

Revised: Fall 2011
Fall 2012
Fall 2013
Fall 2014
Fall 2015
Fall 2016

REL 237

Eastern Religions

COURSE OUTLINE

Prerequisites: None

Course Description:

Studies major religious traditions of the East including Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, and Zen Buddhism. Includes an analysis of Eastern philosophy and approach to life.

What is religion and how do different cultures define and express religious beliefs, values, and practices? This course examines these, and other, questions from a non-western perspective by introducing students to the fundamentals of several Eastern religious traditions including Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, and Shinto.

- We examine the ancient roots and modern manifestations of each tradition by tracing the oral and written history and development of religious elements such as the holy, myth/sacred story, sacred texts, ritual, symbol systems, organizational patterns, ethics, and sacred communities.
- We study the impact of modernization and modern scholarship on the scriptures, customs, and beliefs of Eastern religious traditions.
- Additionally, the course explores and compares issues of social, cultural, and religious diversity that arise in the global context of our religiously pluralistic contemporary world.

Semester Credits: 3 Lecture Hours: 3

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REL 237: Eastern Religions

Course Outcomes:

By the close of the course, the student should:

1. possess an understanding of the basic origins, history, and doctrines of the world's major religions.
2. be able to discuss the significant differences and similarities between the major religions of the world.
3. possess a respect for the diversity of religious expression.

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Required Materials:

1. Textbooks
2. Internet access
3. Blackboard

Textbooks:

1. Oxtoby & Segal, A Concise Introduction to World Religions, 5th edition. Oxford University Press, 2007. ISBN# 978-0-195-42207-8
2. Miller, Barbara Stoler. *The Bhagavad-Gita*. English translation. New York: Bantam, 1986. ISBN: 978-0-553-21365-2 (also available in its entirety on sacred-texts.com)
3. Thich Nhat Hahn. *Peace Is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life*. New York: Bantam, 1991. ISBN: 978-0-553-35139-2

The following supplementary materials are available: None

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Topical Description:

- Hinduism
- Sikhism
- Jainism
- Baha'i
- Buddhism
- Rinzai Zen Buddhism
- Soto Zen Buddhism
- Tendai Buddhism
- Pure Land Buddhism
- Nichiren Buddhism
- Confucianism
- Daoism
- Chinese Popular Religion
- Shinto

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