

REL 2300 – World Religions

Instructor: Marc Unger

Office Location & Office Hours: [Marc Unger Faculty Page](#)

Phone Number: 727-398-8495

E-mail: unger.marc@spcollege.edu

Course Description

REL 2300 World Religions: Prerequisite: ENC 0025 or EAP 1695 or satisfactory score on the SPC placement test. This course examines the general characteristics of the major religions of the world. Topics include the nature of religion, Indigenous Religions, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shinto, Christianity, Islam, and New Religious Movements. Each is examined in its cultural context, how basic human concerns are addressed, the way purpose for life is defined, and the uniqueness of religious practice. This course partially satisfies the writing requirements outlined in the General Education Requirements and Enhanced World View Requirements.

Learning Outcomes

1. The student will describe the major religions of the world by:
 - a. identifying the cultural tradition associated with each religion.
 - b. naming the important leaders associated with each religion.
 - c. associating each religious tradition with its geographical setting.
 - d. listing the dominant beliefs and practices of each religion.
2. The student will explain the relationship between cultural mores and religious practice by:
 - a. summarizing the influence of a religion tradition on a culture.
 - b. comparing the practices of various religions with cultural traditions.
 - c. identifying the shared features of world religions.
 - d. distinguishing the ethical impact of religion on culture.
3. The student will identify the way religion contributes to social unity and integrity by:
 - a. assessing how various religions view the way humans relate to nature.
 - b. analyzing the impact of religion on the structure of society.
 - c. evaluating the role religions play in providing order and cultural stability.
 - d. citing the influence religion has on ordering life-cycle events.
4. The student will analyze basic religious concepts by:
 - a. identifying the ways the "sacred" is delineated.
 - b. comparing how religions define the nature of humans and the human dilemma.
 - c. distinguishing and contrasting the various goals of each religion.
 - d. summarizing the worldview presented by each religion.
5. The student will compare and contrast various types of religious experience in both Eastern and Western cultures by:
 - a. describing various rituals and evaluating the impact of the experience.
 - b. listing the major festivals of each religion and how they represent differing beliefs and world views.
 - c. identifying the varieties of religious experience and how they differ between cultures.
 - d. examining the effectiveness of ritual as an expression of belief.

Prerequisites: Dev Level 2 Writing Met or satisfactory score on the SPC placement test.

Approved Course Outline

[REL 2300 - World Religions - Approved Course Outline](#)

Required Resources, Supplies, and Textbook

Resources: Access to MyCourses - <https://mycourses.spcollege.edu>

Supplies: Paper and pen for activities; 2 ScanTrons and a #2 pencil for exams (Form 882-E).

Textbook: Van Voorst, Robert. *RELG: World*. 4th Edition, Cengage Learning, 2020. (*The eText is found in the Textbook Access" module in the "Course Content"*)

The First Day Inclusive Access Program is a partnership between Barnes & Noble College, SPC, and Cengage Publishing to bring the eText to you through MyCourses at a low price on the first day of class. You can opt out of the program within the first week of class if you want to purchase your materials elsewhere. SPC will bill your student account at the discounted price after the opt-out deadline passes. If you are using a 3rd party vendor for your course materials and are Chapter 31, Vocational Rehabilitation, Dual Enrollment, etc. we will bill the 3rd party vendor for you.

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Attendance

In order to meet college attendance reporting requirements for the first week of the semester, you must attend the first class meeting or e-mail me within 48 hours of missing class (a reply email from me is required to verify this email has been received). For 60% college attendance reporting, you must have completed the Mid-Term Exam or at least 80% of the assignments due in the first half of the course.

Special Accommodations

St. Petersburg College recognizes the importance of equal access to learning opportunities for all students. Accessibility Services (AS) is the campus office that works with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. Students who have, or think they may have, a disability (e.g., learning disability, ADD/ADHD, psychiatric, medical/orthopedic, vision, and/or hearing), are invited to contact the Accessibility Coordinator (AC) that serves your campus for a confidential discussion. To find your AC for your specific campus, please go to the [Accessibility Services](#) website.

Emergency Preparedness Procedures

The College realizes that it is possible for a natural disaster to compromise SPC campus facilities sufficiently to disrupt the delivery of classes on campus for an extended period of time. In the event this happens, this class can continue in an online only format without disruption.

Student Assistance Program

SPC's [Student Assistance Programs \(SAP\)](#), is a collaboration resource for students with mental health or general life issues. SAP provides help and education in suicide prevention, mental health, substance abuse awareness and more. It is SPC's belief that supporting mental wellness is everyone's charge, and that one loss as a result of substance abuse, mental illness, or suicide is one too many. If you or a loved one are considering suicide, please call the National Suicide Prevention lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.

Course Grade

Your final grade will be based upon the total number of points you accumulate on the assigned assessments only. There will be no extra credit in this course to accumulate more points.

In-Class Activities: Top 20 @ 5 points each = 100 points

Mid-Term Exam: 60 points

Final Exam: 60 points

***Writing Assignments:** 2 @ 60 points each = 120

Total Possible Points = 340

*Since this course satisfies a writing requirement, you must have a grade of at least 70% on your two writing assignments combined to receive a passing course grade. Falling below 70% means you will only be eligible to receive a grade of “D” or “F” in this course (regardless of your overall course average). If you have met this requirement, the following grading scale will apply:

- A - 90% to 100% of points available
- B - 80% to 89% of points available
- C - 70% to 79% of points available
- D - 60% to 69% of points available
- F - fewer than 60% of points available

The Incomplete Grade: An “I” grade may be assigned to complete required course work only if the student was prevented from completing the course work due to non-academic reasons. I may require documentation to assist in the decision. *The “I” grade will only be considered when the student has completed at least 50% of the graded course assignments and is passing the course at the time of request.* A signed incomplete agreement form is required, and all work must be completed by the end of the subsequent term. If the work is not completed within the prescribed timeframe, the “I” will automatically change to an “F” grade.

Graded Assignments

- 1. In-Class Activities (20 @ 5 points each for 100 points total):** The reading assignments should be completed prior to class in order to provide the necessary background information for class activities. Class sessions will consist primarily of lectures, though lectures will be supplemented by audio-visual aids, quizzes, and other in-class work. There will be up to 26 different activities during the semester of which only the top 20 scores will be used for grading purposes. **Graded in-class activities that you miss cannot be made up.** These activities are only valid at the time during the class period in which they are administered. In other words, if you are not present at the time of the activity for **any reason**, you cannot submit it later for credit.
- 2. Mid-Term Exam & Final Exam (60 points each for 120 points total):** There will be 2 non-cumulative closed-book exams administered in class (see the Time Schedule document for dates). Each exam will have 60 non-cumulative objective questions. A study guide for each exam is available in MyCourses. If you miss the scheduled exam date, it is your responsibility to contact me via MyCourses e-mail within *24 hours* of missing the exam. If a missed exam is not completed prior to the next scheduled class period, a grade of “0” will be assigned. However, a make-up exam for either the mid-term or final will be available at the end of the term (see the Time Schedule).
- 3. Writing Assignments (2 at 60 points each for 120 points total)** Students enrolled in REL 2300 will be required to compose and submit two (2) original written assignments that respond to specific topics assigned by the instructor. The complete assignment instructions are located in the “Course Content” in MyCourses under the heading “Writing Assignments.” Each writing will be submitted to a drop box in MyCourses that is linked to Turnitin.com®. Turnitin.com is a teaching tool that allows you to see

how closely your writing matches source materials. If you choose not to use this service, you must contact the instructor within the first two weeks of the semester to make alternate submission arrangements. Failure to do so by this time indicates that you agree to submit your assignments in this manner.

Original Writing

All written work must represent the students' original writing. "Original Writing" means the unique and creative written composition of the student using his/her/their own words and produced using his/her/their own writing skills. The use of modified third-party text in this course is not considered original writing and will result in a reduced score for the assignment or the rejection of the work submitted (a "0" score). This includes "patchwriting" (piecing your writing together with the words and/or sentences of your source material). Since college courses require individual thinking, you need to develop the skill of transforming your research into original writing. Think of it as a conversation that you are having with someone at a gathering. Do you string together sentences and phrases that you have read, or do you explain it in your own words? Likewise, your writing needs to demonstrate that you understand the material to the point of explaining it to someone without resources in front of you. When you provide a response combining the sentences of your sources, you are only demonstrating that you can find the answer, not that you understand it. Reading source material should initiate original thoughts that are tied to your understanding of the world around you. The resulting responses should have your specific take on the main ideas. Additionally, it is not acceptable to submit work from another course or section of this course (in whole or in part). For college-level writing competency, I encourage you to visit the following site to help develop these skills: [LibGuides](#)

Policies

Academic Dishonesty Policy: Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and may be punished by failure of the assignment; failure in course; and/or expulsion from the college. You may not seek or receive assistance on any graded assessment in this course. All written work must represent your own original writing and cannot have been submitted in another course or section of this course (in whole or in part). For example, if you are repeating this course, you may not submit work you produced during a previous attempt. See the "Academic Dishonesty" policy in the SPC Student Handbook.

Laptop, Tablet, Phone, Earbud, & Headphone Policy: While the use of a laptop computer, tablet, or phone during some parts of class time is acceptable for notetaking and research, there will be other times when the use of these tools is not permitted. For example, if a video is being shown to the class, it is not acceptable to be otherwise occupied with your own media. During such times, the expectation is that laptops are closed while tablets and phones are set aside or put away. Additionally, using earbuds or headphones is not permitted at any time during class without an approved accommodation from Accessibility Services. Being cognitively engaged in class is just as important as being physically present.

Classroom Behavior Policy: In accordance with college policy, "each student's behavior is expected to contribute to a positive learning/teaching environment, respecting the rights of others and their opportunity to learn. No student has the right to interfere with the teaching/learning process. The instructor has the authority to ask a disruptive student to leave a classroom." Please remember to be respectful of those around you.

Syllabus Addendum: The college-produced information at [Syllabus Addendum](#) also applies.

A Message from the Instructor

Religion can be a very passionate and controversial subject. In this course, it is important that there be an exchange of ideas about a theme or religious tradition, while allowing others to have a different opinion. We all have our innate free will. We also all have an innate understanding that in a broad way, we are all brothers and sisters of humanity. Please be sensitive and avoid being smug, sarcastic, or judgmental about another

person's religion, or non-religion. This class is not the place to criticize, convert, or demean others. No one will be asked to defend their beliefs. It is important to note that each religion has its critics, just as each religion has its faithful adherents. Each religion has pious and good people who are wonderful examples of the faith; however, each religion also has its share of "bad examples" who are not immune from the baser side of humanity's character spectrum. Like our actions, character itself is a choice.

Students are encouraged to employ critical thinking and to rely on data and verifiable sources to interrogate all assigned readings and subject matter in this course as a way of determining whether they agree with their classmates and/or their instructor. No lesson is intended to espouse, promote, advance, or compel a particular feeling, perception, viewpoint, or belief.

In this course, we will approach each religion in an academic scholarly way. This involves understanding the terms and concepts associated with the study of religions. Each student should acquire a knowledge base of diverse religious traditions that includes founders, major divisions, scriptures, myths, rituals, ethics, and concepts of sacred reality and experience. With this understanding, you should be able to describe how religious traditions contribute to an understanding of people, cultures, nations, and art.

This class will require a significant amount of reading, writing, and studying. **It is a good idea to plan a routine study-time and stay on top of the work.** You cannot cram for this course at the last minute, any more than a farmer can cram for a bountiful crop by planting seeds the night before the harvest. If you do not set aside time for your academic pursuits, who will?

Course Calendar

The course calendar of assignments and the corresponding due dates can be found in the "Time Schedule" document within each content module in MyCourses.