

# World's Living Religions

Miss / Phil 4333

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Course web site: <http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/worldrel.htm>

## Course Description

Introduction to the world's major religious systems (including some segments of Christianity): Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Judaism, Islam and Animism. We will investigate these religions from several perspectives, including historical (beginnings and development), phenomenological (beliefs, rituals, practices), and comparative (similarities and differences). The course will utilize a combination of discussions, lectures, films, special speakers and even some field trips.

## Texts

*World Religions Today* by Esposito, Fasching and Lewis

*Can Evangelicals Learn from World Religions?* by Gerald McDermott

## Course objectives

Upon completion of this course, a student should be able to:

1. Articulate with sympathetic understanding the various dimensions of several major religious worldviews: history, geographical areas of influence, ritual practices, doctrinal beliefs, ethics, expected experiences
2. Have the ability to describe the function of religion in sociological categories
3. Have the ability to describe and interpret the relationship between the religious aspects of a culture and individual behavior
4. Have the ability to describe the human experience of a religious group as expressed in literature, art and music
5. Have the ability to think globally and engage cross-culturally for the purpose of Christian mission

## World's Living Religions course calendar / due dates

Jan. 16	Introduction to class
18	Text 1: McDermott, pp. 1-20
23	Text 2: McDermott, pp. 21-44
30	Text 3: Eposito 2-33; McDermott pp. 185-205
Feb. 6	Text 4: McDermott, pp. 45-72



8	First “seminar handout” due
13	Text 5: McDermott, pp. 73-90; Esposito 34-62
20	Text 6: McDermott, pp. 91-132
22	Exam #1
27	Text 7: Esposito 64-129
March 6	Text 8: Esposito 194-269
8	Second “seminar handout” due
20	Text 9: Esposito 270-300
27	Text 10: Esposito 301-339
29	Exam #2
April 3	Text 11: Esposito 340-373
5	Letter to friend or acquaintance due
10	Text 12: Esposito 373-415
17	Text 13: Esposito 416-452
19	Worship service observation report due
24	Text 14: Esposito 453-494
26	Third “seminar handout” due
May 1	Text 15: Esposito 496-531 Original source material reports by graduate students
8	Final exam, 10 a.m. (Tuesday of exam week)

### How do I pass this course?

1. **Attendance.** Come to class. Attendance will be very important. Beginning with the fifth absence, 10 points will come off your “attendance” grade for each absence. Three tardies count as one absence.
2. **Textbook reading.** Each time you complete a textbook reading assignment, you will turn in two sample test questions over that material. These questions may be used as a basis for some in-class quizzes. The questions must be turned in at the beginning of the class period on the day they are due. Questions coming in late will receive half credit
3. **Exams.** There will be three exams. Study guides will be provided ahead of time to maximize

your learning experience.

4. **Temple/Synagogue/Mosque visit.** Visit a religious service of one of the traditions studied in this class. Your visit must be to an actual service or meeting. Just visiting the building they use will not be enough. Report on that visit with a 2-3 page written observation paper. Up to 40 pts extra credit can be obtained by making an additional visit to a different religious organization's service and writing a paper on that second experience.

Fortunately, we have great resources for this course in the Oklahoma City area:

Baha'i Faith, 1201 S Blackwelder, 631-7490

Buddhist temples

Giac Quang Temple, 516 SE 17 (Vietnamese), 636-1845

Rissho Kosei Kai Dharma Center, 2745 NW 40th, (Japanese) 943-5030

Vien Giac Buddhist Temple, 5101 NE 36th (405) 424-0264 (Vietnamese)

Wat Chairatanaram, 710 SE 50th, 634-2144

Wat Sangharatanaram of Oklahoma, 2200 SE 26 (Thai Theravada) , 677-4306

Wat Lao Buddharam Temple, 7600 N Kelly Ave. (Laotian), 632-7842

Hindu Temple, 7200 N Coltrane (405) 478-0787

Islamic mosques

Islamic Center of Oklahoma City, 3201 NW 48th, 948-6188

Masjid Al-Salam, 525 N University Drive, Edmond, 341-1077

Masjid Mu'min, 1322 NE 23, 424-0352

Islamic Society of Greater OKC, 3815 North St. Clair Avenue (405) 946-2116

Jewish synagogues

Emanuel Synagogue (conservative), 900 NW 47 (405) 528-2113

Temple B'nai Israel (reformed), 4901 N Pennsylvania (405) 843-2755

Kehilat Rosh Pinah (messianic), 3106 N Utah Avenue (405) 941-2889

Sikh Gurdwara (or Gateway), 4525 NW 16th, Oklahoma City OK (405) 949-2638

5. **Letter to friend or acquaintance.** Write a letter to a friend or acquaintance who is a follower of a religion other than orthodox Christianity. Use the letter to: (1) raise questions about what you feel are flawed beliefs, and (2) point to orthodox Christian faith as the fulfillment of some of the highest aspirations of the followers of the religion of your friend. Attach to the letter a bibliography of sources consulted.
6. **Seminar handouts.** Prepare a "seminar handout" sheet for three religions. Use your textbook as well as other sources. All sources used in the paper must be properly cited. Direct quotes must be enclosed in quotation marks and the source properly identified. See SNU's policy on plagiarism at: <http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/integrity.htm>

Your handout should include have a separate bibliography page of sources consulted. In alphabetical order, give the full name of each author, surname first, then first name, followed by the title of the work. Book and journal titles should be italicized or underlined. Article titles

should be in quotation marks. Place and date of publication should be included (date only in case of journals).

Here are some questions to get you started:

- What is the history of this religion?
- Is there a founder? Who? Where? When? Why?
- Where is it found and how many adherents does it have?
- What are the most important sacred stories of this religion?
- What are some of its beliefs about God, spirits, human nature, how the world came to be, what is it that humans should strive for (is it soteriological, for example)?
- What rituals are important in it?
- Is there a priesthood or ecclesiastical hierarchy?
- Is there a creed its adherents subscribe to?
- What ethical ideals does it promote?
- What major artifacts, architectural monuments, art work has it produced?
- Is there more than one sect, version or denomination?
- What do you think your seminar audience will most interesting about this religion?

7. **Video / speaker feedback.** Through the semester we will view some videotapes as a class and have some special speakers. Each time we have a videotape or a special speaker you need to turn in a written response on the form that will be provided. If you miss a class in which a video is shown you can get the response form from my web site, see the film on your own and get credit as though you were in class.
8. **Graduate students.** Students taking the course for graduate credit will be asked to do some reading in source documents of religions (of their choice) other than orthodox Christianity. They will do both oral and written reports on their reading (more details in a separate handout).

## Grading

Attendance	100 pts
Exams 100 pts each	300 pts
Textbook reading questions (10pts x 15)	150 pts
Observation paper	100 pts
Seminar handouts / friend letter	100 pts each
Video / speaker feedback	10 pts each

## Where to begin your research

As you work on your written paper and group presentations, do not rely on your textbook and the Internet alone, although there is lots of material in both those places.

### Some journal and periodical article suggestions

*Evangelical Missions Quarterly, Christianity Today, International Review of Mission, International Bulletin of Missionary Research.*

**Here are a few of the books in the SNU library. There are hundreds more on various world religions Help me improve this listing by suggesting the best ones:**

Abdul-Haqq, Adiyah Akbar. *Sharing Your Faith With a Muslim*  
Aberle, David. *The Peyote Religion Among the Navaho*.  
Accad, Fouad Elias. *Building Bridges: Christianity and Islam*  
Akhtar, Shabbir. *A Faith for All Seasons: Islam and the Challenge of the Modern World*  
Bahr, Donald, Juan Gregorio, David Lopez and Albert Alvarez. *Piman Shamanism and Staying Sickness*.  
Bavinck, Johan. *The Church Between Temple and Mosque*.  
Boi-Nai, Vincent. "The Christian Response to the Phenomenon of Witchcraft in Ghana" (M.A. thesis, Microform).  
Braaten, Carl E. *No Other Gospel: Christianity Among the World's Religions*.  
Brown, Joseph. *The Spiritual Legacy of the American Indian*.  
Burnett, David. *The Spirit of Buddhism: A Christian Perspective of Buddhist Thought*  
Burnett, David. *The Spirit of Hinduism*  
Bushey, Clinton. *The Superiority of Christianity: A Comparative Study of the Religions of the World*.  
Carmody, Denise and John. *Prayer in World Religions*  
Cave, Sydney. *Christianity and Some Living Religions*.  
Chapman, Colin. *Cross and Crescent*  
Clendenin, Daniel. *Many Gods, Many Lords: Christianity Encounters World Religions*  
Cornille, Catherine and Valeer Neckebrouck. *A Universal Faith? Peoples, Cultures, Religions and the Christ: Essays in honor of Dr. Frank De Graeve*.  
Crocker, Jon. *Vital Souls: Bororo Cosmology, Natural Symbolism and Shamanism*.  
Desmangles, Leslie. *The Faces of the Gods: Vodou and Roman Catholicism in Haiti*.  
Dretke, James. *Christian Approach to Muslims: Reflections from West Africa*  
Dunham, Katherine. *Island Possessed*.  
Durkheim, Emile. *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*.  
Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*.  
Esposito, John. *Islam: The Straight Path*.  
Firth, Ramond. *Tikopia Ritual and Belief*.  
Fleming, Daniel John. *Attitudes Toward Other Faiths*.  
Gehman, Richard J. *African Traditional Religions in Biblical Perspective*.  
Geisler, Norman and Abdul Saleeb. *Answering Islam: The Crescent in the Light of the Cross*  
Georges, Robert A. *Studies on Mythology*.  
Gilmore, George. *Animism, or Thought Currents of Primitive Peoples*.  
Grant, George Honro. *The Religions of the World in Relation to Christianity*.  
Gross, Edward. *Miracles, Demons, and Spiritual Warfare: An Urgent Call for Discernment*.  
Harner, Michael. *The Way of the Shaman*.  
Howard, James. *Oklahoma Seminoles: Medicines Magic and Religion*.  
Hultkrantz, Ake. *Native Religions of North America: The Power of Visions and Fertility*.  
Jurji, Edward Jabra. *The Christian Interpretation of Religion, Christianity in its Human and Creative Relationships with the World's Cultures and Faiths*.  
Kateregga, Badru. *A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue*  
Kramer, Kenneth. *The Sacred Art of Dying: How the World Religions Understand Death*  
LaBarre, Weston. *The Ghost Dance: Origins of Religion*.  
Lawson, E. Thomas. *Religions of Africa: Traditions in Transformation*.  
Lehman, Arthur and James Myers. *Magic, Witchcraft and Religion: An Anthropological Study of the Supernatural*.  
Leslie, Charles. *Anthropology of Folk Religion*.  
Levy, Jerrold E. and Raymond Neutra and Dennis Parker. *Hand Trembling, Frenzy Witchcraft and Moth Madness: A Study of Navajo Seizure Disorders*.  
Lowie, Robert. *Primitive Religion*.  
Luhmann, T. M. *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft: Ritual Magic in Contemporary England*.  
MacArthur, John. *Terrorism, Jihad and the Bible*  
Musk, Bill. *Touching the Soul of Islam*  
Musk, Bill. *The Unseen face of Islam*

Neill, Stephen Charles. *Christian Faith and Other Faiths*.

Nickel, Gordon. *Peaceable Witness Among Muslims*

Owens, Donald. "Korean Shamanism: Its Components, Context and Functions" (Ph.D. dissertation).

Parshall, Phil. *Inside the Community: Understanding Muslims through Their Traditions*

Parshall, Phil. *The Cross and the Crescent: Reflections on Christian-Muslim Spirituality*

Renard, John. *In the footsteps of Muhammad: Understanding the Islamic Experience*

Richard, Herbert. *Following Jesus in the Hindu Context*

Ridenour, Fritz. *What's the Difference? A Biblical Comparison of Orthodox Christianity with Major Religions and Major Cults*.

Robinson, Neal. *Christ in Islam and Christianity*

Rubin, Barry. *You Bring the Bagels, I'll Bring the Gospel*

Schumann, H.W. *The Historical Buddha*.

Shenk, Calvin. *Who do You Say That I Am? Christians Encounter Other Religions*

Shenk, David. *Global Gods*

Smith, Huston. *The Religions of Mankind*

Soderblom, Nathan. *The Living God: Basal Forms of Personal Religion*.

Streeter, Burnett. *The Buddha and the Christ: An Exploration of the Meaning of the Universe and of the Purpose of Human Life*.

Thorpe, Shirley. *African Traditional Religions: An Introduction*.

Tillich, Paul. *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions*.

Toynbee, Arnold Joseph. *Christianity among the Religions of the World*.

Turner, Harold. *Bibliography of New Religious Movements in Primal Societies*, Vol. 5--Latin America

Vos, Johannes. *A Christian Introduction to Religions of the World*.

Werbner, Richard. *Ritual Passage, Sacred Journey: The Process and Organization of Religious Movement*

Wheaton Theology Conference. *The Challenge of Religious Pluralism: An Evangelical Analysis and Response*.

Wolfe, Regina. *Ethics and World Religions*

## Disability services

If you need assistance with a learning, physical or psychological disability that may affect your academic progress, I encourage you to contact the Academic Center for Excellence, Disability Services at #491-6694 (M-F 8:00-5:00). All students with disabilities are encouraged to seek assistance from ACE, the Academic Center for Excellence (LRC 3rd floor).