

# Syllabus

## Introduction to World Religions

### Course Overview

This one-semester course is intended to help you understand the origin, beliefs, and practices related to various world religions.

This course includes 14 lessons and 5 Course Activities. Each lesson contains one or more Lesson Activities. The lessons cover the following topics:

- The first lesson introduces the concept of religion and discusses different approaches to studying world religions.
- The next lesson discusses the origins, beliefs, and practices related to some primal religions.
- The next eleven lessons discuss the origins, beliefs, and practices related to various world religions.
- The final lesson discusses the origins, beliefs, and practices related to some contemporary religious movements.

You will submit the Course Activity documents to your teacher, and you will grade your work in the Lesson Activities by comparing them with sample responses. Each lesson also has a multiple-choice mastery test. A multiple-choice end-of-semester test completes the course.

The Course Activities (submitted to the teacher) and the Lesson Activities (self-checked) are major components of this course. They will guide your learning as you work through this course.

### Course Goals

This course will help you meet the following goals:

- Summarize the beliefs of historic and modern world religions.
- Discuss the origins and development of the world's major religions.
- Compare practices, including rituals and festivals, from two or more world religions.
- Identify and describe in writing the unique aspects (including aspects like symbols, rituals, philosophies, or practices) of religious traditions from different places and times in history.
- Analyze how the beliefs and practices of the world's religions influence culture and social institutions.
- Interpret how the beliefs and practices of various religions provide purpose and meaning to the follower.
- Complete a presentation that demonstrates an understanding of the beliefs and practices of major world religions.

## Prerequisite Skills

Introduction to World Religions is a beginner's course and does not have specific prerequisites. Nevertheless, these fundamental skills will be helpful:

- basic computer skills
- ability to structure and process information

## General Skills

To participate in this course, you should be able to do the following:

- Perform basic operations with word processing software, such as Microsoft Word.
- Perform online research using various search engines and library databases.
- Communicate through email and participate in discussion boards.

*For a complete list of general skills that are required for participation in online courses, refer to the Prerequisites section of the Plato Student Orientation document, found at the beginning of this course.*

## Credit Value

Introduction to World Religions is a 0.5-credit course.

## Course Materials

- Notebook
- Computer with Internet connection and speakers or headphones
- Microsoft Word or equivalent
- Microsoft PowerPoint or equivalent

## Course Components and Grading Rubric

The table gives a breakdown of the weight for each component in the course. Weight represents the percentage of the total score coming from each activity.

| Course Components  | Count     | Weight      |
|--|-----------|-------------|
| <b>Module.</b> <i>Each module in this course contains an interactive tutorial and an associated mastery test. Tutorials may include one or more Lesson Activities that constitute tasks associated with the tutorial. The module score comes from a student's score on the mastery test.</i>   | 14        | 30%         |
| <b>Discussion.</b> <i>Online discussions allow for higher-order thinking about terminal objectives. An online threaded discussion mirrors the educational experience of a classroom discussion. Teachers can initiate a discussion by asking a complex, open-ended question. Students can engage in the discussion by responding both to the question and to the thoughts of others. Each unit in a course has one predefined discussion topic; teachers may add more discussion topics.</i> | 5         | 20%         |
| <b>Course Activity.</b> <i>Course Activities are similar to Unit Activities in scope but may be found at any point in the course, either to prepare the student for new learning or to act as a performance-based activity required for a learning objective. Like Unit Activities, Course Activities include simple rubrics, and sample answers are available for teachers. Course Activities are teacher graded.</i>   | 5         | 30%         |
| <b>End of Semester Test.</b> <i>The end of semester test (EOS) appears at the end of the course. Students are delivered a few items from every tutorial in the course in order to assess the major course objectives.</i>  | 1         | 20%         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>25</b> | <b>100%</b> |

\*Teachers may manually adjust these weights if desired, per district grading requirements.

## Course Pacing Guide

This course description and pacing guide is intended to help you stay on schedule with your work. Note that your course teacher may modify the schedule to meet the specific needs of your class.

| Day              | Activity / Plato Objective  | Type              |
|------------------|---|-------------------|
| 1 day:           | <b>Course Orientation</b><br><i>Review the Plato Student Orientation and Course Syllabus at the beginning of this course.</i>   |                   |
| 4 days:<br>2-5   | <b>What is Religion?</b><br><i>Define religion, discuss various concepts related to different religions, and discuss the effects that religion has on people's lives.</i>             | Lesson            |
| 4 days:<br>6-9   | <b>Primal Religious Traditions</b><br><i>Discuss the beliefs and practices related to various primal religions and describe how the concept of taboo can impact daily life.</i>       | Lesson            |
| 1 day:<br>10     | <b>Sacred Stories</b>   | Course Discussion |
| 3 days:<br>11-13 | <b>Creating a Personal Totem</b><br><i>Evaluate personality traits and discuss their relationship to the personal totem, including their purpose and meaning.</i>                     | Course Activity   |
| 5 days:<br>14-18 | <b>Hinduism</b><br><i>Discuss the life of Gandhi and discuss beliefs and practices related to Hinduism.</i>   | Lesson            |
| 1 day:<br>19     | <b>Space Jumble</b>   | Activity          |
| 5 days:<br>20-24 | <b>Buddhism</b><br><i>Discuss the origin, beliefs, and practices related to Buddhism and identify some practitioners of Buddhism.</i>   | Lesson            |
| 3 days:<br>25-27 | <b>Little Buddha</b><br><i>Outline the life of Gautama Buddha, describe the concept of reincarnation in Buddhism, and compare the beliefs and practices of Buddhism and Hinduism.</i> | Course Activity   |
| 4 days:<br>28-31 | <b>Jainism</b><br><i>Discuss the origin, beliefs, symbols, and practices related to Jainism and the similarities to other world religions.</i>  | Lesson            |

| Day              | Activity / Plato Objective   | Type              |
|------------------|--|-------------------|
| 4 days:<br>32-35 | <b>Zoroastrianism</b><br><i>Discuss the origin, beliefs, and practices related to Zoroastrianism.</i>  | Lesson            |
| 1 day:<br>36     | <b>Para Jumble</b>   | Activity          |
| 5 days:<br>37-41 | <b>Judaism</b><br><i>Discuss the beliefs and practices related to Judaism and express how the concepts and stories of Judaism can be used in modern life.</i>  | Lesson            |
| 1 day:<br>42     | <b>Searching for the Truth</b>   | Course Discussion |
| 5 days:<br>43-47 | <b>Christianity</b><br><i>Discuss the origin, beliefs, symbols, and practices related to Christianity and explain the importance of Jerusalem to the religion.</i>   | Lesson            |
| 5 days:<br>48-52 | <b>Islam</b><br><i>Discuss the beliefs and practices of Islam, describe a mystical branch of Islam, express views on Islam, and extend Islam's concepts to the modern world.</i>   | Lesson            |
| 1 day:<br>53     | <b>Personal Jihad</b>  | Course Discussion |
| 1 day:<br>54     | <b>Space Jumble</b>  | Activity          |
| 3 days:<br>55-57 | <b>Mystical Branches of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam</b><br><i>Describe and discuss the practices of Kabbalah, Christian mysticism, and Sufism, which are the mystical branches of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, respectively.</i> | Course Activity   |
| 4 days:<br>58-61 | <b>Sikhism</b><br><i>Discuss the origin, beliefs, and practices related to Sikhism.</i>  | Lesson            |
| 4 days:<br>62-65 | <b>Confucianism</b><br><i>Discuss the beliefs, practices, and themes of Confucianism and explain whether Confucianism is a philosophy or religion.</i>   | Lesson            |
| 1 day:<br>66     | <b>Para Jumble</b>   | Activity          |
| 4 days:<br>67-70 | <b>Taoism</b><br><i>Discuss the origin, beliefs, and practices related to Taoism.</i>  | Lesson            |

| Day              | Activity / Plato Objective   | Type              |
|------------------|--|-------------------|
| 4 days:<br>71-74 | <b>Shinto</b><br><i>Discuss the origin, beliefs, and practices related to Shinto.</i>  | Lesson            |
| 1 day:<br>75     | <b>Asian Traditions</b>  | Course Discussion |
| 3 days:<br>76-78 | <b>Confucianism, Taoism, and Shinto</b><br><i>Discuss the origin and history of Confucianism, Taoism, and Shinto and compare the beliefs and practices of these religions.</i>   | Course Activity   |
| 4 days:<br>79-82 | <b>Contemporary Religious Movements</b><br><i>Discuss the origins, beliefs, and practices and interpret beliefs from some of the contemporary religious movements.</i>   | Lesson            |
| 1 day:<br>83     | <b>Religious Beliefs</b>   | Course Discussion |
| 1 day:<br>84     | <b>Space Jumble</b>  | Activity          |
| 4 days:<br>85-88 | <b>The World Religions Summary</b><br><i>Analyze the religions discussed in the course and create a presentation that demonstrates an understanding of the beliefs, practices, and influence of the world's religions.</i> | Course Activity   |
| 1 day:<br>89     | <b>Course Review</b>   |                   |
| 1 day:<br>90     | <b>End of Course Test</b>  | Assessment        |

## Course Map

You will achieve course level objectives by completing each lesson's instruction, assignments, and assessments. For a detailed look at how the materials meet these objectives, review the [course map](#).