

Submit a separate checklist for each syllabus

# Date received by Dean's office: 01/04/2021 (This line to be completed by office staff)

Syllabus Content Requirement	Complete?
I. Course Information:	⊠ Yes □ No
II. Office location & Office hours	⊠ Yes □ No
III. Textbooks, readings and/or bibliography	⊠ Yes □ No
<ul> <li>IV. General Objectives or Expected Learner Outcomes</li> <li>Is this a General Education Course?   ✓ Yes   No</li> <li>If yes, which competency does it meet?   CULTURAL LITERACY</li> </ul>	⊠ Yes □ No
V. Instructional Methods	⊠ Yes □ No
VI. Course Description/Course Content  ☐ Inclusive of catalog description and pre-requisite ☐ Chronological outline inclusive of topics covered and course requirements (exams, quizzes, projects, papers, assignments, with indication of the course grading value for each)	⊠ Yes □ No
VII. Evaluation and Grading  ⊠ Includes specific grading system (number and type of evaluations; how final grade is determined, when assignment grades will be posted viewing in BB)	⊠ Yes □ No
VIII. Absence Policy  ☑ Similar to or refers to one in catalog (is not stricter than catalog policy)	⊠ Yes □ No
IX. Texas Wesleyan Policies  □ University policies statement □ Disability accommodations statement □ Syllabus subject to change statement □ Lab/chemical use statement (if applicable) □ Repeating Courses statement □ Title IX syllabus statement □ COVID-19 policies statement	⊠ Yes □ No

# **Recommendations by Dean's Office**

☐ Accept as is	S		
□ Reject			
☐ Rationale:		 	



# REL1321-30/32 | Intro to Comparative Religions | Spring 2021

Instructor: Dr. Chad J. Pevateaux Course modality: Online

**Meeting Times:** Weekly participation req.

Office: PMC 310 or via Teams

Email: cjpevateaux@txwes.edu Office Hours: On campus T 3-4:30 and W

11-1:30&3-5 and via Teams M and Th 3-6

# **Course Introduction**

Phone: 817.531.4904

Religious illiteracy hampers many of our efforts in the world today. This course will equip you with knowledge and skills for navigating dynamics deemed religious that not only will help you in your career but moreover will help make the world a better place.

# **Course Description**

How is religion experienced around the world? This course will introduce the academic and comparative study of the world's religious traditions using historical and/or thematic approaches to beliefs, practices, institutions, and cultural expressions of selected world religions. As we learn to compare commonalities and differences across time and clime, we will also interrogate the very idea of "world religions."

Course Learning Objectives: Students will	Degree Program Goals
Develop critical thinking skills to apply different theories and methods in the comparative study of religions	1.1 Students will be able to identify and explain key concepts arising from various religious systems     2.2 Students will be able to identify and evaluate significant philosophical and metaphysical claims made within varying religious systems.
Recognize both commonalities and differences of various religious practices	1.2 Students will gain an appreciation for the historical context that gives rise to the experience and claims     2.1 Students will gain an appreciation for the complex history associated with the development of primary religious texts     3.1 Students will be able to assess and respond to primary claims, practices and ideas associated with specific global religious systems.
Evaluate the importance and impact of studying religions on practitioners, society, and themselves	3.2 Students will be able to articulate a response in a well-reasoned essay to one or more key religious claims.  4.2 Students should acquire and enhance skills in analysis, research, critical thinking and communication, that will support them in further studies in any academic field or in their professional careers.

# **Required Materials**

Comparing Religions: Coming to Terms, by Jeffrey J. Kripal (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014) = CR Religious System Summaries from companion website (on Blackboard & www.wiley.com/go/kripal)

# **Learning Methods and Technologies**

The learning methods used in this course include the following:

☑ Discussion forums and/or wikis
 ☑ Synchronous (real-time) virtual meetings with peers and/or the instructor
 ☑ Streaming video
 ☑ Undependent homework assignments
 ☑ Writing-intensive assignments
 ☑ Clinical or field work
 ☑ Other:
 ☑ Exams

# **Student Workload Expectation**

This is a 3-credit-hour course, which means that students are expected to do at least 7.5 hours of course-related work each week during the semester. This independent learning includes tasks like: completing assigned readings, participating in module activities and discussion boards, and doing written assignments.

# **Course Requirements**

## **Submitting and Returning Assessments**

#### **Assessment Submission**

- Submit all of your assignments via Blackboard.
- Use the standard Microsoft<sup>©</sup> Office programs such as Word, PowerPoint, and Excel
  (available to you through your txwes.edu Office 365 account) to complete your
  assignments unless assignment directions specify that you should use a different file
  format.
- Use the following guidelines when formatting your documents:
  - All essays should use double-space, 12-point font, either Times New Roman or Arial
  - Do not upload Pages documents or any file formats that cannot be read by SafeAssign

#### Assessment Feedback

- I will provide feedback on assessments within 14 days after submission.
- My feedback will be provided in the form of notes in Grade Center and, when pertinent, comments directly in the uploaded documents.

### Communication with the Instructor

Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns either by scheduling a meeting with me during my office hours or other times by appointment (cjpevateaux@txwes.edu).
 I'm happy to talk by phone or over Skype, though email is always the best way to reach me. I strive to respond quickly to emails, but please allow up to 2 business days for reply.

#### Quizzes and Exams

- Participation quizzes administered in Blackboard and must be completed by the end of the week in the modules in which they appear for full credit.
- Tradition summary quizzes must be completed by due date and at 100% for full points.
- Exams will be taken on your own online as well.

# **Evaluation & Grading**

The course will be graded on 4 components: (1) module participation and completion, 20% (2) five completion quizzes on religious traditions summaries, 10% [2% each], (3) two exams, 30% [midterm 10% and final 20%], and (4) two essays, 40% [midterm 15% and final 25%] for a total of 100%. Bonus opportunities: 1point sixth trad sum quiz and 5 points unfamiliar tradition site visit.

Online Module Participation and Completion –20%– Students are expected to keep up with regular, weekly participation in online module content, whether discussion boards, wikis, worksheets, quizzes, viewing videos, or other Blackboard resources.

5 Religious Tradition Summary Quizzes –10%– Based entirely on the religious tradition summaries found on the companion website for the textbook (Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Islam, 2% each), these quizzes will be graded with one of two scores—either 100% or 0%. You can retake as many times as necessary to get all of the answers correct. For whichever ones you have not completed at 100% before the due date you will receive 0%. Bonus—complete Jainism Quiz by May 5th for one extra point on final grade

2 Essays (900-1500 words, approx. 3-5 pages) –40%— The essays (15% first, 25% second) cover material from the corresponding sections of the course. The final essay should also include reflection on how you re-read religions after the semester as a whole. See the below grading rubric for guidelines on attaining excellence with these papers. Each essay should have a comparative component and focus almost entirely on textbook material. Tradition summaries and readings from the supplemental section of blackboard may also be used to enhance your discussion of the textbook material.

Exams –30%– The exams (10% Midterm, 20% Final) will be multiple choice/fill-in-the-blank/etc and based on textbook material, tradition summaries, and video content. The final exam be comprehensive.

Bonus Unfamiliar Tradition (Web)Site Visit –up to 5 points on final grade— Visit (virtually or in person if possible) the service or website of a religious tradition with which you are not familiar. Write a short 2-page summary and personal reflection.

#### **Guidelines for Grading Papers**

- A paper—This paper contains insightful and original claims facilitated by class discussions rather than merely reproducing a line of argument that has been fully explicated in class. The A paper will have a clearly delineated thesis statement and must be logically organized. Individual paragraphs making up the body of the paper must have topic sentences that relate back to the thesis as well as transition sentences to help the reader smoothly move between paragraphs and follow the line of argument. The A paper makes use of relevant material from the textbook and other course readings. When textual evidence is used in the A paper, it is appropriately cited and its relevance is fully explicated and argued by the writer (i.e., it's not enough to just throw a quote in, you need to demonstrate why it's important to your argument). Few grammatical or other errors.
- B paper—This paper contains insightful or interesting claims facilitated by class discussions and has a clearly delineated thesis statement. There are slightly more problems with grammar, syntax, weak transitions, and there are likely problems with focus and organization. There are fewer instances of textual evidence or the use of less relevant textual evidence. Overall organization is still pretty clear, the argument and writing fairly strong, and properly cited evidence is utilized.

- C paper—This paper's argument reproduces, without adding anything substantially new or insightful, points already fully explicated in class or has an otherwise insufficiently sophisticated argument. The paper seems to demonstrate a lack of thought and effort as indicated by a deviation from the assignment (e.g., not following the prompt, not meeting page requirements), is technically sloppy (poor grammar, word choice, sentence structure), poorly organized, and tends to employ generalizations versus making specific claims based on textual evidence. This paper is not likely to contain enough supporting textual evidence.
- D paper—This paper either does not present an argument, or presents one that is logically flawed, unoriginal, and unsophisticated. This paper does not use adequate textual evidence and contains serious technical errors including poor organization, lack of topic and transition sentences, poor word choice, and bad grammar.
- F paper—Paper not turned in, contains plagiarism, or is less than ½ of the required length.

Some helpful resources:

How To Write a Sentence: And How To Read One, by Stanley Fish The Elements of Style, by William Strunk and E.B. White

A Manual for Writers: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers, Kate L. Turabian

Final Grade	Final Points/Average
Α	90% and above
В	80% - 89.99%
С	70% - 79.99%
D	60% - 69.99%
F	Below 60%

# **Course Policies**

### **Academic Integrity**

- Cheating, plagiarism (submitting another person's material as one's own), or completing
  assignments for another person who will receive academic credit are not permitted. This includes
  the use of unauthorized books, notebooks, or other sources in order to secure or give help
  during an examination, the unauthorized copying of examinations, assignments, reports, or term
  papers, or the presentation of unacknowledged material as if it were the student's own work.
  Disciplinary action may be taken beyond the academic discipline administered by the course
  instructor. Read the University's Academic Integrity Policy.
  - More specifically, plagiarism is submitting another person's material as one's own or even re-submitting your own previous work without proper acknowledgement. This includes but is not limited to failing to cite when quoting, paraphrasing or summarizing someone else's work without citation, omitting quotation marks from a quote, giving incorrect information about the source of a quote, failing to cite when using another's ideas or concepts from online or elsewhere, or turning in any portion of someone else's work as your own. Plagiarism may result in a grade penalty, failure of the course, or more.

#### **COVID-19 Policies**

- While the University plans to offer instruction face-to-face, due to Covid-19, some or all
  instruction for all or part of Academic Year 20-21 may be delivered remotely. Tuition and
  mandatory fees have been set regardless of the method of instruction and will not be refunded in
  the event instruction occurs remotely for any part of the Academic Year.
- Students are required to wear masks in the class at all times; should wash their hands frequently, watch and maintain adequate social distance from others.

- For your safety, you should sanitize your desk space before and after use.
- International students enrolled in hybrid courses are required to attend the in-person sections and attendance policies will be enforced.
- The University reserves the right to change the instructional modality of this course as needed in response to concerns related to COVID-19 or other public health/safety issues.

### **Spring 2021 Attendance Policies**

- 1. For the benefit of students, faculty will record the audio portion of all class lectures and make those recordings available to students.
- 2. Excluding online classes, all class meetings will either be face-to-face (FTF) or virtual.
- 3. Students are required to attend all FTF lectures either in-person or virtually with the following exceptions:
  - Some classes, labs, etc., require that students attend face-to-face lectures in-person.
     These classes are identified in the class schedule by the designation In-person.
  - With faculty approval, students may learn asynchronously. The asynchronous learning option is restricted and only applies to students residing abroad, or, have other circumstances which limit their ability to attend classes in-person or virtually. Approval for this option must be obtained from the faculty member prior to the first day of class.
- 4. International students should consult with the Office of International Programs and may be required by federal law to attend all FTF lectures in person.

#### Instruction/Attendance definitions

- Asynchronous students learning asynchronously are not attending class in-person or virtually. Asynchronous students will be provided recordings of class lectures (audio).
- **Face-to-Face** faculty deliver live instruction in the classroom. Subject to the restriction noted above (#4) students may choose to attend a FTF class in-person or virtually.
- **In-person** students are physically present in the classroom during the designated face-to-face (FTF) class lecture.
- Virtual or virtually students attend class using an online platform such as Collaborate or Teams. Students are expected to be online and participate in class at the designated meeting time for the class period.

#### **Online Class Attendance**

Attendance via participation is critical to a student's success in Online and Hybrid Classes. When an online or hybrid class student does not participate in consecutive online activities or does not submit consecutive assignments AND has not communicated with the instructor about the student's participation, the instructor must drop the student from the class using the Faculty Initiated Student Withdrawal process. Each instructor determines the specific number of consecutive activities or assignments that will initiate the withdrawal, according to the requirements of the particular online or hybrid class.

### **Other University Policies**

Links to selected University policies are available in <u>Blackboard under the Student Resources</u>
 <u>tab</u>. The current Texas Wesleyan University <u>Catalog</u> and <u>Student Handbook</u> contain all
 University policies.

Note: Course syllabi are intended to provide students with basic information concerning the course. The syllabus can be viewed as a "blueprint" for the course. Instructors will inform students of any changes concerning examinations, the grading or attendance policies, or changes in project assignments.

### Regarding Masks and Caring for the Safety of Each Other

Approved face masks must be worn at all times. Since masks are primarily about protecting the safety of others, purposely not wearing one will be treated as a violation of our University policies on the order of endangering or assaulting other students and will be handled accordingly, possibly resulting in being dropped from the class or suspended from the University.

### **Concerning Recommendations**

As you progress in your college career, which might eventually involve asking professors to recommend you for graduate programs, jobs, or internships, please be aware that professors are not obligated to write references for any student who asks us. I do not write a reference for a student unless I can write a very positive and specific one. Therefore, your job is to become the kind of student professors can rave about in recommendations—hardworking, collegial, intellectually inquisitive, and honest. Consider maintaining relationships over time with professors, so that they know you well enough to write for you. Many juniors and seniors tell me they wish they had thought about such aspects much earlier.

#### **About the Professor**

Dr. Chad J. Pevateaux earned his PhD in Religion at Rice University in Houston, Texas (2013). His primary research was in history and philosophy of religions, with a focus on gender, race, class, species, and ethics in relation to comparative mystics. He also earned a MDiv from Harvard Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts (2005), where he focused on Christian history and theology in dialogue with Asian traditions and philosophy. He earned his BA from Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas, another Methodist-affiliated school, with a double major in English and history (1997). Before coming to Texas Wesleyan, Dr. Pevateaux taught for three years as a visiting assistant professor of religious studies at St. Mary's College of Maryland, the public honors college. Prior to graduate school, he worked for eight years as the director of youth and young adult ministries at St. Michael's Episcopal Church in Austin, Texas.

### **Core Values of Student Conduct at Texas Wesleyan**

- *Integrity:* Texas Wesleyan University students exemplify honesty, honor, and respect for the truth in all of their actions.
- **Community:** Texas Wesleyan University students build and enhance their community in a positive and healthy manner.
- **Social Justice:** Texas Wesleyan University students are fair, just, and equitable in their treatment of all members of the community and act to discourage and/or intervene to prevent unjust and inequitable behaviors.
- **Respect:** Texas Wesleyan University students show positive regard for each other, for property, and for the community.
- **Responsibility:** Texas Wesleyan University students are extended and accept a high level of responsibility to self, to others, and to the community.

## Cultivating a Scholarly, Equitable, and Empathic Learning Community

Because it is integral to the subject matter of the course, discussion of potentially volatile issues such as sexuality, gender, race, class, politics and religion will occur. By signing up for this course and accepting this syllabus, the student understands that this is a critically oriented, academic study of religion whose reading and discussion content may sometimes conflict with the present understandings of some contemporary adherents of these traditions. This is a crucial point, as the course's success will depend largely, if not entirely, upon how effectively we can all create together a learning environment of intellectual freedom, critical inquiry, and interpersonal honesty.

You may unavoidably encounter thoughts that challenge or upset you. The goal of the course is to think critically about complicated topics without disrespecting others. Thus, students are expected to maintain a high level of tolerance for other viewpoints and to work to promote mutual understanding wherever differences arise.

Texas Wesleyan students, faculty, and staff value diversity and inclusion. Hate speech is unacceptable. With respect to sex, gender, race, color, age, creed, national or ethnic origin, physical or mental disability, veteran status, pregnancy status, religion, sexual orientation, and other protected statuses, we strive, in keeping with our core values, not only to not discriminate according to such categories but moreover to promote social justice in regard to them by following the guidance of John Wesley to do "good of every possible sort and as far as is possible to all." In sum, be kind.

By remaining in this course and accepting this syllabus, you are expressing your understanding of and agreement with these vital conditions of open class discussion, critical thinking, and compassionate living. Put metaphorically but not inaccurately, this is a university online classroom, not a church, temple, mosque, gurdwara, or synagogue. The rest follows from there.

### **Schedule**

Subject to change as necessary or prudent

Week 1	Starting the Journey
1.13-17	Syllabus, Q&A, Pre-Course Assessment Quiz, and Ice-Breaker Activity
Week 2	Hinduisms, Jainisms, Buddhisms, Judaisms, Christianities, and Islams
1.18-24	Module 1: Read "I Am" pages & Pres. Slabach, "The Relevance of Our Mission" Discussion Board participation—initial post by Wed and responses by Sun
Week 3	Exploring the Multiplicity and Messiness of "World Religions"
1.25-31	Module 2—How did ancient religions compare? How Does "Religion" differ from "Din" or "Dao," and what difference do the differences make? Read Comparing Religions (CR) Chapter 3 pages 93-94, and CR1 pages 1-39 Watch three short teaching videos and do 10-minute writing exercise
Week 4	From Comparison in Global History to Studying "World Religions" in Colleges
2.1-7	Module 3—Western Origins & the History of the Modern Practice: From the Bible to Buddhism, & From Renaissance Humanism to Spiritual But Not Religious CR2 43-73 Watch 2 teaching videos and take module quiz; Christianity quiz due Sun as well
Sun 2.7	11:59pm Christianity Tradition Summary Quiz Due for Full Credit
Week 5	So How Do We Define Ourselves and Religions?
2.8-14	Module 4—Reflexivity in the Study of Religion, CR3 77-94 Watch Plato's Cave & three teaching videos, take module quiz, plus 10min writing
Sun 2.14	11:59pm Hinduism Tradition Summary Quiz Due for Credit

Week 6	The Creative Functions of Myth and Ritual: How Do We Perfom Our Worlds?
2.15-21	Module 5—Myth & Ritual: Telling the Story Telling Us, Acting Out the Story Acting Us Comparative Practice: Awakened One and Great Hero in Ancient India CR 4.111-40 Watch three short teaching videos, 10min writing, and module quiz
Week 7	From Plato to Play-Doh: What's the Path Out of Suffering?
2.22-28	Module 6—Movie: The Life of Buddha, BBC Documentary Watch meditation videos, hour-long documentary, module quiz, read handouts
Sun 2.28	11:59pm Buddhism Tradition Summary Quiz Due for Credit
Week 8	What Do Religions Do With & to the Natural World? Religion, Nature, & Science
3.1-7	Module 7—What Does "Dirt" Teach Us About World Religions? What's Up? From Deep Ecology to the Human Plant: What Do Entheogens Teach Us about WR? CR 5.143-73. Watch three short teaching videos, 10min writing, and module quiz
Week 9	Embodying Religions: What Do World Religions Do With and To the Body?
3.8-14	Module 8—What's a Male Androgyne? How Does the Paternity-Patriarchy Principle Help Explain Gendered Religious Power Dynamics? Is Male:Female::Spirit:Nature? CR 6.177-97. Two short teaching videos, module quiz, and work on midterm essay
Week 10	The Way of Re-Creation
3.15-19	Spring Break—Be safe and take care
Week 11	Where Are You On Your Way?
3.22-28	Module 9— <b>Midterms</b>
3.22-24	Midterm Exam (10% of course grade) available M at noon and due W by 11:59pm
Sun 3.28	Midterm Essay (15% of course grade) due by 11:59pm
Week 12	Sociology of Religions: How Does Charisma Become Institutionalized?
3.29-4.4	Module 10—How is Power Transmitted in World Religions? How Do Different Forms of Religious Institutions Function? Or Not? CR 7.209-29  Three short videos, 10min writing, and module quiz
Week 13	Death, Dying, & the Afterlives: How Do Religions View the Soul & End of All?
4.5-11	Module 11—How Do Body and Soul, If We Have a Soul, (Inter)Relate in World Religions? How Do Our Views of the Hereafter Affect the Here and Now? CR 9.271-96 Optional Kripal TED talk, Colbert fun video, module quiz, and Judaism quiz due
Sun 4 11	11:59nm Judaism Tradition Summary Ouiz Due for Credit

Week 14	Re-Reading Religions: Religious Re-Readings
4.12-18	Module 12—What Are the Pros and Cons of Exclusivism, Inclusivism, and Pluralism? How Does Comparing Religions Relate to Justice? CR 10.303-31 Short teaching video, Cone clip, No White Jesus humorous video, Islam Compassion TED Talk, Module Quiz, 10min writing, and Islam quiz due
Sun 4.18	11:59pm Islam Tradition Summary Quiz Due for Credit
Week 15	Re-Reading Religions: Rational Re-Readings
4.19-25	Module 13—How Do the Reductions of the Masters of Suspicion Help or Hinder? How Do Cognitive Science and Evolutionary Psychology Contribute to Understanding World Religions? All CR 11, but focus on reduction and externalization-objectification-internalization <i>Teaching video, module quiz, 10min writing</i>
Week 16	Re-Reading Religions: Reflexive Re-Readings
4.26-5.2	Module 14—Looking at the Looker: How Might the Filter Thesis Help Harmonize Religion And Science? CR 12.365-92 Short teaching video, discussion board, and module quiz due Sun by 11:59pm
Week 17	After Comparing Across Time and Clime, How Do You Re-Read Religions?
Tue 5.4	Final Exam (20% of course grade) due by 11:59pm
Sun 5.9	End-Course Assessment Quiz and All Extra Credit Due by 11:59pm
Tue 5.11	Last Exam Day—Final Essay (25% of course grade) due uploaded to

"I become a transparent eyeball—I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me—I am part or particle of God."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

"It may be that what is right and what is good consist in staying open to the tensions that beset the most fundamental categories we require, in knowing unknowingness at the core of what we know, and what we need, and in recognizing the sign of life in what we undergo without certainty about what will come."

-Judith Butler

"Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike?"

—John Wesley