

# **REL1439 Religious Studies**

## **Course Syllabus**

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Religious Studies is an introductory course. All students are eligible to take this course.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will familiarize students to the morals, views, traditions and foundations of four major world religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam. This course surveys religion in ritual, logical, realistic and principled facets. Currently, globalization empowers people to communicate and intermingle with people of diverse ethnicities and backgrounds. A key to comprehending others is realizing their dogmas and beliefs about life. A profound and educated appreciation of religions will permit students to be considerate of the many people they will come across in the course of their lifetime.

You will have a decent awareness of what the four main religious systems believe. A concise history of the assorted religions will be inspected. Whether we detach ourselves from religious practices or support them, we cannot elude the influence of religious ideas, practices, images, languages and values in our everyday life, work and play.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Religion is vital. It makes importance and furnishes organization to life, tackling deep questions about body, spirit, community and time. What is religion? How does it work in our world? This course will give an extensive range of what the four main religions believe and how it influences the people around the world. By the end of this course, all students should:

- Outline religion
- Expound on conventional traits of the basic religions
- Compare the different religious beliefs of the world
- Evaluate the fundamental attributes of the major religions
- Distinguish the history, beliefs, rituals, and ways of each custom
- Illuminate source beliefs of several world religions
- Competence to compare and contrast the credos and qualities of the world religions

### **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance is mandatory for all students. Excellent attendance is imperative for mastery and application of the information dispensed. Whether you are sitting at a desk in a classroom or attending via Skype, your attendance is vital to your success. Late arrivals are distracting and disrespectful. Please refrain from being tardy. Grades will be affected by absences and tardiness. Participation in class is a prerequisite. You learn from lectures, discussions and presentations.

## **CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR**

Students are expected to treat all persons with respect. We should all conduct ourselves in a courteous and responsible manner. Be considerate, you can disagree, don't insult.

Please set all your electronic devices to silent during class so as not to be a disturbance to others in the class.

## **TUTORIAL ASSISTANCE**

We maintain an open-door policy for our students. We are absolutely willing to discuss any matter that may arise during the course. If you have any questions, problems, or need help with the course material, we urge you to reach out as soon as the issue arises. If you want to contest a grade, you must do so within 48 hours and put it in writing. Please ask your student advocate for help. If you do not have a student advocate send an email to: [tutordept@usilacs.org](mailto:tutordept@usilacs.org).

## **NON-DISCRIMINATORY STATEMENT**

All students regardless of age, race, gender, religion, physical disability, class, etc., shall have equal opportunity without harassment in this course. Any problems with or questions about harassment can be discussed confidentially via email at: [hr@usilacs.org](mailto:hr@usilacs.org).

## **DRESS CODE**

For students enrolled who are attending in a classroom or via Skype, please be sure you are dressed modestly and respectfully. Please refer to [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/business%20casual](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/business%20casual). NO short shorts or skirts. Avoid low-cut tops. We want to present ourselves in a dignified manner at all times.

## **NETIQUETTE**

- Always read through all the comments of the class before responding. This will avoid duplicating comments or questions asked.
- Avoid language that could be offensive. All profanity is strictly prohibited. Remember that using all caps when replying online signifies shouting. This would be rude and combative.
- Be sensitive to the fact that there will be fellow students from all parts of the world with many differing backgrounds and languages. Remember that slang and idioms will most likely be misconceived and/or misinterpreted. These should be avoided.
- Respect others views or opinions.
- Be thoughtful of the privacy of others. Ask permission before sharing email addresses or other personal information.
- Do not forward inappropriate material such as: virus warnings, chain letters, jokes, etc. The sharing of pornographic material is strictly prohibited.
- Use good spelling and grammar. Avoid using texting shortcuts.

- Strive to compose your comments in a positive, supportive and constructive manner at all times.

Any of these offenses will be dealt with by the school disciplinary committee.

### **ADA ACCOMMODATIONS**

All reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with disabilities. Any student attending USILACS who needs an accommodation due to a chronic challenge (i.e. blindness, deaf or hard of hearing, mobility issues, psychological, or learning disability), register with:

USILACS Registrar's Office  
1221 Brickell Ave.  
Miami, FL 33131  
1-305-330-2202  
[registrarsoffice@usilacs.org](mailto:registrarsoffice@usilacs.org)

### **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY/CHEATING**

We encourage collaborating with others, either in person or online, to study and learn. When you complete your assignments or your exams, however, the wording has to be your own.

Plagiarism is the theft of someone else's work and ideas. You are permitted to cite or even quote someone else, however, you must properly cite them. There are two accepted ways of doing this. They are known as Modern Language Association (MLA) or American Psychological Association (APA). You can visit [www.citationmachine.net](http://www.citationmachine.net) for help in correctly citing information.

As a school that strives to maintain high moral standards, we strongly caution our students to be ethical and honest. Endeavor to be honest in conducting yourself in regard to any coursework you accomplish or exams you may take. Cheating is a dishonest practice.

### **REFERENCE MATERIALS**

The vast majority of textbooks are outdated by the time they are published. USILACS education programs are not based upon outdated printed textbooks. USILACS programs are based on the most accurate and reliable knowledge available; specifically, up-to-date vetted internet-based information.

For those who would like some reference or Internet search recommendations, we would recommend the following.

- (2017) Religious Studies: Wikipedia The Free Encyclopedia.
- (2017) "Jesus Christ and Christianity/World History." Khan Academy
- (2017) "Paul and the Apostles Christianity/World History." Khan Academy
- (2017) "Christians remain world's largest religious group, but they are declining in Europe." Conrad Hackett and David McClendon. Pew Research Centre.

- (2015) "How the U.S. Public Became Less Religious." Pew Research Center
- (2013) "Religion & Modern Society." Believers
- (2013) "The Five Major World Religions." TED-Ed
- (2006) "The Big Religion Chart." Religion Facts.

**MINIMUM REQUIRED SUPPLIES**

All students will need all of the following:

- Computer with camera, microphone, and speakers.
- Skype installed on the computer with an active Skype account.
- Internet
- Printer
- Notebook paper
- Pens/pencils

If the student does not have a computer or internet, there will be some available for use at the school in the computer lab.

**GRADING SYSTEM**

There will be three tests throughout the course. Each test will count for 33.3% of the final grade.

Grade	Percentage	Grade Point
A+	99	4.0
A	97	3.8
A-	94	3.7
B+	89	3.3
B	85	3.0
B-	81	2.7
C+	77	2.3
C	73	2.0
C-	69	1.7
D	66	1.0
F	59	0.0

All students must earn at least a "D" in order to pass the class.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

*Religion in the news report-*

Find an article or news report involving religion in some way. Summarize the article and give your opinion of what was reported on. Tell how it positively or negatively influences people. This report should be at least 1,000 words in length.

*Critical response paper-*

Pick a belief from a religion unfamiliar to you (i.e. reincarnation, immaculate conception, karma), research it to understand it better. Write a paper that 1) explains the belief, 2) addresses why people would be inclined to adopt the belief, and 3) what do you think about the belief? This paper should be at least 1,500 words in length.

*Belief chart-*

Make a chart outlining the basic beliefs of each of the four religions examined in this class. The chart should enable the onlooker to plainly see the similarities and the differences in the religions.

## **WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS**

<b>Week 1</b>	Overview of course and coursework Why do people adhere to religious beliefs?
<b>Week 2</b>	Major religions around the world and their sects
<b>Week 3</b>	Hinduism overview and history
<b>Week 4</b>	Beliefs of Hinduism <i>Religion in the news report due</i>
<b>Week 5</b>	<i>Video review and Exam</i>
<b>Week 6</b>	Buddhism overview and history
<b>Week 7</b>	Beliefs of Buddhists
<b>Week 8</b>	World religions on the decline? <i>Critical response paper due</i>
<b>Week 9</b>	<i>Video review and Exam</i>
<b>Week 10</b>	Islam history and beliefs
<b>Week 11</b>	Christianity history
<b>Week 12</b>	Christianity beliefs <i>Belief chart due</i>
<b>Week 13</b>	<i>Video review and Final exam</i>