dialogue and engagement.



6. Assess the significance of religious thought and practice on individual and collective behavior, from the personal to the geopolitical.
7. Formulate a framework for engaging with religious diversity in a pluralist society.
8. Career Development Skill—Inclusive Teamwork: The ability to understand multiple perspectives, find common goals, and collaborate with others to achieve team objectives.

Participation and Grading

Your grade in this course will be determined by your performance in the following categories:

Assignments	Percentage
First Exam	30%
Research paper	30%
Final Exam	30%
Class Discussion/ Participation/ Homework	10%
Total	100%

Grading Scale:

The grading scale in the class will be as follows:

- A=90-100%
- B=80-89%
- C=70-79%
- D=60-69%
- F=59% And Below

You may track your running point total throughout the term via our course site. Please be aware, however, that the course grade you see in the site will reflect only assignments and activities you have already completed and that your professor has graded.

Academic Integrity

Wesleyan's College expects student to show integrity in all of their work. Cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, inventing or falsifying information, turning in work for more than one class without authorization, or helping someone else are all violations of the Honor Code and are not tolerated. Any of these forms of cheating will not be tolerated and will be grounds for a grade of zero on the exam or assignment and a grade of F for the course, in addition to any penalties imposed by the Provost.

Potential Changes to Course Schedule

The following week-to-week schedule is a general plan for the course. Deviations may be necessary and will be announced in advance via announcement and/or e-mail. Students should check their course site announcements and emails at least once every twenty-four hours throughout the term to watch for updates regarding this course.



Course Schedule

The name of the chapters in bold and around quotations and pages for the assigned readings have been provided, all of which are located within the course textbook. The select documents (e.g., The Creation Hymn; and the Bhagavad Gita) have also been included, which are located in the textbook in “document boxes” and will be discussed in the lecture.

Week 1 – Introduction: Studying Religion & the Hindu Traditions

- Introduction to the course, what is religion/the sacred and the profane/ types of religion/defining religion
- **“About Religion,”** pp. 3–28
- **“Hindu Traditions,”** pp. 281–335
- “The Creation Hymn, Rig Veda 10.129, p. 287
- “Bhagavad Gita,” p. 293
- “Tiruvaymoli,” p. 310

Week 2 – Eastern Traditions

- **“Buddhist Traditions,”** pp. 379–437
- “The Dhammapada,” p. 385
- “A Woman’s Compassionate Wisdom,” p. 389
- “Pure Land Buddhism: Honen’s Testament,” p. 409
- **“Chinese and Korean Traditions,”** pp. 479–538
- “On the Mandate of Heaven,” p. 485
- “From the Sutra in Forty-Two Sections,” p. 499
- “The Holy Mother of Mount Fairy Peach,” p. 531

Midterm Exam

Week 3 – Abrahamic Religions: Jewish and Christian Traditions

- **“Jewish Traditions,”** pp. 91–146
- “The Tanakh,” p. 95
- “The Decalogue (Ten Commandments),” p. 101
- “From Maimonides, Guide of the Perplexed: On Image and Likeness,” p. 119
- “The Shema,” p. 132
- **“Christian Traditions,”** pp. 153 – 174
- “The Nicene Creed,” p. 163
- “The Desert Fathers and Mothers,” p. 171

Week 4 – Abrahamic Religions: Christian and Muslim Traditions

- **“Christian Traditions,”** pp. 174–209
- “Julian of Norwich,” p. 179
- “Teresa of Avila, from the Interior Castle,” p. 190
- **“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

5-6 page research paper

Week 5 – New Religious Movements and Final Exam

- “New Religions and Movements,” pp. 579–612
- “Nichiren ‘On Attaining Buddhahood in This Lifetime,’” p. 581
- “From The Book of Mormon, 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

Final Exam

Civility in the Academic Community

Students, faculty, and staff are expected to treat one another with respect in all interactions both during class meetings and on the Moodle course site. Rude, disruptive and/or disrespectful behaviors as determined by a faculty member interfere with other students’ rights and with the professor’s ability to teach. Therefore, any student exhibiting unacceptable behaviors during a class meeting or Moodle collaborative activity will be asked to leave and will be counted absent for that class period or activity. Failure to cooperate with this process will result in disciplinary action that may include withdrawal from the class or dismissal from the College. Violations will be reported to the Provost.

Disabilities Statement

Wesleyan College is committed to equal education, full participation and access to facilities for all students. Any student who requires reasonable academic accommodations, use of auxiliary aids or facility access for a class must first register with Disability Resources by contacting Jill Amos, Director of Disability and Advocacy Services, jamos@wesleyancollege.edu or (478) 757-5219. If reasonable accommodations are established, students should request Accommodation Letters from Disability Resources then schedule an appointment to meet with the professor to determine how the accommodations will be implemented for each class as early in the semester as possible. Accommodations require advance notice to implement and will not be retroactively administered for the semester. Accommodations that decrease the integrity of a course will not be approved.

Privacy in Teaching & Learning Spaces

In order to promote an environment in which ideas may be freely expressed, the interior offices; in-person and virtual classrooms; and Moodle course sites at Wesleyan are private spaces. The unauthorized creation of photographic images, audio recordings, or video recordings of students or faculty in these spaces is considered to be disruptive behavior which may result in a student’s removal from class according to the professor’s discretion. The distribution of unauthorized images or recordings, or of class meeting recordings shared by a professor for instructional purposes, without the express written permission of the College is strictly prohibited and is subject to disciplinary action by the Provost of the College.