

STUDENT WARNING: This course syllabus is from a previous semester archive and serves only as a preparatory reference. Please use this syllabus as a reference only until the professor opens the classroom and you have access to the updated course syllabus. Please do NOT purchase any books or start any work based on this syllabus; this syllabus may NOT be the one that your individual instructor uses for a course that has not yet started. If you need to verify course textbooks, please refer to the online course description through your student portal. This syllabus is proprietary material of APUS.

American Public University System

The Ultimate Advantage is an Educated Mind

School of Arts and Humanities

HIST 588
History of Religion

3 Credit Hours
8 weeks

Graduate students are encouraged to take required or core courses prior to enrolling in the seminars, concentration courses or electives.

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Instructor Information

Instructor:

Email:

Office Hours:

Website:

The above email address is for before and after the course. During the course use only Messages.

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Course Description

This course explores the historical development and central beliefs and practices of each of the major world religions. Students employ a multi-disciplinary approach to religious study (e.g. the use of literary criticism, anthropology, psychology, phenomenology and other tools) to examine the importance of religious thought and expression within each religion. The scope of the course is international, and each religious movement is approached from both a chronological and geographical perspective.

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Course Scope

This course covers the history of religion across the globe. Besides an intellectual approach, students will experience the religions studied as well, to the extent possible. We will examine several religious traditions important in the contemporary world. Because each religion is different, the same themes will not be treated each week. Depending on the religion, we might consider, for example, history, worldview, myth, ritual, practices, symbols, doctrines, scripture, ethics, or art. Besides the required reading, during the week, students are strongly encouraged to read the holy scripture of the religion being studied. Our perspective will be pluralistic. Approach each religion with an attitude of curiosity, even if you are a member of that religion. Think about how the religions are similar and different. In this course, which is a full semester taught in an intensive eight weeks, you are expected to engage in significant outside research and share it with the class. Each week you will write a short essay on some aspect of the religion under study. There is a course bibliography in the forum Resources to Help You during the Course that will assist you with your research.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of HIST 588, the student will be able to:

- Analyze the key underlying beliefs and principles of the religions studied.
- Explain the major similarities and differences between the different religions studied.
- Critically engage primary and secondary sources related to the study of the history of religion.
- Discern the wide variety of ways that religion is practiced and interpreted.

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Course Delivery Method

This course delivered via distance learning will enable students to complete academic work in a flexible manner, completely online. Course materials and access to the online learning management system will be made available to each student. Online assignments are due by Friday evening of the week except as otherwise noted and include discussion questions (accomplished in Forums) and individual assignments submitted for review and evaluation by the Faculty Member. Assigned faculty will support the students throughout this course.

Course Materials

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Keown, Damien. *Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction*. ISBN 9780199663835
- Knott, Kim. *Hinduism: A Very Short Introduction*. 2nd ed. ISBN 9780198745549
- Momen, Wendi, and Moojan Momen. *Understanding the Baha'i Faith*. ISBN 97819037655000
- Olupona, Jacob. *African Religions: A Very Short Introduction*. ISBN 9780199790586
- Ruthven, Malise. *Islam: A Very Short Introduction*. ISBN 9780199642878
- Solomon, Norman. *Judaism: A Very Short Introduction*. 2nd ed. ISBN 9780199687350
- Woodhead, Linda. *Christianity: A Very Short Introduction*. 2nd ed. ISBN 9780199687749

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HIGHLY RECOMMENDED (For All History Majors)

Turabian, Kate L. *Manual for Writers of Term Papers*. 9th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018. Purchase optional but highly recommended. The full, online Chicago style manual, sixteenth edition is available in the APUS Library @ <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org.ezproxy2.apus.edu/16/contents.html>.

Additional Required Readings: In Resources or provided by the Instructor.

For those students who want a general textbook giving an overview of the study of religion, see for instance:

Momen, Moojan. *Understanding Religion: A Thematic Approach*. London: Oneworld, 2014.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The Department of History and Military Studies requires conformity with the traditional University of Chicago Style Manual and its Turabian offshoot. **Citations will follow traditional footnote attribution. Do not use endnotes, parenthetical notes, MLA, or APA.** Make sure that your Microsoft Word is not set to create an extra line between paragraphs. This is not in accordance with the *Chicago Style Manual*. Also, make sure that Word creates one space after punctuation, which Chicago requires. Ensure that you change the preferences in Word before you turn in a written assignment. Historians use the Chicago bibliography style (not the author-date style). Humanities and other students: You may use MLA (or APA). However, as this course is housed in the History Department, each post and essay, you must state that you are a Humanities (or other) student. If you do not, then the professor will assume that you are in the History program and use Chicago.

Copyright and Fair Use Notice: Electronic readings may be provided by way of licensed materials in the APUS Library, but also in keeping with Fair Use exemptions for educational purposes under U.S. Copyright Law.

Websites: In addition to the required course texts some websites might be useful. Please abide by the university's academic honesty policy when using Internet sources as well. Note that web site addresses are subject to change.

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Evaluation Procedures

Week 1:

This week includes your virtual introduction with a response to at least two students and a discussion about how to approach the academic study of religion. You absolutely must write one post with at least 250 words by Sunday 11:55 p.m. ET of the first week to maintain your registration. In addition, you will plan your field trips. All components of your first week's work are graded. For this week only, no word lengths are required for any post other than your virtual introduction.

Forum Discussions:

Each forum requires answers to questions listed in the forum. Use this opportunity to express critical analysis and deeply engage the course material. Adhere closely to the requirements in the Graduate Forum Grading Rubric found in the Week 1 forum. Each week, students will respond to the questions in each forum, and to at least two fellow students (or to me when I post). Each post must be analytical in nature, well written, and properly referenced. Each post must adhere to Chicago and include footnotes. These forum discussions are preparation for you to participate in professional online discussion forums.

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Weekly posting schedule: Tuesday by 11:55 p.m. ET post your response to the questions. This post must be at least 350 words. Thursday by 11:55 p.m. ET post your first response to a student or to me. Friday by 11:55 p.m. post your second response to a student or to me. Each response post must be at least 250 words. This is an intensive one-semester course covered in eight weeks. To ensure this is graduate-level discussion, do not be late with your posts. Being late with your posts may incur a penalty.

For the forum discussions only, a bibliography is not necessary. Classroom discussion work must be posted to the forum during the week in which it is assigned. Classroom discussions will not be accepted through email. Postings unrelated to the week's discussion, as well as late postings (after the week), do not count as participation for grading purposes (see below for my late work policy). Remember, forum postings are the equivalent of what you would do in terms of discussion in a tradition classroom. Part of the forum participation will include incorporating what students have learned from the discussions and reviews on the H-Net network they have joined @ <https://networks.h-net.org>. The first week every student will join an H-Net discussion network. It can take time for an application to be approved, but the logs are public and all students should start reading them as from the first week.

Analysis Essays (AE):

When submitting work, the proper file name for uploading is: .doc or .docx. No late assignment will receive an A grade unless the instructor has been contacted before the due date with a valid reason; late essays may incur a penalty.

Weeks 2 through 8, in four to five pages, you will write an essay per week on a narrowly focused topic that is on some aspect of the religion being studied that week. For each essay, you will read and incorporate into your essay, a book or document from the course bibliography (in the forum Resources to Help You during the Course) that is directly related to the week's subject matter and is not required reading. The course bibliography is divided according to the religions. Each essay must be uploaded as an attachment in Assignments, and they are due no later than the last Sunday of each week, 11:55 p.m. ET. See Assignments for the exact dates. Use your research for these essays to enhance your forum posts. For each essay, you are required to use a minimum of six excellent academic sources. Remember that required reading will not count for one of these six sources.

You choose the focus of your essays. I do recommend that you select one theme to analyze for all the religions (however, that is not required). The possibility is virtually unlimited: salvation, abortion, a just war, rituals, holidays, prayer, and the calendar are just a very few possibilities.

All essays will be double-spaced pages, with standard margins, in Times New Roman 12 pt font. Grading is based on the graduate grading rubric for essays in the Week 1 forum. Do not forget to include in each essay the required minimum number of academic sources. All essays will demonstrate excellent use of academic journal articles. Your essay writing should be near-journal quality.

Field Trip:

Weeks 3 through 8 you will take a field trip to visit a person, family, or group who are members of the religion being studied. (This is not possible for African Religions unless you are in Africa, therefore, it is not required for Week 2. If you are stationed in Africa, and it is safe, then please take a field trip.) The purpose is to see the religion in action. You can, for example, attend a Jewish Friday night Seder, a church service for a Christian Church you are not familiar with, a halal shop, a yoga class (if you do not already do it), a Bahá'í holy day celebration, or a Buddhist meditation center. Week 1 we will discuss how you can find the places for these field trips. No later than Sunday 11:55 p.m. ET of each week, you will write a couple paragraphs detailing your visit. This is graded. If you have trouble organizing one, contact me ASAP.

Practicing Being a . . . :

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Each week starting Week 2, you will “practice” being a member of the religion being studied. Further instructions will be given each week. No later than Sunday, 11:55 p.m. ET of each week, you will write a couple paragraphs detailing your efforts. This is graded.

Late Work Policy:

Computer failure or other technological problems are generally not an excuse for late work. Save your work every few minutes. Purchase an external hard drive and back up your work. Alternatively, you can save your drafts and documents in the cloud. Google Drive and dropbox.com are free. Is the APUS website slow or not functioning, or Sakai? Let Classroom Support know. You might be the first to tell them. If you are having Internet trouble try your public library, an Internet café, a friend, or a family member. Excused late work is only permissible if you have a valid, documented medical or work excuse. No late assignment will receive an A grade unless the instructor has been contacted before the due date with a valid reason.

Students are expected to submit classroom assignments by the posted due date and to complete the course according to the published class schedule. As adults, students, and working professionals, I understand you must manage competing demands on your time. Should you need additional time to complete an assignment, please contact me before the due date so we can discuss the situation and determine an acceptable resolution.

Work posted or submitted after the assignment due date will be reduced by 10 percent of the potential total score possible for each day late up to a total of five days, including forum posts and replies, quizzes, and assignments. Beginning on the sixth day late through the end of the course, late work, including forum posts and replies, quizzes, and assignments, will be accepted with a grade reduction of 50 percent of the potential total score earned.

Assignment	Weighted Percentage
Forum Discussions (8)	35
Analysis Essays (7)	35
Practice Being a . . .	10
Field Trips	15
Virtual Introduction	5
Total	100 percent

Course Outline

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Learning Objectives</u>	<u>Readings and Activities</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
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1	Orientation and Introductory Discussions	<p>Create a learning community.</p> <p>Discuss how academics approach the study of religion. LO 4.</p>	None.	<p>Virtual introduction and other Week 1 work. Remember that DOE requires that you post 250 words by Sunday 11:55 p.m. ET Week 1 to maintain your registration.</p> <p>Explore the classroom.</p> <p>Explore the APUS Library.</p> <p>Join a discussion network at H-Net.</p> <p>Discuss your proposed field trips.</p> <p>Discuss what a religion is and how academics approach the study of religion.</p>
2	African Religions	Analyze African religions. LO 1, 2, 3, 4.	<p>Required: See the forum for required work.</p> <p>There are no written sacred scriptures.</p> <p>There is no field trip unless you live in Africa.</p>	<p>Required reading and lectures.</p> <p>Forum discussions.</p> <p>Practice being a . . . adept of an African Traditional Religion.</p> <p>Post your first analysis essay by Sunday 11:55 p.m. ET.</p>
3	Hinduism	Analyze Hinduism. LO 1, 2, 3, 4.	<p>Required: See the forum for required work.</p> <p>You are encouraged to read, on top of a primary or secondary source, the Bhagavad Gita. The course bibliography has several suggested translations.</p>	<p>Required reading and lectures.</p> <p>Forum discussions.</p> <p>Practice being a . . . Hindu.</p> <p>Hinduism field trip.</p> <p>Post your second analysis essay by Sunday 11:55 p.m. ET.</p>
4	Judaism	Analyze Judaism.	Required: See the forum for required work.	<p>Required reading and lectures.</p> <p>Forum discussions.</p>

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		LO 1, 2, 3, 4.	You are encouraged to read, on top of a primary or secondary source, the Jewish Bible (<i>Tanakh</i>). The course bibliography has several suggested translations.	Practice being a . . . Jew. Judaism field trip. Post your third analysis essay by Sunday 11:55 p.m. ET.
5	Buddhism	Analyze Buddhism. LO 1, 2, 3, 4.	Required: See the forum for required work. You are encouraged to read, on top of a primary or secondary source, Buddhist scripture. The course bibliography has several suggested sources and translations.	Required reading and lectures. Forum discussions. Practice being a . . . Buddhist. Buddhism field trip. Post your fourth analysis essay by Sunday 11:55 p.m. ET.
6	Christianity	Analyze Christianity. LO 1, 2, 3, 4.	Required: See the forum for required work. You are encouraged to read, on top of a primary or secondary source, the Christian Bible (New Testament). The course bibliography has several suggested translations.	Required reading and lectures. Forum discussions. Practice being a . . . Christian. Christian field trip. Post your fifth analysis essay by Sunday 11:55 p.m. ET.
7	Islam	Analyze Islam. LO 1, 2, 3, 4.	Required: See the forum for required work. You are encouraged to read, on top of a primary or secondary source, the Qur'an. The course bibliography has several suggested translations.	Required reading and lectures. Forum discussions. Practice being a . . . Muslim. Islam field trip. Post your sixth analysis essay by Sunday 11:55 p.m. ET.

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8	Bahá'í	Analyze the Bahá'í Faith. LO 1, 2, 3, 4.	Required: See the forum for required work. You are encouraged to read, on top of a primary or secondary source, Bahá'í scripture. The course bibliography has several suggested sources.	Required reading and lectures. Forum discussions. Practice being a . . . Bahá'í. Bahá'í Faith field trip. Post your seventh analysis essay by Sunday 11:55 p.m. ET.
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Policies

Please see the Student Handbook @ <http://www.apus.edu/student-handbook> to reference all University policies. The University's grading scale is @ <http://www.apus.edu/student-handbook/grading/index.htm>.

Drop and Withdrawal Policy @ <http://www.apus.edu/student-handbook/withdrawal/index.htm>.

Plagiarism Policy @ [http://www.apus.edu/student-handbook/academic-dishonesty/index.htm#Academic Dishonesty](http://www.apus.edu/student-handbook/academic-dishonesty/index.htm#Academic_Dishonesty).

Extension Process and Policy @ <http://www.apus.edu/student-handbook/extension/index.htm>.

Disability Accommodations @ [http://www.apus.edu/student-handbook/rights-responsibilities/index.htm#Disability Accommodations](http://www.apus.edu/student-handbook/rights-responsibilities/index.htm#Disability_Accommodations).

Citation and Reference Style

Use the style manual for your major.

Netiquette

Online universities promote the advance of knowledge through positive and constructive debate--both inside and outside the classroom. Discussions on the Internet, however, can occasionally degenerate into needless insults and "flaming." Such activity and the loss of good manners are not acceptable in a university setting--basic academic rules of good behavior and proper "Netiquette" must persist. Remember that you are in a place for the fun and excitement of learning that does not include descent to personal attacks, or student attempts to stifle the discussion of others. Humor Note: Despite the best of intentions, jokes and--especially--satire can easily get lost or taken seriously. If you feel the need for humor, you may wish to add "emoticons" to help alert your readers: ☺ Points will be deducted from forum postings that do not adhere to Netiquette or professional standards.

Disclaimer Statement

Course content may vary from the outline to meet the needs of this particular group.

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APUS Library

The APUS Library is available to enrolled students and faculty from inside the electronic campus. This is your starting point for access to online books, subscription periodicals, and Web resources that are designed to support your classes and generally not available through search engines on the open Web. In addition, the APUS Library provides access to special learning resources, which the University has contracted to assist with your studies.

Questions can be directed to librarian@apus.edu.

- **Charles Town Library and Inter Library Loan:** The University maintains a special library with a limited number of supporting volumes, collection of our professors' publication, and services to search and borrow research books and articles from other libraries.
- **Electronic Books:** You can use the online library to uncover and download over fifty thousand titles, which have been scanned and made available in electronic format.
- **Electronic Journals:** The University provides access to over twelve thousand journals, which are available in electronic form and only through limited subscription services.
- **Tutor.com:** For help with writing, go to the Tutorial and Student Study Center Portal in the Online Library. If you have questions, you may email librarian@apus.edu. They are available seven days a week. Active duty military have a different area to use in Tutor.com.

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Selected Bibliography

See the course bibliography in the forum Resources to Help You.

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