

**College of Arts & Sciences
Program in Religious Studies
Oakland University**

***REL1850, World Religious Traditions, 4 Credits
Fall, 2018***

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General Religious Studies Mission Statement:

In keeping with the institutional goals of Oakland University to nurture student success, foster an environment for creative endeavors and engage with the general public, Religious Studies undertakes the interdisciplinary exploration of the world's religious traditions, beliefs and practices to develop critical thinking concerning the role of religion and spirituality in human affairs, and to cultivate cross-cultural competencies among students and the broader community.

It is possible to obtain a concentration or independent major in religious studies at OU. Students may select this major only through special arrangement. If you are interested, you may contact the program chair, Dr. Alan Epstein (Epstein@oakland.edu), or the instructor of this course, Dr. Charles Mabee, director of Christianity Studies. The religious studies program also offers minors in Judaic, Christian, and Islamic Studies. You may wish to check the OU religious studies web site at <http://www.oakland.edu/religiousstudies/>

Course Description:

This course will enhance your critical thinking skills and better appreciate the ways religion and spirituality shape and are shaped by culture, politics, economics and society. In addition to providing a solid theoretical base for understanding key ideas and concepts of the great religious traditions, it also addresses specific challenges that these traditions face at the beginning of the 21st century. Utilizing an academic approach to the study of religious traditions, cross-cultural competencies will be cultivated enabling you to negotiate an increasingly diverse social space and workplace in the progressively larger interlinked global world that we all live now.

This class satisfies the General Education Requirement in the Global Perspectives area.

Course Prerequisites/corequisites: none

Required Texts:

The primary text for the class is **Jeffrey Brodd, et.al., *Invitation to World Religions*** (Third edition; Oxford, 2019) **NOTE: YOU MUST USE THE NEW THIRD EDITION OF THIS TEXT!**
The second text for the class is Karen Armstrong, ***Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life*** (Knopf, 2011). This book is to be read in its entirety.

Course Procedure: *Quizzes, online essay posting, off-campus visit to a religious community*

Course Description

Outcomes & Objectives	<p>This class satisfies the General Education requirement in the Knowledge area of Global Perspective.</p> <p>General Education Learning Outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge of the core values, key terms and concepts of formative religious traditions as manifested in societies throughout the world; 2. Knowledge of comparative religious heritages, past and present, as they impact value formation and perspective in these societies. <p><i>Cross-Cutting Capacities:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social Awareness— This course examines the originating foundational ideas and practices that form the symbolic core of much of contemporary global civilization. It explores them with an eye toward uncovering fundamental concepts and values that exert continuing influence upon social behavior. 2. Critical Thinking— This course examines religious ideas and commitments from the standpoint of neutral analysis, encouraging the formation of critical judgment. It explores the deeper meaning of religious language, probing the deeper questions of human existence underlying global expressions of religious symbolism and metaphor. <p><i>Learning Objectives:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Characterize the nature of religious studies as an academic discipline. 2. Application of seminal ideas found at the core of major religious traditions to contemporary social issues; 3. Broad understanding of the history and expression of those ideas expressed within diverse religious communities; 4. Personal, professional, ethical and societal implications of common ideas and ethical practices found within various religious traditions to the on-going struggle for justice and well-being.

Drop/Add	<p>Add/Drops & Incompletes: The University add/drop and incomplete grade policies will be explicitly followed. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the University deadline dates for dropping the course.</p>
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Notes:

Grades in this course will be based on equal evaluations of each of the six learning modules and the final paper. Remember: Late submission of any work is not acceptable!!

There are 6 major learning modules in the class that last two weeks each. In modules 2-6, you will take a quiz on the assigned reading. If you are happy with your quiz score, you are finished and begin to work on the next module or final paper. However, these modules also provide you an opportunity to visit a community that practices the particular religion you are studying. You may visit the indicated community and raise your modular grade by as much as 1 full grade point (1 point out of 4). So, for example, if your quiz score is 2.7, then you may visit the designated community, write a paper relating your visit to your assigned reading and raise your modular grade to as much as 3.7. If you do not visit the community and do not write a paper, your grade would remain 2.7. Etc., etc. Your final modular grade will be recorded in the appropriate place in the "grades" link that you can find on the Moodle homepage. You will see these instructions laid out in more detail on the Moodle homepage.

In addition, there is a final required paper that encourages you to review the work of the entire semester from a new standpoint (cf. the Moodle homepage for more details). All modules and the final paper are worth an equal amount, or 1/7 of the final class grade.

Quiz Grade Calculation: Class grades will be determined by a compilation of quiz scores, short-writing assignments, optional community visits and final paper. Details will be explained on the 1st of 3 in-class meetings on Jan. 3.

Do NOT follow any automatic calculations made by the Moodle website:

Notes:

Academic Dishonesty

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner conducive to an environment of academic integrity and respect for the educational process and the safety and well being of all members of the community. Adherence to the Student Code of Conduct will be expected; violations of this code will be reported to the Dean of Students. The Code of Academic and Student Conduct can be found at <http://www2.oakland.edu/deanofstudents/handbook/conduct.cfm>.

Below are examples of academic dishonesty in our class. Students, faculty or staff who know of possible academic violations are expected to report the alleged violation to the Dean of Students Office. The report will include a brief written statement and relevant evidence (original material when available). A copy of this report with supporting evidence is given to the accused student as the statement of the charge. When appropriate, the faculty member will issue a grade of Incomplete until the academic conduct matter has been resolved.

1. Cheating on assignments and examinations. This includes, but is not limited to, the following when not authorized by the instructor: the use of any assistance or materials such as books and/or notes, acquiring exams or any other academic materials, the use of any other sources in writing drafts, papers, preparing reports, solving problems, works completed for a past or concurrent course, completing homework or carrying out other assignments. No student shall copy from someone else's work or help someone else copy work or substitute another's work as one's own. No student shall engage in any behavior specifically prohibited by an instructor in the course syllabus or class discussion.
2. Plagiarizing the work of others. Plagiarism is using someone else's work or ideas without giving that person credit. By doing this, a student is, in effect, claiming credit for someone else's thinking. This can occur in drafts, papers and oral presentations. Whether the student has read or heard the information used, the student must document the source of information. When dealing with written sources, a clear distinction should be made between quotations, which reproduce information from the source word-for-word within quotation marks, and paraphrases, which digest the source of information and produce it in the student's own words. Both direct quotations and paraphrases must be documented. Even if a student rephrases, condenses or selects from another person's work, the ideas are still the other person's and failure to give credit constitutes misrepresentation of the student's actual work and plagiarism of another's ideas. Buying a paper or using information from the Internet without attribution and handing it in as one's own work is plagiarism.

Note the following statement from the Student Handbook of the University of Edinburgh that may help you better understand the seriousness of plagiarism in the academic environment: "In order to assess your work and to give you useful feedback the professor needs to have a clear sense of what ideas you have developed for yourself and what comes from elsewhere. To be fair to all of the students in the course it is important that each student is given grades that accurately reflect their own efforts. Students sometimes wonder where to draw the line between discussing their ideas with their peers (which can be an excellent learning experience) and unacceptable collusion. The time to be particularly careful is when you are preparing work for assessment. You need to be certain that the work you submit represents your own process of engagement with the task set. You may get into difficulty if, for example, reading another student's plan for their work influences you, or if you show them your plan. Assisting another student to plagiarize is a cheating offence. In addition to giving references for all of the materials that you have actually included within your assignments, it is important to appropriately acknowledge other sources of guidance you have used when preparing your work."

3. Unauthorized collaboration on assignments. This is unauthorized interaction with anyone in the fulfillment of academic requirements and applies to in-class or take-home coursework. Individual (unaided) work on exams, homework, computer assignments and documentation of sources is expected unless the instructor specifically states in the syllabus or verbally that it is not necessary. Collaboration can also include calculating homework problems with another person, having another help to rewrite a paper, sharing information/sources with others and checking coursework with others.
4. Completion of original work. When an instructor assigns coursework, the instructor intends that work to be completed for his/her course only. Work students may have completed for a course taken in the past, or may be completing for a concurrent course, must not be submitted in both courses unless they receive permission to do so from both faculty members.

University Services

Disability Support Services Disability Support Services acts as an advocate for students with disabilities and works with 500-600 students per semester. In addition to helping students understand university policies and practices, we assist students in addressing personal and academic concerns. We supply referrals to other university offices when appropriate. Visit <https://oakland.edu/dss/>

The Writing Center The Writing Center provides writers with an interested and supportive audience of well-trained consultants who help both novice and expert writers explore ideas, revise drafts, and develop the skills to draft polished works. Learn more about the writing center by exploring www.oakland.edu/ouwc/ and by visiting Oakland University's "Write Space" in Kresge Library.

Gender and Sexuality Center The Gender and Sexuality Center is dedicated to providing services and education on issues of gender and sexuality for the Oakland University community through resources, referrals, programs and advocacy. For more information visit <https://oakland.edu/gsc/>

Note: If you do not identify with the name that is listed with the registrar, please notify me so that I may appropriately amend my records. In addition, if you prefer to go by a different pronoun, please inform me.

OU Help Desk

For all technology related questions, please contact the OU Help Desk. This is your "go to" resource for online help in case you have questions, or encounter problems throughout the semester. More specific information can be found at <https://oakland.edu/helpdesk/>

Academic Advising

Academic advisers at the university guide you along your learning journey. For more information, visit <https://oakland.edu/advising/> On this site, you can find who you should be seeing for academic advising and information to help make the most out of your academic advising appointments and your time at OU.

The **First Year Advising Center** is the first stop for all incoming first-year students and undecided transfers. In addition to orientation, that office provides academic advising for all first-year, undecided and re-deciding students; programs and events for first-year students; and major exploration and career counseling for all undergraduate students.

Once you reach sophomore standing, your academic program of choice will determine the academic advising office you will visit. Each school and the college at Oakland University house their own professional academic advising office. Use the "**Find My Academic Adviser**" tools on this website to determine which advising office you will be visiting. Faculty advisers within each **academic department** also are qualified to advise you and connect you with additional resources.

Academic advising is an ongoing partnership between the student and adviser, empowering students to plan for their academic success. Advisers help students with both the "here and now" as well as life after graduation.

The Tutoring Center The Tutoring Center offers a host of free support services — individual and group peer tutoring (for most 000 - 299 level courses), Supplemental Instruction and study skills assistance through a number of instructional and informational videos.

The students and staff of the Tutoring Center understand that everyone learns differently. Their mission is to coach and challenge you to take control of your own academic success. All services and support programs are available at no cost to currently enrolled OU students.

OU Counseling Center The Oakland University Counseling Center, located in the Graham Health Center, provides a broad range of mental health services which include:

- Personal Counseling
- Psychological and Psychoeducational Testing
- Career Testing and Counseling
- Substance Abuse Evaluation, Treatment, and Prevention
- Consultation and Outreach
- Crisis Intervention

More information can be found at <https://oakland.edu/oucc/> Counseling is provided by licensed psychologists and interns. Staff that are not fully licensed are supervised by licensed psychologists. Counseling services are based on a short-term model. If long-term counseling is indicated, the staff is happy to help with outside referrals. In order to meet with a counselor, you can call or come in to the Counseling Center and schedule an appointment. Same day appointments may be available, subject to counselor availability.

Basic Class Schedule and Topical Outline (**assignment details are given on Moodle homepage**)

Ungraded Introductory Postings/Sept. 5-

Introduction to your fellow students, online learning, class syllabus

Note: this assignment is required, but ungraded!

LEARNING (FIRST GRADED MODULE) MODULE ONE/ Sept. 10-19

Primary Topic: "General Orientation to the Academic Study of Religion"

Assigned Reading: Brodd, et.al., Chapters 1 & 2

Assigned Activities:

1. Invitation to World Religions (Quiz accessible Sept. 14-17)
2. Indigenous Religions of North America (Post on FORUM on Moodle homepage)

LEARNING MODULE TWO/ Sept. 24-Oct. 3

Primary Topic: "Hinduism"

Assigned Reading: Brodd, et.al., Chapter 4

Assigned Activities:

1. Hinduism (Quiz accessible Sept. 28-Oct. 1)
2. Sikhism and Jainism (Post on FORUM on Moodle homepage)

LEARNING MODULE THREE/ Oct. 8-17

Primary Topic: "Buddhism"

Assigned Reading: Brodd, et.al., Chapter 5

Assigned Activities:

1. Buddhism (Quiz accessible Oct. 12-15)
2. Chinese Religions (Post on FORUM on Moodle homepage)

LEARNING MODULE FOUR/ Oct. 22-31

Primary Topic: "Judaism"

Assigned Reading: Brodd, et.al., Chapter 11

Assigned Activities:

1. Judaism (Quiz accessible Oct. 26-29)
2. Visit to synagogue and written report (Post on FORUM on Moodle homepage)

LEARNING MODULE FIVE/ Nov. 5-14

Primary Topic: "Christianity"

Assigned Reading: Brodd, et.al., Chapter 12

Assigned Activities:

1. Christianity (Quiz accessible Nov. 9-12)
2. New Religious Movements (Post on FORUM on Moodle homepage)

LEARNING MODULE SIX/ Nov. 19-28

Primary Topic: "Islam"

Assigned Reading: Brodd, et.al., Chapter 13

Assigned Activities:

1. Islam (Quiz accessible Nov. 30-Dec. 3)
2. Indigenous Religions of Africa (Post on FORUM on Moodle homepage)

Final Paper due to be posted by Friday, Dec. 14

Go to final paper FORUM for the exact assignment and requirement for this paper.