

Religious Studies 1: Introduction to Religious Studies
Santa Rosa Junior College, Spring 2020

Section: 6073 Times: M/W 1:30pm-3:30pm Location: Emeritus 1509 Course dates: 01/13/20 – 05/13/20 Final Exam: W 05/13/20, 1:00pm-3:45pm Course website: https://canvas.santarosa.edu	Adjunct Instructor: Emily A. Schmidt Email: eschmidt@santarosa.edu Office phone: (707) 535-3738 x5344 Direct voicemail: (707) 527-4999 x5344 Office: Emeritus 1545 Office hour: M/W 3:00pm-5:30pm <i>or by appointment</i> Mailbox: Emeritus 1551, Service Center
---	--

Course Description: This course introduces the study of religion as a critical, academic discipline. It will explore the meaning, origins and function of religion, and illustrate these by drawing on myths, rituals, symbols, and beliefs from cultures all over the globe and through human history. The course will survey the evolution and content of various theories and methods in the study of religion, as well as career opportunities in the field.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Identify and explain various methods and theories used in explicating the meaning, origins, functions, and elements of religions.
2. Describe, compare and contrast corresponding elements of different kinds of religions from different parts of the world and different periods of history.
3. Demonstrate appreciation for the diversity of religious expression.

Required Books:

- Mallory Nye, [*Religion: The Basics*](#). (2nd ed) 2008, ISBN 978-0415449489 (listed as Nye in the schedule)
- Online used booksellers often have the best prices for both new & used books.
- Other readings will be posted on Canvas (marked with * on Canvas).

Required Materials:

- Note-taking materials of your choice (notebook & pen/pencil or laptop/tablet computer)
- Paper & pen/pencil for doing in-class work.
- Sticky-notes or pen/pencil/highlighter to annotate your readings AND/OR learn to use the annotation & highlighting tools on your e-reading software
- Binder and/or folders. Keep all materials from this course until your course grade is filed.
- Access to a computer, printer, and the internet. Readings and assignments will be posted on the Canvas website.
- A dictionary. I recommend the Miriam-Webster Dictionary or their [website](#) or the [app](#).
- [SRJC Student ID/Library Card](#) (available at Student Services, Bertolini).

Course Requirements & Grade Breakdown:

50 pts: 2 quizzes, 25 points each
100 pts: 2 reflection papers, 50 points each
100 pts: Midterm Exam
100 pts: Final Essay
100 pts: Final Exam
450 pts: Course Total

Quizzes (50 points): There will be 2 timed quizzes on Canvas, each worth 25 points. Each quiz will be open on Canvas for one week and you will be permitted 2 tries to achieve your highest score. Questions may be multiple choice, true/false matching, fill in the blank, or short answer. Material from any of the readings, films, lectures, or class discussions for any previous classes up to the day the quiz opens will be under consideration for the quizzes. Generally, quizzes will emphasize names, dates, terms, & key points.

Reflection Papers (100): There will be 2 papers of 2-3 pages (600-750 words), each worth 50 points. You will be given a choice of prompts that will ask you to be familiar with & engage with course materials (including readings, films, lectures, class discussions, and any discussion board postings on Canvas). These are not research papers. The assignment will be open one week before the due date, and there will be an automatic grace period of one week, after which the assignment will close and you'll have to talk to me to get it opened again. Due dates are in the schedule.

Midterm Exam (100 points): The midterm exam will be an in class exam on M 3/2. It will likely consist of terms identifications, short answer, and an essay question. A study guide will be provided a week in advance.

Final Essay (100 points): The final essay will be a 4-6 page (1,000-1,500 words) essay responding to a prompt, due on M 5/4. You will be asked to be familiar with & engage with course materials (including readings, videos, lectures, class discussions, and any discussion board postings on Canvas). The assignment will be open 2 weeks before the due date, and there will be an automatic grace period of one week, you'll have to talk to me to get it opened again.

Final Exam (100 points): The final exam will consist of an in class exam on W 5/20. The in class exam will likely consist of multiple choice, terms identifications, short answer, and/or short essay questions. A study guide will be provided a week in advance.

Grade Scale:

90% & above	A / P (Excellent & exceptional work)
80-89%	B / P (Good work, more than minimum requirements)
70-79%	C / P (Acceptable college work, meets minimum requirements)
60-69%	D / NP (Work does not meet the standard for college work)
59% & below	F / NP (Work does not meet standards for college, is incomplete or missing)

Disclaimer about grades: You **EARN** grades. I do not **GIVE** grades. You do not start with points and then lose points. You start with zero points and earn points by completing coursework. **You are more than your grades.**

Late Work, Exam Make-Up Policy, and Incompletes: In the interest of fairness to the majority of students who complete their work on time, I wish to make the conditions under which work is produced and evaluated as equal as possible for everyone in the class. Therefore:

- You will have one week and two tries to complete quizzes on Canvas. You'll have to talk to me if you want an extension.
- Paper/essay assignments will include an automatic one week grace period after the due date. You'll have to talk to me if you want an extension beyond the grace period. There will be an option to rewrite if you meet with me first.
- Students who are seriously injured, seriously ill (physical or mental illness) or who have other emergencies will need to contact me as soon as possible to discuss exceptions.
- Make-up options may differ from original assignments, but will meet the same educational goals.
- Incompletes will generally not be granted for this class, because managing incompletes takes my time away from serving my students in the next term.

Attendance & Participation Policy: Attendance & participation in class activities are mandatory.

- Attendance will be recorded.
- Come on time. Stay until the end. Keep your coming and going to a minimum.
- Missing 8 classes will result in failure of the course, unless circumstances indicate leniency is relevant.
- Check in with me if you miss 4 classes.

Reasons to Miss Class or Ask for Extensions: Yes, there are times when missing class is ok (or even a good idea).

- Physical or mental health. Don't risk your health or our health.
- Family/Friend/Other Emergencies.
- Special events that are unreasonable to ask a human to miss: weddings, funerals, graduations, significant religious/cultural events.
- School-sponsored or job related required events.
- Work or child/elder care crises.
- Don't be a jerk & abuse the category "significant event" or "emergency."

Child Care Emergencies: In the event you have a child care emergency, teens/children/infants who can sit (mostly) are welcome, if you wish to bring them. However, the college classroom is a place in which adult topics are discussed, and might not always be appropriate for a child/teen. Give me heads-up by email or call my office, if possible.

If your child is sick with anything contagious that's worse than a common cold, please don't bring your germs to class. If your common cold is making you sneeze and cough a lot, please don't bring your germs to class.

Students with disabilities, chronic illness, or other situations that might necessitate frequent absences, late work, or alternative exams: please speak with me privately (and confidentially) as soon as possible – before a potential situation becomes a real situation.

Students with Disabilities: It is SRJC policy to provide equal educational opportunities for students with disabilities, according to state and federal laws. It's your right! Please contact me ASAP about disabilities and/or chronic illnesses and register with the [Disability Resources Department](#) for facilitation. I cannot make accommodations other than granting extensions to due dates without documentation from SRJC's DRD because I am not qualified to determine what accommodations should be made. If you have accessibility concerns or suggestions, please share them with me. I'm trying to improve course accessibility.

Academic Integrity (or NOT cheating & Plagiarizing): Students are expected to do their own work. Academic dishonesty is regarded as any act of deception, benign or malicious in nature, in the completion of any academic exercise. Examples of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to): turning in someone else's work as your own, using unapproved cheat sheets on exams, forging attendance records, and plagiarism of or in papers. Plagiarism includes copying another author's work or ideas, whether word for word or in paraphrase without giving proper credit to the original author by citation. Any academically deceitful or dishonest behavior or act will meet with appropriate disciplinary sanctions, which might include an F on the assignment or in the course, academic probation, or suspension or expulsion from the College. **Your continued enrollment in the course indicates that you have read [the statement on academic integrity](#), [the statement on academic integrity and your grades](#), and that you will consult the instructor if you do not understand what cheating and plagiarism are.**

Communication Policy: I generally respond to emails/Canvas within 48 hours M-F. Do not expect a same day response, although it is possible. The time stamp on your email will let me know when you sent it, if that's essential. Please check the syllabus, Canvas, & check with a classmate before emailing me to get information that's already on the syllabus, on Canvas, or was covered in class. Please [How to E-mail a Professor without Being Annoying AF](#). Please check your email and check in on Canvas regularly. Please keep the email on file in your Cubby updated. I strongly encourage [registering for your SRJC student email](#). You can use it for student matters and they're rarely caught in SRJC spam filters.

Office Hours: M/W 3:00pm-5:30pm, or by appointment. **Office hours are times faculty reserve for seeing students privately, in their offices.** My office hours are open; just come by! If you can't make my office hours, we'll make an appointment. My availability outside of scheduled office hours is limited by my other professional & personal responsibilities, but phone/Skype appointments are possible. **Office hours are for STUDENTS. I want to see you! Don't feel bad about interrupting me during office hours.** What to talk about: questions about class, questions about college in general, your favorite books, tv shows, movies, or games, religion news, personal/family things for which you need resources, celebrity gossip news, etc. See the "Office Hours" page on Canvas for more ideas & info.

I advise you to visit me in my office hours at least once before the midterm and at least once after the midterm. To encourage you, I will give you **10 points extra credit** for a 5-10 minute

chat once before the midterm **and** once after the midterm. This can be in office hours, by appointment or by phone/Skype. Additional office hour visits are welcome & encouraged, but you max out at 20 extra credit points for them.

Golden Rule & Class Culture: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Act like an adult. Don't be a jerk. Be respectful of the thoughts and opinions of your colleagues. Respectful disagreement and discussion are appropriate. Hostility and name-calling are inappropriate. We will discuss texts, ideas, and practices that relate to religions & cultures that are still being practiced. If you can't say something in a mature and respectful way, keep it to yourself. We should all be respectful – and that includes me. If I say something that offends or upsets you, please discuss it with me after class or in office hours. I'm a learning human, too!

- Questions are always ok, so please ask – in class, office hours, or by email! If you have a question, there is a very good chance that someone else has the same question.
- The classroom is a collaborative learning environment. Do the reading and to come prepared to help the entire class learn together. If you aren't prepared when you come to class, then you're mooching off the work of your classmates and that's uncool.
- You will generally have 50-70 pages of reading per week. Please bring the readings to class, in hardcopy or electronic form (if possible, or arrange to share with a classmate).
- Attendance is **mandatory** and the **classroom is collaborative**, SO: come on time. Stay until the end. Keep your coming and going to a minimum. It's distracting and disruptive.
- It is disrespectful to instructors and to classmates to be distracted or to cause distraction in the classroom.
- Please use your electronic devices only for class-related work.

On the Study of Religions: This course is about the academic study of religions according to secular academic methods. We seek to be **descriptive** of human experience, not **prescriptive**. We try to describe what people **actually do/did** and **think/thought** as religious agents, not whether they have “true” myths or the “right” religion. This course aims to give to concepts and vocabulary that you can use to think about religion in your own lives.

Since this is a state school, the First Amendment to the Constitution does not allow (nor do I want) this course to be “Sunday school.” It does allow the secular, academic study of the history, material culture, texts, beliefs, and practices of religions. This class will not teach you who is the “real” god, which religion is “right” or how to get into “Heaven.” You'll have to talk to your religious leaders for that. You **do not** have to agree with the religions we read about **or** with contemporary scholars – you just have to learn what they say and do. We must all speak and write respectfully and academically about religion. The classroom is **not** the place for preaching or for trying to get someone to join your religion. The classroom is not the place for disrespectful comments about religions. Every religion has made both positive and negative contributions to the human experience. Don't be a jerk.

Content Warning: This course is about religions & the academic study of religions. It may include topics of upsetting/distressing nature related to or discussions about: the meaning of life, death & mortality, suffering, violence, sacrifice, sexual violence, slavery, sexuality, gender roles, anti-LGBTQ and/or anti-woman ideologies, and religious, ethnic, racial, or ability prejudices. Learning about the human experience can often be uncomfortable or unpleasant. That's ok. That

means we're thinking about things that matter. But: please come speak to me if you suspect something might trigger an extreme emotional or physical reaction (PTSD, panic attack, etc.). I can help warn you, make alternative readings available (within reason), or point you towards appropriate services. I can't possibly know what might trigger an extreme emotional or physical emotion, but I can help you find resources.

Statement of Inclusivity: People of all races, religions, sexual orientations, gender presentations, and ability will be present and are welcome in the classroom. We are all (students and myself) expected to treat each other respectfully. Act like an adult. Don't be a jerk. We will all call each other by the names we each choose to go by, and our correctly gendered pronouns (he/she/they etc.). Please let me know privately if something makes you uncomfortable and we can try to find a solution.

What it Means to Have an Adjunct as an Instructor: [read statement](#) (also posted on Canvas)

Food & Housing Insecurity: Many students here and across the US face food or housing insecurity – that is, students are struggling with affording food & rent. Many are hungry and homeless or couch-surfing. If you're one of them, I can help you find campus & community resources. Get in touch with me (confidentially) if I can help! See also: The “Campus & Community Resources” Page under the “Getting Ready” Module on Canvas.

Credit Hours and Workload: This is a 3 unit course. The [SRJC Catalog defines a unit](#) as “One lecture hour and two hours of outside work throughout the semester ordinarily serve as a basis for one unit of credit.” The expectation for this course is that you will spend **about 3 hours per week in class** and you will spend **about 6 hours per week studying and completing assignments** for this course. Your reading speed will affect the actual time it takes you to complete readings. As always, excellent students (“A” students) often spend slightly more time on coursework and studying. In other words, the [SRJC catalog suggests](#):

If you are taking:	Time in class/lab or reading/studying:	Limit jobs & activities to:
12-15 units (4-5 courses)	36-45 hours per week	8-15 hours per week
9-12 units (3-4 courses)	27-36 hours per week	15-20 hours per week
3-9 units (1-3 courses)	9-27 hours per week	20-40 hours per week

Your continued enrollment in the course indicates that you have read the syllabus and that you will consult the instructor if you do not understand the major components of the course or course policies

