

Introduction to World Religions
Course Syllabus: PHIL 1304.064, Fall 2025
The University of Texas at Tyler

Instructor: Dr. Chris King
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Class Information: Online
Virtual Office Hours:
Available through email.

Required Text:

The World's Religions, Huston Smith, 2009 (50th Anniversary Edition). Harper Collins.
ISBN: 978-0061660184

Catalogue Description:

A comparative and philosophical introduction to the religions of the world including but not limited to Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism.

Learning Objectives:

Objective 1: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the beliefs, principles, and practices of some major religions and cultures.

Objective 2: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the *meaning* of religion for individuals, cultures, and societies from both historical and contemporary perspectives.

Objective 3: Students will understand and apply methods from various academic disciplines employed in religious studies.

Grade Assessment:

Discussion Boards (6 @ 30 points each): 180 points (45% or 7.5% each)

Quizzes (6 @ 20 points each): 120 points (30%, or 5% each)

Final Exam: 100 points (25%)

Total: 400 points (100%)

Discussion Boards: Throughout the term, students are required to make a substantive contribution to a discussion board devoted to the week's material. I will provide a prompt for each forum as a starting point of the discussion. In addition to offering their own contribution, students are required to respond to at least one contribution made by another student. I will grade these contributions on the basis of the contribution they make to our discussion and their ability to make reference to material provided from the week (video/reading/Power Point).

Quizzes: There are six quizzes, which may include true/false, multiple choice, and/or short answer questions. Quizzes will be taken on Canvas, timed, and open book.

Final Exam: A final exam will be given through Canvas. It will consist of a short answer section, multiple choice, and true/false questions.

Grading Scale

A = 100-90

B = 89-80

C = 79-70

D = 69-60
F = 59 and below

Important Information:

UT Tyler Honor Code

Every member of the UT Tyler community joins together to embrace: Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do.

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy. For this course, **AI is not permitted in this course at all**. For this class, I want you to develop particular writing and argumentative skills that are different from the ways that AI typically generates content. Learning to express your own ideas in thoughtful and clear ways is an important goal of this course.

Students Rights and Responsibilities

To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: <http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies

Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at <http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar>. Each semester's Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.

Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions of which students need to be aware. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.

- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a “W” grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

State-Mandated Course Drop Policy

Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date).

Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

Disability/Accessibility Services

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler> and fill out the New Student application. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with Cynthia Lowery, Assistant Director of Student Services/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices>, the SAR office located in the University Center, # 3150 or call 903.566.7079.

Social Security and FERPA Statement

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Student Standards of Academic Conduct

Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, including, but 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, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

i. “Cheating” includes, but is not limited to:

- copying from another student’s test paper;

- using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
- failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test;
- possession during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or specifically designed “crib notes”. The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation if they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test;
- using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program;
- collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;
- discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
- divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructors has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or not to be returned or to be kept by the student;
- substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment;
- paying or offering money or other valuable thing to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program or information about an unadministered test, test key, home solution or computer program;
- falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit;
- taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of The University of Texas at Tyler, or of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct; and
- misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit or injuring another student academically or financially.

ii. “Plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another’s work and the submission of it as one’s own academic work offered for credit.

iii. “Collusion” includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.

iv. All written work that is submitted will be subject to review by plagiarism software.

UT Tyler Resources for Students

- UT Tyler Writing Center (903.565.5995), writingcenter@uttyler.edu
- UT Tyler Tutoring Center (903.565.5964), tutoring@uttyler.edu
- The Mathematics Learning Center, RBN 4021, this is the open access computer lab for math students, with tutors on duty to assist students who are enrolled in early-career courses.
- UT Tyler Counseling Center (903.566.7254)

Class Schedule

This schedule is subject to announced revisions.

<i>Week</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Assignment</i>
Week 1: Aug. 17-23	Course intro/ The Study of Religion	<i>The World's Religions</i> Chapter 1 (Point of Departure)	Discussion 1 Quiz 1
Week 2: Aug. 24-30	Hinduism	Chapter 2 (Hinduism)	Discussion 2 Quiz 2
Week 3: Aug. 31- Sept. 6	Buddhism	Chapter 3 (Buddhism)	Discussion 3 Quiz 3
Week 4: Sept. 7-13	Chinese Religions	Chapters 4 & 5 (Confucianism & Taoism)	Discussion 4 Quiz 4
Week 5: Sept. 14-20	Judaism	Chapter 7 (Judaism)	Discussion 5 Quiz 5
Week 6: Sept. 21-27	Christianity	Chapter 8 (Christianity)	Discussion 6 Quiz 6
Week 7: Sept. 28- Oct. 4	Islam	Chapter 6 (Islam)	Final Exam