



Religious Studies 1023E (570)
Introduction to World Religions
Fall/ Winter 2025-2026

Instructor: G. Hegedus
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Course Information

Calendar Description:

An introduction to the rich and varied religions of the world, past and present, set within their historical and cultural contexts. In the First Term, we delve into Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism (Indian, Chinese, and Japanese), Sikhism, Confucianism, Daoism, and Shinto; in the Second Term, we examine Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Extra Information: 3 hours.

Course Weight: 1.00

Breadth: Category B

Subject Code: RELSTUD

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Religious Studies 1023E (Section 570)
INTRODUCTION TO WORLD RELIGIONS
King's University College
Fall/Winter 2025-26

Prof: Gyongyi Hegedus

Office Hours: By Appointment (in-person or *via* zoom)

Email: ghegedus@uwo.ca

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an introduction to the rich and varied religions of the world, past and present, set within their historical and cultural contexts. In the First Term, we delve into Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, and Shinto; in the Second Term, we examine Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

COURSE FORMAT

This is an in-person course, which meets twice a week throughout both terms.

COURSE PREREQUISITES AND ANTIREQUISITES

Students are responsible for ensuring that their selection of courses is appropriate and accurately recorded, that all course prerequisites have been successfully completed, and that they are aware of any antirequisite course(s) that they have taken. Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course, and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites. If you have already taken one of the antirequisites to this course, then this course will not count towards your degree.

Prerequisites for this course: None

Antirequisites for this course: **RS 2130; RS 2203F/G**

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course is designed to provide students with a basic introduction to the major religious traditions of the East (Term I) and West (Term II). No prior experience in the study of World Religions is required or assumed. In the first term, we will begin with a brief discussion of Religious Studies as an academic discipline and a brief introduction to Shamanism/Animism, after which we will survey a variety of religious traditions from India (Hinduism and Buddhism), China (Confucianism and Daoism), and Japan (Shinto). The second term is primarily devoted to an examination of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Over the course of the year, we will be emphasizing a number of general points. These include: the ambiguous nature of the term 'religion' and the difficulty in arriving at a clear definition of the phenomenon; the fact that religions change over time and thus have histories; the fact that religions often mutually influence one another; the fact that a number of similarities can be found across various religious traditions; and the fact that the relative emphases placed on religious beliefs vs. religious behaviours varies widely from one tradition to the next.

The **Learning Outcomes** for this course include a student's ability to:

- (1) briefly sketch out the history of each religious tradition covered;
- (2) clearly articulate the primary doctrines and practices of each tradition;
- (3) demonstrate an understanding of basic similarities among religions as well as differences;
- (4) appreciate and articulate the complexity of the study of religion and the wide variety of methods used in the field of Religious Studies;
- (5) appreciate and articulate an understanding of the often-intimate relationship between religious ideas and cultural worldviews/politics; and
- (6) write, on both writing assignments/essays and exams, in a clear, concise and persuasive manner.

COURSE MATERIALS

The materials needed for this course, all of which are required, are listed below by term. ***Detailed Reading Schedules for each term will be posted separately to the OWL Brightspace website for this course.***

Term I

Roy C. Amore, Amir Hussain, Willard Oxtoby (eds), *World religions, Eastern Traditions*, 2018, Oxford University Press, 5th edition, \$187.99 approx.

ISBN: 9780190875435, e-book \$60 approx.

(Note: This book can be purchased or even rented online as an e-textbook, but limited hardcopies will also be at the UWO bookstore.)

Term II

Oxtoby and Hussein, *World Religions: Western Traditions*, \$187.99 approx. E-book, \$60.00 approx.

(Note: This book can be purchased or even rented online as an e-textbook, but limited hardcopies will also be at the UWO bookstore.)

EVALUATION SCHEME

This course has two separate terms, each of which is worth 50% of your final grade. The grade breakdown is as follows:

Term I

Two '3-Page' Writing Assignments	20% (2 x 10%)	(Oct. 31; Nov. 30)
Mid-Term Exam	30%	(December Exam Period)

Term II

Two '4-Page' Writing Assignments	20% (2 x 10%)	(TBA)
Final Exam (Term 2 material only)	30%	(April Exam Period)

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Detailed information on the Writing Assignments for this course will be discussed in class and posted to the OWL Brightspace site.

Within this course, use of **artificial intelligence** (A.I.) tools such as Chat GPT is not permitted for written work submitted for evaluation. Unauthorized use of AI will be subject to academic discipline.

When you submit your Writing Assignments to the OWL Brightspace site, they will be automatically subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of **plagiarism**. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY

'Late' penalties for written assignments will be 5% per day.

ABSENCES AND MISSED IN-TERM ASSIGNMENTS/QUIZZES

The deadlines for the Writing Assignments are listed above. No late penalty will be imposed for the first 72 hours after the deadline, in case of extenuating circumstances. Students should plan to submit by the deadline. Because the submission deadline for these assignments already includes flexibility, the instructor reserves the right to deny academic consideration for assignments submitted past the 72-hour window.

MIDTERM AND FINAL EXAMS

Both the midterm and final exams in this course are scheduled by the Registrar and will be written during the designated December and April Examination Periods. The midterm exam covers all material from Term 1; the final exam covers all material from Term 2 only (i.e., the final exam does not cover any material from Term 1).

CLASS CANCELLATIONS

All reported class cancellations are posted at:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-life/service-disruptions/>

IMPORTANT DATES

Fall Reading Week: Nov 3 – 9, 2025

December Examination Period: December 11-23, 2025

Spring Reading Week: February 16-22, 2026

April Examination Period: April 12-28, 2026

King's University College
General Course Policies
2025-2026

1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences

Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

Academic Considerations for Absence/Missed Assessments

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration using the extranet portal (www.extranet.uwo.ca). Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course.

Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs and further consideration may be denied. Please refer to the course outline for each course.

Academic consideration for examinations scheduled by the Office of the Registrar always requires documentation.

The policy on academic consideration is found here:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the final examination, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup final examination).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

For policy on accommodation for religious holidays, see:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf

2. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King's University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University College: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-support-services/personal-counselling/>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/

Academic Support Services at King's University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/>

King's is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

See also https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-affairs/code-of-student-conduct1/>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with your instructor on what tools are permitted in the course, including generative AI (e.g. ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools). Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/TurnItIn.html>

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

5. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright of their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

6. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

7. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.