

**REL 2000 Introduction to Religion**  
Garrett Howard

**Text:** Huston Smith, *The World's Religions*

**Course Description:** This course is a survey of the world's religious traditions. This is a **Gordon Rule** course, in order to get a "C" or better in this class, the student must submit 6,000 written words. The Essay assignments each contain specific instructions regarding style, format, and length., if followed, they will easily ensure the requirement is met. Students must use the textbook and lecture material for all take home writing assignments. The use of additional source material is optional. However, If additional source material is used, a bibliography (plus footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical citations) is required. If using parenthetical citations, ensure each source includes a page number. Indent and single space lengthy quotes (4 lines or more). Papers must be double spaced, with 1-inch margins for the top, bottom, left and right. Also, the font must be a 12.

**Course Objectives/Goals:** The fundamental ideas of the world's religious traditions will be studied so that the student can develop clear definitions of the basic terms, concepts and ideas. This study will include basic theological concepts and ideas such as: God, Nature, Culture, and the Self. Also, the religious concepts that pertain to such topics as: suffering and joy, ignorance and enlightenment, estrangement and atonement will be examined. The goal is to provide the student with an opportunity to: 1. Carefully examine, interpret and evaluate basic theological concepts. 2. Distinguish fundamental ideas within the world's religious traditions. 3. appreciate the universality of basic religious concepts. 4. Develop an informed point of view.

**Method of instruction:** The Textbook will serve as the basis for lectures, discussions and Essays. Study Outline:

- Introduction
- Confucianism
- Taoism
- Hinduism.
- Buddhism.
- Islam
- Judaism
- Christianity.
- The Primal Religions

**Method of Grading:**

Attendance	20%
Class Participation	20%
Take Home Midterm Essay	25%
Take Home Final Essay	35%

**Attendance Grade Criteria:** This course requires a high level of commitment and involvement. A great value is placed on the student's classroom performance. Students are responsible for all material covered in the classroom. Therefore, it will be necessary to attend class on a regular basis to obtain a decent grade. Attendance grades are ranked with respect to the number of absences each student earns. Students with the lower number of absences receive the higher grade. Being Late for class or leaving class early will count as ½ absence. An absentee rate of 25% will result in an automatic failure.

**Class Participation Grade Criteria:** (1) The ability to think and speak critically and reflectively utilizing material covered in the class; (2) The ability to use language and argumentation in a logical and systematic manner; (3) The ability to do work in a consistent and punctual manner; (4) Courtesy and attentiveness to the needs of your classmates; (5) The ability to exhibit: courtesy and professionalism with respect to your conduct and responsibilities as a college student and (6) Avoidance of disruptive behavior: eating and drinking in class, talking during lecture, being late for class, & leaving class early. Cell phones and pagers must be turned off.

**Take Home Essay Grading Criteria:** (1) Form: - Unity of thought and Coherence of Expression., and Sentence, paragraph variety, grammar and spelling. and (2) Content - "Reporting" is a concise demonstration of your acquaintance with the material. (min. req. for a "C"); "Analysis" is the ability to compare, contrast, or critically evaluate the material. (min. req. for a "B"); and "Synthesis" is a demonstration of your ability to adequately develop your thesis (or main idea), and to reach a sound conclusion. (min. req. for an "A").