

SOPHIA Learning

REL1001: Approaches to Studying Religions (3 semester credits)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students in this course gain mastery of the basic concepts integral to the study of religion and will learn how these concepts apply in real world situations. Students will analyze key components of religions as they apply to a range of different belief systems and will explore the role of religion in modern society.

Course Effective Dates: March 2013 – Present

Prerequisite(s): Entry level Gen Ed course – no prerequisites

Length of course: This is a self-paced course. Students have 60 days with an additional 30 day extension (if needed) to complete the course.

ACE CREDIT® Recommendation: In the lower-division baccalaureate/associate degree category, 3 semester hours in world religions or humanities (5/13).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of the course, the student will be able to:

1. Investigate the major approaches to studying religion.
2. Identify common elements of religions.
3. Analyze religion's impact on individuals, society, and the world.
4. Evaluate social, ethical, and cultural topics through the lens of religion.

OUTLINE OF MAJOR CONTENT AREAS

- Purposes for Studying Religions
- Reasons for Studying Religion
- Role of Religion in Modern Life
- The Religious Impulse
- Religion and the Individual
- Religion and Origins
- Religion and the Family
- Religion and Society
- Defining Religion
- What is Religion?
- "Origins" of Religion
- Religion as Myth
- Religion as Culture & Social Convention
- The Sacred and the Profane
- A "Definition" of Religion
- An Overview of Religions
- Categorizing Religions
- Primal Religions
- Judaism
- Christianity
- Islam
- Hinduism

- Confucianism
- Buddhism
- Other Eastern Religions
- Approaches and Methods of Studying World Religions
- Phenomenology
- Theology
- Historical Approaches
- Comparative Religion
- Philosophy of Religion
- Sociology of Religion
- Common Elements of Religions
- Sacred & Transcendent
- Summum Bonum
- Judaism- Yahweh
- Christianity- Trinity
- Islam- Allah
- Hinduism - Brahman/Atman
- Taoism - The Tao
- The Transcendent in Primal Religions
- The Problem
- Suffering
- Sin
- Death
- Evil
- The Solution
- Mysticism
- Sacramentalism
- Silence
- Action
- Religious Narratives
- Transmission of the Teaching
- The Nature of Religious Narratives
- Early Creation Stories
- Parable, Myth, and Allegory
- Revelations
- Philosophy and Doctrine of World Religions
- Animism and Related Beliefs
- Monotheism
- Theism vs. Deism
- Polytheism & Henotheism
- Atheism
- Non-Theism
- Religion's impact on Individuals, Society, and the World
- Fear and Wonder: Ultimate Questions
- Death and Eternity
- Social Convention
- Humanism, Atheism, and Nihilism
- Gender

- Economics
- Law
- Family Structure
- Societal Structure
- Morality & Ethics
- Marriage, Family and Sexuality
- War and Peace
- Duties and Law
- The Environment
- Overview of Ritual & Material Culture
- Holy Places
- Architecture
- Festivals
- Pilgrimages
- Life Cycle Events
- Sacred Objects
- Religion in Government
- Religious States
- Separation of Church and State
- National Religions
- Religious & Political Issues
- Atheistic States
- Religion in Global Affairs
- Many "Worlds" in One
- Religious Wars & Violence
- Liberation Theology, Economic Inequality, and Social Justice
- Religious Inclusion and Exclusion

GRADING

This is a pass/fail course. Students are required to complete all 12 formative and 4 summative assessments with an overall course average of 70% or better.