

# REL 102-001-Religions of World

Fall 2023

Credit Hours: 3

Lecture



## Contact Information

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## Teaching Assistant

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## Course Description

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This comparative study of religions highlights complexity in world religions. Topics, such as texts, practices, and deities, organize the study of different pairs of religions.

Core Attributes: Humanities

## Required Texts

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**NONE / NO TEXT REQUIRED**

**Subtitle:** NONE / NO TEXT REQUIRED

## Other Course Materials

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This course will make significant use of Blackboard Learn (<https://ualearn.blackboard.com>) for readings, quizzes, take-home tests, and assignment submission, and class meetings will be recorded on Panopto (accessible through Blackboard) for you to review afterwards. Therefore, you will need internet access to complete the course, as well as access to a computer or other device, and the tools that we will use in this course function best with updated browsers. For general tutorials for Blackboard, you can go to <https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student>. If you have problems using Blackboard or any of the other tools within Blackboard, please contact the professor or GTA as early as possible.

No additional course materials are necessary, beyond the readings posted as PDFs on Blackboard and the required computing and internet capabilities to work with Blackboard and, if desired, Panopto recordings.

## Student Learning Outcomes

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- Students will be able to analyze critically the history of the category “world religions” and the values implicit within it.
- Students will be able define basic terms associated with the histories and practices of a

broad range of ideas and practices commonly labeled religions.

- Students will be able develop a sophisticated method for comparative studies.
- Students will be able critique the specific categories commonly associated with religions and the agendas and assumptions that those categories reveal.
- Students will be able work effectively in small groups to present critical analyses of representations

## Outline of Topics

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This course meets twice each week. All class sessions will be recorded to assist students who want to review material that they might have missed during a class session. You can access recorded sessions in the relevant folder on the coursepage on Blackboard.

The following schedule of sessions is tentative and subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class and/or via email as early as possible, allowing sufficient time for students to adjust.

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignments
24 Aug	Introductions		
29 Aug	Approaches to the Study of Religion	Introduction 1	
31 Aug	What are Religions of the World?	Introduction 2	
5 Sept	Hinduism 1	Hinduism 1	Quiz 1
7 Sept	Hinduism 2	Hinduism 2	
12 Sept	Hinduism 3		Quiz 2
14 Sept	Judaism 1	Judaism 1	Hinduism Write-up due by 11:59 pm
19 Sept	Judaism 2	Judaism 2	Quiz 3
21 Sept	Judaism 3		

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
26 Sept	Comparisons		Quiz 4 Judaism Write-up due by 11:59 pm
28 Sept	Buddhism1	Buddhism 1	
3 Oct	Buddhism 2	Buddhism 2	Quiz 5
5 Oct	Buddhism 3		
10 Oct	Chinese Religion 1	Chinese Religion 1	Quiz 6 Buddhism Write-up due by 11:59 pm
12 Oct	Chinese Religion 2	Chinese Religion 2	
17 Oct	Chinese Religion 3		Quiz 7
19 Oct	Comparisons		Chinese Religion Write-up due by 11:59 pm
24 Oct	Christianity 1	Christianity 1	Quiz 8
31 Oct	Christianity 2	Christianity 2	
2 Nov	Christianity 3		First Critical Analysis Project due by 11:59 pm
7 Nov	Islam 1	Islam 1	Quiz 9
9 Nov	Islam 2	Islam 2	
14 Nov	Islam 3		Quiz 10
16 Nov	African Religion 1	African Religion 1	Islam Write-up due by 11:59 pm
28 Nov	African Religion 2	African Religion 2	Quiz 11
30 Nov	African Religion 3		
5 Dec	Comparisons		African Religion Write-up due by 11:59 pm
7 Dec	Conclusion		
11 Dec			Final Critical Analysis Project due by 11:59 pm

## Attendance Policy

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Attendance is not recorded, but keeping up with class sessions and readings, along with specific assignments, contributes to student learning and success on assessments (and thus the final grade). If you are ill, you should stay home for the sake of the entire class.

In-Class Assignments, however, are restricted to those who are present in class and typically are not announced ahead of time. Thus, an absence on a day when an In-Class Assignment is given reduces the points available to that student. Class sessions will be recorded and posted (barring technical complications) for students to review elements of class that they missed or found confusing. Please see the statement on missed / late coursework.

## Exams and Assignments

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### QUIZZES

For most weeks (as noted in the schedule above, beginning Sept 5), students must complete an online quiz prior to the start of class on Tuesday. That timed quiz will cover the readings assigned for the prior week, plus any class material since the previous quiz. All of these quizzes are open book, open note and available on Blackboard, beginning on the previous Friday at noon. They will be relatively short, typically 5 multiple choice / true false questions (worth 4 points each).

### IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

During many class sessions, everyone present will compose a short written response to a specific issue or question, which must be submitted at that time. These written responses will be graded as Acceptable or Unacceptable. Acceptable papers will be awarded 20 points towards the In-class Assignment grade. You cannot make-up a missed In-class Assignment, except in exceptional circumstances.

### WRITE-UPS

Six times during the semester, as outlined in the schedule, students write a one-page description of the religion that compares **2** of the specific representations discussed in class or the readings (e.g., Representation 1 and 3 in reading). In this description,

identify the **2** representations and present a brief explanation of what each representation emphasizes and an example from the analysis discussion of either what each excludes or who gets left out of the representation. Each Write-up will be graded for content only. Style and grammar will not be graded, except for cases where the writing is unclear. Write-ups (submitted through Blackboard) are due at 11:59 pm on the class day after the final class on that religion (as marked in the schedule above). Each Write-up is worth 40 points.

### CRITICAL ANALYSIS PROJECT

The Critical Analysis Project requires each student to analyze a news article of their choice that represents / addresses one or more religions or religion generally. The various points of analysis will be discussed throughout the semester and practiced collaboratively in class discussions. Details about options for format (essay, video, audio recording) and submission process will be provided during the semester. The project is due at 11:59 pm on November 2.

### FINAL CRITICAL ANALYSIS PROJECT

Instead of a final exam, the final project for the course will be a second Critical Analysis Project, allowing each student the opportunity to improve their performance on this second opportunity by incorporating the feedback from the first. This is not a rewrite of the first Critical Analysis Project and should analyze a different article. The Final Critical Analysis Project is worth 200 points, more than the previous project. The source analyzed must be a different source than used in the first project. The Final Critical Analysis Project is due at 11:59 pm on December 11.

## Grading Policy

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Assessment	Points possible (1050+ points total)
QUIZZES (11 quizzes x 20 points each)	220
IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS (12 ICAs x 20 points each)	240
WRITE-UPS (6 Write-ups x 40 points each)	240
FIRST CRITICAL ANALYSIS PROJECT	150

Assessment	Points possible (1050+ points total)
FINAL CRITICAL ANALYSIS PROJECT	200

Final grades will be based on the following ranges: 970-1000+ = A+; 920-969 = A; 900-919 = A-; 870-899 = B+; 820-869 = B; 800-819 = B-; 770-799 = C+; 720-769 = C; 700-719 = C-; 600-699 = D; 0-599 = F.

Note that the class has more than 1000 points possible, but the grade scale is based on 1000 points, making 2 quizzes or In-Class Assignments entirely extra credit points. **DO NOT RELY ON BLACKBOARD PERCENTAGES TO ASSESS YOUR GRADE IN THE COURSE.** Assignments that are never submitted do not automatically get included in that calculation, and the extra points possible also throw off that calculation. Consult with the professor or GTA if you are concerned about your current grade in the course. Midterm grades will also be posted on Blackboard and through myBama at that time of the semester.

#### EXTRA CREDIT

Extra credit opportunities for participation in virtual or inperson events will be announced in class during the semester. Attending and submitting a paragraph write-up about the event will provide 5 extra points added into the total point earned. Maximum 15 points extra credit allowed for any student

## Policy on Missed Exams and Coursework

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We will be as flexible as possible to assist each student to complete the semester in a manner that is fair to both the student and the others in the course. Fairness, though, is never perfect and also requires some guidelines.

- Quizzes, which are available online, and In-Class Assignments **cannot be made up/submitted late** in most circumstances, but the extra points in the course mean that you can miss two quizzes or In-Class Assignments completely and still potentially receive over 1000 points (A+) in the course (depending on other scores, of course). Long-term or chronic illnesses can generate an exception about make-up assignments, though you have a right to keep details about your health private.

- Write-ups and the First Critical Analysis Project will be accepted late and without penalty until 11:59 pm on the Saturday of the week in which it is due. Any Write-up or project submitted after that time will be penalized unless the student can demonstrate why they could not submit by the **original due date**.
- The Final Critical Analysis Project will be accepted without penalty until 11:59 pm on Wednesday, December 13. Submissions made after that date will be penalized and risk not being graded before final grades are submitted.

Please speak with the GTA or the professor as soon as possible to make arrangements for late assignments. Late submissions will not be accepted after the last day of class (December 7). If anyone is unable to complete course requirements before then, they must make arrangements with the professor. A grade of Incomplete counts as an F until resolved and are only available in exceptional circumstances. Receiving an Incomplete also requires a realistic plan for how they will complete the required work.

## Generative AI Tools

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Internet sources outside of specific class assignments are not recommended as the primary sources of information for this course, including AI tools. Assignments in this course are specific to class materials and must reference those materials/class discussions to be successful. Simply inserting a query, "What is Hinduism?" will not produce an acceptable response to classroom prompts.

If you use a generative AI tool in any way, you should incorporate the following statement in their assignments: "For this assignment's preparation, the author(s) utilized [Generative AI Tool Name], a language model created by [Generative AI Tool Provider]. Within this assignment, the [Generative AI Tool Name] was used for purposes such as [e.g., brainstorming, grammatical correction, writing paraphrasing, citation, specific sections of the assignment]."

## Notification of Changes

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The instructor will make every effort to follow the guidelines of this syllabus as listed; however, the instructor reserves the right to amend this document as the need arises. In such instances, the instructor will notify students in class and/or via email and will endeavor to provide reasonable time for students to adjust to any changes.



## **Statement on Academic Misconduct**

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Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the official [Academic Misconduct Policy](#).

## **Statement On Disability Accommodations**

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The University of Alabama is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability (or think you may have a disability) and need reasonable accommodation(s) to participate in this class, contact the Office of Disability Services (or ODS; 205-348-4285, [ods@ua.edu](mailto:ods@ua.edu), Houser Hall 1000, [www.ods.ua.edu](http://www.ods.ua.edu)) as soon as possible. If you have been approved to receive accommodations through ODS, please meet with your instructor or College designee during office hours or by appointment to review your accommodation letter and discuss how accommodations can be implemented in this course.

## **Severe Weather Protocol**

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Please refer to the Severe Weather Guidelines located on the [Office of Emergency Management website](#).

## **Pregnant Student Accommodations**

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Title IX protects against discrimination related to pregnancy or parental status. If you are pregnant and will need accommodations for this class, please review the University's FAQs on the [UAct website](#).

## **Religious Observances**

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Under the Guidelines for Religious Holiday Observances, students should notify the instructor in writing or via email during the first two weeks of the semester of their intention to be absent from class for religious observance. The instructor will work to provide reasonable opportunity to complete academic responsibilities as long as that

does not interfere with the academic integrity of the course. See full guidelines at [Religious Holiday Observances Guidelines](#).

## **UAct Statement**

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The University of Alabama is committed to an ethical, inclusive community defined by respect and civility. The [UAct website](#) provides extensive information on how to report or obtain assistance with a variety of issues, including issues related to dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, sexual assault, sexual violence or other Title IX violations, illegal discrimination, harassment, hate or bias incidents, child abuse or neglect, hazing, threat assessment, retaliation, and ethical violations or fraud.

## **Wellness Resources**

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College can be a stressful time. If you or someone you know is facing a challenging time or dealing with academic or personal stress, anxiety, depression, or other concerns, we strongly encourage and support you to seek assistance or to help friends find the care that they may need by reviewing the [Campus Resource List for Students](#).

If you are experiencing a personal crisis and need urgent assistance, you can also contact the following resources:

### **Counseling Center**

Monday-Friday during routine Center hours (205-348-3863).

Weekends, holidays, after-hours (contact UAPD at 205-348-5454 and ask to speak with the on-call counselor).

You may also text BAMA to 741-741 to text with a trained volunteer.

### **Women and Gender Resource Center**

Monday-Friday during routine Center hours (205-348-5040).

Weekends, holidays, after-hours: contact UAPD at 205-348-5454 and ask to speak to the on-call advocate for the WGRC.