

Virginia Western Community College

REL 231

Religions of the World I

Prerequisites

None

Course Description

REL 231 studies religions of the world with attention to origin, history, and doctrine. The course focuses on Eastern Traditions, including Hinduism and Buddhism.

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

Required Materials

1. Textbook
2. Internet access
3. Canvas

Textbook: (optional)

Partridge; Dowley, A Short Introduction to World Religions, 3rd Edition. ISBN # 978-1-506-44595-3.
Fortress Press

Other Required Materials:

None

Course Outcomes

At the completion of this course, the student should be able to:

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

Topical Description

1	Hinduism
2	Sikhism
3	Jainism
4	Baha'i
5	Buddhism
6	Rinzai Zen Buddhism
7	Soto Zen Buddhism
8	Tendai Buddhism
9	Pure Land Buddhism
10	Nichiren Buddhism
11	Confucianism
12	Daoism
13	Chinese Popular Religion
14	Shinto

Notes to Instructors

None