UNIVERSITY MISSION

Azusa Pacific University is an evangelical Christian community of disciples and scholars who seek to advance the work of God in the world through academic excellence in liberal arts and professional programs of higher education that encourage students to develop a Christian perspective of truth and life.

COURSE INFORMATION

This course embraces a study of the great religious systems of the world, including the worship of the most primitive groups, as well as the religions of ancient Egypt, Greece, Mesopotamia, and Rome. It reviews the various religions of the present world, including Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Shintoism, Taoism, and Christianity.

Two religions will be chosen as case studies to provide a dimension of depth to this course of much breadth. Book-length literary accounts of Islam and Amazonian shamanism by insiders will begin and end our study as reminders of the richness and texture of human lives lived within the frameworks of religious belief and practice.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcome</th>
<th>IDEA Objective</th>
<th>Assignments Used to Assess</th>
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<tr>
<td>Describe the major scriptures, themes, figures, myths, rituals, iconographies, and arts of the religions studied</td>
<td>Gaining factual knowledge</td>
<td>Reading notes, Final exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of basic theories of religion and interact critically with them</td>
<td>Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments and points of view</td>
<td>Reading notes, Final exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write clearly, informatively, and personally in engaging books on religion written by insiders</td>
<td>Developing skills in expressing oneself orally or in writing</td>
<td>Book reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Develop a Christian perspective of truth and life” with regard to the religions of the world</td>
<td>Developing specific skills, competencies and points of view needed by professionals in the field</td>
<td>Book reviews, Class discussions</td>
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</table>
TEXTS

Required Books


A gracefully written, deeply felt, probing account of Islam from a young Persian American with a profound knowledge of his own religion and an MFA in creative writing.


Rich and well-explained illustrations and informative photographs give a concise overview of the iconographies of major religions and relates them to religious ways of thinking.


Compelling and often shocking first-person account of a shaman from the violent Yanomamo tribe in the Amazonian rainforest, who gradually comes to know of a spirit more powerful than those he has been taught to recognize and work with.


Sensitively framed by compact introductions to the main tenets of each religion represented and providing the function and use in these religions of their scriptures, this anthology allows each religion to speak with its own voice through the scriptural texts judiciously selected by Van Voorst.

Required Online Readings


**Recommended Books**


From Library Journal. “Chapter titles suggest Burkert's scope and treatment of the multiple facets of Greek religion, focusing upon the period 800-300 B.C.: Prehistory and the Minoan-Mycenaean Age; Ritual and Sanctuary; The Gods; The Dead, Heroes, and Chthonic Gods; Polis and Polytheism; Mysteries and Asceticism; Philosophical Religion. .... Generally, this is a praiseworthy overview of a difficult subject...” Robert J. Lenardon, Classics Dept., Siena College & SUNY at Albany.


Hultkrantz identifies the differences and similarities in American Indian spirituality by introducing hunters and farmers, the physical contexts and the conceptual frameworks of tribal religions, and the shades of meaning within an Indian community.


In this unusual doctoral dissertation, Krupa takes up as his subject Chief Peter John, chief of chiefs of the Athabaskan peoples of Alaska, only to discover by the end of his research project that Peter John, subject of many studies over decades, has used Krupa's dissertation for his own purposes: to send a message into the heart of western academic discourse regarding what Peter John considers promising and perilous in the “white man way.” Krupa's research is complicated by the fact that Peter John, the son of a medicine man, had become a discreet yet devout follower of Jesus years earlier.


A one volume guide presenting ten cultures and traditions side-by-side from the ancient world as it addresses questions of history, method, and especially, “key topics.” These include “Sacred Times and Spaces,” “Prayers, Hymns, Incantations, and Curses,” “Divination and Prophecy,” “Rites of Passage,” “Death, the Afterlife, and Other Last Things,” “Religion and Politics,” and “Visual Representations.”


Meyer introduces and selects mystery texts from Greece (various), Anatolia (the “Great Mother”), Egypt (Isis and Osiris), Rome (Mithras), and Judaism and Christianity. His inclusion of selections from the Gospel of Philip and nothing from the New Testament may indicate some bias, for the New Testament has many references to the mysterion it finds centered in Jesus Christ.

Otto’s “idea of the holy” attempts to save religion from reductive theories that see it as simply a form of sociology (Durkheim), the unconscious (Freud), or class oppression (Marx), by positing a nonreductive experience of the sacred as common to all forms of religion. It has been very influential in the academic study of religion, and has introduced contemporary use of the terminology of the “numinous” to describe this experience. Critics of Otto question whether the experience of what Otto calls “holiness” is everywhere the same.

A classic presentation of classic interpretations of religion that have left their mark on the twentieth century. Includes anthropologists Tylor, Frazer, Eliade, Evans-Pritchard, and Geertz; sociologists Weber and Durkheim; and the reductionists Freud and Marx.

“Lacking (apparently) a native mythology or images of its gods, Roman religion has always seemed barren to scholars. Without anything much to interpret, interpretation has regularly fallen into minutely descriptive lists of gods and rituals. … Scheid is insightful, concise, and original. This is an indispensable text for the study of Roman religion and all fields that intersect with it. Summing Up: Essential. All libraries.” C. M. C. Green, University of Iowa, Choice, April 2004.

This book by a secular (Jewish) analyst who has worked the National Security Administration of the United States examines the practitioners of each of the Abrahamic faiths who have become radicalized to the point of engaging in violence “in the name of God.” Stern is honest and fair in her assessments of religious belief, and in her own desire (as she puts it) to believe despite not quite being able to.

ASSIGNMENTS

format requirements for all typed assignments

• an academically appropriate 12-point font
• 1 inch margins everywhere

1. Attendance and Participation in Discussion
Lectures are vital to this course because of the range of material covered and because of interactions in class discussions. Please do your best to attend punctually and engage thoughtfully in discussion. Absences will be excused for illness (with a doctor’s note), or for extra-curricular activities (if you provide a dated and signed excuse slip from the coach or teacher, or an email from them to me).

2. Book Reviews
Try your hand at writing a double-spaced 4-6 page book review. This will help you react to the book and engage critically with it in a way that will make it your own. You will be writing two book reviews for the course (on Aslan and Ritchie), with due dates that appear in the schedule.

The following criteria will be used to assess your reviews. “A book review is a description, critical analysis, and an evaluation on the quality, meaning, and significance of a book, not a retelling. It should focus on the book’s purpose, content, and authority. A critical book review is not a book report or a summary. It is a reaction paper in which strengths and weaknesses of the material are
analyzed. It should include a statement of what the author has tried to do, evaluates how well (in the opinion of the reviewer) the author has succeeded, and presents evidence to support this evaluation. ... Book reviews are highly personal and reflect the opinions of the reviewer.” Los Angeles Valley College website. See http://www.lavc.edu/Library/bookreview.htm for more tips.

3. Reading Notes
Notes are required for all Van Voorst and Nigosian readings. See the course schedule for due dates. These notes must be cogent, readable (preferably typed in single-spacing), organized, and in an outline form of some type. All major points from the readings must be retrievable from the notes. Readings must be clearly titled and subtitled, and all references to readings must include page numbers.

• **Van Voorst.** Notes are not required on the scripture passages themselves, but read them carefully since you will be asked to identify the sources of some scripture passages on the Final. Van Voorst provides a great deal of information in his introductions. Please reflect this in your notes.
• **Nigosian.** Follow Nigosian's section headings and take note of his main points.

4. Final Exam
The primary purpose of this exam is to help you integrate what we have learnt in the semester. The secondary purpose is to give you a grade. **Anything covered in the lectures or any assigned readings may appear on this exam, so take notes conscientiously throughout the semester.**

The final will include:

• major theories and theorists of religion
• challenges and benefits of comparing religions in a university
• major scriptures, themes, figures, myths, rituals, iconographies, and arts
• identifying scriptures from passages taken from them
• setting scriptural passages in their religious context

**GRADING**

Attendance and participation in class discussion ......................... 10
Book review, Aslan ................................................................. 15
Book review, Ritchie ................................................................ 15
Reading notes ................................ ......................................... 20
Final exam .............................................................................. 40

100

A 93-100  A- 90-92
B+ 87-89  B 83-86  B- 80-82
C+ 77-79  C 73-76  C- 70-72
D+ 67-69  D 63-66  D- 60-62
F 0-59
A Outstanding
Above and beyond the requirements of the assignment; outstanding effort, significant achievement, and personal improvement are clearly evident. Some measure of remarkable skill, creativity, or energy is also evident.

B Above Average
Fulfills all aspects of the assignment and goes a bit beyond minimum competence to demonstrate extra effort, extra achievement or extra improvement.

C Average
Fulfills all aspects of the assignment with obvious competence and grace. Assignments are completed exactly as assigned.

D Below Average
Below average either because some aspect of the assignment has not been fulfilled or because a preponderance of errors (more than one or two per page) interferes with clear communication. May also indicate failure to follow directions, failure to follow specific recommendations, or failure to demonstrate personal effort and improvement.

F Not Acceptable
Not acceptable, either because the student did not complete the assignment as directed, or because the level of performance is below an acceptable level for college work.

COURSE POLICIES
Absences. One unexcused absence will be allowed without penalty per semester. Thereafter, each unexcused absence will reduce the “attendance” component of the grade by 2 points.

Late submissions. Penalized 2 points for every day late.

Incompletes. Granted only in extraordinary circumstances, at the discretion of the instructor.

Schedule. Subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES
All university and departmental policies affecting student work, appeals, and grievances, as outlined in the Undergraduate Catalog and/or Department Handbook will apply, unless otherwise indicated in this syllabus.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
Students in this course who have a disability that might prevent them from fully demonstrating their abilities should meet with an advisor in the Learning Enrichment Center as soon as possible to initiate disability verification and discuss accommodations that may be necessary to ensure full participation in the successful completion of course requirements.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY
The mission of APU includes cultivating in each student not only the academic skills that are required for a university degree, but also the characteristics of academic integrity that are
integral to a sound Christian education. It is therefore part of the mission of the university to nurture in each student a sense of moral responsibility consistent with the biblical teachings of honesty and accountability. Furthermore, a breach of academic integrity is viewed not merely as a private matter between the student and an instructor but rather as an act which is fundamentally inconsistent with the purpose & mission of the entire university. A complete copy of the Academic Integrity Policy is available in the Office of Student Life, the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Programs, and online.

- Expectations for this course and consequences for violations are consistent with those outlined in the academic integrity policy.
- Students found guilty of plagiarism or of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Provost and the Dean of Students, and a memorandum of the plagiarism event will be placed in the students permanent file in the Provost’s office.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Total number of pages to read for semester: 1300.

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Readings and assignments due dates</th>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs.</td>
<td>religion as an object of academic study</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 10</td>
<td>· why do it? pluses, minuses</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>· anthropological background</td>
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<td>· brief history of &quot;religious studies&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>· the problem of cultural and religious identity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues.</td>
<td>theories of religion</td>
<td>Bowker, pp. 6-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 15</td>
<td>· that criticize it by reducing it to something else</td>
<td>Smart, Ch. 1 (online no. 1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>· that try not to</td>
<td>Aslan, Preface through Ch. 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs.</td>
<td>ways of comparing religions</td>
<td>Bowker, p. 210</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 17</td>
<td>· difficulties of comparison</td>
<td>Van Voorst, Ch. 1, &quot;Scripture&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>· means of comparison</td>
<td>Aslan, Chs. 6-10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues.</td>
<td>Islam. There is no god but God, Reza Aslan.</td>
<td>Aslan book review due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 22</td>
<td>· book discussion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>· the five pillars</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs.</td>
<td>Islam.</td>
<td>Van Voorst, Ch. 12, &quot;Islam&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 24</td>
<td>· Sunnis and Shiites</td>
<td>Bowker, pp. 174-195</td>
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<td>· the Quran and its interpretation</td>
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<td>· jihad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues.</td>
<td>INTERLUDE 1. TERROR IN THE NAME OF GOD, JESSICA STERN</td>
<td>Stern, &quot;Introduction&quot; (online no. 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 29</td>
<td>· &quot;holy wars&quot; in the Abrahamic religions</td>
<td>H. Smith, &quot;Methodology&quot; (online no. 3)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>· holy war organizations</td>
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<td>· the &quot;God-shaped&quot; hole in modernity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs.</td>
<td>Mesopotamia</td>
<td>Nigosian, &quot;Mesopotamian Religion&quot; (online no. 4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 1</td>
<td>· deities</td>
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<td>· themes</td>
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<td>· festivals and structures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Books/Readings</td>
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<td><strong>Tues. Oct. 6</strong></td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Bowker, p. 12; Nigosian, &quot;Egyptian Religion&quot; (online no. 5)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Zoroastrianism</strong></td>
<td>Van Voorst, Ch. 9, &quot;Zoroastrianism&quot;; Bowker, p. 13</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Ancient Greece</strong></td>
<td>Nigosian, &quot;Greek Religion&quot; (online no. 6); Bowker, p. 14</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Ancient Rome</strong></td>
<td>Nigosian, &quot;Roman Religion&quot; (online no. 7); Bowker, p. 15</td>
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<td><strong>Tues. Oct. 20</strong></td>
<td><strong>INTERLUDE 2. SCULPTURE IN ANCIENT RELIGION</strong></td>
<td>Various, &quot;Visual Representations,&quot; (online no. 8)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>The Tanakh and its understanding of other religions</strong></td>
<td>Numbers 22-24; Yoder, &quot;What Balaam Knows&quot; (online no. 9); Daniel 1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tues. Oct. 27</strong></td>
<td>Judaism</td>
<td>Van Voorst, Ch. 10, &quot;Judaism&quot;; Bowker, pp. 123-147</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Christianity</strong></td>
<td>Bowker, pp. 148-173</td>
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<td><strong>Thurs. Oct. 29</strong></td>
<td><strong>INTERLUDE 3. MYSTERIES, MAGIC, RELIGION</strong></td>
<td>[read ahead]</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Hinduism</strong></td>
<td>Van Voorst, Ch. 2, &quot;Hinduism&quot;; Bowker, pp. 18-43; Sire, &quot;Journey to the East&quot; (online no. 10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tues. Nov. 10</strong></td>
<td>Buddhism</td>
<td>Van Voorst, Ch. 3, &quot;Buddhism&quot;; Bowker, pp. 58-81</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Jainism</strong></td>
<td>Van Voorst, Ch. 4, &quot;Jainism&quot;; Bowker, pp. 44-57; Van Voorst, Ch. 5, &quot;Sikhism&quot; (online no. 10)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Sikhism</strong></td>
<td>Bowker, pp. 82-95</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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| Tues. Nov. 17 | Confucianism  
- Five Classics  
- Four Books  
- cultural influence  
Taoism  
- scriptures  
- iconography and rites | Van Voorst, Ch. 6, "Confucianism"  
Van Voorst, Ch. 7, "Taoism"  
Bowker, pp. 96-109 |
| Thurs. Nov. 19 | Shinto (Japan)  
- kami  
- humanity's origins and center  
nat worship, astrology (Burma)  
- nats  
- astrology | Van Voorst, Ch. 8, "Shinto"  
Bowker, pp. 110-121 |
| Tues. Nov. 24 | Catchup, review | J.Z. Smith, "Religions" (online no. 11) |
| Tues. Dec. 1 | INTERLUDE 4 . MASKS, DRAMA, MUSIC  
- the religious use of masks  
- cult of Dionysius as the origin of theater | Daniel 3  
Bowker, pp. 198, 204, 206  
Ritchie, Prologue through Ch. 10 |
| Thurs. Dec. 3 | Africa  
- the Azande, and Evans-Pritchard  
- the Yoruba | Bowker, pp. 202-207  
Ritchie, Chs. 11-16 |
| Tues. Dec. 8 | Native America  
- hunter-gatherers, cultivators  
Spirit of the Rainforest  
- book discussion | Bowker, pp. 202-205 |
| Thurs. Dec. 10 | Religion, anthropology, and western cultural identity  
- shamans, spirits, scholars  
- Peter John's reverse anthropology  
- a Christian understanding of other religions | Ritchie book review due  
Daniel 5 |
| Thurs. Dec. 17 | FINAL | Reading notes due |