



East Carolina University

Religious Studies Program

SYLLABUS

World Religions 101

Spring 2023 (Class begins February 7)

Instructor: Religious Studies Faculty and Community members

Contact Person: Dr. Mary Nyangweso

Austin Building 325A

Phone: 252-737-2422, Email: wangilam@ecu.edu

Time: Tuesday at 5:30-7:00 pm Venue: Brewster D313

Course Description: We welcome all to World Religions 101. Religion has not only existed and influenced human behavior since ancient times; it has also expressed itself in diverse ways. This course will present a survey of the origins, historical developments, teachings, and current status of some major world religions. In the course, we will explore the differing ways in which religions are used to interpret life and reality. The religions to be examined include Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Chinese religions, and Indigenous religions. We will particularly explore the lives, practices and teachings of great religious leaders associated with these religions to highlight their interpretations of life and reality. For more information about the course or the religious studies major contact me at wangilam@ecu.edu or visit www.ecu.edu/religionprogram

Learning Outcomes: At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Explain the origin, historical development, beliefs, and contemporary practices of a variety of religious expression.
- Appreciate the richness and diversity as well as commonalities of religious experience over a variety of cultural and historical periods.
- Gain an understanding about how and why people construct their religious worlds through myth, ritual, symbolism, beliefs and ethics.
- Understand the benefits of inter-religious engagement, dialogues and possibly collaboration.

Required Text: Willoughby Deming, *Understanding the Religions of the World: An Introduction*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2015. The Deming text book is also available online at

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/eastcarolina/reader.action?docID=2009831>



Course Schedule

| Week 1: Completed | Introduction & Expectations | Some faculty |
|---------------------|--|----------------------|
| Week 2: Completed | Why Religion Matters- Deming 1-8 | Dr. Nyangweso |
| Week 3: February 7 | Hinduism Reading: Deming, 9-60 | Dr. Maher, Dr. Priti |
| Week 4: February 21 | Buddhism Reading: Deming, 61-114 | Dr. Maher |
| March 5-12 | Spring Break | |
| Week 5: February 28 | Judaism Reading: Deming, 269-324 | Rabbi Harley |
| Week 6: March 14 | Christianity Reading: Deming, 325-334 | Dr. Dawson |
| Week 7: March 21 | Philosophy and the Christian Experience Reading: TBD | Dr. John Collins |
| Week 8: March 28 | Islam Reading: Deming 389-448 | Dr. Nyangweso |
| Week 10: April 4 | Afrocentric Religion Reading: Deming, 201-236 | Dr. Nyangweso |
| Week 11: April 11 | Future of Religion Reading TBD | Dr. Mercer |
| Week 12: April 18 | Wicca | Ms. Mitchell |
| Week 13: April 25 | Closing session | All faculty |