

College of San Mateo
Official Course Outline

1. **COURSE ID:** PHIL 300 **TITLE:** Introduction to World Religions
Units: 3.0 units **Hours/Semester:** 48.0-54.0 Lecture hours; and 96.0-108.0 Homework hours
Method of Grading: Grade Option (Letter Grade or Pass/No Pass)
Recommended Preparation:
 Eligibility for ENGL 100 or ENGL 105.

2. **COURSE DESIGNATION:**
Degree Credit
Transfer credit: CSU; UC
AA/AS Degree Requirements:
 CSM - GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS: E5c. Humanities
CSU GE:
 CSU GE Area C: ARTS AND HUMANITIES: C2 - Humanities (Literature, Philosophy, Languages Other than English)
IGETC:
 IGETC Area 3: ARTS AND HUMANITIES: B: Humanities

3. **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS:**
Catalog Description:
 Survey of major contemporary Eastern and Western religions. Includes theories, practices, history, and leaders of each religion studied. Emphasizes the similarities underlying the differences between various religions.

4. **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME(S) (SLO'S):**
 Upon successful completion of this course, a student will meet the following outcomes:
 1. Compare and contrast the belief systems, practices, vocabulary, central tenets and philosophical assumptions of the major religions of the world;
 2. Appraise the historical conditions that gave rise to (or transformed) these religions, and the influence that these religions have in the world today;
 3. Question the relevance and meaning that religion has in the consciousness of those who practice it.

5. **SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:**
 Upon successful completion of this course, a student will be able to:
 1. Compare and contrast the belief systems, practices, vocabulary, central tenets and philosophical assumptions of the major religions of the world; Appraise the historical conditions that gave rise to (or transformed) these religions, and the influence that these religions have in the world today; Question the relevance and meaning that religion has in the consciousness of those who practice it.

6. **COURSE CONTENT:**
Lecture Content:
 1. Introduction to the Academic Study of Religion
 - A. Arguments
 - B. Rationality
 - C. Theory of Religion
 - D. Types of Religion
 2. Hinduism
 - A. Sacred Literature
 - B. Fundamental doctrines
 - C. Cosmology
 - D. Ethics
 - E. Practices of lay people
 - F. Major holy days
 - G. Art and music
 - H. Founders and other significant leaders
 - I. Historical Context

Instructors will include
the following eight major religions below.

- J. Modern Expressions of Hinduism
- 3. Buddhism
 - A. Sacred Literature
 - B. Fundamental doctrines
 - C. Cosmology
 - D. Ethics
 - E. Practices of lay people
 - F. Major holy days
 - G. Art and music
 - H. Founders and other significant leaders
 - I. Historical Context
 - J. Modern Expressions of Buddhism
- 4. Taoism
 - A. Sacred Literature
 - B. Fundamental doctrines
 - C. Cosmology
 - D. Ethics
 - E. Practices of lay people
 - F. Major holy days
 - G. Art and music
 - H. Founders and other significant leaders
 - I. Historical Context
 - J. Modern Expressions of Taoism
- 5. Confucianism
 - A. Sacred Literature
 - B. Fundamental doctrines
 - C. Cosmology
 - D. Ethics
 - E. Practices of lay people
 - F. Major holy days
 - G. Art and music
 - H. Founders and other significant leaders
 - I. Historical Context
 - J. Modern Expressions of Confucianism
- 6. Shintoism
 - A. Sacred Literature
 - B. Fundamental doctrines
 - C. Cosmology
 - D. Ethics
 - E. Practices of lay people
 - F. Major holy days
 - G. Art and music
 - H. Founders and other significant leaders
 - I. Historical Context
 - J. Modern Expressions of Shintoism
- 7. Judaism
 - A. Sacred Literature
 - B. Fundamental doctrines
 - C. Cosmology
 - D. Ethics
 - E. Practices of lay people
 - F. Major holy days
 - G. Art and music
 - H. Founders and other significant leaders
 - I. Historical Context
 - J. Modern Expressions of Judaism
- 8. Christianity
 - A. Sacred Literature
 - B. Fundamental doctrines
 - C. Cosmology

- D. Ethics
- E. Practices of lay people
- F. Major holy days
- G. Art and music
- H. Founders and other significant leaders
- I. Historical Context
- J. Modern Expressions of Christianity

9. Islam

- A. Sacred Literature
- B. Fundamental doctrines
- C. Cosmology
- D. Ethics
- E. Practices of lay people
- F. Major holy days
- G. Art and music
- H. Founders and other significant leaders
- I. Historical Context
- J. Modern Expressions of Islam

(Emphasis is on practice of the religion in its primary site but mention is made of local temples, practices, etc.)

(An instructor may choose to include other religions as well, including examples such as Ancient Egyptian, Zoroastrian, Native American, Jainism, Sikhism, Baha'i, or modern sects of Judaism, e.g., Hasidim; Christianity, e.g., Mormonism; Islam, e.g., Black Muslims.)

7. REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

Typical methods of instruction may include:

- A. Lecture
- B. Discussion
- C. Field Trips
- D. Other (Specify): 1. Lecture to present the a) principles of major belief systems, practices, vocabulary, central tenets, and philosophical assumptions; b.) historical conditions that gave rise to (or transformed) the major religions; c.) influence that these religions have in the world today 2. Small group discussion of assigned readings, lecture material, and teacher-generated questions to a) compare and contrast belief systems, practices, vocabulary, central tenets and philosophical assumptions of the major religions of the world b) evaluate the historical conditions that gave rise to (or transformed) these religions, and the influence that these religions have in the world today c) estimate the meaning a religion has in the consciousness of its practitioners 3. Full class discussion serving as follow-up to small group discussions to a.) criticize various interpretations of belief systems, b.) assess the influences the religions have on the modern world, 4. Video and audio presentations to a.) demonstrate the social, communal, artistic, and ritual aspects of religions. 5. Field trips to local places of worship or museums to a.) introduce various belief systems, b.) experience the conditions under which practitioners engage their full being with the object of religious veneration, c.) experience the artistic expressions of religious minded persons in their attempt to present the meaning of their

8. REPRESENTATIVE ASSIGNMENTS

Representative assignments in this course may include, but are not limited to the following:

Writing Assignments:

- Students will write summaries of main ideas from the chapters of the text.
- Students will write research papers which explore specific concepts in depth.
- Students will write summaries of the videos shown.
- Students will write essay answers to exam questions.

Reading Assignments:

- Students will read the assigned chapters from the textbook.
- Students will read selections from the world's sacred scriptures.

9. REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF EVALUATION

Representative methods of evaluation may include:

- A. Class Participation
- B. Exams/Tests

- C. Homework
- D. Oral Presentation
- E. Papers
- F. Quizzes
- G. Research Projects
- H. Written examination

I. 1. Post-lecture question-answer sessions to verify student comprehension of material presented. 2. Monitoring of student responses, participation, and contribution in small group and full class discussion and full class debate to determine comprehension of theoretical and material. 3. Evaluation of in-class writing assignments to determine comprehension of material. 4. Assessment of student-led discussions to judge breadth and relevance of prepared discussion questions. 5. Assessment of individual student presentations according to completeness of summary and analysis of the reading and depth of evaluation of the reading. 6. Evaluation of major essays to determine the quality of the research and the analysis of the topics chosen. This will include an assessment of the sources (traditional and internet) and the quality of the critical thinking exhibited. 7. Evaluation of short response essays or journal entries to determine seriousness and depth of consideration of the chosen writing topic. 8. Short-answer and essay examinations to establish the understanding of the terms, beliefs, philosophical assumptions etc.

10. **REPRESENTATIVE TEXT(S):**

Possible textbooks include:

- A. Fisher. *Living Religions*, 10th ed. I Prentice Hall, 2017
- B. Van Voorst, Robert. *World*, 4th ed. Cengage, 2020
- C. Van Voorst. Robert. *Anthology of World Scriptures*, 9th ed. Cengage, 2017
- D. Huston Smith. *The World's Religions*, ed. San Francisco: Harper Row, 2009
- E. Cunningham and Kelsay. *Sacred Quest*, 6th ed. Prentice Hall, 2013

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Course Originator: Jeremy Ball