

## COMPARATIVE RELIGIONS

Course: REL 2300--30

Term: Spring 2023

Time: Tuesday 2:00--3:15

Location: Building 8, Room 108

Instructor: Richard Kirk

Office: Building 8, Room 106 H kirkr@cf.edu (352) 854-2322, ext. 1315

**OFFICE HOURS: Monday and Wednesday 8:00--9:30; Tuesday 8:00--11:00 am and 12:30—2:00 pm; Thursday 10:00 am--1:00 pm (online) and 4:30-6:00 pm (online)**

Students are encouraged to discuss any questions or problems concerning the course during scheduled office hours. Additional times to meet with the instructor may be arranged on an individual basis.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

Students will learn about major features of the world's great religious traditions as the means for obtaining insight into the nature and expression of people's religious aspirations. This class is not designed to do harm to your own personal beliefs, but to help you develop an understanding and appreciation for the variety of faith systems in the world. Open discussion and respect for the opinion of others is expected.

TEXTBOOK: Smith The World's Religions (50th anniversary edition) isbn #9780061660184  
**Older editions are acceptable.**

### **GRADING SCALE:**

#### **Scale**

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

#### **Grading**

Exam	20%
Papers	30%
Discussion Board	40%

Attendance/Participation 10%

## **COLLEGE POLICIES**

**Academic Integrity** – Academic dishonesty (such as plagiarism or cheating) will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action under the Code of Student Conduct. Cases of academic dishonesty will be referred to a mandatory, two-hour Academic Integrity Seminar, which includes a fee (see [Student Handbook\(Links to an external site.\) \(Links to an external site.\)](#)). Failure to attend the Academic Integrity Seminar will result in the assignment of a final course grade of “FF” on the student’s transcript, denoting course failure due to a violation of the college’s Academic Integrity policy. For a better understanding of academic integrity and ethical writing practices, please see [The Office of Research Integrity’s Guide to Ethical Writing\(Links to an external site.\) \(Links to an external site.\)](#) ([https://ori.hhs.gov/\(Links to an external site.\) \(Links to an external site.\)](https://ori.hhs.gov/)) or the CF Library’s [Academic Integrity\(Links to an external site.\) \(Links to an external site.\)](#) guide ([cf.libguides.com/academic integrity](http://cf.libguides.com/academic%20integrity)).

**Disability Services for Students with Disabilities** – To ensure students have equal access to educational opportunities here at the College of Central Florida, students with medical, sensory, physical, psychological, and/or cognitive disability are encouraged to register with the Office of Disability Services and request an application. If eligible, Disability Services will help facilitate approved accommodations for you. **Please do this as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion for your academic success.** The Office of Disability Services is located in Building 5-204, on the Ocala Campus. For more information visit the Disability Services webpage at [CF.edu/Access\(Links to an external site.\) \(Links to an external site.\)](#), or email Cindy Pfriender at [pfriencd@cf.edu](mailto:pfriencd@cf.edu) , or call 352-873-5843 for further information.

Professional counseling services are available for all college students who are experiencing anxiety, depression, PTSD, stress; basically, all psychological issues that could affect their school, job, relationships, or their home lives. Services are provided by Florida licensed mental health clinicians. This confidential resource is for all college students who want to achieve their endeavors. The Counseling Department is located in building 5, office 205B or office 205F. For more information about Counseling, you may call 352-854-2322 Ext. 1760 or Ext. 1286 or Ext. 1580.

**Attendance Policy** – Regular, punctual class attendance is the responsibility of every student who enrolls at the College of Central Florida; therefore, the institution is committed to enforcing the attendance policy in an effort to assist students in achieving their educational objectives. The documentation of student absences will begin the first day of class, regardless of when the student registers. When a student has a legitimate reason for being absent, the instructor has the option of permitting the student to make up work missed and may require an explanation for the absence. The college reserves the right to evaluate individual cases of nonattendance.

See [Student Handbook\(Links to an external site.\) \(Links to an external site.\)](#), Policy Manual and Administrative Procedures.

**Equal Access/Equal Opportunity** – College of Central Florida does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, marital status, national origin, genetic information, or disability status in its programs, activities, and employment. For inquiries regarding nondiscrimination policies, contact the Equity Officer, 3001 S.W. College Road, **Building 40, Room 306A**, 352-854-2322, ext. 1437, or [smithc@cf.edu](mailto:smithc@cf.edu).

**Classroom Decorum** – Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Disruptive students will be asked to leave the classroom. Continuous disruptive behavior will result in withdrawal from the course and disciplinary action under the Code of Student Conduct (see [Student Handbook](#) [\(Links to an external site.\)](#) [\(Links to an external site.\)](#)).

**Withdrawal** – If you want to withdraw from this class, you must fill out the necessary forms and have them signed by the appropriate parties. If you just stop coming to class after the posted drop date, you may receive the grade of F.

- **Add/Drop period:**
- January 9-11
- **Drop only:**
- January 12-13
- **Last date for a refund:**
- January 13
- **Last day to withdraw with a “W”:**
- March 31

Students should be alerted to the following:

- (1) Withdrawals do not count in the CF GPA, but may not be viewed favorably at the university level.
- (2) Withdrawals may negatively impact a student’s financial aid eligibility.
- (3) A withdrawal counts as an attempt under the forgiveness/withdrawal policy and the course repeat policy.
- (4) There are increased costs to take the course on the third attempt (full cost of tuition, same as out-of-state rate).
- (5) There may be a reason a withdrawal request may be denied.

Please see the College’s withdrawal procedures.

**Attendance Verification for Financial Aid:** Attendance Verification is submitted each semester, generally in the third week of the term. Federal Student Aid requires that attendance is based on academic attendance or attendance at an academically-related activity. **For this class, your attendance is verified based on completion of one of the graded class discussion posts.**

## CF Student Assistance Program

The CF Student Assistance Program (SAP) is a confidential resource for assisting students who may have personal problems which could affect their school, work, or home lives. SAP provides early intervention and professional assessment and counseling to best meet the needs of the student. Services are free to all active CF students. The SAP is managed by BAY CARE LIFE MANAGEMENT, a health management organization. A student may call a toll-free helpline during regular business hours Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. For crisis situations after hours, on weekends, or holidays a student may call the same number and the therapist on duty will be paged and will promptly respond to the call. For services a student may call the following toll-free number: 1-800-878-5470. CF also has a counseling office where students may receive free confidential professional counseling by State licensed clinicians. For more information you may call 352-854-2322 ext. 1760 or visit the counseling office at the Bryant Student Union, room 204B.

- **Early Support Program (ESP):** The College of Central Florida is committed to helping you succeed and achieve your academic, personal and career goals. One of the ways we can accomplish this goal with you is through an Early Support Program. Our philosophy, based on extensive research and practice, is that when students are connected early to resources and support systems on campus they are more likely to stay in classes, perform better in those classes, and complete their path more quickly. Therefore, you may be contacted by your First Year Success Specialist, program Advisor and/or other resources on our campus if there is a time during the semester I feel it would be beneficial to your continued success. I am always your first point of contact for any concerns that affect your success or with course content, so I encourage you to come to me to discuss those issues. Also, be assured that I will first communicate any concerns I have with you and will then connect you with the other areas on our campus to help develop a network of support for you.
- This course uses Canvas to post course materials. Go to [MyCF\(Links to an external site.\) \(Links to an external site.\)](https://mycf.cf.edu/ICS/)(mycf.cf.edu/ICS/), login, click on the Academics tab, and follow the link to Go to Canvas. If you are not familiar with Canvas, you may access a self-tutorial by hovering over the Courses tab in Canvas and clicking on the Getting Started in Canvas course. Additional Canvas tutorials can be found under the help menu in Canvas. If you have any questions or encounter any problems logging on to Canvas or within the system, contact the Distance Learning Help Desk Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (fall and spring hours), or Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (summer hours), at [dlhelp@cf.edu](mailto:dlhelp@cf.edu) or at 352-854-2322, ext. 1317. You may also use the 24/7 Canvas help desk by clicking the Help link in Canvas.
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- **Library Resources:** The CF Library is here to help with your research and information needs. Search the library catalog ([library.cf.edu](http://library.cf.edu)), or contact the Ocala campus library ([library@cf.edu](mailto:library@cf.edu), 352-854-2322 x1345) or the Citrus campus library ([citruslb@cf.edu](mailto:citruslb@cf.edu), 352-249-1205) with questions. Learn more about research help, online and database

searching, and citing your sources by visiting the CF Virtual Library (cf.libguides.com) or by visiting the Ocala library (Building 3) or Citrus library (Building C2, Room 202) for one-on-one help.

#### COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

**Tests: (20%)** There will be one exam this semester. It will be an essay exam, but you can use your textbook and your notes as sources for your responses.

**Gordon Rule Papers: (30%)** This course includes a significant writing component. Per state policy, the quality of student writing must demonstrate a “C” level or higher proficiency in order to earn a “C” grade or higher in the course as a whole. You are required to submit 2 separate papers of 1000 words length (each approximately 4 pages typed and double-spaced). **Points will be deducted for papers turned in late, as well as for spelling or grammatical errors.** Your papers should focus on a religious tradition you are unfamiliar with, so no more than one paper may deal with *either* your own spiritual journey *or* a topic related to your own personal faith tradition. You may research a topic or faith; attend a religious ceremony, lecture or debate, etc. Papers based on your own faith journey or your attendance at a service or some other event should concentrate on your own personal thoughts about the topic, vs. being an impersonal research paper.

Papers based on actual research of a topic should reflect your research and show citation of sources. Research papers must show a minimum of 3 sources, only one of which can be from an online site. Citations within the body of the paper itself are needed, as well as a Works Cited page. Basically, you must show adequate time spent on research to replace time spent attending a service. *Neither our textbook or works of scripture qualify as sources you can use for your research papers.* **If you do not plan to do a reaction paper about a service that you attend, or some other seminar or lecture that you attend in person, then you should talk to me about what you plan to research and write about. All papers must be submitted or you will receive a “0” for this portion of the class. Within these guidelines, you have a lot of freedom as to what you write about---so please don't ask me what topic the next paper should be on!**

One of these papers can be based on your own spiritual journey...basically, writing about how you were raised when it came to religious beliefs, events in your life that have impacted what you believe, and how you would describe your beliefs today. This paper does not require any sources, because it is your own story (so it should be in your own words). This faith journey paper is not required, but is relatively easy to write.

The second paper (or both papers if you choose not to write about your own faith journey) must be a research paper on a tradition other than your own. Research papers must show a minimum of 3 sources, only one of which can be from an online site. Citations within the body of the paper itself are needed, as well as a Works Cited page. Neither our textbook or works of scripture qualify as sources you can use for your research papers.

Keep in mind that no more than one paper can be written about one broad faith tradition. So, as an example, if you write your personal faith journey about yourself and you are a Hindu, the second paper must be on a non-Hindu faith. If you write your faith journey and you are a Christian, the second paper must be on a non-Christian faith. Be sure to ask me if you need clarification on this!

**Discussion Board: (40%)**

Success in this class is tied in great measure to your reading of the textbook and the notes that I will post each week. Students are also expected to make comments about the assigned readings and notes. Questions related to the textbook readings and my notes will be available in CANVAS. You are required to respond to each of these questions with a response of at least 125 words. Only messages posted during the week in question will be accepted for credit. Postings should focus on your own thoughts and opinions, versus being a simple retelling of the facts involved.

**Attendance/Participation: (10%)** Regular attendance is expected, as well as participation in class discussions. Students may miss two class sessions with no penalty and no questions asked. Each absence after the second will result in a 5 point deduction off your final grade for the course (up to 10 points maximum). Please note that this policy does not distinguish between "excused" and "unexcused" absences. An absence is an absence! Students who are late, leave class early or are clearly not engaged in the class will be counted for partial absences as deemed necessary by the professor. Students are expected to have completed all reading assignments before class begins, and to be able to contribute to course discussion.

**COURSE OUTLINE---SPRING 2023**

Week 1	January 10	Course Introduction
Week 2	January 17	Chapter 1 Point of Departure//Atheism and Agnosticism
Week 3	January 24	Chapter 9--Primal Religions
Week 4	January 31	Chapter 2--Hinduism
Week 5	February 7	Hinduism and Jainism
Week 6	February 14	<b>NO CLASS—FACULTY WORKDAY</b>
Week 7	February 21	Chapter 3-- Buddhism Paper # 1 Due
Week 8	February 28	Chapter 4--Confucianism
Week 9	March 7	Chapter 5--Taoism
Week 10	March 14	<b>NO CLASS SPRING BREAK</b>

Week 11	March 21	Chapter 7--Judaism
Week 12	March 28	Chapter 8--Christianity
Week 13	April 4	Christianity, continued PAPER #2 Due
Week 14	April 11	Chapter 6--Islam
Week 15	April 18	Islam, continued
Week 16	April 25	Zoroastrianism, Sikhism, Baha'i
Week 17		FINAL EXAM

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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.

Course-related Institutional Learning Outcomes & Assessment Methods: REL 2300

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

Quiz

Exam

Project/

Paper

1. Read materials and effectively understand essential facts and concepts.

X

2. Write an organized document that communicates effectively and appropriately for the situation.

X

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

Quiz

Exam  
Project/  
Paper

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the values and expressions of other cultures that arise from human experience.

X