



**RS 1010: Introduction to Religious Studies**  
**Utah State University Spring 2009**  
**M-W-F 1:30pm-2:20pm**

**Instructor:**

Name: Timothy Ledna M.A. Theo., M.S., NCC  
Telephone: (435) 797-6812  
E-mail: [timothy.ledna@usu.edu](mailto:timothy.ledna@usu.edu)  
Availability: Most up-to-date Office Hours posted at the LLC Building A

**Course Description**

*RS 1010, Introduction to Religious Studies*, will give students an opportunity to study, compare, and process world faith traditions; it will allow learners to do critical analysis in regards to the concept(s) of religion. Students will be better able to define religion and understand its components. Drawing first upon the established foundations of the world's deposit of sacred literature, spiritual exercises, and religious figures, students can also then review their own relationship with religion. After coming to understand key concepts in religious study methodology, students will begin a historical and comparative survey of the principal beliefs and practices of the world's religions. Thus, following a general introduction to the study of religion and its processes, the course will include learning about Hinduism, Buddhism, Chinese and Japanese Religions, Islam, Judaism, Christianity, and other faith traditions. Finally, some discussion will center on contemporary or current issues in religion.

**Course Structure**

Class time will be given to formal lectures by the instructor, dramatic readings of sacred literature, class presentations by the students, learning exercises designed for review and assessment, and the use of multimedia, such as the *Long Search Film Series*, to create a foundation for the overall consideration of the world's religious traditions.

**Learning Outcomes**

After successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Give a definition of religion and understand key components of religion's.
- Analyze the distinctions and similarities between religion and culture.
- Utilize methodology and other forms of critical analysis to the study of religion.
- Investigate world religions with a broader depth of knowledge.
- Identify those practices of the major faith traditions.
- Illustrate the interrelatedness of various religions.
- Value the benefits of religion upon society as well as its limitations.

**Required Texts**

Fisher, Mary Pat. *Living Religions: A Brief Introduction* (2nd edition), Upper Saddle River, NJ CA: Pearson Education, Inc., 2009. ISBN: 0-20-563564-4

**Suggested Reading (Optional)**

**Weekly Schedule of Readings and Topics**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading</u>
Jan. 11	1	<b>Teaching Preview</b> Syllabus – Teaching style – College level learning	Fisher, preface

Jan. 13	2	<b>Introduction to the Course</b> Why Study Religion? - Tasks for the Science of Religion	
Jan. 15	3	<b>Religious Responses</b>	Fisher, Chapter 1
Jan. 18		<i>No Class</i>	
Jan. 20	4	Classroom Learning Exercise	
Jan. 22	5	Multimedia Presentation	
Jan. 25	6	<b>Indigenous Sacred Ways</b>	Fisher, Chapter 2
Jan. 27	7	Classroom Learning Exercise	
Jan. 29	8	Multimedia Presentation	
Feb. 1	9	<b>Hinduism</b>	Fisher, Chapter 3
Feb. 3	10	Classroom Learning Exercise	
Feb. 5	11	Multimedia Presentation	
Feb. 8	12	<b>Buddhism</b>	Fisher, Chapter 4
Feb. 10	13	Classroom Learning Exercise	
Feb. 12	14	Multimedia Presentation	
Feb. 15		<i>No Class</i>	
Feb. 17	15	<b>Contemporary Issues in Religion</b>	
Feb. 19	16	<b>Dramatic Readings of Sacred Literature</b>	Meet in LLC Building A
Feb. 22	17	<b>Shinto</b>	Fisher, Chapter 6
Feb. 24	18	Classroom Learning Exercise	
Feb. 26	19	Multimedia Presentation	
March 1	20	<b>Judaism</b>	Fisher, Chapter 7
March 3	21	Classroom Learning Exercise	
March 5	22	Multimedia Presentation	
March 8	23	<b>Christianity</b>	Fisher, Chapter 8
March 10	24	Classroom Learning Exercise	
March 12	25	Multimedia Presentation	

March 15 – 19		<i>No Class</i>	Spring Break
March 22	26	<b>Islam</b>	Fisher, Chapter 9
March 24	27	Classroom Learning Exercise	
March 26	28	Multimedia Presentation	
March 29	29	<b>Sikhism</b>	Fisher, Chapter 10
March 31	30	Classroom Learning Exercise	
April 2	31	Multimedia Presentation	
April 5	32	<b>The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints</b>	
April 7	33	Classroom Learning Exercise	
April 9	34	Multimedia Presentation	
April 12	35	<b>Dramatic Readings of Sacred Literature</b>	Meet in LLC Building A
April 14	36	<b>Contemporary Issues in Religion</b>	
April 16	37	<i>TBA</i>	
April 19	38	<b>Daoism and Confucianism</b>	Fisher, Chapter 5
April 21	39	Classroom Learning Exercise	
April 23	40	Multimedia Presentation	
April 26	41	<b>Religion in a New Era</b>	Fisher, Chapter 11
April 28	42	Classroom Learning Exercise	
April 30	43	Final Exam Preparation Class	

### **Classroom Learning Exercises, Projects, Reading, Exams, and Grading**

- Classroom learning exercises will take place almost once per week as a form of review and assessment. Students may use any notes they had taken during class lectures, presentations, or from their own reading of the text while completing the classroom learning exercise. It is crucial that students read the assigned material each week, attend class, and take notes on what they learned. The learning exercises will include identifying vocabulary, explaining concepts, and some short answer essay.
- Students will each participate in a class presentation project. The presentation will be an individual's opportunity to practice advanced learning by teaching the class material they learned. The presentation will assess the student's ability to share the main points of particular topic within a world religious tradition. The verbal report will last approximately 10 minutes and be graded on creativity, engagement, and thoroughness. More complete directions will be handed out as a separate form.
- There will be only one major test. The final exam will be comprehensive and take place during regularly scheduled exam time.

<b><u>ASSIGNMENT</u></b>	<b><u>POINTS</u></b>	<b><u>% of TOTAL GRADE</u></b>
<b>Class Exercises</b> (Weekly Review)	600 points (50 pts per week)	60%
<b>Project</b> (Class Presentation)	200 points	20%
<b>Test</b> (Final Exam)	200 points	20%
<b>FINAL GRADE</b>	<b>1000 points total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Overall course grades will be determined by your total performance on all graded course activities. Grades in *Religious Studies 1010* **will not** be curved, nor will there be any extra credit opportunities. The grading scale employed will be as follows:

<b>A</b>	93-100
<b>A-</b>	90-92
<b>B+</b>	87-89
<b>B</b>	83-86
<b>B-</b>	80-82
<b>C+</b>	77-79
<b>C</b>	70-76
<b>D</b>	60-69
<b>F</b>	59 and Below

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception and is an educational objective of this institution. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating of information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Please see the USU General Catalog for explicit descriptions of Academic Dishonesty. Any instances of Academic Dishonesty in this class will result in an automatic grade of "F."

### **DISABILITY ACCESS**

The university encourages qualified people with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities and is committed to the policy that all people shall have equal access to programs, facilities, and admissions without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by university policy or by state or federal authorities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please tell the instructor as soon as possible.