

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

Department of Religious Studies

FALL 2017

RS 100: INTRODUCTION TO RELIGIOUS STUDIES ONLINE: COURSE SYLLABUS

Professor: Dr Claire White
Email: claire.white@csun.edu
Weekly Class: Online
Office hours: - I am online during Tuesdays 12noon-1pm.
I respond to emails on a first-come-first-served basis.
I am available to Zoom with you at this time ☺ just email me.
Office Location: Santa Susana Hall (SN), room 236, telephone: 818-677-5640
D2 on Map: http://www.csun.edu/maps/Campus_Map.pdf
Website: <http://www.csun.edu/religious.studies/profile.White.html>

1. This document

This is your syllabus for the class. A syllabus is an outline of a course that describes what to expect and what you need to do to pass. You cannot pass this course unless you read and consult this document regularly. It is subject to minor changes as we progress (e.g., topics, readings). Before you ask me a question there, or by email, consult this document (and the FAQ's on Moodle) to ensure it has not been answered.

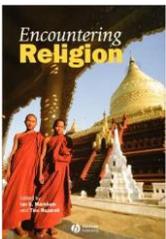
2. Brief course description

This course fulfills CSUN requirements for RS 100 "Introduction to Religious Studies". The course will introduce students to religion as a universal characteristic of human thought and behavior. We will start with a discussion about religion in general and address some of the challenges of studying religion such as defining religion, methods of studying religion and the origins and functions of religion. We will also consider some common and unique practices in religious traditions. Note: This class does not cover world religions or religious doctrines in detail (this is another course, RS150: World Religions).

The course is divided up into three main sections:

- 1. Studying religion:** Fundamental issues in the study of religion.
- 2. Approaches to religion:** Different intellectual approaches to the study of religion.
- 3. Religious practices/traditions:** Some practices in religious contexts.

Required Textbook:



Markman, I. & Ruparell, T. (2000). *Encountering Religion: An Introduction to the Religions of the World*. USA: Blackwell (Edition 1).

Regular consultation of the required textbook is required to pass the course. CSUN library holds multiple copies (Reserve Room BL80.2. E493 2001I). I strongly recommend that you purchase/obtain a personal copy of this text. Obtain a copy before class begins. Available at the CSUN bookstore and Amazon.com.

3. Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)

Below is a list of the aims and objectives of this course that have been determined by the University, College, Department and I. *What can you expect to learn in this course?*

By the end of the semester, students will be able to demonstrate efficiency in all of RS 100 SLO's and the majority of GE and RS SLOs outlined below:

A. General Education Student Learning Objectives, Arts and Humanities:

1. Students will explain and reflect critically upon the human search for meaning, values, discourse and expression in one or more eras/stylistic periods or cultures.
2. Students will analyze, interpret, and reflect critically upon ideas of value, meaning, discourse and expression from a variety of perspectives from the arts and/or humanities;
3. Produce work/works of art that communicate to a diverse audience through a demonstrated understanding and fluency of expressive forms;
4. Students will demonstrate ability to engage and reflect upon their intellectual and creative development within the arts and humanities;
5. Students will be able to use appropriate critical vocabulary to describe and analyze works of artistic expression, literature, philosophy, or religion and a comprehension of the historical context within which a body of work was created or a tradition emerged;
6. Students will learn to describe and explain the historical and/or cultural context within which a body of work was created or a tradition emerged.

B. Religious Studies Student Learning Objectives

1. Students will be able to recognize and to articulate (orally and in writing) the difference between an academic approach to religion and a personal, devotional approach.
2. Students will be able to demonstrate a basic level of proficiency in recognizing the major contributors to the modern study of religion and their models/theories from philosophy, theology, the history of religions, and the social sciences.
3. Students will be able to understand the following terms in their conventional, popular usage, and then discuss the variety of ways that religious studies scholars have critiqued, expanded, or problematized these: religion, religious, myth, ritual, symbol, philosophy, subjectivity, objectivity, secular/secularization, cult, sect, mysticism, theism, atheism, polytheism, monotheism, spirituality, magic, paganism, animism, canon, religious violence, post-colonialism, individualistic compared to community-based religions.
4. Students will be able to explain and give basic examples of the social function of religion with regard to gender, ethnicity, and nationality.
5. Students will be able to recognize religiosity in an aspect of modern culture such as different forms of media, art, music, films, politics, sports, and the public discourse on science.
6. Students will be able to demonstrate a basic level of proficiency in describing several specific religious traditions, including their historical development, major beliefs and practices, and demonstrate a basic level of proficiency in interpreting religious texts and rituals from each religious tradition.

C. RS 100 Student Learning Objectives

By the end of this course you should be able to:

1. Describe some current approaches and methods to studying religion academically;
2. Identify some common aspects of religions around the world;
3. Understand the main controversies in the study of religion;
4. Describe selected features of at least two of the world's major religious traditions.

D. This course is part of the GE Pathways program in Scientific Reasoning. GE pathways Student Learning Objectives

1. Students will understand the scientific method and show an appreciation of what kinds of questions can and cannot be answered using the scientific method.
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the process of evidence-based rational thought.
3. Students will be able to identify a number of ways in which scientific theories, e.g., evolution, inform a variety of academic disciplines, and the inter-dependence of various levels of inquiry from the natural and social sciences.
4. Students will be able to integrate knowledge into a coherent world-view based on scientific evidence and reason.

4. Course Information

a.) Readings

You cannot pass the course unless you do all of the required readings. You will be tested on them. Readings are from the required book or articles will be available in advance, electronically on Moodle.

b.) Teaching

The sessions will typically include an assigned reading, short e-lecture and video. This class is online. Face-to-face meetings are not required to pass this course.

c.) Technological information:

You will need regular access to a computer equipped with Internet access, Microsoft word and PowerPoint. This course will employ the Moodle web-based format and e-videos are hosted on You Tube.

- For instruction on how to use Moodle technology, go to: <http://www.csun.edu/it/moodle>
- For video instruction on Moodle technology go to: <https://shibboleth.csun.edu/idp/Authn/UserPassword> and login with your CSUN username and password (Lynda.com for CSUN students).
- We will use ZOOM for two check-ins during the course and you can also use it to interact with me during my online office hours. (Zoom is like Skype). See syllabus for dates.
- 1. Log into Zoom here: <https://www.csun.edu/it/zoom>
- (You can also download it as an iphone app and use it on your iphone).
- 2. Click "join a meeting"
- 3. Enter the meeting ID provided by me (check Moodle)
- 4. Make sure your device is set to mute until you want to speak 😊
- If you are having a technical difficulty, please contact the IT Help Center by phone (818-677-1400), online at (<http://techsupport.csun.edu>) or in person (Oviatt Library, room 33).

d.) Class materials

- Class materials (e.g., e-lectures, PowerPoints, discussion posts, articles) will be available on Moodle by 9am on Monday morning at the start of each scheduled weekly topic and due the following Monday by 9am (1 week). Typically, you will be able to complete work up to two weeks ahead. Check the weekly tracker for actual due dates.

e.) Online Class etiquette and tips

- Treat this like any other class.

- Schedule in a regular time each week to spend on the course.
- Plan your schedule ahead of time to allow you to submit assignments on time.
- Do the required readings first, then the remaining tasks (e.g., watch e-video).

f.) Communication

- Check your CSUN account weekly for class messages.
- Ask me via Moodle (using the discussion forum dedicated to student questions), anytime throughout the course, about anything that you are unsure of.
- You can also use the discussion forum to ask your peers a question.
- You may also email me questions, but Moodle discussion forum is preferred. Begin the email with the following "Dear Dr. White, my name is _____ and I am in your RS 100 online class." Be as specific as you can in your enquiry.
- I will answer emails within 48 hours Mon-Fri.
- Email me to arrange an appointment in person if necessary.
- I am also available for Skype meetings during my consultation times. Please email to arrange a Skype meeting.

G.) Disability

If you have a disability and need accommodations, please register with the Disability Resources and Educational Services office or the National Center on Deafness. The DRES office can be reached at (818) 677-2684. NCOD can be reached at (818) 677-2611. Please let me know how I can accommodate you at the earliest opportunity.

H.) Difficulties

If you are experiencing personal difficulties during the course – such as mental health issues or family problems that are affecting your progress, make an appointment to come and see me as early as you can.

I.) Religious Observations

If an assignment due date conflicts with a religious observation that affects you then complete the assignment early. If the observation lasts longer than 6 days contact me for earlier submission.

J.) Submission/Late work

- All assignments are due electronically on Moodle. Follow the guidelines on Moodle.
- Assignments are due by Monday 9:00am. Late assignments (i.e., Monday at 9:01am) will receive 0.
- You may be able to physically submit your work late on Moodle (i.e., submit an assignment at 9:02am) but it will not be graded. If it is late, it does not count.
- Always complete assignments at least 1 day early to allow time for any problems to be resolved.
- ***Late work and re-take assignments are **only** accepted in cases of severe emergencies (e.g., illness requiring hospitalization or a death in the family). All emergencies must be documented in writing and submitted to me for consideration within 7 days of the event.
- Technological problems (e.g., broken computer, failure to upload doc on Moodle) are not valid reasons for late submissions. If you have problems, contact IT BEFORE the deadline.

- Please see the assessment summary (below). You do not need to tell me if you miss an assignment because you are able to miss some assignments and it will not affect your grade.

5. Assessment Summary

#	Due Day/time	Title	Total Points
1	Monday BY 9:00am	8 x Multiple Choice Quizzes (10pt each) (Top 7 are graded. You may miss 1 quiz or complete all to ensure that you get the highest grade possible).	70
2	Monday by 9:00am	14x Moodle Q&A discussion posts (1pt each)	14
3	Monday by 9:00am	3 x Moodle peer discussion posts (2pt each)	6
4	Week 2 (see tracker)	Reflective Essay 1	5
5	Week 14 (see tracker)	Reflective Essay 2	5

a). Multiple choice quizzes

Quizzes on the weekly topic will be posted on Moodle during selected weeks. See guidelines and grading rubric on Moodle.

b). Moodle discussion posts

There are two types of discussion posts.

- The first type are Q&A discussion posts. I will post a question on Moodle during selected weeks on that week's topic. You will respond to my question. See guidelines and grading rubric on Moodle.
- The second type are peer discussion posts. Here, I will give you opportunities to work with your fellow students. These change every time, so check the details on Moodle.

c.) Reflective essays

You will discuss what you hope to learn in the course and what you have learned from the course. These are short essays, 500 words each. Check the details on Moodle.

d). Extra Credit Opportunities

Extra credit opportunities may arise throughout the course. Check Moodle and announcements for updates. Extra credit will never amount to more than 3 points in total so don't rely on them!

e.) Zoom sessions

I will hold two Zoom sessions during the course to discuss any questions that you have. They are optional, but highly recommended. You do not need to tell me if you cannot make the zoom session. To join, Just log-in using the instructions (see c, above). This is like a class sykpe session.

e). Grading

Grading is based on a point system. Maximum points overall = 100.

POINTS	GRADE
90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C

60-69	D
Below 60	F

Grades are not curved or normalized.

6. Academic Dishonesty

All cheating, including plagiarism, will NOT be tolerated. Students will receive a grade F and be reported to the University for disciplinary action. For more information of the behavior defined as academic dishonesty, and a more detailed discussion of disciplinary procedures, consult pages 27-28 of the 2012-2013 Student Handbook.

7. Weekly Class Schedule and Submission Tracker

Have you enjoyed the course? Contact me about becoming a Religious Studies Major or Double Major!

Wk	DUE by 9:00am	Topic	Read	Submit	DONE?
		STUDYING RELIGION			
	29TH Aug (12noon)	Zoom session 1 (see Moodle)	Syllabus		
1	4th Sept	Course intro	Syllabus	-Practice QUIZ on course syllabus -Peer discussion post 1	
2	11th Sept	Studying religion as students	PowerPoint	- Q&A post 1 -Reflective essay 1	
3/4	25th Sept	Defining and measuring religion	CH.1	- Quiz 1 - Q&A post 2 - Peer discussion post 2	
5	2nd Oct	Insider/outsider problem	'Nacirema' article	- Q&A post 3 - Peer discussion post 3	
6	9th Oct	The problem of belief	'Problem of Belief' article	-Quiz 2 -Q&A post 4	
		APPROACHES TO RELIGION			
7	16th Oct	Anthropology	'Witchcraft' article	-Quiz 3 -Q&A post 5	
8	23rd Oct	Psychology	CH.3	-Quiz 4 -Q&A post 6	
9	30th Oct	Sociology	CH.2	-Quiz 5 -Q&A post 7	
10	6th Nov	Cognitive and Evolutionary approaches	Sosis 'Adaptive Value of Religious Ritual' article	-Quiz 6 -Q&A post 8	
		RELIGIOUS PRACTICES/TRADITIONS			
11	13th Nov	Religious Rituals	CH.5	-Quiz 7 -Q&A post 9 - Q&A post 10	
12	20th Nov	Buddhism	CH.9	-Quiz 8 -Q&A post 11	
13	27th Nov	Mindfulness meditation	PowerPoint	-Q&A post 12 -Q&A post 13	
	28TH Nov 12noon	Zoom session 2 (see Moodle)			
14	4th Dec	Jainism	PowerPoint	- Reflective essay 2 -Q&A post 14	