

# Religions of World

REL 102-001 | Spring 2017 | 3 Credit Hours

Lecture

Dr. Steven Ramey

## Contact Information

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### UA Campus Directory:

- Dr. Steven Ramey (<https://www.ua.edu/directory/?i=sramey#listing>)

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All scholars are encouraged to meet with the professor or GTA by coming to the office hours of either one, setting up an appointment for another time with either one, and/or using the contact information (phone or email) listed above for assistance. For technical questions about grades, class policies, or Blackboard, please contact the GTA. For course content questions, contact either of us. Please contact us well in advance if you are having difficulties satisfactorily completing the course's requirements on time or if you anticipate routine absences. Although we cannot guarantee that particular accommodations can be made, speaking with us before a problem arises will greatly enhance our ability to address the situation in a way that is both fair to your classmates and beneficial to you.

## Prerequisites

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### UA Course Catalog Prerequisites:

No prereqs found

# Course Description

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## Course Description and Credit Hours

This comparative study of religions highlights complexity in world religions. Topics, such as texts, practices, and deities, organize the study of different pairs of religions.

## Required Texts

### Required Texts from UA Supply Store:

- PROTHERO (RENTAL) / (RENTAL) GOD IS NOT ONE (RENTAL)
- PROTHERO / GOD IS NOT ONE (Required)

## Course Objectives

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- Introduce students to information about various practices and beliefs associated with religions.
- Discuss the construction of the category "world religions" and the implications of those constructions.
- Develop strategies to analyze critically representations of religions.
- Apply these critical analysis strategies to contemporary media representations.

## Student Learning Outcomes

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Scholars in Rel 102 will be able to

- 1) Analyze critically the history of the category "world religions" and the values implicit within it.
- 2) Define basic terms associated with the histories and practices of a broad range of ideas and practices commonly labeled religions.
- 3) Develop a sophisticated method for comparative studies.
- 4) Critique the specific categories commonly associated with religions and the agendas and assumptions that those categories reveal.
- 5) Work effectively in small groups to present critical analyses of representations

## Other Course Materials

Additional readings are available on the course page on Blackboard.

# Outline of Topics

## INTRODUCTIONS

Jan 12 – Introduction to the academic study of religions

Jan 17 – Comparison and the power of representations

Prothero Introduction

\*\* Selected online readings

## TEXTS AND IDENTIFICATIONS IN HINDUISM AND JUDAISM

Jan 19 – Judaism

Prothero chp 7

Jan 24 – Judaism

\*\*Selections from the Torah

### **Online Quiz**

Jan 26 – Hinduism

Prothero chp 4

Jan 31 – Hinduism

\*\*Selections from the Vedas

### **Online Quiz**

Feb 2 – Comparison of texts and identifications

\*\*Selected Online Readings

### **Online Quiz**

Feb 7 – **TEST 1**

## PRACTICES IN ISLAM AND DAOISM

Feb 9 – Daoism

Prothero chp 8

Feb 14 – Group Presentation 1

Meet in Manly Hall at assigned times

Feb 16 – Daoism

**Online Quiz**

Feb 21 – Islam

Prothero chp 1

Feb 23 – Islam

**Online Quiz**

Feb 28 – Group Presentation 2

Meet in Manly Hall at assigned times

Mar 2 – Media representations of practices

Mar 7 – Comparison of practices

\*\* Selected online readings

**Online Quiz**

Mar 9 – Test 2

Mar 14, 16 Spring Break

ATTITUDES TOWARDS VIOLENCE IN CHRISTIANITY AND BUDDHISM

Mar 21 – Buddhism

Prothero chp 5

Mar 23 – Buddhism

**Online Quiz**

Mar 28 – Christianity

Prothero chp 2

Mar 30 – Christianity

**Online Quiz**

Apr 4 – Comparing interpretations of violence

\*\*Select online readings

**Online Quiz**

Apr 6 – **Test 3**

CHANGE IN CONFUCIANISM AND YORUBA RELIGION

Apr 11 – Confucianism

Prothero chp 3

Apr 13 – Confucianism

**Online Quiz**

Apr 18 – Yoruba religion

Prothero chp 6

Apr 20 – Yoruba religion

**Online Quiz**

Apr 25 – Comparison of developments in Confucian and Yoruba religions

\*\* Selected online readings

**Online Quiz**

CONCLUSIONS

Apr 27 – Conclusions and Review

May 1, 11:30 – 2:00 **Final Exam**

## Exams and Assignments

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### ONLINE QUIZZES

For designated class days (see schedule under Outline of Topics), you must complete an online quiz BEFORE class begins. The quiz will be available through the course's Blackboard page at 5:00 pm on the day of the prior class session and will be disabled at the start of the class session for which it is due (the

date under which the quiz is listed on the schedule). Each online quiz will cover the reading assigned for that segment of the course and significant points of the previous class session(s). Each question in these quizzes is worth two points towards the online quiz portion of your grade, and each quiz will have between 4 and 6 questions. Over the course of the semester, these twelve quizzes will include more than 50 questions, totaling over 100 points. Therefore, a student who misses one quiz can still receive full credit for this portion of the course. If a student receives more than 100 points on the online quizzes, those extra points will count as extra credit. Make-up quizzes will not be arranged, as they are available online from anywhere with internet capabilities.

### **IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS**

During many class sessions, scholars will compose a short written response to a specific issue or question, which must be submitted at that time. These written responses will be graded as Acceptable or Unacceptable. Acceptable papers will be awarded 15 points towards the In-class Assignment grade. You cannot make-up a missed In-class Assignment.

On January 26, scholars will form working groups of 5 scholars each. Anyone absent on that day will be assigned to a group. During some class sessions, scholars will divide into these groups to discuss an In-Class Assignment question and prepare a single, group written response that will be collected and graded like the individual In-Class Assignments. Each person participating in a group that day must be listed on the response and will receive the same credit. Following group discussion, some groups will be called on to present their ideas to the larger group.

With more than 12 In-Class Assignments, the total points possible on these assignments will exceed the 180 points listed in the grading breakdown. Therefore, if a student misses 1 or 2 Assignments, they can still receive an A on this portion of the course. Points beyond 180 will constitute extra credit.

### **GROUP PRESENTATIONS**

Each working group is also responsible twice (on February 14 and 28) for presenting to their assigned grader (GTA or Professor) a comparison of two applications of the category “religion” or representations of a specific religion from contemporary events or news commentary. All group members must participate in the presentations; anyone absent that day will receive a 0. For those two class days, the class will not meet in the regular classroom, but each group will meet at a preassigned time with their grader in Manly Hall.

### **TESTS AND FINAL EXAM**

We will have three in-class tests (February 7, March 9, April 6) and a final exam. The final will be comprehensive and will be given at the time set by the University (May 1, 11:30-2:00). You must arrange your schedule, including your departure at the end of the semester, accordingly. If you miss a scheduled test, you can **only** make-up the test with a documented, excused absence. All tests and the final will have both multiple choice questions and a paragraph response section.

## **Grading Policy**

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The course includes a total of 1000 points possible, distributed as follows:

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Total Possible points</b>

Online quizzes (2 points per question, 50+ questions)	100
In-class / group assignments (15 points each, 12+ assignments)	180
2 group presentations (50 points each)	100
3 tests (140 points each)	420
Final exam	200

Final grades will be based on the following ranges: 970-1000+ = A+; 920-969 = A; 900-919 = A-; 870-899 = B+; 820-869 = B; 800-819 = B-; 770-799 = C+; 720-769 = C; 700-719 = C-; 600-699 = D; 0-599 = F

## **PARTICIPATION**

Your participation in the class is vital. Participation goes beyond the number of words someone speaks to include both the relevance of comments and their attentiveness. Be prepared to ask questions about the readings and/or contribute your own ideas.

## **EXTRA CREDIT**

Scholars can receive extra credit by attending special events announced in class, including Religious Studies and Asian Studies events. Each scholar must submit a one-page summary and reflection of the event. Each event adds five points to the lowest test grade, and each person can receive credit for up to 3 events this semester.

## **Policy on Missed Exams and Coursework**

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If you miss a scheduled test, you will receive a 0 for that portion of the course unless you can document the excused absence. If the absence is documented, all efforts will be made for an equitable means of making up a test. A make-up may be in a different format, including potentially an oral exam.

Neither quizzes nor In-Class Assignments can be made up. The quizzes are available online from anywhere with internet capabilities, and both items have extra opportunities built into the grading to replace a missed quiz or In-Class Assignment.

## **Attendance Policy**

The success of this course requires the contribution of all scholars. When you are absent, you miss an opportunity to learn from the other scholars, and they miss an opportunity to learn from you. Your participation in the class, as well as your presence in the room, is vital. Attendance is important, as reading the assignments or listening to lectures on Tegrity is not as effective. In past semesters, attendance generally correlates with success in the course. If you are late, please join the class as soon as possible without disrupting the learning experience. Habitual tardiness, however, is unacceptable.

In this room, we become a community of scholars, constantly refining our academic skills as well as developing our understanding of various subjects. Approaching religions in an academic setting requires that we think critically to analyze the persuasiveness and biases that sources of information present. We

need to approach a range of viewpoints with both a willingness to question them and an equal willingness to appreciate their strengths. To make the class successful, each scholar must listen respectfully to the opinions of others and contribute their insights honestly. Disruptive behavior is not acceptable. No one has to accept a particular viewpoint, but everyone needs to understand the variety of opinions and the reasoning behind those opinions.

## Tegrity

This class employs Tegrity's course capturing technology. My verbal statements and whatever is shown through the classroom computer will be captured for each class session, and you will be able to access these recordings through the class's Blackboard site to review whatever portion of class you need. However, the recording does not capture everything, including some multi-media items and in-class discussions. Therefore, viewing them does not replace class attendance.

## Statement on Academic Misconduct

Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the official Code of Academic Conduct (<http://catalog.ua.edu/undergraduate/about/academic-regulations/student-expectations/code-academic-conduct/>) provided in the Online Catalog.

## Statement On Disability Accommodations

Contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) (<http://catalog.ua.edu/undergraduate/about/support-programs/disability-services/>) as detailed in the Online Catalog.

## Severe Weather Protocol

Please see the latest Severe Weather Guidelines (<http://catalog.ua.edu/undergraduate/about/support-programs/severe-weather-guidelines/>) in the Online Catalog.

## UAct Statement

The UAct website (<https://www.ua.edu/campuslife/uact/>) provides an overview of The University's expectations regarding respect and civility.