



School of
Distance Education
Andrews University



SYLLABUS

RELG 350 World Religions

202241

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School of Distance Education

Self-Paced Format

This course follows a self-paced online format. This format allows you to set your own pace of study. While you have 180 days from your start date to complete the course with Andrews University, it is your responsibility to meet any deadlines set by your home institution. The last day to withdraw with a full refund is 15 days after your start date. See [more withdrawal details here](#).

Instructor Contact

Please refer to course in LearningHub for the teacher contact information.

Communication with the Instructor

It is important to remember that while the Internet is available 24 hours a day, your instructor is not. You can expect that your instructor will respond to e-mail message to you within 2 business days during the week and may not be available to respond on weekends.

Other Assistance

Username and password assistance	helpdesk@andrews.edu	(269) 471-6016
Technical assistance with online courses	dlit@andrews.edu	(269) 471-3960
Exam requests and online proctoring	sdeexams@andrews.edu	(269) 471-6566
Distance Student Services - any other questions	sdestudents@andrews.edu	Text: (269) 397-4477

Part 1: Course Information

Course Descriptions

Explores major worldviews and religious traditions and their fundamental teachings, beliefs and practices. As students consider each major religion's analysis of basic human problems and the proposed solutions they learn to respect and understand diverse beliefs and practices. This course is taught from a Christian perspective, seeking to explore common ground and challenges between Christianity and other major world religions.

Required Text/Material

Bowker, John. *World Religions: The Great Faiths Explored and Explained*. New York: DK Publishing, 2006, ISBN 9780756617721.

Credit Hour and Commitment

This course is offered for 3 semester credits; therefore it is expected that you will spend 135 hours total on this course. This course has 16 modules with 15 lessons, 2 exams, 10 blogs, 7 reflective journals, 3 studies, and 1 site visit done in 4 parts. Each module represents a week of a typical semester course. It is recommended that you budget 9 hours for studying and completing the activities for each module. There are suggested schedules to accomplish this work included in this syllabus.

Institutional Outcomes:

- 3.a. Articulate a biblical worldview in order to interpret life, learning, and civic responsibility from a Seventh-day Adventist perspective.
- 3.b. Address the needs of diverse communities in a manner consistent with Christian thought and practice.

Program Learning Outcomes

Graduates of this program will be able to:

- Possess a foundational knowledge in the areas of Bible, history, and theology, from a Seventh-day Adventist perspective. (Seek Knowledge)
- Express faith in the context of present society, history, theology, and be able to articulate the Seventh-day Adventist view of life both orally and in writing. (Affirm Faith)
- Exhibit growth in Christian life skills. (Affirm Faith)
- Document an attitude of mission, experience & skills in personal service. (Change the World)

Student Learning Outcomes

- Discover ways in which religion lies at the foundation of culture.
- Explore how religion shapes society's values, providing working models to live by.
- Learn to listen to and understand the diversity of the wisdom traditions.
- Appreciate the rich multicultural backgrounds encountered in the workplace and on the larger scale of the global village.
- Consider the underlying principles of your own belief system and how these principles influence your everyday life.

Part 2: Course Methods and Delivery**Methods of Instruction**

Methods of instruction include assigned readings, writing responses to the readings, interaction with the teacher through discussion forums, a project that includes visiting a place of worship and two exams.

Technical Requirements

- Computer: PC (Win 10 or newer) or MAC (10.14 or better)
- A webcam with microphone, and speakers (or plug in headset)
- Internet: 2.4 Mbps or faster DSL, cable or Wi-Fi connection
- Browser: Current version of Chrome or Firefox
- Software: Office 2013 or newer ([Office 365 available here](#))

LearningHub Access

This course is delivered online through LearningHub at <http://learninghub.andrews.edu>

Your username and password are your Andrews username and password. You need to activate your username and password to access LearningHub. Please do this online here: <https://vault.andrews.edu/vault/pages/activation/information.jsp> if you haven't already. If you need assistance, call or email us: (296) 471-6016 or <mailto:helpdesk@andrews.edu>.

If you need technical assistance at any time during the course, or to report a problem with LearningHub, please email dlit@andrews.edu or call (269) 471-3960.

Part 3: Course Requirements

Important Note: Activity and assignment details will be explained in detail within each learning module. If you have any questions, please contact your instructor.

Your Schedule

In LearningHub, you will access online lessons, course materials, and resources. This course is self-paced. You must complete the course within 180 days. This is the Consortium policy. You may have a stricter deadline imposed by graduation, financial aid, or other restrictions.

Start by creating a schedule for completion of the course.

- Determine your deadline. Do you need a transcript sent to your home institution?
- Working from your deadline, count backwards. Allow 2 weeks after you take your final exam for your final grade to be calculated. Allow another 2 weeks for the transcript to be processed and sent.
- Now use the suggested schedules to create a schedule for yourself that ensures completion 4 weeks before your deadline.

Submit your course plan to your instructor within LearningHub AND discipline yourself to make regular progress.

Assessment Descriptions

Assigned Readings: Readings are drawn from the textbook and other online materials. The course schedule below lists the reading assignments and their due dates.

Blogs: There are eight blogs questions for 20 points each that appear throughout the course. Blogs are a fundamental part of this course in which the students and the teacher will take part. These online interactions will allow participants to consider significant questions raised by the teacher and class content. Think of the blogs as an opportunity to express yourself in class, a chance to share your thoughts and in the process have your perspective broadened. Blogs are worth 20% of the course. Blog answers should be approximately 250 words in length.

Reflective Book Journal: There are seven reflections that cover the textbook chapters. The reflection should be 1.5 to 2 pages long and double-spaced. It should be written according to the following criteria:

- Write a one-paragraph summary of the main ideas. This should not be longer than half a page.
- Critique and respond to 3-4 ideas from the chapter. These do not have to be the main ideas, it can be anything that caught your attention. You can agree or disagree with the author of the book. You can also express your opinion on the particular religion or compare it to your own life or your religion.
- Choose one positive principle from the religion you studied and show how it could be applied to your life.
- Each journal should include clear references to the book (page numbers included).
- Journals must use proper grammar.

Studies: There will be three studies in which you will think about religions and their influence on the world, society and you. Each study should be about one to two pages, double-spaced.

- Study #1: Find two recent articles (not more than one month old) that deal with some aspect of religion and its influence on the world. They can be positive or negative. You can choose any religion, even if it is not covered in the class. The two articles must cover two different religions. Each essay must include:
 - Full references
 - One-paragraph summary
 - Two to three paragraph response to each article. Questions you can ask but don't have to limit are:
 - What are the presuppositions of the author?
 - From the same religion?
 - Writing for a conservative or liberal magazine?
 - Supporting, defending or attacking in the article?
 - How does the article reflect the beliefs of this religion? This can include theological or practical/ethical questions.
 - Is the focus of the article on the majority? The liberal, conservative or extremist groups.
 - Is the contribution of this religion to our society, based on this article, positive or negative?
 - What can/did you learn about this religion? Be as objective as possible. Are there positive elements that could be applied to everyday life—negative or positive?
- Study #2: Think of ways that religion influences our world, these can include art, architecture, politics, ecology, education, philosophy, etc. Be creative in your thinking. Include three ways with clear examples from different aspects of life. You may include pictures. The point of this study is for you to see the importance of religion in everyday life and how it helped in shaping history.
- Study #3: What do you believe? This is the last study after recovering all the religions of this course. In one paragraph summarize what you believe in. Compare and contrast what you believe in with all the religions covered in this class. The point of this study is to make you think about what you believe. This is not to see if you understand what others believe—but to help you put in words what you believe. Try to avoid religious phrases and rather be honest with yourself.

Ancient Sacred Texts

- Read two sacred texts and write a reflection based on the following criteria.
 - Choose one text from each group. Read for 20 minutes or more. You can read slow or fast, the key and the objective of this assignment is to think about the text you are reading. Some are more difficult to read than others. Read a continuous passage, do not skip from passage to passages reading several passages out of context.
- Ancient Sacred Text 1: choose from the following texts one that is different from your own religion: The Vedas, The Sutras, Tao Te Ching.
- Ancient Sacred Text 2: choose from the following texts one that is different from your own religion (note, if you are a Christian you will have to choose Quran since the Jewish Bible is the same as your Christian Bible: the Quran, the Tanak (Hebrew Bible), or the Bible (Old and New Testament).
 - For the two texts write a 2-3 page reflection. Include the pages (or chapters/verses) you have read. The reflection should cover, but not have to be limited to the following questions:

- How would you summarize the basic teaching and the message of the text? How did this text reflect the foundational teachings of its religion? How does this text compare/contrast with your own religion and beliefs? Could this teaching be applied today? (this can be positive or negative). Could this teaching be taken out of context and misinterpreted and misused (do you know of any specific examples)? Does this teaching give you any further insight into its religion? (positive or negative). Is there anything from this teaching that you can learn and use in your everyday life?

Project: Place of Worship Visit: In this course we examine six major religions. It is not possible to cover all of them in detail. In this project you will study one of these religions in greater detail and experience its worship. The project includes four steps:

STEP 1: Choose a religion, outside your own. For example, if you are Christian, perhaps you could visit a synagogue or mosque. Explore your community and find out which faiths outside of your own tradition are represented. Submit the location (physical address) of the place you will visit.

STEP 2: Make a research on the history, traditions and beliefs of this religion. This should include a minimum of 2 books and 2 articles. Write a two page, double spaced, summary of traditions and belief of this religion. Include a full bibliography. You may use any citation style you are used to.

STEP 3: Visit the place of worship for the religion you chose. Answer the questions below, but you do not have to limit your report to these questions.

- What are your 1st impressions?
 - Does the place give you a sense of reverence or awe?
 - Do you feel uneasy?
 - Are you made to feel welcome?
- Describe the atmosphere of this place.
 - What do you see, hear, smell, perhaps even taste or touch?
 - Especially make note of any symbols and architecture.
- What do you notice about their mode of worship?
 - Is it a corporate or individual style of worship?
 - What role do any authority figures play (priests, rabbis, etc)?
- What insights did you gain? *This section should be covered in at least one of the three required pages of this project.*
 - What are comparisons, contrasts and implications for your life?
 - Were any stereotypes dispelled or reinforced?
 - Does this place and the mode of worship give you an impression about the kind of God these people worship?
 - What do the requirements of this religion imply about their deity?
- Would you return to this place?
- Is there anything about their belief system or worship atmosphere that you would like to incorporate into your own way of life?

STEP 4: Think about the religion you studied. Write a short response (two pages, double spaced) about what you experienced and learned about this religion. This essay is not a summary of beliefs, as those were covered in STEP 2. This essay is your response and reaction to this religion. Some of the questions you could consider may include:

- What are the positives and negatives of this religion? This can include the theological, ethical, social questions. Are these problems clearly seen in the society? Are they reflected among the followers of this religion?
- How does this religion compare to my religion?
- Does it have any issues or problems? Are they being addressed? If yes, in what way? Are there similar issues in your religion? Are these problems being addressed in a similar way or are they being overlooked or solved in a different (better/worse) way?
- How does it affect your world? Does it reflect the beliefs and actions of a friend who claims to follow the same religious beliefs? Does it influence the society and the world around you or is its influence insufficient in my world?
- What impressed you about this religion? What were the positive aspects of this religion that you could learn from and apply in your life?

Exams

The midterm exam is worth 20% of your grade. You are allowed 120 minutes to complete this exam. The final exam is worth 20% of your grade. You are allowed 120 minutes to complete this exam.

All exams must be taken under supervision of a proctor. Follow prompts in the course space to set up your exam session. In each module that contains an exam, you will find what to review and what materials are allowed (if any) during the exam.

Please read the important information about taking exams and how online proctoring works at www.andrews.edu/distance/students/exams.html. Follow the instructions that apply to your situation on the [exam request form](#) to set up your exam session.

Please note that an exam code is never released to the student. All students must present photo identification before each exam session. Exams can only be proctored after a deadline with approval directly from the instructor to the Testing Center (sdeexams@andrews.edu or 269-471-6566). No exam is returned to the student for review. To aid studying for future exams, you may request the instructor to provide summary feedback on an exam.

Suggested schedule for completion in 8 weeks:

Week	Lessons	Readings	Assignments
Intro	These items will need to be completed before you will have access to the rest of the course	Orientation Course Overview Introductions Academic Integrity	Schedule Introduce Yourself Academic Integrity Quiz Academic Integrity Statement
1	Lesson 1: What is Religion	Textbook pg.6-9	Blog 1 Reflective Journal 1
	Lesson 2: Hinduism	Textbook pg. 18-43	Blog 2 Reflective Journal 2
2	Lesson 3: Buddhism	Textbook pg. 58-81	Blog 3 Reflective Journal 3
	Lesson 4: Buddhism, cont.		Study 1: World religions and media Place of Worship Visit Part 1 (plan)
3	Lesson 5: Chinese Religions	Textbook pg. 96-109	Blog 4 Reflective Journal 4
	Lesson 6: Chinese Religions, cont.		Blog 5 Sacred Text 1
Review for Midterm			
4	PROCTORED MIDTERM EXAM		
5			Blog 6
	Lesson 10: Judaism	Textbook pg. 122-147	Reflective Journal 5 Blog 7
6	Lesson 11: Judaism, cont.		Study 2: World religions and their influence Place of Worship Visit Part 2 (research)
	Lesson 12: Islam	Textbook pg. 174-195	Reflective Journal 6 Blog 8
7	Lesson 13: Islam, cont.		Place of Worship Visit Part 3 (visit report) Blog 9 (video)
	Lesson 14: Christianity	Textbook pg. 148-173	Blog 10 Reflective Journal 7
Review for Final Exam			
8	Lesson 15: Christianity, cont.		Study 3: World religions and me Sacred Text 2 Place of Worship Visit Part 4 (essay response)
	PROCTORED FINAL EXAM		

Suggested schedule for completion in 16 weeks:

Week	Lessons	Readings	Assignments
Intro	These items will need to be completed before you will have access to the rest of the course	Orientation Course Overview Introductions Academic Integrity	Schedule Introduce Yourself Academic Integrity Quiz Academic Integrity Statement
1	Lesson 1: What is Religion	Textbook pg.6-9	Blog 1 Reflective Journal 1
2	Lesson 2: Hinduism	Textbook pg. 18-43	Blog 2 Reflective Journal 2
3	Lesson 3: Buddhism	Textbook pg. 58-81	Blog 3 Reflective Journal 3
4	Lesson 4: Buddhism, cont.		Study 1: World religions and media Place of Worship Visit Part 1 (plan)
5	Lesson 5: Chinese Religions	Textbook pg. 96-109	Blog 4 Reflective Journal 4
6 & 7	Lesson 6: Chinese Religions, cont.		Blog 5 Sacred Text 1
Review for Midterm			
8	PROCTORED MIDTERM EXAM		
9			Blog 6
10	Lesson 10: Judaism	Textbook pg. 122-147	Reflective Journal 5 Blog 7
11	Lesson 11: Judaism, cont.		Study 2: World religions and their influence Place of Worship Visit Part 2 (research)
12	Lesson 12: Islam	Textbook pg. 174-195	Reflective Journal 6 Blog 8
13	Lesson 13: Islam, cont.		Place of Worship Visit Part 3 (visit report) Blog 9 (video)
14	Lesson 14: Christianity	Textbook pg. 148-173	Blog 10 Reflective Journal 7
Review for Final Exam			
15	Lesson 15: Christianity, cont.		Study 3: World religions and me Sacred Text 2 Place of Worship Visit Part 4 (essay response)
16	PROCTORED FINAL EXAM		

Completing Assignments

All assignments for this course will be submitted electronically through LearningHub unless otherwise instructed. Assignments and exams must be completed **within 180 days** of course registration date. This timeframe is subject to change depending on deadlines set by your home institution.

Part 4: Grading Policy

Graded Course Activities

Percent %	Description
10	Journals 1-7
6	Studies 1-3
4	Sacred Text 1-2
10	Discussion forums 1-10
30	Project
	Part A – 2 points
	Part B – 10 points
	Part C – 12 points
	Part D – 6 points
40	Exams
	Midterm Exam – 20 points
	Semester Exam – 20 points
100	Total Percent Possible

Viewing Grades in Moodle

- Click into the course.
- Click on the **Grades** link in Administration Block to the left of the main course page.

Letter Grade Assignment

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	93-100%
A-	90-92%
B+	88-89%
B	83-87%
B-	80-82%
C+	78-79%
C	73-77%
C-	70-72%
D	60-69%
F	0-59%

Part 5: Course Policies

Withdrawal and Incomplete Policies

The current withdrawal policy can be found online at <https://www.andrews.edu/distance/students/gradplus/withdrawal.html>. The incomplete policy is found online at <http://www.andrews.edu/web/llmsc/moodle/public/incompletes.html>.

Maintain Professional Conduct Both in the Classroom and Online

The classroom is a professional environment where academic debate and learning take place. Your instructor will make every effort to make this environment safe for you to share your opinions, ideas, and beliefs. In return, you are expected to respect the opinions, ideas, and beliefs of other students—both in the face-to-face classroom and online communication. Students have the right and privilege to learn in the class, free from harassment and disruption.

Academic Accommodations

Students who require accommodations may request an academic adjustment as follows:

1. Read the Andrews University Disability Accommodation information at <https://www.andrews.edu/services/sscenter/disability/>
2. Download and fill in the disability form at <http://www.andrews.edu/services/sscenter/disability/accommodationsreqform.pdf>. Preferably type answers. To save a digital copy, 1) print to file and save or 2) print and scan. Email the completed form and disability documentation (if any) to success@andrews.edu or fax it to (269) 471-8407.
3. Email sdestudents@andrews.edu to inform the School of Distance Education that a disability has been reported to Student Success.

Commitment to Integrity

As a student in this course, and at the university, you are expected to maintain high degrees of professionalism, commitment to active learning, participation in this course, and integrity in your behavior in and out of this online classroom.

Commitment to Excellence

You deserve a standing ovation based on your decision to enroll in, and effectively complete this course. Along with your pledge of “commitment to Integrity” you are expected to adhere to a “commitment to excellence.” Andrews University has established high academic standards that will truly enhance your writing and communication skills across the disciplines and in diverse milieu with many discourse communities in the workplace.

Honesty

Using the work of another student or allowing work to be used by another student jeopardizes not only the teacher-student relationship but also the student’s academic standing. Lessons may be discussed with other students, tutors may help to guide a student’s work, and textbooks, encyclopedias and other resource materials may be used for additional assistance, but the actual response must be the student’s own work. A student who gives information to another student to be used in a dishonest way is equally guilty of dishonesty. Any violation of this policy will be taken before the Higher Education Academic and Curriculum Committee for appropriate punitive action.

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