



SYLLABUS

**RELG 350 World Religions
Summer 2021**

RELG 350 World Religions

School of Distance Education

Interactive Online Format

This course follows a condensed accelerated interactive online format and has multiple deadlines per week. You are expected to login regularly during the course to participate in the online discussions. Please plan accordingly. You are completing the work from a regular semester in half the time.

Also, please keep in mind while this online class is not self-paced, it is asynchronous. 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 throughout each week in the graded discussion forums. Additionally, you will have written assignments presentations and papers due regularly each week.

Adequate Internet access and setting aside enough time each week to complete discussions and assignments during the duration of the course is critical. To be successful, plan to spend time daily on the course.

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

Please refer to course in LearningHub for the teacher contact information.

Other Assistance

Username and password assistance	helpdesk@andrews.edu	(269) 471-6016
Enrollment and withdrawal questions	sderegister@andrews.edu	(269) 471-6323
Technical assistance with online courses	dlit@andrews.edu	(269) 471-3960
Exam requests and online proctoring	sdeexams@andrews.edu	(269) 471-6566
Distance Student Services - any other questions	sdestudents@andrews.edu	(269) 471-6566

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.

Required Text/Material

Bowker, John. *World Religions: The Great Faiths Explored and Explained*. New York: DK Publishing, 2006, ISBN 9780756617721.

NOTE: We recommend getting textbooks through Amazon as they ship rapidly to most locations and offer more used and ebook options. If you choose to use the Andrews Bookstore, be sure you order the texts listed in the syllabus for your enrolled section (970-999). Then check delivery date before you order as it is essential to have the materials from day one.

- *Guest students*, contact your financial advisor at your home university.
- *Degree students* using federal financial aid should discuss textbook costs with their financial advisor before purchasing books, if they wish to include this in their budget.

Credit Hour and Commitment

This course is offered for 3 semester credits; therefore it is expected that you will spend 135 total hours on this course. Note that as an 8 week course, it is the equivalent of a semester course offered in half the time. You should budget about 3.5 hours per week day. You'll spend your time reading, accessing instructional materials, interacting with your instructor and classmates, and completing homework.

A recommended weekly schedule to divide your time is provided:

- Readings and Lectures: 6 hours
- Interactive Discussions: 4 hours
- Journals and Assignments: 2 hours
- Place of Worship Visit: 2 hours
- Studying for Upcoming Exams: 2 hours

Institutional Outcomes:

- 3.a. Articulate a biblical worldview in order to interpret life, learning, and civic responsibility from a Seventh-day Adventist perspective.
- 3.b. Address the needs of diverse communities in a manner consistent with Christian thought and practice.

Program Learning Outcomes

Graduates of this program will be able to:

- Possess a foundational knowledge in the areas of Bible, history, and theology, from a Seventh-day Adventist perspective. (Seek Knowledge)
- Express faith in the context of present society, history, theology, and be able to articulate the Seventh-day Adventist view of life both orally and in writing. (Affirm Faith)
- Exhibit growth in Christian life skills. (Affirm Faith)
- Document an attitude of mission, experience & skills in personal service. (Change the World)

Student 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.

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

- Computer: PC (Win 7 or newer) or MAC (10.6 or better)
- A webcam with microphone, and speakers (or plug in headset)
- Internet: 2.4 Mbps or faster DSL, cable or Wi-Fi connection
- Browser: Current version of Chrome or Firefox
- Software: MS Office 2013 or newer ([Office 365 available here](#))

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

- Provided in schedule further in syllabus

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 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

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.

All exams in this course require proctoring. Follow prompts in the course space to set up your exam session. In each module that contains an exam, you will find what to review and what materials are allowed (if any) during the exam.

Please read the important information about taking exams and how online proctoring works at www.andrews.edu/distance/students/exams.html. Then follow the instructions that apply to your situation on the [exam request form](#) to set up your exam session.

Please note that an exam code is never released to the student. All students must present photo identification before each exam session. Exams can only be proctored after a deadline with approval directly from the instructor to the Testing Center (sdeexams@andrews.edu or 269-471-6566). No exam is returned to the student for review. The instructor, to aid studying for future exams can provide feedback on exams.

Schedule:

All times in the schedule are for the U.S. Eastern Time Zone.

Week	Lessons	Readings	Assignments
Intro	These items will need to be completed before you will have access to the rest of the course	Orientation Course Overview Introductions Academic Integrity	Student Introductions Academic Integrity Quiz Academic Integrity Statement
1a June 14-15	Lesson 1: What is Religion Mandatory ZOOM meeting Look in course space for the day & time of your section's meeting	Textbook pg.6-9	Discussion 1: Initial Post Due Tues, June 15, 11:59 p.m. Discussion 1: Responses Reflective Journal 1 Due Thurs, June 17, 11:59 p.m.
1b June 16-17	Lesson 2: Hinduism	Textbook pg. 18-43	Discussion 2: Initial Post Due Tues, June 15, 11:59 p.m. Discussion 2: Responses Reflective Journal 2 Due Thurs, June 17, 11:59 p.m.
2a June 18-21	Lesson 3: Buddhism	Textbook pg. 58-81	Discussion 3: Initial Post Due Sun, June 20, 11:59 p.m. Discussion 3: Responses Reflective Journal 3 Due Mon, June 21, 11:59 p.m.
2b June 22-24	Lesson 3: Buddhism cont'd		Study 1: World religions and media Place of Worship Visit Part 1 (plan) Due Thurs, June 24, 11:59 p.m.
3a June 25-28	Lesson 4a: Chinese Religions	Textbook pg. 96-109	Discussion 4: Initial Post Due Sun, June 27, 11:59 p.m. Discussion 4: Responses Reflective Journal 4 Due Mon, June 28, 11:59 p.m.
3b June 29 – July 1	Lesson 4b: Chinese Religions cont'd		Discussion 5: Initial Post Due Wed, June 30, 11:59 p.m. Discussion 5: Responses Sacred Text 1 Due Thurs, July 1, 11:59 p.m.
4a July 2-5			Discussion 6: Initial Post Due Sun, July 4, 11:59 p.m. Discussion 6: Responses Due Mon, July 5, 11:59 p.m.
4b July 6-8	PROCTORED MIDTERM EXAM (needs to be completed by Thursday, July 8, 11:59 p.m.)		
5a July 9-12	Lesson 5: Judaism	Textbook pg. 122-147	Discussion 7: Initial Post Due Sun, July 11, 11:59 p.m. Reflective Journal 5 Discussion 7: Responses Due Mon, July 12, 11:59 p.m.
5b July 13-15	Lesson 5: Judaism cont'd		Study 2: World religions and their influence Place of Worship Visit Part 2 (research) Due Thurs, July 15, 11:59 p.m.

Week	Lessons	Readings	Assignments
6a July 16-19	Lesson 6: Islam	Textbook pg. 174-195	Discussion 8 Due Sun, July 18, 11:59 p.m. Reflective Journal 6 Discussion 8 Due Mon, July 19, 11:59 p.m.
6b July 20-22	Lesson 6: Islam cont'd		Discussion 9: Initial Post (video) Due Wed, July 21, 11:59 p.m. Place of Worship Visit Part 3 (visit report) Discussion 9: Responses Due Thurs, July 22, 11:59 p.m.
7a July 23-26	Lesson 7: Christianity	Textbook pg. 148-173	Discussion 10: Initial Post Due Sun, July 25, 11:59 p.m. Discussion 10: Responses Reflective Journal 7 Due Mon, July 26, 11:59 p.m.
7b July 27-29	Lesson 7: Christianity cont'd		Study 3: World Religions and Me Sacred Text 2 Place of Worship Visit Part 4 (essay response) Due Thurs, July 29, 11:59 p.m.
8 July 30 – August 5	PROCTORED FINAL EXAM (needs to be completed by Thursday, August 5, 11:59 PM)		

Completing Assignments

All assignments for this course will be submitted electronically through Learning Hub unless otherwise instructed.

Part 4: Grading Policy

Graded Course Activities

Percent %	Description
10	Journals 1-7
6	Studies 1-3
4	Sacred Text 1-2
10	Blogs 1-10 and ZOOM meeting
30	Project
	Part A – 2 points
	Part B – 10 points
	Part C – 12 points
	Part D – 6 points
40	Exams
	Midterm Exam – 20 points
	Semester Exam – 20points
100	Total Percent Possible

Viewing Grades in Moodle

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

Letter Grade Assignment

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	93-100%
A-	90-92%
B+	88-89%
B	83-87%
B-	80-82%
C+	78-79%
C	73-77%
C-	70-72%
D	60-69%
F	0-59%

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/web/msc/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/>
2. Download and fill in the disability form at <http://www.andrews.edu/services/sscenter/disability/accommodationsreqform.pdf> . 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.

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