



Reynolds High School

Comparative Religions:
Peace and Reconciliation through Inter-faith Dialogue



2024/2025 School Year

Building Relationships for Academic Success

"Sometimes it falls upon a generation to be great. You can be that great generation." Nelson Mandela

Instructor Name: Mr. May

Phone with ext. 503.667.3186 ext. 1140

Room Number: 624

Email Address: rmay@rsd7.net

Required Textbooks/Materials: Notebook, pen/pencils, and your laptop.

Course Description

This course examines religions of humankind. The course will examine the History of Religion in the world, the development of the idea of God and how the various views have impacted the development of various traditions. It will also introduce the student to topics and themes such as doctrine, ritual, scripture, mysticism, pilgrimage, and myth across the belief systems. The content of the course will also seek to weave together of themes growing out of the following three key issues:

- **The historical question: How have religious traditions developed and manifested themselves in world history?**
- **The social scientific question: How are religious beliefs and practices related to social organization and broader cultural contexts?**
- **The philosophical question: Why are there religions and how are they best understood in relation to various regions of the world?**
- **TABOO ONE: NO PREACHING**

Comparative Religion means looking at different religions objectively and attempting to understand them from the inside.

The goal is to identify the different approaches to the study of religion, the relationship of deity to culture. What are the major characteristics of the oral traditions of early societies. The background of Native American, the various African traditions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism, early Chinese philosophy, Judaism (Rabbinical and Modern developments, Christianity and Islam.

Grading Policy Description

Your grade will be based on your written responses to various items such as.

- **Free Response Questions (FRQ's):** these will cover the Unit Topics.
- **Written Responses to various Supreme Court Cases, the Required Documents and various articles that you will be presented with.**
- **Unit Tests**

Plagiarism: You are required to do your own work. Plagiarized work will not be accepted and for term papers, these will be checked with an online program.

Letter Grade Description & Percentage Breakdown

Grade Percentage	Letter Grade	Description
100-90	A	The student fully understands the content and the course objectives have been mastered.
89-80	B	The student understands the content and course objectives at an above average level.
79-70	C	The student understands the course content and course objectives at an average level.
69-60	D	The student does not understand the course content and a minimum of course objectives are met.
59-0	F	The student has not met a sufficient number of course objectives to pass a minimum level and receives no credit.

Late Work Policy: Late work will be accepted with the understanding that you cannot receive the full credit for work that is turned in late, unless you have worked out some arrangement prior to the deadline of the work.

TEST MAKE-UP: tests can only be made up with an Excused Absence.

Course Schedule/Outline of Units

Dates	Topic
September What is Religion and How is it Studied?	What is Religion? Aspects of Religion, theology, philosophy of religion. Comparing psychology and sociology of religion
October Anthropology of Religion	Anthropological theories; the Primal Religions. Characteristics of Basic Religions from Neanderthal's, Native American Religions, and African Religions UNIT EXAM
November Hinduism	Pre-Vedic origins; Vedic Religion; Upanishads the Paths to Moksha
December Buddhism	Life of the Buddha, Dharma, Theravada, Mahayana and Zen
January Jainism, Sikhism, Taoism, and Confucianism	Yin/Yang, Filial Piety and Ancestor Worship, Divination, Shan Ti, Life of Lao-tzu, Life of Confucius, Celebrations

	End of Semester One: MIDTERM
February Zoroastrianism	Pre-Zoroastrian Persian Religion, The life of Zoroaster, The teaching of Zoroaster, Zoroastrianism today
March Judaism	Early Hebrews, the Prophets, Rabbinical Judaism, Modern Developments
April Christianity	Life of Yeshua (Jesus), the Gospels, Gnostic Gospels, Early Christianity, Catholicism .
May Islam	Life of Muhammad ibn Abdallah, the Quran, the rise of Islam throughout Northern African and Europe. Conflict with other religions
June Wrap-up	Baha'i, Origin and development and teachings.

Class Expectations (i.e. POWER) The key aspect in class is respect for yourself and those around you. Be prepared for class, be on time, and be engaged in the class. (this is a key component) This course required you to think, reflect, and be able to communicate those aspects through speaking and writing.

Homework policy: Coursework will be completed in the virtual setting and work will be completed and turned in through OneNote/Schoology.

Schoology is utilized and you will access it through your Chromebooks.

Test Retakes: Students can retake tests when necessary.

Internet Resources: If students miss class, they can find the day's class work posted on **Schoology.com**. Also, grades will be update on a regular basis and these can be accessed through Synergy student or parent portal.

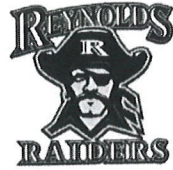
Content advisory

- ✓ **NO PREACHING:** a comparative religion course requires a particular form of discourse. This course is not about arguing the validity of one religion over another.
- ✓ Comparative Religion means looking at different religions objectively and attempting to understand them from the inside. It does **NOT** mean "comparing" in the sense of arguing which religion is better or worse.
- ✓ Arguments over the material will not be tolerated. You must avoid such judgements in all or our discussions this year.
- ✓ While you have every right to hold any religious (or non-religious) opinion you wish, please don't make your personal views a focus of your discussion.
- ✓ There is nothing worse for the learning environment of this course than to have a student try to preach their religion to others.
- ✓ Proselytizing or preaching of one's own religious views will lead to a quick intervention on my behalf and a discussion with the student.
- ✓ If you find these guidelines hard to follow, it is recommended that you drop the course.
- ✓ I encourage you to freely express your views, but in a way that is respectful of, and protects the dignity of, your peers; therefore, **putdowns and insults, including those based characteristics such as race, gender, ethnicity, religion, appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc. are unacceptable.**

- ✓ You may be aware that on college campuses, some professors began noticing around 2013-2014 that many students were asking for protections from words, books, ideas, images and speakers, indicating that they would suffer medialized harm or damage if they were not given “trigger warnings” and “safe spaces” from material they might disagree with or find upsetting.
- ✓ Studying the topics that make up the course of Government, involves content that is potentially **controversial and/or upsetting**, we will examine aspects of the history of the formation of the idea surrounding various Deities that our society generally sees as positive, along with much darker aspects.
- ✓ So, I will not infantilize you by seeing you as so fragile, so at risk of being harming or damaged, as to need “protection”, from words, books, ideas, imagery and speakers. We will all see and hear things we are disposed to disagree with, but intellectually, a properly conducted history class is going to be a place where your ideas may be challenged, refined, harmed and perhaps even destroyed, and that's as it should be.

2024/2025

Mr. May



STUDENT NAME: _____

STUDENT SIGNATURE: _____

Parent/Guardians please read the requirements for the course.

PARENT/GUARDIAN: NAME: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE: _____

Return this signed for ten points!