

# RS3310: Major World Religions

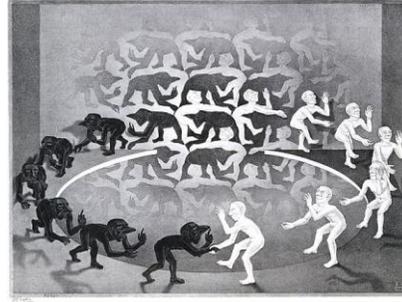
The University of Texas at El Paso

Semester: Fall 2022

Room: LAB 208

Instructor: Chavah I. Schwartz

Email: [cischwartz@utep.edu](mailto:cischwartz@utep.edu)



M.C. Escher, *The Encounter* (1944), lithograph.

Retrieved from: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/365239>

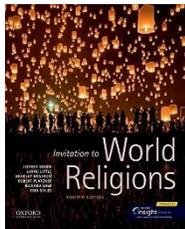
**“The world in which we live no longer concedes that one way of life or one system is valid for all. The world for which our students now prepare demands, therefore, the capacity to take two steps: first, to discover oneself in the other, so that the alien seems less strange, and second, to discover the other in oneself, so that the self seems more strange.”**

- Jacob Neusner, *Why Religious Studies in America? Why Now?*

## Course Description:

*What is the academic study of religion?* Signs of the world’s religions are readily observable on most American college campuses. However, the academic study of religion goes beyond mere observation of outward signs to capture the full meaning and scope of what religion offers to our understanding of the world around us. To academically study the world’s religions is to enhance one’s understanding and appreciation for others and the rich variety of cultures around the globe. For our study of each major world religion, we will explore the significance of its teachings, examine foundational concepts in its historical development, and consider how to appropriately research it as a way of life. The goal of this course is to introduce students to the academic study of religion and what it offers as an academic field of understanding.

## Required Text:



COVER

Jeffrey Brodd, Layne Little, Bradley Nystrom, Robert Platzner, Richard Shek, Erin Stiles, eds. *Invitation to World Religions* (4<sup>th</sup> edition). Oxford University Press, 2021.

ISBN-10: 0197543782 | ISBN-13: 978-0197543788

## Grading:

Discussion Boards – 30%

Quizzes – 30%

Midterm Exam – 15%

Final Exam – 25%

## Course Policies:

This is a college level course and the amount of assigned work reflects that fact. *It is up to each student to maintain their responsibilities to this course.* Students are expected to arrive to class on time,

prepared for lecture, and ready to field questions about the assigned materials covered that day. Due to the ongoing situation with COVID-19, it is important that students understand all course policies and expectations to ensure that this course offers an environment where everyone can be successful.

*Classroom & Discussion Board Etiquette* – Students are always expected to be courteous and respectful towards one another. All electronic devices are to be put on silent or turned off while class is in progress to avoid disruption to others. Any inappropriate or offensive behavior will not be tolerated. Should this become an issue with any student during the semester, the student will not be allowed to participate with others and will not receive credit for missed assignments. Any offenses that violate university policy will be documented and reported to the appropriate authority. For more information, visit UTEP’s Student Code of Conduct: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/student-conduct/>

*Late Work & Make-up Policy* – Any work submitted late will only be eligible for half-credit. It is important that students are keeping up with all deadlines. Once a grade has been finalized, additional or retroactive arrangements for credit will not be made.

*Extra Credit* – Please understand there is no obligation to provide extra credit opportunities so additional arrangements beyond what is detailed here will not be made. There will be one opportunity for extra credit to count toward the midterm exam, and a second opportunity for extra credit toward the final exam. More information about these assignments will be provided on Blackboard.

*Course Drop* – Students are responsible for initiating and completing any course drops. Faculty drops for this course will not be offered. For more information: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/registrar/students/registration.html>

*Lectures/Recording Devices* – Lectures cannot be recorded without the explicit consent and permission from the appropriate agencies.

#### Email:

In accordance with university policy, all email correspondence will be done **exclusively** through our UTEP email addresses. Emails sent from any other accounts will not be opened or viewed. Make sure to include your name and course information in all emails. Please allow at least a 24-hour window for response. For more information: <https://www.utep.edu/information-resources/iso/policies/>

#### Academic Honesty/Plagiarism:

“Any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Proven violations of the detailed regulations, as printed in the *Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP)*, and available in the Office of the Dean of Students and on the homepage of the Dean of Students at [www.utep.edu/dos](http://www.utep.edu/dos), may result in sanctions ranging from disciplinary probation to a

failing grade on the work in question, to a failing grade in the course, to suspension or dismissal, among others.” For more information: <http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=73922>

#### Graduate Student Requirements:

“Undergraduate courses approved for graduate credit require additional work, the amount and nature of which to be determined by the instructor.” For more information: <http://catalog.utep.edu/grad/the-graduate-school/general-degree-requirements/>

#### Disability Accommodations:

“UTEP seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all qualified individuals with disabilities, including learning disabilities. This university will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required affording equal educational opportunity. *It is the student's responsibility to register with The Center for Accommodations and Support Services within the first two weeks of classes and inform the faculty member to arrange for appropriate accommodations.*” Retroactive arrangements will not apply. For more information about CASS policies: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/ada-policies/>

The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS): <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/>

Location: Union Building East Room 106

Phone: (915) 747-5148

Email: [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu)

#### Blackboard:

Blackboard will be used throughout this course for announcements, course materials, grades, assignment submissions, etc. Make sure to take the time to familiarize yourself with Blackboard and the course layout. *Make sure to plan appropriately and anticipate technological issues.* Do not hesitate to contact the Help Desk for troubleshooting and assistance with any issues.

UTEP Technology Support: <https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/>

Location: 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of UTEP Library, Room 300

Phone: 915-747-HELP (4357)

Email: [helpdesk@utep.edu](mailto:helpdesk@utep.edu)

*Modules* – Modules will become available in Blackboard beginning on the scheduled date (page 5). This is where lecture slides, submission links, and any other materials for each module will be provided. Information provided in the slides and modules are intended to help clarify the purpose of the assigned readings and to help guide students through the ideas presented. Students are ultimately responsible for keeping up with all assigned readings and should not rely solely on the information provided in the modules to complete assignments.

## **Class Assignments & Requirements:**

### Discussion Boards:

Students will be responsible for participating in six discussion boards which will count for 30% of the final grade. Each discussion board will detail the necessary requirements for full credit and must be submitted by the scheduled deadline (page 5). The purpose of this assignment is to see that students understand the ideas presented in the assigned readings and can substantially contribute to an academic discussion about those ideas with their peers. Late submissions will only be eligible for half-credit and will not be accepted beyond the scheduled deadline.

### Quizzes:

Students will be responsible for completing six quizzes which will count for 30% of the final grade. Each quiz will cover the assigned readings from the module and must be completed by the scheduled deadline (page 5). The purpose of this assignment is to see that students are keeping up with the assigned readings and can answer questions about the ideas presented in the readings. Late submissions will only be eligible for half-credit and will not be accepted beyond the scheduled deadline.

### Midterm Exam:

Students will be responsible for completing a midterm exam on **Wednesday, October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022**, which will comprise 15% of the final grade. The midterm exam will consist of multiple-choice questions and cover the assigned material from weeks 2-7. The exam will become available in the module on the scheduled day beginning at midnight and will be due by 11:59 p.m. MST. Any exams submitted late will only be eligible for half-credit and will not be accepted beyond the scheduled deadline.

### Final Exam:

Students will be responsible for completing a final exam on **Wednesday, November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022**, which will comprise 25% of the final grade. The exam will be comprehensive and consist of multiple-choice questions. The exam will become available in the module on the scheduled day beginning at midnight and will be due by 11:59 p.m. MST. Any exams submitted late will only be eligible for half-credit and will not be accepted beyond the scheduled deadline.

*\*Failure to complete any of the requirements will severely affect the final grade for the course.*

### Grading Scale:

A: 90-100%

B: 80-89%

C: 70-79%

D: 60-69%

F: 59% and below

**SCHEDULE: (Provisional)**

WEEK(S):	ASSIGNED READING(S):	ASSIGNMENT(S):
1: 8/22 & 8/24	<p>*Key: <b>IWR</b> – Invitation to World Religions, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. <b>BB</b> – Blackboard</p> <p><u>Introduction</u> Syllabus (BB) Why Religious Studies in America? Why Now? – Neusner (BB) Ch.1: An Invitation to the Study of World Religions (IWR)</p>	*All assignments are due by 11:59 p.m. MST unless stated otherwise.
2-3: 8/29 – 9/7	<p><u>Module 1: Hinduism</u> Ch.4: Hinduism (IWR)</p>	Discussion Board 1 & Quiz 1 – due 9/9
4-5: 9/12 – 9/21	<p><u>Module 2: Buddhism</u> Ch.5: Buddhism (IWR)</p>	Discussion Board 2 & Quiz 2 – due 9/23
6-7: 9/26 – 10/5	<p><u>Module 3: Confucianism &amp; Daoism</u> Ch.8: Confucianism &amp; Daoism (IWR)</p>	Discussion Board 3 & Quiz 3 – due 10/7
8: 10/10 & 10/12	<p><u>Module 4: Midterm</u> Review for Midterm Exam</p>	Midterm Exam – 10/12
9-10: 10/17 – 10/26	<p><u>Module 5: Judaism</u> Ch.11: Judaism (IWR)</p>	Discussion Board 4 & Quiz 4 – due 10/28
11-12: 10/31 – 11/9	<p><u>Module 6: Christianity</u> Ch.12: Christianity (IWR)</p>	Discussion Board 5 & Quiz 5 – due 11/11
13-14: 11/14 – 11/23	<p><u>Module 7: Islam</u> Ch.13: Islam (IWR)</p>	Discussion Board 6 & Quiz 6 – due 11/25
15: 11/28 & 11/30	<p><u>Module 8: Final</u> Review for Final Exam</p>	Final Exam – 11/30
16: 12/5 – 12/9	<p>Finals Week</p>	

\*9/5: Labor Day – University closed

11/24-11/25: Thanksgiving Holiday – University closed

12/2: Dead Day – University closed