

Introduction to Western Religions

Course Syllabus

CRN 26045 R102 3 credits

TR 2:30 - 3:50

North Santiam Hall-Room 110

FALL 2019

About this Class:

This is our agreement with one another. I will generally follow this course outline, but might make changes if needed. I want you to succeed in this class and have a good time learning what I think is a very exciting subject. Religion is often very subjective, which is why it is important that we keep an open mind and respectful tone with one another. Remember, this class is much like the practice of religion; it has much to do with what you put into it. Also, I hope that this class will be a dialogue, not my monologue. Your input and participation is expected!

About Technology

Our classroom will be a technology free zone. All of my slides and notes will be posted on my instructor website.

Instructor Information

Matt Gordon

Office Hours: By appointment, send me an email. I can usually find an opportunity to meet before or after class.

I can be found on campus every Tuesday/Thursday from 1 - 2. Call or text.

541-829-3003 (call or text)

E-mail: gordonm@linnbenton.edu

Instructor Website:

http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/gordonm/web.cfm?pgID=7938

Course Description:

RELI 102 surveys cultures and religions of the western world with a focus on the teaching of compassion and tolerance in these religions. Includes understandings of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Goals:

- Discover an understanding of the history, beliefs and practices of major Western religious traditions
- Discover an understanding of the impact and influence of Western religions on western culture
- Discover an understanding of the importance of studying, knowing and appreciating world religions in a 21st century context

Required Reading:

Molloy, Michael. *Experiencing the World's Religions*. New York, NY. McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

Novak, Philip. *The World's Wisdom: Sacred Texts of the World's Religions*. New York, NY. HarperCollins Publishers.

Course Requirements

Class Participation: Show up to class, stay awake, and participate in discussions.

Quizzes: There will be a total of five quizzes, five questions each. You will be allowed to drop the lowest grade of one (this is not an opt-out option, you still need to take all five quizzes.). HINT: If you know the answers to the key terms, review questions, and discussion questions at the end of each chapter of *Experiencing the World's Religions* book, you will do well on the quizzes.

Mid-Term: The mid-term will reflect your understanding of our course work up to this point, the study of religion in general, Judaism, and Christianity. This mid-term will be mostly multiple choice with a few essay questions.

Influencers/Shapers Research Presentation or Research Paper: Every religious movement begins with a powerful vision and often a charismatic visionary. These visionaries are

the prophets, messiahs, heroes and heroines, gods and goddesses, and founders of these movements. As history unfolds and movements grow, movements take shape and change. Movements grow, evolve, and adapt to their surroundings. Often, challengers give new life and new hope to religious movements. Leaders spark debate, enthusiasm or even controversy within established traditions. Students will be asked to research shapers and influencers of one of the major religions we explored. The presentation will be in the form of a group presentation (15-20 minutes, 2-4 students) or a research paper (6-8 pages, double-spaced).

Final Exam: Covers all the material we studied.

Grading

(see above for descriptions)

Class Participation – 15%	105 – 90 = A
Weekly Quizzes – 15 %	89 -80 = B
Presentation/Paper – 25 %	79-70 = C
Mid-Term – 25 %	69 – 60 = D
Final Exam—25 %	Below 60 = F

=105 % (this allows some flexibility if there any deficiencies in your work)

Extra Credit/Make up/Late Work Policy: Late work is not offered, but early work is accepted. The course outline offers you every chance to excel, if for a good reason you know you will be missing class, please communicate with me to make arrangements BEFORE you miss a quiz or exam, not AFTER. I can offer extra credit opportunities in the form of writing assignments for students concerned about their grade.

College Policies:

Disability Services: Students who may need accommodations due to documented disabilities, who have medical information which the instructor should know, or who need special arrangements in an emergency, should speak with the instructor during the first week of class. If you have not accessed services and think you may need them, please contact Disability Services, 917-4789.

Waitlist Policy: Students not in attendance for the first class meeting may be dropped to allow for those wishing to add at that time.

Drop Policy: Students are responsible for knowing the last day to drop the course for a full refund. Also, be aware of the last day to officially withdraw from this course for transcripts to show a 'W.' *Incomplete Grades:* You may be eligible for an 'Incomplete' grade if you have finished 90% of the class work. Should you receive an 'Incomplete,' all course work must be finished by the end of the next term. Please contact the

instructor prior to term's end with appropriate documentation for requesting an 'Incomplete.'

Diversity Policy: The LBCC community is enriched by diversity. Everyone has the right to think, learn, and work together in an environment of respect, tolerance, and goodwill. I actively support this right regardless of race, creed, color, personal opinion, gender, sexual orientation, or any of the countless other ways in which we are diverse.

Course Schedule

(NOTE: I reserve the right to change, add or delete, so please come to class)

Date	Read Before Class	In Class	Exams, Projects, Quizzes
Tues, Oct 1		Syllabus, Class Overview, Introduction to Religious Studies, Timelines	
Thurs, Oct 3	Molloy, Chapter 1 Pew Research on World Religion, Preview Website Link on Instructor Website	Worldviews, Social Contexts, Guiding Definitions	
Tues, Oct 8	Novak, 331-345, Creation Myths 1-11	Creation Myths, Introduction to Religious Studies, Introduction to Judaism	Quiz #1 on Introduction to Religious Studies
Thurs, Oct 10	Molloy, Chapter 8: Judaism	Judaism	
Tues, Oct 15		Judaism	
Thurs, Oct 17	Novak, 173-191, Torah	Judaism	QUIZ #2 on Judaism
Tues, Oct 22	Molloy, Chapter 9: Christianity	Christianity	
Thurs, Oct 24	Novak, 239-253, Sayings of Jesus	Christianity	
Tues, Oct 29	Novak, 282-299, Life of the Early Church	Christianity	QUIZ #3 on Christianity
Thurs, Oct 31	Molloy, Chapter 10	Islam	
Tues, Nov 5	Novak, 282-299	Islam	Presentations Mid-term Study Guide
Thurs, Nov 7		Islam	Quiz #4 on Islam
Tues, Nov 12	MID-TERM		
Thurs, Nov 14		Intersections and Interfaith Dialogue:	

		Roadblocks and Resources:	
Tues, Nov 19	Molloy, Chapter 11	Alternative Paths	
Thurs, Nov 21	Molloy, Chapter 12	The Modern Search	
Tues, Nov 26		Class Presentations	QUIZ #5- Alternative Paths and the Modern Search
Thurs, Nov 28	<i>NO CLASS- HAPPY THANKGIVING!</i>		
Tues, Dec 3	No reading for this day!	Class Presentations	
Thurs, Dec 5	No reading for this day!	Class, Presentations Final Exam Review	Final Exam Study Guide
FINAL EXAM WEEK	<i>Final Exam on Tuesday, December 10 at 4:30-6:20</i>		

Extra Credit (10 points possible – one of each activity)

If you are struggling in the class, and are worried about your final grade, there will be up to 10 points available for extra credit. If you have questions about your choice of activity / program you will use (or, if you have an idea of your own), please do not hesitate to ask me. *I hope you take advantage of the extra credit opportunities offered for this course. This is your chance to experience religion and the ongoing dialogue about religion happening presently in our community -- which can be easily accessed by the curious-minded!*

Attend an event/service (5 points): You may attend a religious service or event (outside of your own tradition or closely related denomination) at any point during the term and write a 2-page, double-spaced paper including your thoughts and impressions on the experience. If you would prefer to attend a lecture about religion (for example, a debate on Jesus hosted by the Socratic Society at OSU would be a great option), I will accept a 2-page, double-spaced paper outlining the main points of discussion and your thoughts on the subject.

Listen to a Podcast (5 points): You may enjoy streaming a radio program or watching a documentary while earning extra credit. I will accept a full 1-page, double-spaced, paper outlining the main points of discussion and your thoughts on the subject.

On Being, hosted by Krista Tippett

onbeing.org

(Click on *Archive*, pick a program that interests you personally. This is one of my favorite radio programs.)

Philosophy Talk, hosted by Ken Taylor and John Perry of Stanford University

<http://www.philosophytalk.org/>

(Click on *past programs*. These are not all specifically related to religion *per se*, so here are a few that will meet the religion requirement: St. Augustine; Faith, Reason and Science; Islamic Philosophy; Worship; Challenges to Free Will; Gandhi; Believing in God; The Problem of Evil; Jewish Philosophy; Concept of God; Confucius; Zen; The Existence of God; Religion and the Secular State; and, Has Science Replaced Religion?

Frontline – *The Mormons* (video)

<http://www.pbs.org/mormons/>

(Click on *watch online*, scroll down to April 30, 2007, *The Mormons*) This is a very interesting documentary on the historical and modern Mormon traditions. I wish I could show this in class, but it is quite long. So, if you have an interest in learning about this rapidly growing religion, have at it!

Wild, Wild Country - Documentary on the Rajneesh movement in Oregon (Netflix)

Or, find your own!