



**MERCER**  
COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# COURSE OUTLINE

Course Number	Course Title	Credits
REL-102	Living World Religions	3.0
Hours: Lecture/Lab/Other 3/0/0	Co- or Pre-requisite ---	Implementation Semester & Year FA 2022

**Catalog description:**

A comparative study of the world's major religions, through a critical exploration of the essential teachings and cultural context of Hinduism, Buddhist, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Daoism, Confucianism among others, including pre- and post-colonial African and American traditions. 3 lecture hours.

**General Education Category:**

**Goal 6: Humanities**  
**Goal 8: Diversity and Global Perspective**

**Course coordinator:** Ken Howarth, 6095703809  
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**Required texts & Other materials:**

Invitation to World's Religions, by Jeffrey Brodd, Layne Little, Brad Nystrom, Robert Platzner, Richard Shek, Erin Stiles, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Oxford, 2018, ISBN: 978-0190690816

Handouts & Websites as directed; for updated editions/similar text-check bookstore

**Course Student Learning Outcomes (SLO):**

***Upon successful completion of this course the student will be able to:***

1. Identify and analyze the basic perspectives, characteristic practices of and similarities and differences between the major religions of the world (ILGs 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10); (PLOs 1, 2, 3, 4)
2. Use critical thinking methods appropriate to the interpretation and appraisal of religious ideas to analyze and evaluate the ways in which various religions approach life and its problems (ILGs 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11) (PLOs 1, 2, 3, 4)
3. Analyze the relationships between religion and other aspects of human culture such as ethics, science, philosophy, art, environment and politics (ILGs 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11) (PLOs 1, 2, 3, 4)
4. Describe, explain, interpret, and compare the differing religiosities of diverse individuals and groups as expressed traditionally, formally, textually and in actual practice, including factoring the issues of respect and rights (ILGs 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11) (PLOs 1, 2, 3, 4)
5. Frame and present your own views on religious issues, both orally and in writing, with logical and

critical precision, clarity, coherence and rigor. (ILGs 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11); (PLOs 1, 2, 3, 4)

Each goal or outcome relates to “religious studies literacy” with respect to content knowledge and to the “discipline-specific methodologies” of the study of religion with respect to relevant content material. Other learning goals may be specified in particular sections by the instructor with the course coordinator’s approval in addition to but not as a replacement for the above listed goals.

### **Course-specific Institutional Learning Goals (ILG):**

**Institutional Learning Goal 1. Written and Oral Communication in English.** Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.

**Institutional Learning Goal 5. Social Science.** Students will use social science theories and concepts to analyze human behavior and social and political institutions and to act as responsible citizens.

**Institutional Learning Goal 6. Humanities.** Students will analyze works in the fields of art, music, or theater; literature; philosophy and/or religious studies; and/or will gain competence in the use of a foreign language.

**Institutional Learning Goal 7. History.** Students will understand historical events and movements in World, Western, non-Western or American societies and assess their subsequent significance.

**Institutional Learning Goal 8. Diversity and Global Perspective:** Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples

**Institutional Learning Goal 9. Ethical Reasoning and Action.** Students will understand ethical frameworks, issues, and situations.

**Institutional Learning Goal 10. Information Literacy:** Students will recognize when information is needed and have the knowledge and skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for college level work.

**Institutional Learning Goal 11. Critical Thinking:** Students will use critical thinking skills understand, analyze, or apply information or solve problems.

### **Program Learning Outcomes for Liberal Arts (PLO)**

1. Concept Knowledge Understand the vocabulary, methods, and major concepts present in the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences
2. Communication Articulate complex ideas clearly and effectively, both verbally and in writing
3. Critical Thinking Perform a series of thinking tasks including speculation, analysis, and synthesis (i.e., abstract reasoning)
4. Research Methods Utilize research materials and methodologies

### **Units of study in detail – Unit Student Learning Outcomes:**

The general plan for this course is broadly in two parts; the first unit serves as a primer of religious studies; while subsequent units address various contemporary issues and focus on subject particulars and applications of more general religious influences.

Units in Summary

Unit 1 - Studying Religion and Religions

Unit 2 – A World of Religions

Unit 3 – Religion and Ethics in the World

Detailed Units:

**Unit I** Studying Religion and Religions (SLO #1, 2, 3, 4)

**Learning Objectives The student will able to:**

1. Identify reasons for studying religion and different religions Distinguish between the major areas of religious studies and their central concerns, including the role of reason, evidence and judgments
2. Explain key religious concepts, elements, practices and traditions from both internal and external perspectives
3. Critically distinguish different definitions, histories and roles of major world religions

**Unit II A World of Religions (SLO #1, 2, 3, 4)**

**Learning Objectives The student will able to:**

1. Identify common features of the major religions such as: Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, Shinto, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, and indigenous and emerging traditions,
2. Critically distinguish between and relate different religious traditions' practices and beliefs regarding common religious features and functions, including applying categories & methods from sociological, anthropological, psychological and other fields
3. Analytically compare different major religious traditions' internal and external narratives, commitments and histories, employing studied examples and case study techniques

**Unit III Religion and Ethics in the World (SLO #1, 2, 3, 4)**

**Learning Objectives The student will able to:**

1. Identify & critically distinguish different and shared features of major religious traditions accounts of good and evil, suffering and success, and the human condition and ways of living, and students' own convictions
2. Critically distinguish between different religious traditions' grounds and practices regarding individual ethical beliefs and actions, applying examples, case studies, and categories & methods from philosophical and scientific fields, and students' own convictions
3. Critically compare and contrast different religious traditions' grounds and practices regarding family, community and societal political, economic and other cultural contexts, organizational authorities, structures and actions, applying examples, case studies, and categories & methods from philosophical and scientific fields, and students' own convictions
4. Identify & critically distinguish different and shared features of emerging religious traditions accounts of good and evil, suffering and success, and the human condition and ways of living, and students' own convictions

**Evaluation of student learning:**

<i>Citizenship:</i>	<i>Course-long assessment of how students demonstrate religious studies literacy and practice Through their contributions to the class learning environment, that may include such factors as attendance, the amount and manner of class participation, helpfulness to other students' understanding, oral presentations (may be broken out as a separate grading categories), etc.</i>
<i>Homework: /Discussion Board Posting</i>	<i>6 or more short assignments aimed at having the student demonstrate that they did the assigned reading assignment and can address the issues covered in their own words.</i>
<i>Quizzes:</i>	<i>2 or more brief assessments to allow students to demonstrate topical literacy in a specific unit of instruction</i>
<i>Tests:</i>	<i>1 or more longer assessments to allow students to demonstrate topical literacy in covered units of instruction</i>
<i>Examinations:</i>	<i>1 or more class-length assessments to allow students to demonstrate topical practices (and</i>

*Essays: literacy) in narrative form as applied to units of instruction; includes one comprehensive final exam 1 or more assessments to allow students to demonstrate philosophical literacy and practices as applied to units of instruction. Well-argued papers are the first goal here, as a demonstration of well-evinced reasoning, though assigning and assessing, in part a research dimension to the assignment is fitting, especially for 100-level courses.*

Course Grade Breakdown:

Citizenship	10-15% (not more than this) (includes 'participation')
Homework	10-15%
Quizzes	5-10%
Tests/Exams	30-50% (no one test/exam worth more than 20%)
<u>Essays</u>	<u>30-50%</u> (no one paper worth more than 25%)
Course =	100%

The particular grading breakdown is to be determined by each instructor in line with above and listed clearly in her/his syllabus.