CCU Catalog Course Description
This course is an introductory study of the beliefs and practices of the major religions of the modern world, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Islam. The course may be taken more than once for credit as the topic is changed.

Course Summary—
This graduate school intensive seminar for three credits provides students with a general framework in which to understand religions of the world, both ancient and modern. Students will explore theological perspectives on the study of religion, learn how comparative religion or religious studies helps us understand religious phenomena, and consider the distinctive nature of individual world religions.

ADA Compliance
Students who require academic accommodations due to a documented physical, psychological or learning disability must request assistance from Ray Horton via the Student Services Center. Students are encouraged to complete this request immediately, since this is a one-week intensive seminar, plus the research paper. The Student Services Center is located in Presidents Hall level 2 across from the elevator. Contact: ray.horton@ccuniversity.edu or (513) 244-8420.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1—Desired Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Established Goals:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Create a working definition of “religion” for both ancient and modern manifestations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Examine your own theological perspective on why many religions exist, and why you view them as you do. Compare your theological perspective with other theological perspectives and determine if you need to make any adjustments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Using a “comparative religion” approach, recognize and explore common elements manifested in religions (the phenomena of religions).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Learn other features of the discipline “religious studies.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Begin to understand why people of a particular religion choose to stay within that religion, even if it was originally the choice of society or their parents for them to be part of it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Gain a preliminary understanding of individual major religions of the world today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Focus on one religion and study it more in depth, and determine how you might make your faith understandable to another person in their religious context.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential Questions:</th>
<th>Students will understand that...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
1. When people say Christianity is not a religion, what do they mean? Is it a fair statement? Could the same thing be said about other religions, thereby reducing the definition of religion to nothingness?
2. What do we mean by “religion”? What is its “essence”?
3. What are common elements of religions? How are these structural elements expressed in similar ways or differently?
4. What is the appeal of a particular religion to its followers?
5. What function do religions serve within cultures?
6. With increased secularization throughout the world, why is there also an increase in religious radicalization?
7. Is there a “clash of civilizations” from a religious perspective?
8. How might you explain your faith to someone of a different faith in such a way that person will understand you, whether that person chooses to agree with you or not?
9. How might the study of other religious traditions enrich your own faith?

Students will know...
1. What we mean in this class when we use the word “religion,” as well as various other ways the term has been used that often creates confusion.
2. Basic methodological approaches for the study of “comparative religion” and “history of religions.”
3. How to read contributors to the study of religions, taking into consideration their different theological and philosophical assumptions.
4. Basic beliefs and practices of major religions of the world.
5. Definitions of a limited number of terms given by the instructor.
6. Differences between pre-modern, modern, and postmodern approaches toward religion in general.

Students will be able to...
1. Give a working definition of “religion,” showing its essential nature.
2. Explain common structural elements in religions, past and present.
3. Explain distinctive features of world religions.
4. Speak truthfully about religious traditions that are not your own.
5. Meet and talk with people of different faiths in a sensitive and intelligent manner. This includes learning from others what they really believe and do as well as sharing your own faith perspective with them.
6. Study religions in a comparative way (with topics such as sacred space, prayer, rites of passage) or focus on some aspect of a particular religion.

Stage 2—Acceptable Evidence

Performance Tasks:
1. Give a working definition of “religion,” showing its essential nature.

Other Evidence:
1. End of course test. 40%

Self-Assessment and Reflection:
1. Keep notes throughout the course answering such questions as:
2. Explain common structural elements in religions, past and present.
3. Explain distinctive features of world religions.
4. Speak truthfully about religious traditions that are not your own.
5. Meet and talk with people of different faiths in a sensitive and intelligent manner. This includes learning from others what they really believe and do as well as sharing your own faith perspective with them.
6. Study religions in a comparative way (with topics such as sacred space, prayer, rites of passage) or focus on some aspect of a particular religion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Class participation.</th>
<th>10%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Research paper.</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- a. What is the most important thing I learned from this lesson?
- b. What seems familiar?
- c. What seems strange?
- d. What would I like to know more about this subject?
- e. What confused me?
- f. What issues do I want to discuss more with others from the class?

These notes will not be turned in to the professor, but they may enhance class discussions.

### Stage 3—Learning Plan (subject to modification based on class discussion and student interests)

| Day 1 in class | Quickly review what you will study in this class and what is required of you. |
|               | Define “religion.” |
|               | What is meant by comparative religion or religious studies? |
|               | Theological considerations |

| Day 2 in class | Ancient religions |
|               | Hinduism |
|               | Buddhism |

| Day 3 in class | Buddhism continued |
|               | Taoism |
|               | Confucianism |

| Day 4 in class | Judaism |
|               | Christianity |
|               | Islam |

| Day 5 in class | Islam continued |
|               | End of course test |

Your research paper will be due on 18 September 2015. This gives you four weeks after class to complete the paper. If you have problems or questions with the paper, you may contact Mr. Tingle online. The research paper will be submitted online to donald.tingle@CCUniversity.edu. Here are some general guidelines for the paper:

1. You can research and write about a topic within a single religion or you can do a comparative study. If you choose a topic within a single religion, it might be a belief or a practice or a look
at one aspect of their history. If you do a comparative study, be fair. Don’t compare the
historical worst of the religion you write about with the ideal best of what you believe or
should do. You may also deal with theological issue raised in relationship to Christians and
people of other faiths. Samples of some of those issues are alluded to within the textbook by
McDermott. These issues will also be discussed in class.
2. Possible topics for research papers, as well as guidelines, will be discussed each day in class.
3. The research paper is not long, only 10 to 15 pages double-spaced, excluding bibliography.
The paper will be graded on quality and insights rather than simply on length.
4. There is no specific format the research paper must follow. But quotations, citations, and
bibliography must be clear. Make sure Mr. Tingle can see that you distinguish between your
own words and ideas and what you borrowed from other sources. In other words, no
plagiarism.
5. You will be graded on the following criteria:
a. Depth of research on the topic
b. Depth of analysis on the topic
c. Clarity of thought
d. And to a somewhat lesser degree, sentence structure, spelling, and grammar
e. You grade may be reduced if the paper is simply an attack against what the other
believes or does. You also must show a grasp of why the people within that religion
believe or do what you disagree with. What is they see as the appeal of their
position?
f. Your grade may also be reduced if you do not stay with one main idea. Focus on one
manageable subject, delving deeper into that subject rather than providing a broad
survey of many ideas or practices.

TEXTBOOKS


Even though these textbooks are older, they contain helpful information for the course. (Our
Religions continues to be the finest introductory text to world religions available, even surpassing
Huston Smith’s classic The World’s Religions.)

SUGGESTIONS FOR PREPARATION BEFORE THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS
• Read McDermott’s book.
• Read the chapter on Hinduism in Sharma’s book.
• Read the chapter on Judaism in Sharma’s book.
• Read one additional chapter of your choice in Sharma’s book.
It is not necessary to complete all of this reading before the first day of class, but it will be helpful to
complete as much of it as possible.