

SOC-980: Comparing World Religions

Independent Study Online Course Syllabus

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Course Description

Examines the major religions of the world, including Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. Emphasis will be placed on each religion's origins, historical development, central doctrines, and important rituals in order to locate the similarities and differences between each faith. Additional focus will be placed on the role of religion in American history and in today's global community. This course addresses the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; Common Core Standards for Literacy and Writing in History/Social Studies; College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards; National Standards for World History, and National Standards for U.S. History. Local travel is required.

Note: Required books must be acquired separately.

Required Texts and Course Materials

Books:

- Hinnells, J. R. (2010). *The Penguin Handbook of the World's Living Religions* (Revised Edition). Penguin Books. ISBN-13: 978-0141035468 <https://www.amazon.com/Penguin-Handbook-Religions-Reference-Library/dp/0141035463>
- Novak, P. (1995). *The World's Wisdom: Sacred Texts of the World's Religions*. HarperOne. ISBN-13: 978-1269365352 <https://www.amazon.com/Worlds-Wisdom-Sacred-Texts-Religions/dp/0060663421>

Canvas: This course will be delivered totally online. Canvas is a web-based learning management system (LMS) that provides students access to online resources, documents, videos, assignments, quizzes, forums, etc. Canvas is easy to learn and has a user-friendly interface.

Online Resources: Relevant online resources that support the course content and encourage further investigation will be available throughout the course assignments. Active hyperlinks are utilized throughout the course and will link to the appropriate information when clicked. These include videos, podcasts, worksheets, online activities, journal articles and other resources.

Course Dates

Self-paced; students may enroll at any time and take up to one year, from the date of registration, to complete assignments. Students may complete assignments in no less than three weeks for a 3-unit course (one week per unit).

National Standards Addressed in This Course

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)

(<http://www.nbpts.org/standards-five-core-propositions/>)

First published in 1989 and updated in 2016, [*What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do*](#) articulates the National Board's Five Core Propositions for teaching. The Five Core Propositions - comparable to medicine's Hippocratic Oath — set forth the profession's vision for accomplished teaching. Together, the propositions form the basis of all National Board Standards and the foundation for National Board Certification. Course assignments have been designed so students can demonstrate excellence against these professional teaching standards whenever possible.

- Proposition 1: Teachers are committed to students and their learning
- Proposition 2: Teachers know the subject they teach and how to teach those subjects to students
- Proposition 3: Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning
- Proposition 4: Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience
- Proposition 5: Teachers are members of learning communities

National Standards for World History (grades 5-12)

- Era 1 – The Beginnings of Human Society Giving Shape to World History
 - 2B - The student understands how agricultural societies developed around the world.
- Era 2 - Early Civilizations and the Emergence of Pastoral Peoples, 4000-1000 BCE
 - 1A - The student understands how Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Indus valley became centers of dense population, urbanization, and cultural innovation in the fourth and third millennia BCE.
 - 2A - The student understands how civilization emerged in northern China in the second millennium BCE.
- Era 3 - Classical Traditions, Major Religions, and Giant Empires, 1000 BCE-300 CE
 - 1B - The student understands the emergence of Judaism and the historical significance of the Hebrew kingdoms.
 - 3D - The student understands religious and cultural developments in India in the era of the Gangetic states and the Mauryan Empire.
 - 5A - The student understands major global trends from 1000 BCE to 300 CE.
- Era 4 - Expanding Zones of Exchange and Encounter, 300-1000 CE
 - 1D - The student understands the expansion of Hindu and Buddhist traditions in Southeast Asia in the first millennium CE.
 - 2A - The student understands the emergence of Islam and how it spread in Southwest Asia, North Africa, and Europe.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (www.corestandards.org)

Common Core Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies (grades 6-12)

- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

Common Core Standards for Writing in History/Social Studies (grades 6-12)

- Text Types and Purposes
- Production and Distribution of Writing
- Research to Build Present Knowledge
- Range of Writing

Continuing Education Student Learning Outcomes (CE-SLO)

CE-SLO 1	Demonstrate proficient written communication by articulating a clear focus, synthesizing arguments, and utilizing standard formats in order to inform and persuade others, and present information applicable to targeted use.
CE-SLO 2	Demonstrate comprehension of content-specific knowledge and the ability to apply it in theoretical, personal, professional, or societal contexts.
CE-SLO 3	Reflect on their personal and professional growth and provide evidence of how such reflection is utilized to manage personal and professional improvement.
CE-SLO 4	Apply critical thinking competencies by generating probing questions, recognizing underlying assumptions, interpreting and evaluating relevant information, and applying their understandings to the professional setting.
CE-SLO 5	Reflect on values that inspire high standards of professional and ethical behavior as they pursue excellence in applying new learning to their chosen field.
CE-SLO 6	Identify information needed in order to fully understand a topic or task, organize that information, identify the best sources of information for a given enquiry, locate and critically evaluate sources, and accurately and effectively share that information.

Course Student Learning Outcomes (C-SLO)

Student Learning Outcomes for This Course By the end of this course student will be able to:	National Standards Addressed*	CE-SLO Addressed**
1. compare the major religions of the world through a focus on doctrine, scripture, liturgy, origin, and historical impact.	National Standards for World History Era 1: 2B; Era 2: 1A, 2A; Era 3: 1B, 3:D, 5A; Era 4: 1D, 2A, 2B, 3A, 5B, 7A; Era 5: 1C, 6B; Era 6: 2B, 2D, 3C, 6A; Era 9: 2F	CE 2
2. scrutinize major religions in order to challenge mainstream assumptions about those faiths and to fairly and accurately teach about them	NBPTS 2	CE 4

3. exhibit proficient written communication on religions through persuasive arguments and proficient research of primary and secondary sources.	NBPTS 2	CE 1, 6
4. reflect on and apply their learning in the contexts of personal and professional life—both in terms of growth and values.	NBPTS 1-4	CE 3, 5

* Please refer to the section on **National Standards Addressed in This Course**

** Please refer to the section on **Continuing Education Program Student Learning Outcomes**

Topics, Assignments, and Activities

Module Title	Module Assignments and Activities	Points Possible
Home Page	- Welcome Video - Course Syllabus - Policies and Procedures - Introduce Yourself Forum	
Module 1 – Introduction / Religions Originating in India	- Read Hinnells, Ch. 5, 6, 8 and Novak, Ch. 1, 2 1.1. Module 1 Summary 1.2. Module 1 Current Event Summary	10 10
Module 2 – East Asian Religions	- Read Hinnells, Ch. 9, 10 and Novak, Ch. 3, 4 2.1. Module 2 Summaries 2.2. Module 2 Current Event Summary	10 10
Module 3 – Abrahamic Religions	- Read Hinnells, Ch. 1, 2, 3 and Novak, Ch. 5, 6, 7 3.1. Module 3 Summaries 3.2. Module 3 Current Event Summary	10 10
Module 4 – Additional Religion / Making Comparisons	- Read <u>one</u> of the following chapters (student choice): Hinnells, Ch. 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 4.1. Module 4 Summary 4.2. Module 4 Current Event Summary 4.3. Multimedia Presentation	5 5 10
Module 5 – Attend a Religious Service	- Attend a Religious Service 5.1. Reflective Essay	10
Module 6 – Application and Lesson Planning	6.1. Lesson Plan	10
Course Wrap-up – Grading and Evaluation	- Request Your Grade - Request Your Transcript or Grade Report - Course Feedback	
	TOTAL POINTS	100 points

Grading Policies, Rubrics, and Requirements for Assignments

Grading Policies

- Assignments will be graded per criteria presented in the course rubrics.
- A = 90-100% and B = 80-89%, (anything below 80% will not receive credit.)
- The discernment between an A or a B letter grade is at the discretion of the instructor based on the quality of work submitted (see course rubrics).
- Coursework falling below a B grade will be returned with further instructions.
- All assignments must be completed to receive a grade and are expected to reflect the quality that teacher-training institutions require of professional educators. If completed assignments do not meet this standard, students will be notified with further instructions from the instructor.

Grading Rubrics

Grade	Percent	Description	Rubric
A	90-100%	Excellent	Meets all course / assignment requirements with significant evidence of subject mastery and demonstration of excellent graduate level professional development scholarship.
B	80-89%	Very Good	Adequately meets criteria for all course/assignment requirements - demonstrates subject competency with very good graduate level professional development scholarship.
NC	Below 80%	Unacceptable	Does not meet the minimum criteria for all course/assignment requirements and demonstrated little, if any, evidence of acceptable graduate level professional development scholarship.

Writing Requirements

- **Superior:** Writing is clear, succinct, and reflects graduate level expectations. Clearly addresses all parts of the writing task. Maintains a consistent point of view and organizational structure. Includes relevant facts, details, and explanations.
- **Standard:** Writing is acceptable with very few mistakes in grammar and spelling. Addresses most parts of the writing task. Maintains a mostly consistent point of view and organizational structure. Includes mostly relevant facts, details, and explanations.
- **Sub-standard:** Writing contains noticeable mistakes in grammar and spelling. Does not address all parts of the writing task. Lacks a consistent point of view and organizational structure. May include marginally relevant facts, details, and explanations.

Lesson Plan Requirements

- **Superior:** Instructional goals and objectives clearly stated. Instructional strategies appropriate for learning outcome(s). Method for assessing student learning and evaluating instruction is clearly delineated and authentic. All materials necessary for student and teacher to complete lesson clearly listed.
- **Standard:** Instructional goals and objectives are stated but are not easy to understand. Some instructional strategies are appropriate for learning outcome(s). Method for assessing student learning and evaluating instruction is present. Most materials necessary for student and teacher to complete lesson are listed.
- **Sub-standard:** Instructional goals and objectives are not stated. Learners cannot tell what is expected of them. Instructional strategies are missing or strategies used are inappropriate.

Method for assessing student learning and evaluating instruction is missing. Materials necessary for student and teacher to complete lesson are missing.

Instructor/Student Contact Information

Throughout the course participants will be communicating with the instructor and their classmates on a regular basis using asynchronous discussion forums. Students are provided with instructor contact information in the event they want to make email or phone contact. In addition, students are encouraged to email or phone the instructor at any time. Students will also receive feedback on the required assignments as they are submitted.

Forums

Participation is an important expectation of this course and all online courses. Online discussions promote reflection and analysis while allowing students to appreciate and evaluate positions that others express. While students may not be engaging with the same students throughout this course, they will be expected to offer comments, questions, and replies to the discussion question whenever possible. The faculty role in the discussion forum is that of an observer and facilitator.

Coursework Hours

Based on the Carnegie Unit standard, a unit of graduate credit measures academic credit based on the number of hours the student is engaged in learning. This includes all time spent on the course: reading the textbook, watching videos, listening to audio lessons, researching topics, writing papers, creating projects, developing lesson plans, posting to discussion boards, etc. Coursework offered for FPU Continuing Education graduate credit adheres to 45 hours per semester unit for the 900-level courses. Therefore, a student will spend approximately 135 hours on a typical 3-unit course.

Services for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities are eligible for reasonable accommodations in their academic work in all classes. In order to receive assistance, the student with a disability must provide the Academic Support Center with documentation, which describes the specific disability. The documentation must be from a qualified professional in the area of the disability (i.e. psychologist, physician or educational diagnostician). Once documentation is on file, arrangements for reasonable accommodations can be made. For more information and for downloadable forms, please go to <https://www.fresno.edu/departments/disability-access-education>.

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty

All people participating in the educational process at Fresno Pacific University are expected to pursue honesty and integrity in all aspects of their academic work. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will be handled per the procedures set forth in the Fresno Pacific University Catalogue and Handbook - <https://handbook.fresno.edu/graduate/academic-policies>

Technology Requirements

To successfully complete the course requirements, course participants will need Internet access, can send and receive email, know how to manage simple files in a word processing program, and

have a basic understanding of the Internet. Please remember that the instructor is not able to offer technical support. If you need technical support, please contact your Internet Service Provider.

Getting Help with Canvas: If you need help with Canvas, please contact the FPU Help Desk by phone: (559) 453-3410 or email: helpdesk@fresno.edu. Help is available Mon-Fri 8:00 am to 7:00 pm.

Final Course Grade and Transcripts

When all work for the course has been completed, students will need to request their final grade by accessing the form at ce.fresno.edu/grade-request. Once the instructor receives the request and posts their final grade, students will receive an email communication from the University. Please allow at least two weeks for the final grade to be posted before you order your transcripts online.

University Policies and Procedures

Students are responsible for becoming familiar with the information presented in the Academic Catalog and for knowing and observing all policies and procedures related to their participation in the university community. A summary of university policies may be found on the university website at <https://www.fresno.edu/departments/registrars-office/academic-catalogs>.

Fresno Pacific University Student Learning Outcomes (FPU-SLO)

FPU-SLO 1	Oral Communication: Students will <i>exhibit</i> clear, engaging, and confident oral communication – in both individual and group settings – and will critically <i>evaluate</i> content and delivery components.
FPU-SLO 2	Written Communication: Students will <i>demonstrate</i> proficient written communication by <i>articulating</i> a clear focus, <i>synthesizing</i> arguments, and utilizing standard formats in order to <i>inform</i> and <i>persuade</i> others.
FPU-SLO 3	Content Knowledge: Students will <i>demonstrate</i> comprehension of content-specific knowledge and the ability to apply it in theoretical, personal, professional, or societal contexts.
FPU-SLO 4	Reflection: Students will <i>reflect</i> on their personal and professional growth and <i>provide evidence</i> of how such reflection is utilized to manage personal and vocational improvement.
FPU-SLO 5	Critical Thinking: Students will <i>apply</i> critical thinking competencies by <i>generating</i> probing questions, <i>recognizing</i> underlying assumptions, <i>interpreting</i> and <i>evaluating</i> relevant information, and <i>applying</i> their understandings to new situations.
FPU-SLO 6	Moral Reasoning: Students will <i>identify</i> and <i>apply</i> moral reasoning and ethical decision-making skills, and <i>articulate</i> the norms and principles underlying a Christian worldview.
FPU-SLO 7	Service: Students will <i>demonstrate</i> service and reconciliation as a way of leadership.
FPU-SLO 8	Cultural and Global Perspective: Students will <i>identify</i> personal, cultural, and global perspectives and will employ these perspectives to <i>evaluate</i> complex systems.

FPU-SLO 9	Quantitative Reasoning: Students will accurately <i>compute</i> calculations and symbolic operations and <i>explain</i> their use in a field of study.
FPU-SLO 10	Information Literacy: Students will <i>identify</i> information needed in order to fully understand a topic or task, <i>explain</i> how that information is organized, <i>identify</i> the best sources of information for a given enquiry, <i>locate</i> and critically <i>evaluate</i> sources, and accurately and effectively <i>share</i> that information.