

INTRODUCTION TO WORLD RELIGIONS

WEB

Instructor: Justin Rice

Contact: Canvas Messenger

Overview: Major world religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam with the goal of understanding the general nature of religion and its various dimensions.

Texts:

[A] *The World's Religions* by Smith (available through the university bookstore).

[B] *The World's Wisdom* by Novak (available through the university bookstore).

[C] Various handouts, slides and videos on Canvas.

Computer Requirements: All students must have access to a desktop or laptop computer, equipped with an internet browser (such as Chrome, Firefox or Safari). Students will also need access to a slideshow application, such as Powerpoint or Keynote.

Structure of the Course: This course is completely online, and posts to the discussion board are essential since they replace the interactive dialogue that occurs in the traditional classroom.

The styles of writing required for your posts will vary somewhat, as will the format – be advised! Some prompts will require a style of self-reflection, others argumentative/persuasive, while several of your posts will simply utilize an informative style.

Students are expected to engage in reasoned discourse that takes into account opposing views, and they must be able to separate issues and positions from the persons advocating them. Philosophy and religious studies are best done through *civil* discussion. Each student will be expected to treat one another with respect and tolerance. I will not abide rude and disrespectful behavior.

It would be to your benefit to interact with Canvas on a daily basis. In each module, you will find essential course materials: reading assignments, links to discussion posts, videos, slideshows and other materials essential to learning about the world's religions. Prior to making a discussion post, you should complete **all** reading and viewing assignments relevant to your topic. Regarding format, your posts should be organized into 3-4 paragraphs, depending on length; i.e., your post should not one, single paragraph, nor a multitude of short paragraphs.

All of your posts must include your original writings. **DO NOT** copy and paste the writings of other students (or websites) into your posts – this is considered plagiarism. You may *only* cite the textbook or the other required materials (no outside sources), and any quotations must be cited. It is also important not to quote too much (some people attempt to fill up their posts primarily with quotes – this will cost you points). In other words, *you must paraphrase the passage in your own words and then cite it*. Do not over quote! It should be rare that you need to quote more than one sentence per post. In general, a post will lose 5 points for every quote beyond one sentence (i.e., if you quote two sentences, you lose 5 points; three sentences, 10 points).

To cite in this course, simply insert parentheses with the quoted work, with page number (when applicable); the format of citation shown immediately below will extend to slides, handouts, and podcasts. *For instance:*

Example #1: Joe uses a brief *quote* from page 10 of the textbook. At the end of the quotation he inserts: (Smith, pg. 10)

Example #2: Lulu uses an *idea* from one of the required videos named, “Buddhism”. At the end of the sentence she credits the video for the idea by inserting: (Buddhism, video)

Discussion Board Etiquette:

- Make an effort to be engaged throughout the week
- REFRAIN FROM USING ALL CAPS. IT IS CONSIDERED SHOUTING
- Respect others' opinions. If you disagree with what another has said, post your thoughts in an objective, respectful manner. Do not make remarks that can be taken personally • Reflect upon the text you have entered before posting
- Keep the discussion within the scope of the course material
- Communication should be grammatically correct. Adhere to correct sentence structure, grammar, and spelling conventions
- Before you respond to a threaded message, read all the messages related to that message that have been previously posted.

Course Requirements:

Discussion Posts: 300 points total. As stated above, every Module will typically include one or two prompt options, and you will select one of them. Unless otherwise stated, each post is worth 50 points (remember, formats will vary, so be sure to read each post topic *carefully*). *Please note that in the final week of class, you will have a final project to turn in - in addition to the required post.*

If you have any problems with spelling and grammar, please use grammarly.com for help.

*** Please see grading rubric at the bottom of the page. ***

Final Project: 200 points total. Your final project will consist of a slideshow that you will create and upload to Canvas. Please see the course website for more details.

Discussion posts: 300 pts

Final Project: 200 pts

Total: 500 pts

NOTE: To calculate your grade at any given time in the semester, simply add up the points you have earned and divide that total by the total number of points offered at the time of your calculation. *For example*, if you have earned 42 out of 50 points, you would divide 42 by 50 and get .84 (which is 84 percent or a ‘B’). Since all grades will be posted on Canvas, you can do this calculation whenever you like.

Policies:

Email: Please allow up to two business days for an email response from your instructor or designated TA. Make sure you provide your first and last name in the email. Importantly, when you email either instructor or TA, you must state the name of the course in the subject line of the email. Failure to follow these requirements will likely result in a delayed response to your email. If you have a question regarding your grade on a particular discussion post, first contact the TA that you have been assigned to; your TA will be the person grading your discussion posts.

Extra Credit: I do not offer extra credit. If you are having a hard time in class, talk to either your instructor

Late Work: Every student is expected to participate in the discussion posts according to the schedule. It will be very hard to have quality discussions if a number of students are not responding in a reasonable amount of time. Regarding missed assignments, I will work with anyone who has a genuine, school-sanctioned emergency. However, I do require some official form of documentation. Otherwise, I do not accept late work – no exceptions! If you foresee that you are going to miss a due date or quiz, it is your responsibility to inform both your instructor and grader no less than 48 hours in advance; getting extension requests after the due date is not possible. If you contract COVID-19, please reach out to me immediately - grades will not suffer because of illnesses.

Students with Physical or Learning Disabilities: If you need special accommodations the University will try to make appropriate arrangements. These arrangements will need to be made ahead of time through the Student Disability Services Office, 315 Student Union (phone: 744-7116)

Academic Integrity: All written assignments will be electronically checked for plagiarism. If I discover academic dishonesty of any kind, the instructor will seek the appropriate punishment. The University has a syllabus attachment available online that provides information about the official academic integrity policy, important deadlines, and University resources:

<http://osu.okstate.edu/acadaffr/aa/PDF%20Files/SYLATFA.pdf>

Grading Rubric for Discussion Posts:

Excellent	Above Average	Acceptable	Not Adequate	Failing
50-45	44-40	39-35	34-30	29-0
Meets the length requirement. Clearly answers the question while connecting it to and analyzing the assigned material (readings, videos, podcast, etc.). Can <i>explain</i> the concepts in question without either endorsing or attacking them. Superb spelling and grammar. Meets the citation requirement; does not quote more than one sentence.	Meets the length requirement. Demonstrates a capacity to grapple with the material, though the student's writing may be a bit vague or ambiguous. More than three spelling or grammar errors. Fails to meet the citation requirement by at least 2 citations; does not quote more than one sentence.	Meets the length requirement. Some understanding of the material, but the fundamental question is not answered in depth. Perhaps enough bias to muddy your discussion. More than four spelling or grammar errors. Includes only 1 or 2 citations, or too many quotations (more than one).	Word count only comes to 75% of the assigned length. Lack of understanding of the material. Perhaps enough bias to muddy your discussion. Numerous spelling or grammar errors. Fails to include any citations, or too many quotations (more than one).	Either a complete failure to turn in the assignment, or meet the length requirement by 50%. Perhaps all opinion, no critical thinking about the issue at hand. Numerous spelling or grammar errors that make it difficult to understand the student's ideas and thought processes. Fails to include any citations.