



Bridgewater State University Syllabus

Summer 2021, 3 Credits

June 14 – July 9

GRST 200: INTRODUCTION TO GLOBAL RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Instructor: TBD

E-mail: TBD

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to global religious studies, a field of study that draws from many different academic disciplines such as anthropology, history, philosophy, psychology, and sociology.

Religious expression has been an essential part of the human experience throughout recorded history. Among other things, religion has been a catalyst for social change and conflict, a means of expressing social and personal identity, a tool of political control and of revolution, and a statement of the way people and cultures understand their purpose and place in the world.

Studying the way religion has influenced historical events, cultural frameworks, and personal experiences is an important avenue for understanding human society and interaction. A basic level of global religious literacy is therefore essential if one wishes to be a global citizen.

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of religious identities, how they come about, and how they are expressed;
- Identify key differences and similarities between worldviews, practices, ideas, and rituals across major global religions;

- Explain how major religious traditions have evolved and adapted across time (history) and space (geography);
- Recognize the internal diversity and complexity of individual religions;
- Develop an appreciative knowledge of different worldviews and faith traditions

Required Text:

A. Sharma, *Our Religions: The Seven World Religions Introduced*. (Published by HarperOne)

Grading Breakdown:

Attendance: 20%

Preparation and Class Participation: 50%

In-Class Final Exam: 30%

100%

| Grade | Quality Points |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| A | 4.0 |
| A- | 3.7 |
| B+ | 3.3 |
| B | 3.0 |
| B- | 2.7 |
| C+ | 2.3 |
| C | 2.0 |
| C- | 1.7 |
| D+ | 1.3 |
| D | 1.0 |
| D- | 0.7 |
| F | 0.0 |

Tentative Course Schedule: (additional readings available electronically)

June 14: Course Introduction

June 15 & 16: **Defining Religion**

- Smith, “Religion, Religions, Religious”

June 17 & 18: **Hinduism**

- Sharma, “Hinduism”

June 21: **Ritual**

- Sharf, “Ritual”

June 22 & 23: **Judaism**

- Neusner, “Judaism”

June 24 & 25: **Buddhism**

- Abe, “Buddhism”

June 28 & 29: **Christianity**

- Cox, “Christianity”

June 30 & July 1: **Islam**

- Nasr, “Islam”

July 2: **Religion and Conflict**

- Lincoln, “Conflict”

July 5 & 6: **Globalizing Religion**

July 7: **Final Exam**

July 8 & 9: Course Conclusion