

0101R100

Introduction to Religions

Instructor: TBA

Time: May 18, 2026 - June 19, 2026

Office Hours: 2 hours (according to the teaching schedule)

Contact Hours: 60 (50 minutes each)

Credits: 4

E-mail: TBA

Course Description

This subject aims at providing students with a fundamental understanding of diverse types of religions and religious practices in today's world. At the same time, the course will examine the complex nature of religious phenomena, including religious knowledge and competing truth claims.

Required Textbook(s)

All reading materials (cf. handouts, essays) will be supplied by the professor.

Prerequisites

No prerequisites

Course Goals

Religion is one of the most widespread and deeply entrenched aspects of human experience. It is also a phenomenon that has proven remarkably resistant to systematic explanation. This course is an introduction to an array of influential approaches to explaining religion and its core aspects – e.g. ritual, religious institutions and belief in the supernatural. Through this course, students will gain a deeper understanding for the diversity and complexity of religion/s as well as a basic understanding of the study of religion. By the end of the course students will possess:

1. Familiarity with the philosophy and doctrines common in many world religions, including the Roman Catholic Church, Judaism and Islam.
2. A greater understanding of the traditions and history of the Roman Catholic Church.
3. A greater understanding of the traditions and history of Judaism and Islam.
4. An in-depth understanding of the most influential people in the largest and oldest religions, including Jesus and the 12 Apostles (Catholicism), Moses, Abraham (Judaism) and Muhammad (Islam).
5. An understanding of other religions and religious practices in today's world.

Schedule/Calendar

Please note that the schedule is meant to give an overview of the major concepts of this course. Changes may occur in this calendar as needed to aid in the student's development. The following reading assignments are to be completed before the class meeting for the day so as to be prepared to discuss the concepts therein during class time. The professor may modify this schedule due to the pace of the class, time constraints, or canceled classes.

WEEK 1 STUDYING RELIGION & THE HINDU TRADITIONS

- Introduction to the course, what is religion/the sacred and the profane/ types of religion/defining religion
- “About Religion”
- “Hindu Traditions”

- “The Creation Hymn
- “Bhagavad Gita”
- “Tiruvaymoli”

WEEK 2 EASTERN TRADITIONS

- **“Buddhist Traditions”**
- “The Dhammapada”
- “A Woman’s Compassionate Wisdom”
- “Pure Land Buddhism: Honen’s Testament”
- **“Chinese and Korean Traditions”**
- “On the Mandate of Heaven”
- “From the *Sutra in Forty-Two Sections*”
- “The Holy Mother of Mount Fairy Peach”
- **Discussion One**
- **Midterm Exam**

WEEK 3 ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS: JEWISH & CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS

- **“Jewish Traditions”**
- “The Tanakh”
- “The Decalogue (Ten Commandments)”
- “From Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed: On Image and Likeness*”
- “The Shema”
- **“Christian Traditions”**
- “The Nicene Creed”
- “The Desert Fathers and Mothers”

WEEK 4 ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS: CHRISTIAN & MUSLIM TRADITIONS

- **“Christian Traditions”**
- “Julian of Norwich”
- “Teresa of Avila, from the *Interior Castle*”
- **“Muslim Traditions”**
- “A Hadith (Saying) of the Prophet Muhammad”

- “From the Qur’an: Abraham Destroys the Idols”
- “Rabi’a al-‘Adawiyah”
- “Jalal al-Din Rumi”
- **Discussion Two**

WEEK 5 NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS AND FINAL EXAM

- “New Religions and Movements”
- “Nichiren ‘On Attaining Buddhahood in This Lifetime”
- “From *The Book of Mormon*”
- “Elijah Muhammad on the True God and the Tribe of Shabazz”
- “L. Ron Hubbard in the Benefits of Clearing”
- **5-6 page research paper**
- **Final Exam**

Grading Policy

Type	Percentage
Midterm Exam	30% (300 Points)
Research paper	30% (300 Points)
Final Exam	30% (300 Points)
Class Discussion/Participation	10% (100 Points)
Total	100%

Grading Scale

The instructor will use the grading system as applied by JNU:

Definition	Letter Grade	Score
Excellent	A	90~100
Good	B	80~89
Satisfactory	C	70~79
Poor	D	60~69

Failed	E	Below 60
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Academic Integrity

As members of the Jinan University academic community, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic coursework and activities. Academic dishonesty, includes (but is not limited to) cheating on assignments or examinations; plagiarizing, i.e., misrepresenting as one's own work any work done by another; submitting the same paper, or a substantially similar paper, to meet the requirements of more than one course without the approval and consent of the instructors concerned; or sabotaging other students' work within these general definitions. Instructors, however, determine what constitutes academic misconduct in the courses they teach. Students found guilty of academic misconduct in any portion of the academic work face penalties that range from the lowering of their course grade to awarding a grade of E for the entire course.