

Virginia Western Community College

REL 232

Religions of the World II

Prerequisites

None

Course Description

REL 232 studies religions of the world with attention to origin, history, and doctrine. The course emphasizes a variety of Western religions.

This course is an introduction to the fundamentals of Western religious traditions. Our study focuses on Native American Religions, African Religions and the three predominant monotheistic traditions - Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

- We examine the ancient roots and modern manifestations of each tradition and trace religious elements of the holy, myth/sacred story, sacred texts, ritual, symbol systems, organizational patterns, ethics, and sacred communities throughout the development of Native American Religions, African Religions, and the monotheistic traditions.
- We study the impact of modern scholarship on the scriptures, stories, and myths of Native American Religions, African Religions, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.
- Additionally, the course explores issues of social and cultural diversity, and religious pluralism in the United States by examining Native American, African, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim identity and diversity.
- We will identify and discuss the tools of oppression that some religious groups have utilized in an effort to assert domination and control over other religious groups in the U.S.
- Our inquiry will lead us to question religious prejudices and stereotypes that have arisen in the specific context of America's religiously pluralistic society.

Semester Credits: 3

Lecture Hours: 3

Required Materials

1. Textbook
2. Internet access
3. Canvas

Textbook: (optional)

1. Partridge; Dowley, *A Short Introduction to World Religions*, 3rd Edition. ISBN # 978-1-506-44595-3. Fortress Press
2. Miller, *Bhagavad-Gita*: Bantam Books. ISBN# 978-0-553-21365-2
3. Hanh, *Peace Is Every Step*: Bantam Books. ISBN# 978-0-553-35139-2

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 Native American religions, African religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
- be able to discuss the significant differences and similarities between these traditions.
- possess a respect for the diversity of religious expression in our country and in the world.

Topical Description

1	African Religions
2	Native American Religions
3	Judaism
4	Christianity
5	Islam
6	New Religious Movements

Notes to Instructors

None