



REL 150, Introduction to the World’s Major Religions (CRN 63114)

Meeting Times: N.A.

Office: N/A

Classroom: N.A.

Email: masonrl@hawaii.edu

Professor: Mason, Richard L.

Description of Course:

REL 150 is a historical survey of the world’s major religious traditions. The course provides a basic introduction to the world's religious traditions while enabling students to think both sensitively and critically about the religious world.

Greetings - This course explores the major world’s religions as well as resurgence of old faiths growing in popularity. Students needn’t have prior knowledge of any materials presented. Beliefs from Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and Oceania will be presented. This course is designated as a *Global and Multicultural Perspectives* which fulfills the FG requirement.

Student Learning Outcomes:

After successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

1. *Identify the myths, rituals, ethics, and art of each major religious tradition.*
2. *Describe significant historical developments within each major religious tradition, from the time of its origins until today.*
3. *Demonstrate an understanding of their own religious background and those of the surrounding communities.*

Course Requirements

1. **Participation:** *Regular online class participation is required – this is represented in weekly forums & prompt questions. Each forum question answered is worth 5 points (for a total of 25% of overall grade)*
2. **Reading Assignments:** ** Reading assignments must be completed on a weekly basis.*
3. **Lectures:** *In addition to counting as Participation, involvement with lectures is an invaluable resource in retaining information. These will be presented as YouTube videos (links will be found in the Resources folder of Laulima)*
4. **Weekly Exams:** *There will be 5 weekly exams during the course.*

***Readings/Required Texts:** All required reading materials are provided as free .pdf documents on Laulima: They will be found in the Resources folder. As a friendly advisory, there are a fair bit of them. Students should plan on the best times to read the texts throughout the week rather than waiting until night prior to quizzes and exams. Also, the Important Word Lists (as found on the first day) will prove an invaluable tool should you keep it handy. The information on this document will be carried through the whole of the semester, and if you pursue further study into Religion, can carry you through even more semesters in your future.

Quizzes:

There are five quizzes over the course of the semester- One for each week. The tests are not cumulative, but some basic concepts may be reflected on all 3. The Grades are worth 30% of the final grade apiece.

Assignments	Date	% of grade
Participation (Questions)	Weekly	25%
1 st Quiz	Fri 5 th July	15%
2 nd Quiz	Fri 12 th July	15%
3 rd Quiz	Fri 19 th July	15%
4 th Quiz	Fri 26 th July	15%
5 th Quiz	Thur. 1 st Aug	15%

Grading. Final letter grades are determined by total number of points earned from participation and Exams as follows...

Full grade Breakdown:

A+ (97-100 +); A (93-96.99); A- (90-92.99);
 B+ (87-89.99); B (83-86.99); B- (80-82.99);
 C+ (77-79.99); C (73-76.99); C- (70-72.99);
 D+ (67-69.99); D (63-66.99); D- (60-62.99);
 F (under 60)

AS OF RIGHT NOW, ALL STUDENTS HAVE A 100% A+ GRADE - IT IS UP YOU TO MAINTAIN IT
Calendar of Events (*Subject to Change*)

DATE	TOPIC	READING	ACTIVITY
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Week 1 **July 1st -5th**

Monday	Introduction	Why the World Needs Religious Studies Ramdas Lamb on the Sacred	Word List
	Ho`omana Hawaii	Mourning the Land Wakea & Papa	Word List

Week 2 **July 8th - 12th**

Monday	Hinduisms	Hinduism today - 1 Hinduism today - 2	Word List
	Beginnings of Buddhism	Understanding Buddhism	Word List

Week 3 **July 15th - 19th**

Monday	Buddhism continued	Understanding Buddhism -Brief Overview	Word List
	Asian Religions	Excerpts from Kojiki Excerpts from Tao de Ching	Word List

Week 4 **July 22nd - 26th**

Monday	Judaism	Judaism Today 1 Judaism Today 2	Word List
	Beginning Christianity	Christianity Today- the Basics	Word List

Week 5 **July 29th - Aug 2nd**

Monday	Christianity Continued	Christianity Today- Sources of Authority	Word List
	Islam	Islam Today- Introduction Islam Today - Muslim Diversity	Word List

Helpful Tips.

1. **The Word List is your most valuable tool!** Print out a hard copy. Keep it handy as you read along with the readings or watch the lectures. Fill out the definitions in your own words, writing cements them in your mind.
2. **Don't try to memorize!** Try to understand the why! How is it happening, what is the time and place that it is happening, who were the players involved?
3. **Take your time!** Don't rush, don't try to cram, it can pile up on you, especially with other classes. There are a lot of readings, and lots of lectures to watch. Be sure to give yourself plenty of time for breaks.
4. **Chew Gum!** This isn't grade school, and you don't need enough for the entire class. Keep a piece handy. Chewing when you're studying or reading cements brain-paths. Chewing again when you're taking the tests helps reopen them. It's true!
5. **Keep in contact with the professor (ME)!** Ask me anything! I'm always there to help! I especially enjoy it when I don't know the answer, and we can find out together!

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION-

An Addendum on mutual RESPECT:

The material presented is sacred to billions of people around the world. It is vital that it is presented with the decorum and magnanimity it so richly deserves. Though a student may disagree with it, even disapprove of it, they must still approach the subject matter with all the respect that they would show their own beliefs.

This goes doubly so for others in the class. The Golden Rule was presented by a myriad of Faiths, and it is just as true in each. Students who cannot abide by this simple tenet *risk failing the course*.

An Addendum on AI

Caveat Emptor- "*let the buyer beware*." Let this be gentle caution. The rate at which AI has been advancing is an incredible facet of our reality, but some may use it for slippery ends.

Anything to be written needs information taken from our own readings and lecture videos only, and any sources other than this will be suspect. What is important is our own understandings and our synthesis of material. This is something no AI, no matter how advanced, can accomplish to the same mighty ends.

For the sake of your own grade, use the material presented, and never depend on an AI to write your papers.

SERVICES AVAILABLE-

Students with learning differences or who are having problems with the material are strongly encouraged to contact the Professor during Office Hours, or to seek out TRiO.

TRiO- Hale Kako'o 116 - 808-235-7487

Monday - Friday: 7:00 am - 7:00 pm

Saturday and Sunday: 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Students having concerns about educational and civil rights matters are encouraged to contact:

Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Windward Community College

Hale 'Ākoakoa 202

45-720 Kea'ahala Road

Kāne'ohe, Hawai'i 96744

Phone: 808-235-7466