OVERVIEW:

This class will explore many religious traditions practiced throughout the world. By paying constant attention to their similarities and differences, it is hoped that this course will acquire a large-scale picture of global religious diversity. We will examine the practices of major and minor world religions – from Native American traditions, through Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and East Asian religions, and finally the three Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. We will discuss the historical contexts of their emergence and spread, the points of contact and dialogue with each other, the nuances of their belief systems and institutions, and their individual contributions to world civilization. This course will also place a great emphasis on discussion of primary texts.

AIMS:

a) To provide the student with a large amount of details and information on the beliefs, rituals, symbols, and scriptures of major world religions.
b) To facilitate cross-cultural comparisons of religious faith and practice.
c) To broaden the intellectual and spiritual horizons of the student by exposure to the beauty, vitality, truth, and power of religious approaches to reality, especially within non-Western frameworks.
d) To challenge the student to enter sympathetically into the worldviews of the religious traditions selected for study.
e) To prepare the student for informed, ethical participation in our religiously plural world.

EVALUATION:

1. Weekly Discussion Responses (20%)
2. Thursday Quizzes (20%)
3. Midterm Exam (20%)
4. Final Exam (20%)
5. Site Visit (20%)

Weekly Discussion Responses (20%):
Every Thursday afternoon, I will post a passage on the discussion board, usually a primary text from a religious tradition. I may also post a few guiding questions. By the following Tuesday, you must a short response to the original posting on the discussion board, summarizing your thoughts on the text and what it is meant to communicate.

**Thursday end-of-class quizzes (20%)**:

Every Thursday towards the end of class, I will hand out (on paper) a short online quiz on the week’s material. The quiz will comprise of simple multiple-choice and matching questions and should take less than ten minutes to complete.

**Midterm (20%) and Final (20%)**:

These exams will consist of both objective and essay portions. The objective portions of the midterm and final are both online, time-restricted examinations. **Students will have only one attempt to complete the both portions of these exams.** The essay prompts for the exams will become available in the “Quizzes” area during the exam availability period. The essay portions of these exams must be submitted via Canvas.

The Midterm Objective portion will cover Indigenous religions, Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism.

The Final Objective portion will cover Daoism/Confucianism, Shinto, Judaism, Islam, Christianity, and New Religions

**Site Visit (20%)**:

At any time prior to Week 14 of the semester, students will individually visit a religious site in the South Florida area (listed at the end of this syllabus). The Site Visit and Report must deal with a religious tradition that is **not the student’s own**. The student will then complete two assignments based on this visit.

1. **Site Visit Report**: Guidelines for this 3-4 page report will be posted on Canvas.
2. **Site Visit Presentation**: Students will execute an extremely short (<5 minutes) presentation of their visit.

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOK**:


Other readings will be posted on the discussion forum.

**POWERPOINTS**:
Powerpoints will be posted on the Canvas site in the MODULES section after each class.

Week 1
August 27: Overview

August 29: Indigenous Traditions Overview
Hopfe Chapters 1, 2,
Quiz 1

Week 2

September 3: Indigenous Traditions II
Hopfe Chapter 3
Discussion 1 response due

September 5: Indigenous Traditions III
Quiz 2

Week 3:

September 10: Hinduism I
Hopfe, Chapter 4
Discussion 2 response due

September 12: Hinduism II
Hopfe, Chapter 4
Quiz 3

Week 4:

September 17: Hinduism III:
Film: 330 Million Gods
Discussion 3 response due

September 19: Jainism
Hopfe, Chapter 5
Quiz 4

Week 5:

September 24: Buddhism I
Discussion 4 response due

September 26: Buddhism II
Week 6

October 1: Buddhism III
Hopfe Chapter 6
Discussion 5 response due

October 3: Sikhism
Hopfe Chapter 7
Quiz 6

Week 7:

October 8: Shintoism, Taoism, Confucianism I
Hopfe Chapter 9,
Chapter 8, 165-177
Discussion 6 response due

October 10: Shintoism, Taoism, Confucianism II
Hopfe Chapter 8, 178-196
Quiz 7
MIDTERM POSTED

Week 8

October 15: Religions of the Middle East
Discussion 7 response due

October 17: Early Judaism
Hopfe, Chapter 11
Quiz 8

Week 9

October 22: Judaism II: Kingship and Priesthood
Hopfe, Ch. 11
Discussion 8 response due

October 24: Judaism III: Rabbinic Judaism
Quiz 9

Week 10

October 29: The Historical Jesus and Early Christianity
Hopfe Chapter 12, 270-289
Discussion 9 response due
October 31: Christianity II: The Church and Medieval Christianity
   Hopfe 290-292
   Quiz 10

Week 11

November 5: The Protestant Reformation
   Hopfe 293-298
   Discussion 10 response due

November 7: Modern Christianity
   Hopfe 298-306
   Quiz 11

Week 12:

November 12: Islam I
   Hopfe Chapter 13
   Discussion 11 response due

November 14: Islam II
   Hopfe Chapter 13
   Quiz 11

Week 13:

November 19: Islam III
   Hopfe Chapter 13
   Discussion 12 response due

November 21: Islam IV
   Quiz 13

Week 14:

November 26: New Religions
   Discussion 13 response due

November 28: THANKSGIVING

Week 15:

December 3: Presentations

December 5: Presentations, Final Review