

Course Syllabus
Spring C, 2023 REL 2300 - 05

I. Course Information

Course Title: Comparative Religions

Course No. & Section: REL 2300-05

Instructor Name: Dr. Alan Altany

Credit Hours: 3

Course Location: Bldg. 8 - 108

Office Location: Bldg. 8 - 107

Office Hours: R 11 - 12

Telephone No.: 912-531-3697

Email: altanya@cf.edu

Meeting Day & Time: T/R 9:30 - 10:45 am

Extended Emergency Closure

“For emergency campus closings (natural disasters, etc.) call 352-291-4499 or 800-831-9244 or check our [website](#) (CF.edu).”

II. Course Description

REL 2300 is a course focused upon a comparative study of the major religions of the world, their beliefs and practices. We will examine the main questions these religions ask and the responses they have to those serious questions. Each student is to learn the basic teachings of the religions and how to think critically about the similarities and differences among the religions. Regular visits to the course website in Canvas is expected.

For many students this study is their first exposure to the academic study of religion and to many of the specific religions to be studied. Therefore, it is important to think critically and imaginatively in seeking to understand religions to which one does not belong. The study of one’s own religion or worldview presents its own unique issues for the study. This study is open to anyone of any belief system or of no religious beliefs. No religion will be elevated above other religions as each will be studied based upon its own understanding of itself.

Course Manners & Mindfulness

NO CELLPHONES, NO LAPTOPS. There is to be no use of cellphones and laptops during class so that no one distracts anyone else, and so that everyone is present

both physically and mentally (mindfulness) to participate, contribute, and learn. It is important to develop a contemplative ability, that is, being able to give sustained attention to one subject or topic without distractions. Growth in enduring knowledge, understanding, imagination, and wisdom requires it.

Please do not do the following: 1. Arrive late for class; 2. Leave the room during class (unless for emergency) and then returning; 3. Leave classroom before the end of class. Let's fully immerse ourselves in the complex and compelling world of comparative religions for the totality of each class period.

Required Text Title: **World RELG4 Introduction of World Religions**
(No access code needed)

Author of Text: Van Voorst Edition: 4th

ISBN No.: 978-1-337-40505-8

III. Student Learning Outcomes/Course Objectives

Learning Outcomes & How Measured

1. Critical Reasoning: The student will reflect, analyze, synthesize, and apply critical thinking.

exams, papers, discussion list

**2. Identify purpose of argument:
exams, papers, discussion list**

**3. Identify the ideas and concepts, information and data, and the use of such in the argument:
exams, papers, discussion list**

**4. Identify assumptions, bias, and point of view of information presented:
exams, papers, discussion list**

**5. Create plausible solutions and implications of solutions:
exams, papers, discussion list**

Communication: The student will read, write, speak, and listen effectively.

- 1. Read materials and effectively understand essential facts and concepts:
exams, papers, discussion list**
- 2. Write an organized document that communicates effectively and appropriately for the situation:
papers**
- 3. Listen actively to comprehend main ideas and essential details:
discussion list, modules**
- 4. Express clear, well-organized ideas through oral communication:
discussion list**

Global Socio-Cultural Responsibility: The student will be an informed and responsible citizen in social, cultural, and global matters.

- 1. Demonstrate an understanding of the values and expressions of other cultures that arise from human experience:
exams, papers, discussion list**
- 2. Recognize complex historical, cultural, economic, and political forces that create societies as well as how these forces shape personal identity:
papers, discussion list, modules**
- 3. Understand the local and global connections among power, knowledge, gender, and class:
papers**
- 5. Understand the local and global connections between self-direction, cooperation, respect, responsibility, integrity, and social success:
exams, papers, discussion list**

IV. Assessment

There will be NO make-up exams or quizzes unless for emergencies. Non-participation does not constitute withdrawal from this course. It is the student's responsibility to complete the withdrawal forms by the appropriate date.

Attendance is expected at all class sessions. 3 or more unexcused absences are

grounds for a reduction in the semester grade, or course failure. Showing up is part of learning, and of learning how to learn. Please take this attendance policy seriously.

Plagiarized papers will result in a grade of "0". [What is Plagiarism?](#)

Required work and grading

There will be 2 exams (including the final exam) and 2 major papers as well as quizzes on the various religions studied. The exams will be essay exams which will require a good understanding of the content of the textbook, modules, and online resources. Guidelines are provided in advance of the exams. Guidelines and topics for each paper will be given. Each paper is to be typed, double-spaced, with citations given within the text. There is to be Works Cited page. Either APA or MLA citation style may be used. Exams and papers will be submitted in Canvas.

Paper #1	20%
Exam #1	20%
Paper #2	20%
Exam #2	20%
Quizzes	20%

Grading scale:

A	90-100
B+	87-89
B	80-86
C+	77-79
C	70-76
D	60-69
F	59 and below

Make-up policy: No make-up work will be given unless there is an emergency or prior approval has been given by the instructor. In such an event, you must notify your professor before the exam or item is due unless the emergency prohibits it and you will be asked to bring proof of the emergency. A make-up exam must be taken within one week of the original exam date unless the emergency prohibits it. While you do not need to disclose personal details, let your professor know as soon as possible if something is preventing you from participating or completing work.

V. Course Schedule of Weeks

Jan 10/12 Introduction to religion; Module 1 in Canvas; Van Voorst, ch. 1: pp 3-13

Jan 17/19 Indigenous Religions, Van Voorst, Chapter 2: 30-58

Jan 24/26	Hinduism, ch. 3, pp. 60-76; Module 2
Jan 31/Feb 2	Hinduism 76-91
Feb 7/9	Buddhism, ch. 5, 108-123, Module 3
Feb 16	Buddhism 123-137 No class on Feb 14th Paper#1 due Feb 15th (in Canvas)
Feb 21/23	Taoism & Confucianism, ch 7, 154-170, Module 4
Feb 28/Mar 2	Taoism & Confucianism, 170-184 Revised Paper #1 due on Feb 28th (optional)
Mar 7/9	Exam #1 on March 9th (in canvas); no class that day Judaism, ch. 10, 222-237; Module 5
Mar 13-19	Spring Break
Mar 21.23	Judaism, 237-252
Mar 28/30	Christianity, ch. 11, 254-271; Module 6 <i>Last day to drop course with a "W":</i>
Apr 4/6	Christianity, 271-289 Paper #2 Due Apr 5th (in Canvas)
Apr 11/13	Christianity/Islam
Apr 18/20	Islam, ch. 12, 290-309; Module 7 Optional Research Paper due Apr 19th (via email attachment in Word)

Apr 25/27 Islam, 309-325

May **Exam #2 (Final Exam) on May _ in Canvas**

STATEMENT: Due to unforeseen happenings, it may be necessary for the course assignment schedule to be altered. The instructor will always strive to be fair about any changes.

COLLEGE POLICIES, IMPORTANT DATES, AND RESOURCES

Check the link near the bottom of the **menu on the left**.