

**Religion 202 Course Syllabus**  
**CRN # 32895**

**Introduction to Religious Studies**  
**Winter 2019 / 3 Credits**

**Tuesday and Thursday, 2:30-3:50 PM**  
**NSH 107**

**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!

**Instructor Information**

Matt Gordon

Office: IA 220 (Albany campus)

Office Hours: By appointment. It's a good idea to email, call or text if you want to stop by and see me. I'm on campus in Albany sometimes, but don't have an office at the Benton Center. My schedule is flexible and can usually find a time to meet before class or other times during the week.

[gordonm@linnbenton.edu](mailto:gordonm@linnbenton.edu) -- a word about email: Please use your linnbenton email address for correspondence with me. The college takes your privacy seriously and I'm not allow to share any information unless I know for sure it is you.

541-829-3003 – call or text

Instructor Website: [http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social\\_science/gordonm/web.cfm?pgID=7938](http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/social_science/gordonm/web.cfm?pgID=7938)

You will find access to this syllabus, course information, weblinks, study materials, and classroom slides here.

**Course Description**

Explores the nature of religion as experienced historically throughout the world. Examines the nature of religious experience with the divine and the relationship between science and religion.

Discusses the roles of language, myths, and symbols in religion.

### Course Learning Outcomes

- Articulate an awareness of the varieties of religious expression and the dynamic nature of religious traditions.
- Describe a variety of methodological approaches to the study of religion (e.g. anthropological, philosophical, sociological, feminist, postcolonial).
- Discuss and examine the diverse debates and issues related to the study of religion.
- Practice reflexivity, identifying and critically examining the source and content of one's own cultural perspectives and world-views.

### Prerequisite Course(s):

Reading 90 and Writing 115 or above are *strongly* recommended.

### Required Texts:

Pals, D. L., (2006). *Eight Theories of Religion* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). New York; Oxford University Press.

### Course Requirements

Your final grade will be determined by your performance on assignments and activities:

**Class Participation:** Show up on time, stay awake, and be engaged in class discussions. This counts for 10% of your grade.

**Exams:** There will be 2 exams. The final exam will be cumulative. Both exams will be multiple choice and essay questions, study guides will be given for both exams. Each exam is 25% of your grade.

**Quizzes:** There will be a 4 short, 5 question quiz to test your knowledge on key terms. Each quiz is worth 5% of your grade, totaling 20%. **Quiz dates are on the calendar below.**

**Research Paper:** During the second half of the term, a 4-5 page research paper will require you to examine one major religion of your choice (outside of your own tradition). The research paper is worth 20% of your grade.

**Extra Credit:** There are some extra credit points available if you want to increase your percentages points, but these are optional and are due the last week before finals. Each extra credit opportunity is worth a maximum of 5% and two extra credit assignments are accepted. Extra credit is up to 10%. Extra credit assignments described below.

## Grading

Final letter grades will be determined as follows.

**Class Participation: 10%**  
**Weekly Quizzes: 20%**  
**Mid-term Exam: 25%**  
**Research Paper: 20%**  
**Final Exam 25%**  
**Optional extra credit up to 10%**  
**=110%**

Percent	Grade
90% or above	A
80-89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
59% or below	F

## Tentative Course Schedule

Week/Class	Textbook or other readings for the Week	Material to be covered: topics / lectures/ documentaries	Important dates: Exams / Research Paper due date
<u>Week 1</u> Jan 8 Jan 10		Introduction/Syllabus Defining Religion / Social Contexts/ Approaches to Studying Religion Timeline of Religion Key Terms	
<u>Week 2</u> Jan 15 Jan 17	Pals: Introduction and Chapter 1 (Tylor and Frazer)	Anthropology  Creation Myths and Indigenous Religions	<b>Quiz #1 on Jan 16</b>
<u>Week 3</u> Jan 22 Jan 24	Pals: Ch. 7 (Evans-Pritchard)  Selections from <i>The Bhagavad Gita</i>	Anthropology Theology  Hinduism	
<u>Week 4</u> Jan 29 Jan 31	Pals: Ch. 3 (Durkhiem)  Selections from <i>The Torah</i>	Sociology  Judaism	<b>Quiz #2 on Jan 31</b>
<u>Week 5</u> Feb 5 Feb 7	Pals: Ch. 2 (Frued)  <i>The Sayings of Jesus</i>	Psychology  Christianity	<b>Mid-term study guide given on exam on Feb 5</b>

<b><u>Week 6</u></b> Feb 12 Feb 14	Pals: Ch. 4 (Marx)  <i>The Legend of the Buddha's Life,</i>	Philosophy  Buddhism	<b>MID-TERM on Feb 12</b>
<b><u>Week 7</u></b> Feb 19 Feb 21	Pals: Ch. 8 (Geertz)  <i>Tao Te Ching</i>	Philosophy of Religion  Tao Te Ching	<b>Quiz #3 on Feb 21</b>
<b><u>Week 8</u></b> Feb 26 Feb 28	Pals: Ch 6 (Eliade) <i>5 Pillars of Islam</i>	Religion and History  Islam	<b>Quiz #4 on Feb 28</b>
<b><u>Week 9</u></b> Mar 5 Mar 7	<i>No Reading!</i>	New Religious Movements Feminism	<b>Research Papers Due on March 7</b>
<b><u>Week 10</u></b> Mar 12 Mar 14	<i>No Reading!</i>	Myths and Story Purpose and Meaning of Religion Conclusion and Discussion about Learning Process Final Exam Overview	Final Exam study guide given out  Extra Credit assignments due.
<b><u>Finals Week</u></b>	<b><u>Final Exam will be cumulative and be held on Tuesday, March 19 @ 2:30 - 4:20</u></b>		

### **Class Policies:**

*Plagiarism:* I reserve the right to issue an “F” grade for an assignment or the entire course if a student is found to have cheated or plagiarized. I do not allow students to re-write research papers for a higher grade. All direct quotes *and* information from outside sources must be cited within the text *and* in a bibliography or reference page. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism. If you are unsure, please seek help in the writing lab.

***READ ALL Inclusive community / constructive discussions:*** This material is inherently interesting, but it can also be a sensitive subject to discuss. As a class we must welcome participation, open discussion, and insight from all. Please remember to keep an open mind, and be respectful to me as your instructor and to your peers. The field of religious studies is incredibly vast and we simply do not have time to delve deeply into each topic. You are expected to engage positively, and even critically, with the material presented. However, using online class forums to complain or to be consistently negative towards another’s traditions or culture will not be tolerated. I reserve the right to delete posts if necessary.

*Late work:* I do not accept late work (research papers, exams, weekly assignments etc). I do accept early work though.

*Technology and devices in the classroom:* There is no need to use your phone, tablet, computer, or other technological devices in the classroom. All of my slides will be posted online. Study guides for exams and quizzes will be given. Our class will be very interactive, engaging, and discussion focused and technological devices are distracting to our process.

**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.

*Institutional Withdrawal / Waitlist Policy:* There is no waitlist for this course. Students who do not participate in week 1's discussion boards will be dropped from the course.

*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.'

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

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 or Watch a Documentary (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.

### **Some examples....**

**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

**Thich Naht Hanh Dharma Talks:** Archives of his dharma talks at Plum Village.

**Dalai Lama Audio Podcast:** Basically, recordings of his talks around the world.

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

**The Mormons: Documentary on PBS on the mormons, several parts:**

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/mormons/>

Or, find your own!