RELG 350 999 & 996 World Religions
Summer 2018
RELG 350 999/996 World Religions
Consortium of Adventist Colleges and Universities

Interactive Online Format
This course follows an interactive online format with **Wednesday/S** deadline. You are expected to login regularly during the course to participate in the online discussions. Please plan accordingly. **Please review the Dates & Deadlines widget on the right side of your course in LearningHub for the last day to withdraw for a full refund.**

Instructor Contact
**Instructor:** Alexej Muran  
**Email:** alexejmuran@gmail.com or muran@andrews.edu  
**Phone:** 269.359.1045  
**Skype:** alexej.muran  
**Facetime:** alexejmuran@gmail.com

Other Assistance
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assistance</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Username and password assistance</td>
<td><a href="mailto:helpdesk@andrews.edu">helpdesk@andrews.edu</a></td>
<td>(269) 471-6016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment and withdrawal questions</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sderegister@andrews.edu">sderegister@andrews.edu</a></td>
<td>(269) 471-6323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical assistance with online courses</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dlit@andrews.edu">dlit@andrews.edu</a></td>
<td>(269) 471-3960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam requests and online proctoring</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sdeexams@andrews.edu">sdeexams@andrews.edu</a></td>
<td>(269) 471-6566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance Student Services - any other questions</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sdestudents@andrews.edu">sdestudents@andrews.edu</a></td>
<td>(269) 471-6566</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part 1: Course Information

**Course Description**
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.

**Course 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.
Required Text/Material

NOTE: Purchase textbooks through any online bookstore, such as amazon.com, which can deliver within 2 days. If you need to use financial aid to purchase textbooks, email sdestudents@andrews.edu, cutting and pasting the textbook information from syllabi, including course title and section, your full name and student ID#.

Credit Hour and Commitment
This course is offered for 3 semester credits. In a face to face 15-week semester class, that typically requires 3 hours of classroom time per week, and 6 hours of homework per week for a total of about 135 hours.

Part 2: Course Methods and Delivery

Methods of Instruction
Methods of instruction include assigned readings, writing responses to the readings, interaction with the teacher and classmates through weekly discussions, a project that includes visiting a place of worship and two exams. Regular participation in the course is essential to good performance.

Technical Requirements
- Internet connection (DSL, LAN, or cable connection desirable).

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. (269) 471-6016 or email helpdesk@andrews.edu if you need assistance.

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: This online class is not self-paced. You can arrange your schedule flexibly during each week, but you MUST participate each week. You are expected to “show up” to class by interacting in the discussion forums a minimum of two times per week. In addition, assignments are due regularly each week. Adequate Internet access during the duration of the course is critical for your participation. To be successful, plan to spend time daily on the course.

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.

Discussion Forums: There are eight discussion forum questions for 20 points each that appear throughout the course. These are a fundamental part of this course in which the students, classmates and the teacher will take part. These online interactions will allow participants to consider significant questions raised by the teacher, classmates and class content. Think of the discussion as an opportunity to learn from one another, a chance to share your thoughts and in the process have your perspective broadened. Discussions are worth 20% of the course.

Each week students are required to make at least three postings on the discussion board in accordance to the following parameters:

- By Wednesday – respond to the question posted by the teacher (10 points)
- By Sunday – respond to at least two of the replies or questions made by other students (5 points each)

Rubric for Online Discussion Board Participation

1. Submissions must be made on time to receive credit. If they are late, they will not receive credit unless a valid excuse is provided. The week’s postings are worth 20 points.
2. Posts and responses must be thoughtful and careful to include sufficient explanation. Stating, simply, that “I agree,” or “I disagree,” or “This is wrong,” is unsatisfactory. Use examples, personal experiences, and specific references to the course content to explain yourself. Remember, your fellow students will be reading your work.
3. All posts should be limited to one paragraph between 75 to 250 words. Writing longer posts will not improve your grade, nor will it detract from it either.
4. All posts must address the question or questions posed. Writing on complete separate topic will yield no credit. Likewise, if post content is inaccurate or irrelevant to the discussion at hand it will not yield high marks.
5. When appropriate, refer to your personal experiences in your posts. If you have learned something about the world that is relevant to the topic at hand please share with us.
6. Posts should be always complete when posted and use proper grammar. No one likes to read anything riddled with mistakes.

If for any reason your post(s) on the discussion do not meet these criteria, they will not receive full credit.
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 (nor 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 is 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

Exams must be completed in the presence of an approved proctor without the assistance of books, notes, devices or outside help unless otherwise specified in the exam review and exam directions.

Please review the current policy on approved proctors before completing the exam request form, which is linked through your course space. It is your responsibility to make arrangements for an approved proctor (unless living near the main campus) and to complete the exam request form at least two weeks prior to each exam date. Bring an official photo ID to show the proctor at the start of the exam session. Bibles, books, and notes are not allowed in these 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.

If you cannot take your exam within the period noted in the email regarding exam arrangements, email sdeexams@andrews.edu with the reason you cannot meet this deadline, and a proposed alternate time within a week, and prior to the course end date.

Completed exams are never available to you or your proctor. Instructors provide feedback on exams other than the final exam. Exam grades can be viewed in the course space, and the final course grade is included in the University Academic Record accessible through your IVUE page.
**Schedule:**
All times in the schedule are for the U.S. Eastern Time Zone.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Lessons</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intro</td>
<td>Introduction and Orientation</td>
<td>Orientation Writing Expectations</td>
<td>Tell About Me Academic Honesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 June 11-17</td>
<td>Lesson 1: What is Religion</td>
<td>Textbook pg. 6-9</td>
<td>--Reflective Book Journal 1 --First post to the Discussion 1 --Reflective Book Journal 2 --First post to the Discussion 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 June 18-24</td>
<td>Lesson 3: Buddhism</td>
<td>Textbook pg. 58-81</td>
<td>--Reflective Book Journal 3 --First post to the Discussion 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 June 25-July 1</td>
<td>Lesson 4: Chinese Religions</td>
<td>Textbook pg. 96-109</td>
<td>--Reflective Book Journal 4 --First post to the Discussion 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 July 2-8</td>
<td>Midterm Exam (Midterm Exam needs to be completed by Monday, July 9, 11:59 p.m.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>--First post to the Discussion 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 July 9-15</td>
<td>Lesson 5: Judaism</td>
<td>Textbook pg. 122-147</td>
<td>--Reflective Book Journal 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 July 23-29</td>
<td>Lesson 7: Christianity</td>
<td>Textbook pg. 148-173</td>
<td>--Reflective Book Journal 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 July 30 - Aug 2</td>
<td>Semester Exam (Final Exam needs to be completed by August 2, 11:59 pm)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Completing Assignments
All assignments for this course will be submitted electronically through Learning Hub unless otherwise instructed.

Part 4: Grading Policy

Graded Course Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent %</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Journals 1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Studies 1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sacred Text 1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Blogs 1-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part A – 2 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part B – 10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part C – 12 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part D – 6 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Midterm Exam – 20 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semester Exam – 20 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Total Percent Possible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Viewing Grades

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

Letter Grade Assignment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>78-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 5: Course Policies

Withdrawal and Incomplete Policies
The current withdrawal policy can be found online at http://www.andrews.edu/distance/students/withdrawal.html. The incomplete policy is found online at http://www.andrews.edu/weblmsc/moodle/public/incompletes.html.

Late Work
Late work will not be accepted. Timely completion of all assignments is an absolute necessity due to the nature of the online course. Unless a reasonable excuse is provided, all assignments are required to be turned in on the date indicated.

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.

Netiquette
In this course you will communicate with your classmates and instructor primarily in writing through the discussion forum and e-mail.

"Online manners" are generally known as "netiquette." As a general rule, you should adhere to the same classroom conduct that you would "off-line" in a face-to-face course. Some examples of proper netiquette are:

1. Avoid writing messages in all capital letters. THIS IS GENERALLY UNDERSTOOD AS SHOUTING.
2. Be careful what you put in writing. Even if you are writing an e-mail message to one person, assume that anyone could read it. Though you may send an e-mail to a single person, it is very easy to forward your message to hundreds or thousands of people.
3. Grammar and spelling matter. Online courses demand the same standard of academic communication and use of grammar as face-to-face courses.
4. Never use profanity in any area of an online course. The transcripts of online course discussion forums, e-mail, and chat sessions are savable.
5. When responding to messages, only use "Reply to All" when you really intend to reply to all.
6. Avoid unkindly public criticism of others. Publicly criticizing others in an inappropriate way is known as "flaming." Consider this course a practice forum for selecting your verbiage thoughtfully and professionally.
7. Use sarcasm cautiously. In the absence of nonverbal cues such as facial expressions and voice inflections, the context for your sarcasm may be lost, and your message may thus be misinterpreted.
8. In a face-to-face setting, our tone of voice and facial expressions may convey as much of our meaning as the words we use. In a written message, the subtext of your meaning may be confused or misinterpreted. Write clearly. Use active verbs.

[Source: University of Maryland, Communications Department]
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/](https://www.andrews.edu/services/sscenter/disability/)
   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.