



## COURSE SYLLABUS

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### REL 120–WA Introduction to World Religions

#### **Self-Paced Course – Web-Based Format**

Session begins on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of enrollment month and ends on the last day of the 6<sup>th</sup> month.

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#### Instructor Information

**Instructor Name:** Jim Comer

**Email:** [comerj@uiu.edu](mailto:comerj@uiu.edu)

**Telephone number:** 225-401-8229

**Appropriate time to call:** Call between 9 am and 5 pm CST. I check messages daily and will usually respond within 24 hours. Text messages may be sent at any time.

**Contact Information:** For questions, comments, or concerns please contact the SelfPaced Degree Program office:

Telephone: 563-425-5200 or 1-800-553-4150

E-mail: [selfpaced@uiu.edu](mailto:selfpaced@uiu.edu)

Address: Upper Iowa University, PO Box 1857, Fayette, IA 52142

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#### Course Description

**Course Description:** An investigation of the phenomenon of religion with a special emphasis on systems of belief, codes of conduct, use of ritual and notions of the sacred. Several religious traditions (e.g., Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam) will be examined and compared with reference to these issues. Meets the humanities requirement.

**Semester Credits:** 3 semester credits **Prerequisites:** None

**Credit Hours:** As a requirement of HLC Accreditation, all UIU courses, regardless of meeting schedule or instructional mode, follow the Federal Credit Hour Definition. As such, each credit hour earned at UIU is equivalent to a minimum of 45 hours of student engagement.

For more information on how specific instructional modes meet this requirement, please see *UIU's Policy Guidelines for Instructional Time Expectations*: [UIU Policies](#).

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## Course Materials

It is the student's responsibility to make sure she/he has access to all required course materials by the start of the session.

### Required Textbooks

Textbook will be sent to student.

Ondich, J. (2021) World Religions: The Spirit Searching. Open Education Resource (OER). Available at <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/world-religions-the-spirit-searching>

### Recommended Resources

APA Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association: 7<sup>th</sup> Edition:  
American Psychological Association (2019),  
ISBN-13: 978-1433832178 ISBN-10:  
1433832178

### Recommended Resources

UIU Writing Center

- Email: [writingcenter@uiu.edu](mailto:writingcenter@uiu.edu)
- Phone: (563) 425-5272

UIU Academic Success

- Email: [academicsuccess@uiu.edu](mailto:academicsuccess@uiu.edu)
- Phone: (563) 425-5264

### Ordering Textbooks

Purchase your textbook through the online university bookstore, [BNC](#), or by phone at (800) 325-3252.

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## Course Objectives

1. Develop awareness of the validity of divergent cultural perspectives on religion.
  2. Recognize the similarities and differences between the major religious belief systems.
  3. Explore openly and critically the codes of conduct and ethics that arise from religious thought in various religious traditions.
  4. Articulate the personal experience of religion.
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# General Education Assessment

Upper Iowa University General Education program is guided by the Peacock Pillars and promotes foundational learning in multiple disciplines. The four Peacock Pillars (demonstrate technological literacy, exercise critical thinking across disciplines, communicate effectively, and engage as members of a diverse community) are student learning outcomes achieved by all Upper Iowa University graduates, and represent critical skills necessary for meaningful participation in society. The Pillars assessed by this course are indicated below:

Communicate effectively

Engage as members of a diverse community

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## Course Requirements and Grading Criteria

### Course Requirements

1. Review the **entire** course syllabus before beginning the course. Be sure you understand the course procedures and objectives. Procedures do change, so please review **ALL** forms even if this is not your first course. Your course status may be affected if policies are not followed.
2. Students who develop a regular time schedule and set goals for unit completion are most successful in completing courses within a specific timeframe.
3. We advise submitting **one unit at a time** rather than all of the units at once. The feedback you receive from the instructor is **critical** to your success on subsequent lessons. Instructors will only grade complete units. These comments allow you to improve and modify the next units if necessary. *Please note: No more than three assignments/units may be submitted in a one-week period.*
4. Assignment covers must be **clearly filled out with complete address information**. We use this information to return your assignments. Any missing or inaccurate information will result in a delay of the assignment being returned.
5. If the information in your syllabus is not clear or if units are not returned to you within a reasonable period of time (3 weeks), please contact the Self-Paced Program office. We would like the opportunity to address concerns, however, we may not know unless we hear from YOU!
6. ALWAYS make a copy of your completed units before submitting them for grading.
7. When needed, examination request forms **must be filled out completely and received a minimum of two weeks prior to the exam date**. A list of appropriate proctors is listed in the Academic Catalog. Make sure your request form is **clearly** completed and **signed** by the proctor. Any missing information or use of an unapproved proctor will result in a delay of the test being sent. If you have questions on who qualifies as an approved proctor, please contact the Self-Paced Program office. Teachers, employers, relatives, other UIU students, and close friends cannot serve as proctors. Exams will not be sent to residential locations.

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## Course Requirement Descriptions and Expectations

### Student Autobiography

Student Autobiography is the first assignment in Unit 1. Your autobiography is worth 10 points. Since we may never have the opportunity to meet face to face, I would like to know a little bit about you. Please provide the following information and tell me about yourself (i.e. - your educational aspirations, employment, family, hobbies). Submit this autobiography along with your other assignments in 'Unit 1'.

### Assignments

Each of the following assignments are to be submitted.

- *Study Questions* (10 points each). Within each Unit you will be required to respond to six study questions based on the week's readings and lecture materials. Your answers should be at least 100 words to no more than 300 words. These questions are designed to help you think through the concepts of the class and practice your reasoning and writing skills.
- *World Religions Charts* (30 points each). These charts, following a provided template, are due during each of the Units. In some units two charts are due. Detailed instructions for successful completion of these charts is provided in the course packet.
- *Research Papers* (80 points each). You will write two research papers, one each in Units 2 and 4. Specific directions and guidelines are provided for the essays in the course packet.
- *Unit Summaries* (40 points each). There is a summary of lessons learned due for each Unit. It should be completed after other assignments in the unit have been completed. Specific directions are in the course packet.

### Proctored Midterm Examination:

The midterm exam is composed of 25 multiple choice questions worth 2 points each and 5 essay questions worth 15 points each. It will cover material in Units 1 and 2. Each essay question response should be between 150-250 words in length. You will have two hours to take the exam. The exam is worth up to 125 points.

### Proctored Final Examination:

The final exam is composed of 25 multiple choice questions worth 2 points each and 5 essay questions worth 15 points each. It will cover material in Units 3 and 4. Each essay question response should be between 150-250 words in length. You will have two hours to take the exam. The exam is worth up to 125 points.

### Grading Criteria

The course letter grade will be based on the following grading criteria.

Activity	Points
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Student Autobiography	10
Study Questions (10 points per question x 6 questions per unit x 4 units)	240
World Religion (WR) Charts (30 points per chart x 6 charts total)	180
Research Papers (one each in units 2 & 4, 80 points each)	160
Unit Summaries (40 points per summary x 4 units)	160
Midterm Exam	125
Final Exam	125
<b>Total</b>	<b>1000</b>

**NOTE:** In order to pass this course, you **MUST** get a passing grade (“D” or better), on at least one of the exams *and* have enough cumulative points to earn a passing grade.

### Grading Scale

This course uses +/- grades.

Letter Grade	Percent	Points
A	93-100%	930 – 1000
A-	90-92%	900 – 929
B+	87-89%	870 – 899
B	83-86%	830 – 869
B-	80-82%	800 – 829
C+	77-79%	770 – 799
C	73-76%	730 – 769
C-	70-72%	700 – 729
D+	67-69%	670 – 699
D	63-66%	630 – 669

D-	60-62%	600 – 629
F	0-59%	0 – 599

## Grades and Feedback

This syllabus contains all assignments and forms necessary for completing your self-paced course. Submit your completed assignments either by mail or email to:

Self-Paced Degree Program, Upper Iowa University, PO Box 1857, Fayette, IA 52142

Toll free: 800-553-4150

Fax: 563-425-5287

E-mail: [selfpaced@uiu.edu](mailto:selfpaced@uiu.edu)

They will be graded and returned to you. If you need academic assistance with the course, please feel free to contact the Self-Paced Degree Program office.

For the paper-based option requiring a proctor, a student must bring a photo I.D. to the exam. The final assessment/exam is administered by a proctor, and the proctor mails your completed exam to UIU. To protect the integrity of the final assessment/exam, you only receive your final grade on the exam; you do not receive any feedback on the answers to the exam questions. The answers to the questions on the exam are not shared with students.

## Turnitin

Turnitin is a tool for both teachers and students to ensure academic integrity by checking the originality of submitted papers to avoid issues of plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Students should be aware that Turnitin scans submitted work and compares it to ALL other sources on file.

## Extension

Students will be allowed to request an extension and receive an 'X' (Extension grade) at the end of their original six-month enrollment period if:

- A minimum of one assignment has been received for grading per guidelines **AND**
- All course units and exams are not completed and submitted **OR**
- A course withdrawal has not been initiated.

**Note:** The fee for a self-paced extension is \$99 per course. The request for an extension must be submitted no earlier than one month before the end of the course and no later than a week before the end of the course. Extension grade details

- When the extension is granted and an X grade is issued, the student will receive a four-month enrollment period to complete the course.

- Students do not have the option to withdraw from a course after the initial six-month enrollment period.
- An 'I' grade posted to the student's official record will be replaced with a final letter grade; however, the extension will remain on the official transcript as a notation.
- If the course is not completed by the end of the extension period, the instructor will assign a final grade (A-F) based on work completed in relation to the total course requirements.
- If credit is not earned by the end of the extension period, students can reenroll and repeat the entire course for credit.

**Note:** Students are not reported as enrolled during the extension period and are not eligible for student loan deferment. No more than one extension will be granted.

## Course Schedule

Course units and exams should be completed in the order they are shown below. Completing units/exams out of sequence could result in a loss of points and a reduced grade.

The appropriate unit cover sheet must be included with your assignment.

Unit	Topics of Study	Activities	Assessments
Unit 1	Introduction to Religious Studies African Religions Hinduism	Read Course Packet Read About the Instructor Autobiography Readings	Study Questions World Religion Chart: Hinduism Unit Summary
Unit	Topics of Study	Activities	Assessments
Unit 2	Buddhism Sikhism Jainism	Readings <b>REMINDER:</b> Submit exam request form at least 3 weeks prior to the anticipated testing date.	Study Questions World Religions Chart: Buddhism Paper: Jainism Unit Summary
Midterm Exam	Proctored Exam	Will cover Units 1 & 2. Two hours allotted time.	25 multiple choice questions (2 pts each) and 5 short essay questions (15 pts each)

Unit 3	Confucianism Daoism Shinto Judaism	Readings	Study Questions World Religions Chart: Confucianism World Religions Chart: Judaism Unit Summary
Unit 4	Christianity Islam	Readings <b>REMINDER:</b> Submit exam request form at least 3 weeks prior to the anticipated testing date.	Study Questions World Religions Chart: Christianity World Religions Chart: Islam Paper: Comparing religions (Gen Ed task) Unit Summary
Final Exam	Proctored Exam	Will cover Units 2 & 4. Two hours allotted time.	25 multiple choice questions (2 pts each) and 5 short essay questions (15 pts each)

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## Course Expectations

### Professional Writing and Speaking Guidelines

Communications in class and online should follow the Student Conduct and Discipline, Respect for the University Environment, and Code of Student Responsibility in the [Student Handbook](#) (pg. 20 and 21). Respect the opinions of others using appropriate language and communications.

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## University Policies

### Withdrawal (W)

If a student decides to withdraw from a course before the end of an enrollment period, the student's charges, financial aid, tuition assistance, and/or veteran benefits could be affected. All students should consult with the Business Office and Financial Aid Office to understand the financial impact of withdrawing prior to initiating the withdrawal process.

Tuition adjustments are independent from academic and financial aid deadlines. Upon receiving a request for withdrawal, using the number of lessons submitted as compared to the total due, a refund of tuition is made according to the following guideline.

On or before the first day of the enrollment period\* 100%

After the first lesson through 10% of the enrollment period 90%



After the first 10% through the first 25% of the enrollment period 50%

After the first 25% of the enrollment period 0%

\*Enrollment is measured by the number of assignments to be submitted during a six-month period of time, as determined by the University, during which semester credits are earned toward graduation. The refund/repayments shall be calculated using the percentages noted above as determined using the number of assignments completed and the number of assignments yet to be submitted.

For example, if a student submitted 2 of 17 assignments, they completed 11.76% of the class assignments. The student would be refunded 50% of the tuition cost.

For students from Wisconsin, Maryland, Georgia, Oregon, or Arizona, state laws apply. For students enrolled through the [cpacredits.com](https://cpacredits.com) program, no refund is allowed after the first two weeks.

Students who withdraw from a course prior to submitting the first assignment, or who are administratively withdrawn for non-submission of assignments, will be charged an administrative fee of \$99.

Course withdrawal may impact financial aid eligibility. A financial aid counselor is available to discuss this decision.

Upper Iowa University is required to use a pro rata schedule to determine the amount of Title IV aid the student has earned at the time of withdrawal. If financial aid funds have been released to the student because of a credit balance on the student's account at Upper Iowa University, the student may be required to repay some or all of the amount released to the student. This policy is subject to federal regulations. Contact the Financial Aid Office for details.

Withdrawing from a course in progress may result in significant student account charges. Consult with the Business Office before withdrawing. For more information on financial aid implications, go to [uiu.edu/financialaid](https://uiu.edu/financialaid).

## **Administrative Withdrawal (AW)**

A grade of AW (administrative withdrawal) is recorded for any course from which a student is administratively withdrawn. At least one complete assignment/unit must be received and verified by the instructor within the first 60 days of the enrollment period or the student will be administratively withdrawn from the course. Students who are administratively withdrawn for non-submission of assignments, will be charged an administrative fee of \$99. Students through the cpacredits.com partnership follow the withdrawal policy listed above. Non-Attendance (NA): Never attended grades are not applicable to the Self-Paced Degree Program.

## **Academic Accommodations**

It is the policy of Upper Iowa University to ensure equal access to educational and cocurricular activities to students with disabilities as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. A student seeking accommodations should contact the Director of Student Accessibility Services as early in the session as possible. In order to receive accommodations, students are required to disclose their disability to the Director by completing an application for services that can be found on the Student Accessibility Webpage. The Application Packet for New Students can be found here:

<https://uiu.edu/experience/student-accessibility-services> In addition to the application packet, the student is required to submit supporting documentation. Submit these to the Student Accessibility Services Office either in person or by email/Fax. A brief interview, in-person, by phone or virtually, with the Director will confirm or deny the accommodations requested. The Student Accessibility Services Office will email accommodation letters to the appropriate professor, the student, and the student's advisor. Additionally, students should work cooperatively with their instructors throughout the session to make sure that their accommodations are appropriate and effective.

Contact the Director at (563) 425-5949, [accessibility@uiu.edu](mailto:accessibility@uiu.edu) or stop by the office on the 2nd floor of the Student Center, Office of Student Life, Room 229. **Academic**

## **Misconduct Policy**

Cheating, academic dishonesty, and plagiarism constitute a violation of the offender's own integrity, as well as the integrity of the entire University; they will not be tolerated. Violators will receive sanctions based on the level of academic misconduct.

**Cheating** includes, but is not limited to:

- The use of unauthorized books notes or other sources in the giving or securing of help in an examination or other course assignments.

- The copying of other students' work or allowing others to copy your work. The submission of work that is not your own or allowing others to submit your work as theirs.

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- The submission of the same work for two or more classes without the approval of instructors involved.

**Academic dishonesty** includes, but is not limited to:

- Sharing academic materials knowing they will be used inappropriately.
- Accessing another person's work without permission.
- Providing false or Extension information on an academic document.
- Changing student records without approval.
- Obtaining and using texts or other materials intended for instructor use only.

**Plagiarism** includes, but is not limited to:

- The presentation of another's published or unpublished work as one's own.
- Taking words or ideas of another and either copying them or paraphrasing them without proper citation of the source.
- Using charts, graphs, statistics or tables without proper citation.

### **Levels of Academic Misconduct and Sanctions**

The faculty member teaching the course has the primary responsibility for resolving allegations of academic dishonesty, though egregious violations will be resolved by the School administration, the Academic Misconduct Board, or some combination thereof. The final decision on the level of a violation rests with the Academic Misconduct Board. Options for resolving an alleged case of academic dishonesty range from dismissing the allegation with no negative sanction to being expelled from the university ([Academic Misconduct Policy: Table 1](#)). A negative sanction is defined as an action taken by the faculty member that affects the student's grade for the assignment or his or her cumulative grade for the course. Anytime academic misconduct is detected, the procedures outlined in [Academic Misconduct Policy: Table 1](#) should be followed. The incident will be maintained in a searchable database maintained by the Office of Academic Affairs.

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## **Copyright Statement**

In recognition of the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code), Upper Iowa University reminds both faculty members and learners that a willful infringement of the law may result in disciplinary action. The University library has available materials discussing the "fair use" concept, along with criteria and guidelines for reproduction and use of copyrighted materials.

**This syllabus is subject to change.**

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