

RS 150-11 World Religions OF (20119) Fall 2017 *Fully Online*

The Syllabus

This document is your syllabus for the class. It supplements the Canvas course page, which is your first stop. The syllabus contains all the course information including policies and expectations, but will not have the day-to-day updates that will be included on Canvas.

Contact Information

Instructor Webpage

Xochitl Alvizo, Professor of [Religious Studies](#)

Office Phone: (818) 677-2742

Fax Number: (818) 677-7112

Email: xochitl.alvizo@csun.edu

Office Hours

W 11:00AM-12:00PM

Location: Online (On Zoom, see Canvas for link)

Course Information Overview

World Religions

RS 150-11 (20119)

OF – Fully Online course

Final Exam: 12/13/2016, T 10:15AM - 12:15PM SH 384

Course Description

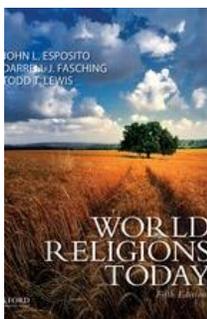
From Course Catalog:

Study of selected major world religions, with emphasis on tribal religions and the historic international faiths of Asia and the Near East. Investigates rituals, ethics, institutional structures and the cultural ethos of religions, as well as their myths, doctrines and sacred texts. (Available for General Education, Comparative Cultural Studies.)

Course Prerequisites

Prerequisite Alert:

- None specified



News and Resources

- [IT help](http://www.csun.edu/it/need-help) [http://www.csun.edu/it/need-help]or call (818) 677-1400; Mon-Fri 8:00am-5:00pm
- [Ask a Librarian](http://library.csun.edu/ResearchAssistance/AskUs) [http://library.csun.edu/ResearchAssistance/AskUs]
- [Oviatt Library online, \(Rel. Studies Librarian: Susanna Eng-Ziskin\)](http://library.csun.edu/smeng) [http://library.csun.edu/smeng]
- University Emergency : (818) 677-2111

Course Related Links

- [Canvas](http://www.csun.edu/it/Canvas): <http://www.csun.edu/it/Canvas>
- [Library Databases](#) (relevant to this course):
 - [ATLA Religion \(EBSCO\)](#)
 - [JSTOR](#)
 - [Project MUSE](#)
 - [Wiley Online Library](#)
- [Feminism and Religion \(FAR\)](https://feminismandreligion.com/) [https://feminismandreligion.com/]



What is this Class *Really* About?

This class introduces the critical study of religion and religious phenomena not as “faiths” but as dynamic ongoing forces in the lives of individuals and in the collective experience of modern societies. It explores the practice of religion and seeks to understand religious experience in terms of its formative elements: religious stories, sacred text, ritual, individual and communal morality and ethics, and its social and political context.

This course provides an introduction to significant forms of religion around the world, including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, as well as religions of East Asian, indigenous religions, and new religions; and will have an emphasis on the historical and cultural developments of religious traditions, on methodological considerations in the study of religion, and on the significance of religion in contemporary life.

Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)

This course is available for **General Education, Comparative Cultural Studies**/Gender, Race, Class, Ethnicity Studies and Foreign Languages.

As a result of this course, students will:

1. Be able to think logically and analytically about various religious traditions;
2. Demonstrate familiarity with the basic content and formative elements of various religious traditions;
3. Grasp the historical and lived-religions approach (as exemplified in the textbook) to the study of religion;
4. Be able to articulate on the meaning and value of the term 'religion' for understanding and describing a diversity of cultural and ideological phenomena in the United States and abroad.
5. Be able to connect today's religions to their classical beliefs and practices and understand how these religious traditions have both radically changed the modern world and been changed by it;
6. Become a more proficient and critical reader through careful study and discussion of primary texts and a written survey of selected religions.

In other words, as you complete the various assignments, you will have the opportunity to showcase your ability to think logically and analytically about the development of religious phenomena in both the Western and Eastern religious traditions and interpret and write about the roles, symbols and concepts within them.

Instructional Materials

These are the required materials for this class. They are available at the Matador Bookstore, on reserve at the Oviatt Library (confirm with the professor first). They can also be found for purchase online.

Textbooks [required]:

1. *World Religions Today, 2014 5th Edition*, John L. Esposito, Darrell J. Fasching, Todd T. Lewis, ISBN-13: 978-0199999590.
2. *God is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions That Run the World* (Reprint Edition), Stephen Prothero, ISBN-13: 978-0061571282, ISBN-10: 0061571288.

Online Resources

- [Links to other readings \(journal articles\) on course Canvas page](#)
- [The Pluralism Project, Harvard University](http://pluralism.org/) [http://pluralism.org/]
- [The Religious Studies Project, a podcast](http://religiousstudiesproject.com/) [http://religiousstudiesproject.com/]
- [Feminism and Religion](https://FeminismandReligion.com/) [https://FeminismandReligion.com/]

How do I Prepare for this class?

Preparation is key: Did you complete the reading? Did you complete the required assignments? This is crucial element of this class. This is not a lecture-only class in which you can sit back and take it all in – to succeed (or even to survive), you have to prepare, which means you *read*. If you plan ahead and put in the time and effort, and you will be rewarded with a fabulous grade.

Find your rhythm: One of the most important things is to develop your weekly rhythm. The benefit of an online class is that you get to work on your own schedule, but planning ahead is key. Second, the reading is key. Complete the readings early enough to give yourself time to take the quiz and complete the required posts or assignments by their due date.

Taking notes as you read: Jotting down notes as you read the assigned text will help you recall information when you take the quiz and is a great habit for enhancing your learning. Notetaking, and including page number references, helps you remember the general chapter topic, key terms, and important points in the text.

What Exactly Will You Do?

You will have various opportunities to dig deep into the readings and other resources, engage in critical dialogue, connect the readings and topics to your own context and research interests. I've incorporated a variety of activities to facilitate your engagement. Here's the breakdown of what you will contribute to the class and to our collective learning:

- **Reading Quizzes**
 - Research shows quizzes help reinforce your learning and deepen engagement with the reading. In that spirit, you will take weekly online quizzes based on the assigned readings.
- **Discussion Forums**
 - One of the most beneficial elements of online learning is your interaction and discussion with your colleagues – it deepens your understanding of the material. Any required Discussion Forums will be posted on Canvas within the relevant Module.
- **Reading Response Posts**
 - Short-answer posts on the week's material will provide opportunities to integrate your learning from the reading with your own social and political context and connect it to current day events.
- **Site Visit**
 - You will attend and observe a service at a site *of a religious tradition other than one you belong to or have practiced*.
- **CIP—Your Ideal Religion**
 - Your “Final” assignment is not an exam, but a Creative Integrative Project (CIP) in which you will imagine and create an original religion. Drawing on the readings and including elements from the various religious traditions, your Ideal Religion should demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of religions and their historical, lived-religion aspects. This creative assignment, will include a bibliography of sources consulted.
- **Annotated Media Bibliography—Extra Credit**—this is an extra credit opportunity in which you will create an annotated media bibliography of up to 10 current news articles that relate to religion (current: occurring during the course of the semester)

All Assignments DUE by 11:55PM on the Sunday of the week assigned.

Make Up Policy

Quizzes, Discussion Forums, and Reading Response Posts are designed to foster and enrich class discussion. Therefore, all assignments are due in Canvas at the designated date/time. There are “no make-ups” once an assignment is closed.

Late Assignment Policy

Deadlines are stated clearly at the outset, I expect you to meet them. For that reason, I do not accept late work. If you have *extenuating circumstances*, please communicate with me as soon as possible, and as much in advance as possible so you do not put yourself in a bind.

Participation Policy¹

Guiding Principles: Respectful discussion and inquiry are at the heart of the academic enterprise. Meaningful and constructive dialogue requires mutual respect, willingness to listen, and tolerance for opposing points of view.

¹ Partially adapted from “The Course Syllabus: Learning-Centered Approach,” O'Brien, Mills and Cohen (2008)

Classroom and online discussions, like any academic discourse, should follow university norms of civility and effective communication. Debates should challenge ideas – not individuals who hold opposing views.

Discussion Posts: When it comes to the discussion posts, the following guidelines are a solid basis for meaningful discussions: 1) Assume nothing; 2) Respect is key; 3) Support your arguments by engaging the texts. Together, these help you remain open to discovery, learn from each other, and have informed and substantive discussions.

My Availability

I am available to help support your learning—you may reach me on Canvas during my online office hours Wednesdays 11:00AM-12:00PM and via email xochitl.alvizo@csun.edu. When emailing, please indicate course number (RS 150) and the content of the email in the subject line. I will do my best to respond within 24 hours—messages sent at night will be read the next day; on weekends, until Monday—please plan accordingly. You may call my office (818) 677-2742.

Email Policy

The Syllabus is Your Friend! Before you reach me by email, review the syllabus and Canvas to see if the information you need is already there. If it's 3 AM and you're feeling panicked, angry, frustrated, or annoyed, that most likely is NOT a good time to send an email – ever, to anyone. Take this as an important life lesson. Further, take in this wonderful Internet advice: *"Failure to plan on your part does NOT constitute an emergency on my part."*

If you are sure that your questions or comments are professional and appropriate, be sure to include these professional courtesies:

- In the subject line please indicate your name, course number (RS 150), and the topic of the email (not the single word URGENT or anything related) and begin your message in the following manner:
- Dear Professor Alvizo,
My name is _____ and I am in your RS 150 class. I am writing to ask (or) I am writing because...

Academic Integrity Policy:

Do NOT Plagiarize—An easy rule of thumb to remember is: if it didn't come from your brain, then give credit to the brain that is the source of information, concept, or idea. While we always relies on the work of others to shape our knowledge and interpretations, we must always acknowledge the source through footnotes and/or direct textual references to influential books, articles, and ideas, providing full bibliographic information in proper academic citation formatting. University policy on Academic Dishonesty here: <http://catalog.csun.edu/policies/academic-dishonesty/>

Accommodations and Services

Students with disabilities must register with Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) in order to receive accommodations. If you feel that you qualify for the services provided by DRES contact them at (818)677-2684 or stop by the office located in Bayramian Hall (BH 110). Faculty cannot provide assistance to students seeking disability accommodations unless they have disability documentation and are registered with DRES. Any student who feels that he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs.

Accommodations and Services

1. [Disability Resources and Educational Services \(DRES\)](#)
2. [National Center On Deafness \(NCOD\)](#)
3. [Health Center](#)

University Policies

- [Academic Policy](#)
- [Student Conduct Code](#)
- [Academic Calendar](#)
- [Accessible Technology Initiative Policy](#)

Grading

Grades: Grades will be calculated on a plus/minus scale. Together all the assignments add up to 100% of the final course grade. I do not curve grades.

Quizzes: You **MUST** take the Quizzes during the scheduled time. Barring any serious, documented emergency, you will be ineligible to make up a missed quiz.

Discussion Forums: Require you to submit a substantive paragraph (150 – 250 words) in response to prompts provided on Canvas.

Grading Summary Table:

Assignments	Final Grade Calculations
Reading Quizzes (QZ)	20 %
Discussion Forums (DF)	20 %
Reading Response Posts (RRP)	10 %
Site Visit and Observation Report	25 %
Creative Integration Project— Ideal Religion	25 %
[Media Bibliography (1pt each entry, up to 10 max)—Extra Credit]	[5%]
Total	100% [105]

Grading Scale:

A	B	C	D	F
100 – 94 = A	89 – 87 = B+	79 – 77 = C+	69 – 67 = D+	59 or < = F
93 – 90 = A-	86 – 83 = B	76 – 73 = C	66 – 63 = D	
	82 – 80 = B-	72 – 70 = C-	62 – 60 = D-	

Grading Rubrics: Assignments will be graded according to the following scoring rubrics. Use them as guides as you complete the assignments for the course.

Discussion Forums and Reading Response Posts

These assignments require a substantive paragraph (or length *as specified*) critically engaging the prompt/s provided. Aim is to be prepared and able to contribute to class discussion based on your thorough engagement with the material. Thus, your responses must engage key points from the reading, reflect your understanding of the material, and include your critical analysis. Informed and prepared student participation is critical to fostering a culture of learning.

- (10) Substantive response directly and critically engaging the material and addressing prompt/s in clear well-polished writing
- (9) Solid work addressing the prompt and engaging the class material in a thoughtful manner, w/ some refining necessary
- (8) Satisfactory engagement, though not substantive and/or sufficiently thoughtful
- (7) Effort made, but insufficient direct engagement with the material and/or prompt
- (6) Minimal effort present, prompt and material not well engaged
- (5) Incorrect engagement or requirement not present

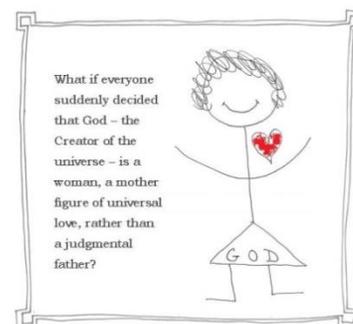
Written Paper Assignments—Site Visit, Ideal Religion

Summary Descriptions

- (A) Represents superior, well-polished level work that satisfies all assignment requirements.
- (B) Represents a commendable level work that satisfies all assignment requirements.
- (C) Represents adequate level work that satisfies basic assignment requirements only.
- (D) Represents inadequate level work that ineffectively and/or inappropriately satisfy basic assignment requirements.
- (F) Represents unacceptable level work that fails to satisfy core assignment requirements.

Detailed Descriptions

- (A) Papers: Represent a superior, well-polished level of writing that satisfies all assignment requirements
- Thesis is thoughtful, considerably clear, and skillfully supported.
 - Sentences are free of grammatical errors, careless mistakes, and exhibit noticeable variety.
 - Paragraphs are extremely well developed, organized effectively with a strong focus, and represent clear, connected units of thought.
 - Essay is rich in detail with exemplary rhetorical control, stylistic fluency, and a wealth of critical thinking.
- (B) Papers: Represent a commendable level of writing that satisfies all assignment requirements
- Thesis is thoughtful, clear, and well supported.
 - Sentences are free of major grammatical errors, careless mistakes, and exhibit sufficient variety.
 - Paragraphs are well developed, organized effectively, clearly focused, and represent complete, connected units of thought.
 - Essay contains noticeable detail, sufficient rhetorical control, and substantial evidence of critical thinking.
- (C) Papers: Represent an adequate level of writing that satisfies basic assignment requirements only
- Thesis is present, but possibly inadequate and/or ill-conceived.
 - Sentences demonstrate lapses in proofreading/editing with enough careless mistakes to significantly catch a reader's attention in a negative manner, and exhibit little or no variety. Grammatical and structural errors may affect readability.
 - Paragraphs are adequately organized, but contain only modest levels of focus and support necessary to effectively illustrate assertions, or represent clear, connected units of thought.
 - Essay contains a minimally acceptable level of detail, rhetorical control, and critical thinking.
- (D) Papers: Represent an inadequate level of writing that ineffectively and/or inappropriately satisfy basic assignment requirements
- Thesis is poorly conceived, ineffective, or absent.
 - Sentences demonstrate significant lapses in proofreading/editing, insufficient variety, and several grammatical and/or structural errors that significantly diminish readability.
 - Paragraphs are inadequately organized, and lack sufficient coherence, support, and focus necessary to appropriately illustrate assertions, or represent clear, connected units of thought.
 - Essay contains insufficient levels of detail, rhetorical control, and little or no evidence of critical thinking.
- (F) Papers: Represent an unacceptable level of writing that fails to satisfy core assignment requirements
- Thesis is absent, erroneous, or completely unacceptable.
 - Sentences demonstrate severe lapses in proofreading/editing, lack variety or appropriateness, and contain an abundance of grammatical and/or structural errors that significantly diminish readability.
 - Paragraphs are not organized, and lack any coherence, support, and focus necessary to appropriately illustrate assertions, and represent clear, connected units of thought.
 - Essay contains little or no detail, and exhibits a complete absence of rhetorical control and critical thinking.



1. Page from Peter Wilkes's Book
A Woman Called God

Course Schedule

All Assignments DUE by 11:55PM on the SUNDAY of the week assigned.

Class Materials: (e-lectures, PowerPoints, Discussion Posts, articles, etc.) “open” on Canvas at 9:00AM Monday mornings of each week. **You have from Monday 9:00AM till Sunday 11:55PM to submit the week’s work.** Don’t wait until the last minute, I recommend setting a regularly scheduled time each week to work on the course.

Abbreviations:

WRT= Esposito, *World Religions Today*

GIN = Prothero, *God is Not One*

O = “Other” material as specified—pdf, hyperlink, video, etc.; see Canva

QZ: Quiz

DF: Discussion Forums

RRP: Reading Response Posts

WK	Week begins MONDAY	Topic	Read	Week ends SUNDAY Submit assignments by 11:55pm Sundays	DONE?
UNIT ONE: FOUNDATIONS					
1	Aug 28	Course Introduction; Why Study Religion? and What is Religion?	O: Syllabus O: “Study Religion” website Part I	1) QZ —Practice 2) DF “Why and What” (I)	
2	Sep 4	Introducing Religious Studies; Approaches to the study of religion.	GIN: Introduction O: <i>Religion Toolkit</i> , 1-14 O: “Study Religion” website Part II	1) QZ —1 2) DF “Misconceptions” & “Pressing Issues” (II)	
3	Sep 11	Formative elements; history and context; Modernity, postmodernity, colonialism.	WRT: Ch. 1, 1-26 O: “Timeline,” in <i>Religion Toolkit</i> , xvi – xxi	1) QZ —2 2) RRP —Timeline	
UNIT TWO: EARLY RELIGIONS AND WESTERN MONOTHEISMS					
4	Sep 18	Indigenous Religions	WRT: Ch. 2—pgs. 39-73 O: Clan Mothers and the Haudenosaunee	1) QZ —3 2) DF	
5	Sep 25	A Bridge to Monotheism—Guadalupe of the Mexica	O: Watch “Mesoamerican Cosmovision,” D. Carrasco O: Read <i>Nican Mopohua</i> GIN: Ch. 6	1) RRP —From Indigenous Roots to...	
6	Oct 2	Judaism Part I	O: Torah and the Law GIN: Ch. 7	1) QZ —4 2) DF	
7	Oct 9	Judaism Part II	O: “Israel” and Diaspora	1) QZ —5 2) RRP	
8	Oct 16	Christianity	WRT: Ch. 4—pgs. 147-152, 156-175, 184-201 O: Gina Messina-Dysert	1) QZ —6 2) DF 3) Site Visit—DUE	
9	Oct 23	Islam	WRT: Ch. 5—pgs. 219-242 GIN: Ch. 1 O: amina wadud	1) QZ —7 2) RRP	
UNIT THREE: 330 MILLION GODS – or NONE; BALANCING AND BLENDING					
10	Oct 30	South Asian Religions: Hinduism, Jainism, and Sikhism	WRT: Ch. 6—pgs. 307-333 O: Manushi Swachhnarayani	1) QZ —8 2) DF	

11	Nov 6	Buddhism	WRT: Ch. 7—pgs. 399-427, 470-482 O: Prothero Video	1) QZ—9 2) RRP		
UNIT FOUR: PRESENT AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS						
12	Nov 13	Clericalism and Women Religious On not clinging (wadud)	O: Hunt, “On Clericalism” and Gross, “How Clinging to Gender Subverts” (or) O: FAR—Gross, “Is Female Rebirth an Obstacle?” O: video	1) QZ—10 2) DF		
13	Nov 20	***** THANSGVING BREAK *****				
14	Nov 27	What makes a “World Religion”? Globalization— from New to New Age	WRT: Ch. 9—pgs. 577-616 O: FAR—Carol Christ, Starhawk	1) QZ—11 2) DF		
15	Dec 4	Closing Questions: Can we define religion?	O: <i>Religion Toolkit</i> , 308-336 O: tbd	1) RRP 2) Annotated Bibliography DUE— Extra Credit		
16	Dec 11	Creative Integration Project—DUE at beginning of our scheduled exam period, TBD.				

Additional Learning Outcomes

This course is available for **General Education, Comparative Cultural Studies/Gender, Race, Class, Ethnicity Studies** and Foreign Languages.

Goal: Students will understand the diversity and multiplicity of cultural forces that shape the world through the study of cultures, gender, sexuality, race, religion, class, ethnicities and languages with special focus on the contributions, differences, and global perspectives of diverse cultures and societies.

Student Learning Outcomes —Students will:

1. Describe and compare different cultures;
2. Explain how various cultures contribute to the development of our multicultural world;
3. Describe and explain how race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, sexuality and other markers of social identity impact life experiences and social relations;
4. Analyze and explain the deleterious impact and the privileges sustained by racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, classism, homophobia, religious intolerance or stereotyping on all sectors of society;
5. Demonstrate linguistic and cultural proficiency in a language other than English.

In other words, as you complete the various assignments, you will have the opportunity to showcase your ability to think logically and analytically about various religious traditions of both the West and the East.

Sexual Violence

In the event that you choose to write or speak about having survived sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking and specify that this violence occurred while you were a CSUN student, federal and state education laws require that, as your instructor, I notify the Campus Title IX Coordinator of such incident(s), including any identifying information. The Campus Title IX Coordinator will contact you to assist with on- and off-campus support services, and to let you know about your rights and options as a survivor, including possibilities for holding accountable the person who harmed you.

The Campus Title IX Coordinator is: Susan Hua, Director of Equity and Diversity; Phone: (818) 677-2077 E-Mail: susan.hua@csun.edu; University Hall Room 285; Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday
<http://www.csun.edu/eqd>

Campus Care Advocate: Katie LaRue; Phone: (818) 677-7492; e-mail, katelin.larue@csun.edu; Klotz Student Health Center Room 140G

Strength United 24/7 Crisis Hotline: Phone: (818) 886-0453 or (661) 253-0258 <http://www.csun.edu/eisner-education/strength-united>

University Counseling Services; Phone: (818) 677-2366; Bayramian Hall Room 520; Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday; After hours, urgent care assistance (818) 677-2366, option 3; <http://www.csun.edu/counseling>

Klotz Student Health Center; Phone: (818) 677-3666 Located east of the bookstore, across from the National Center on Deafness; Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Wednesday; 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Thursday; 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Friday <http://www.csun.edu/shc>

CSUN HelpLine; (in conjunction with UCS and Associated Students, Inc.); Phone: (818) 349-HELP (4357) – ALL CALLS ARE CONFIDENTIAL; Hours: 6:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m., Sunday through Thursday; 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., Friday and Saturday <http://www.csun.edu/helpline>

If it is determined that a perpetrator poses an imminent or immediate threat to you and/or the broader campus community or if person(s) under 18 years of age are involved, CSUN employees are required to notify the Campus Title IX Coordinator and/or **CSUN Police Services:**

Captain Scott VanScoy; Phone: (818) 677-5582; E-Mail: scott.g.vanscoy@csun.edu; Located on the corner of Darby Ave. & Prairie St.; Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday; 24 Hour Police Dispatch: (818) 677-2111; <http://www.csun.edu/police>

For more information regarding your rights and options as a victim/survivor of sexual violence, please visit the University's Title IX website: www.csun.edu/shinealight or the Office of Equity & Diversity's website: www.csun.edu/eqd