



## Course Number, Title and Credits

**RELU 327** - Comparative Religious Cultures - 3 credits

## Course Catalog Description

The purpose of this course is to add a deeper understanding of the plurality of representative world religions to the student's evolving cultural literacy. From sectarian-based violence to seemingly innocuous public religious holiday celebrations, it will also map out notable exemplars of the many landmines that can detonate when religions encounter each other and secular entities both geographically and in the students' own communities. 3 Credits.

## Learning Outcomes and Assessment

Learning Outcomes are statements that specify what learners will know, understand, or be able to demonstrate at the end of a learning experience.

Types of Learning Outcomes include:

- Course Learning Outcome – Result of finishing a course.
- Program Learning Outcome – Result of finishing a program.
- Institutional Learning Outcome – Result of finishing a degree at an institution, reflecting the core learning values and experiences of all graduates.

A Signature Assignment is an assignment used to measure a student's mastery of a program or institutional learning outcome. If a course you are taking includes a Signature Assignment, it will be clearly marked (\*\*SIGNATURE ASSIGNMENT\*\*).

[Click here](#) to access information on the Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and/or Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and Curriculum Map related to this course.

## Essential Equipment

All students must have reliable access to a working computer with Internet access throughout each week of the class. Each student will need to be able to access and work in the University's online Learning Management System, Blackboard. For more information about personal computer requirements [click here](#).

## Academic Integrity

The University of Massachusetts Global is an academic community based on the principles of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Academic integrity is a core University value, which ensures respect for the academic reputation of the University, its students, faculty and staff, and the degrees it confers. The University expects that students will conduct themselves in an honest and ethical manner and respect the intellectual work of others.

Submitting to faculty work completed by the use of any artificial intelligence tool without permission and/or when prohibited by class policy. When faculty require the use of technology, including artificial intelligence, as a part of an assignment for the course, there is no violation. Students are reminded to consult syllabi, assignment sheets/rubrics, program documents and their faculty. Use of artificial intelligence, when permitted, must be correctly cited in the assignment.

The [UMass Global online library](#) provides resources to support research, proper citation styles, and the safe and responsible use of generative artificial intelligence or Gen AI.

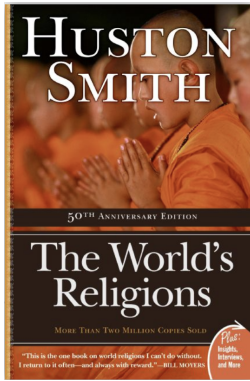
- The [Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Avoidance](#) page provides guidance to help students better understand academic integrity and includes tips on how to avoid plagiarism.
- The [Citing Sources](#) page offers guidance on how to properly cite using APA, MLA, and Chicago styles.
- The [Artificial Intelligence Resource Guide for Students](#) provides advice for understanding and appropriately using generative artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT and Bard.

## University Policies

Students are responsible for complying with university policies including, but not limited to: incompletes, course drops, and student conduct. Information may be found in the [University Catalog](#).

## Required Textbooks

**The World's Religions**  
50th Anniversary Edition  
9780061660184



The World's Religions, by beloved author and pioneering professor Huston Smith (Tales of Wonder), is the definitive classic for introducing the essential elements and teachings of the world's predominant faiths, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, as well as regional native traditions. This revised and updated edition provides sympathetic descriptions of the various traditions, explaining how they work "from the inside," which is a big reason why this cherished classic has sold more than two million copies since it first appeared in 1958.

Huston Smith  
HarperOne  
2009  
2nd ed.  
112

All student textbooks are available at the University of Massachusetts Global Bookstore:

<https://www.bkstr.com/umassglobalstore>

## Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Explain the purposes of religion or humanitarian-based non-religion activities on a personal, communal and nation-state level;
2. Analyze the variety and complexity of world religious cultures both locally and globally;
3. Compare the inter-relationships of religious cultures;
4. Identify points of religious contentions as cautionary tales;
5. Create a plan for greater interfaith and secular humanist, civic

## Major Study Units

Major Study Units

1. Week One: Where I Stand: Personal reflections on the purpose of religion or non-religion
2. Week Two: Dominant Religious Cultures in North America and Europe
3. Week Three: Making Religious Plurality Visible Locally and Globally and the Life of the Buddha
4. Week Four: Voices of Others – Respecting Each Others' Sacred Things

5. Week Five: The Diaspora Big Question: To preserve traditional religious / national culture or to assimilate into the dominant culture
6. Week Six: Coexist mantra – to Convert or Appreciate
7. Week Seven: Religions and Politics: Difficult Marriages and Separations
8. Week Eight: Them is Us: Working toward inter-faith and secular humanitarian common causes

## Instructional Strategies

This class includes readings, textual and video instruction, exercises, discussions, and projects. Instructional Strategies are further explained in the Blackboard course shell.

## Attendance Policy

Requirements for student attendance and participation will be defined by each instructor based on the following policy:

- Monday of the first week of the session is the first day of class.
- Regular attendance/engagement is expected for student success. Online engagement is evident through posting to a discussion board, blog, completing assignments including journal entries, or taking quizzes and exams. If regular attendance/engagement are not evident, the student's grade may be adversely affected. If a student misses more than one week of engagement in an online class, the student may, at the discretion of the instructor, fail the course.
- Students in courses with required synchronous class sessions are expected to remain for the full duration. If a student misses more than one required synchronous online class, the student may, at the discretion of the instructor, fail the course.
- Students must submit an academically-related assignment through the Learning Management System (LMS) before the end of Week 2 (i.e., a quiz, test, course content-related Discussion Board post, or other course content-related assignment). Introduction posts do not count as an academically-related assignment. If a student does not submit an academically-related assignment, the student will be administratively dropped from the course. Students administratively dropped for non-attendance/participation will not be reinstated in the course. In infrequent cases, students in certain classes may be exempt from the requirement to submit an academically-related assignment before the end of Week 2; students may consult with their instructor for further information.
- Students should consider withdrawing from a course if they will be unable to participate each week. Instructors may, but are not obligated to, accommodate students under extraordinary circumstances, but the student must request accommodation and provide requested supporting documentation.
- Schools and programs may have different attendance policies. Refer to school and program specific information for additional attendance policies.

# Letter Grade/Percentage Equivalents

## Grade Point System

(Rounded up at .5 and up)

A = 94%-100%	B = 84%-86%	C = 74%-76%	D = 64%-66%
A- = 90%-93%	B- = 80%-83%	C - =70%-73%	D - = 60%-63%
B+ = 87%-89%	C+ = 77%-79%	D+ = 67%-69%	F = 59% and below

## Methods of Evaluation for Determining Grades

### Assignment Detail for Fully Online Course:

Assignments for Fully Online course - Refer to Rubric(s) in Course Information on Blackboard	Possible Points
Week 1 Self Reflection	10
Midterm Embedded Student Assessment	20
Civility Pledge	10
Weekly Writing Assignments (75 points each X 8)	600
Discussion Board (45 points each X 8)	360
	<b>Total:1,000</b>

### Class by Class Outline for Fully Online Course:

Week	Topics	Assignments
<b>Week 1</b>	Where I Stand: Personal reflections on the purpose of religion or non-religion	Textbook readings and articles Discussion Board or In-Class Discussion Week One Writing Assignment Civility Pledge
<b>Week 2</b>	Dominant Religious Cultures in North America and Europe	Textbook readings and articles Discussion Board or In-Class Discussion Week Two Writing Assignment

		Self Reflection Assignment
<b>Week 3</b>	Making Religious Plurality Visible Locally and Globally and the Life of the Buddha	Textbook readings and articles Discussion Board or In-Class Discussion Week Three Writing Assignment
<b>Week 4</b>	Voices of Others – Respecting Each Others' Sacred Things	Textbook readings and articles Discussion Board or In-Class Discussion Week Four Writing Assignment Zoom Interview
<b>Week 5</b>	The Diaspora Big Question: To preserve traditional religious / national culture or to assimilate into the dominant culture	Textbook readings and articles Discussion Board or In-Class Discussion Week Five Writing Assignment Midterm Embedded Student Assessment
<b>Week 6</b>	Coexist mantra – to Convert or Appreciate	Textbook readings and articles Discussion Board or In-Class Discussion Week Six Writing Assignment
<b>Week 7</b>	Religions and Politics: Difficult Marriages and Separations	Textbook readings and articles Discussion Board or In-Class Discussion Week Seven Writing Assignment
<b>Week 8</b>	Them is Us: Working toward inter-faith and secular humanitarian common causes	Textbook readings and articles Discussion Board or

	In-Class Discussion
	Week Eight Assignment

## Methods of Evaluation for Determining Grades

### Assignment Detail for Blended Course:

Assignments for Blended course - Refer to Rubric(s) in Course Information on Blackboard	Possible Points
In-class discussions and/or Discussion Board (45 points each)	360 pts.
Weekly Writing Assignments (75 points each)	600 pts.
Three Course Embedded Assessments (2-10 and 1-20 pts.)	40 pts.
	<b>Total:1,000</b>

### Class by Class Outline for Blended Course:

Week	Topics	Assignments
<b>Week 1</b>	"Where are you going? Where have you been?"	Textbook readings, videos and articles In-class discussions and/or Discussion Board activities (45 pts.) Writing Assignment (75 pts.)
<b>Week 2</b>	"The Dominance of Christianity in Western Culture"	Textbook readings, videos and articles In-class discussions and/or Discussion Board activities (45 pts.) Writing Assignment (75 pts.) Week 2 -- Embedded Course Assessment (10 pts.)
<b>Week 3</b>	"Making Religious Pluralism Visible Locally and Globally and the Life of the Buddha"	Textbook readings, videos and articles In-class discussions and/or Discussion Board activities (45 pts.) Writing Assignment (75 pts.)

<b>Week 4</b>	"Voices of Others – Respecting All Sacred Things"	Textbook readings, videos and articles  In-class discussions and/or Discussion Board activities (45 pts.)  Writing Assignment (75 pts.)
<b>Week 5</b>	"Volatility on the Indian Sub-Continent and the Great Diaspora: A Case Study"	Textbook readings, videos and articles  In-class discussions and/or Discussion Board activities (45 pts.)  Writing Assignment (75 pts.)
<b>Week 6</b>	"Coexist mantra: To Convert or Appreciate"	Textbook readings, videos and articles  In-class discussions and/or Discussion Board activities (45 pts.)  Writing Assignment (75 pts.)
<b>Week 7</b>	"Global Religious and Political Landmines"	Textbook readings, videos and articles  In-class discussions and/or Discussion Board activities (45 pts.)  Writing Assignment (75 pts.)
<b>Week 8</b>	"Working toward inter-faith and secular humanitarian common causes"	Textbook readings, videos and articles  In-class discussion and/or Discussion Board activities (45 pts.)  Writing Assignment (75 pts.)  Final Embedded Course Assessment (20 pts.)

## UMass Global's Office of Accessible Education

Students who require disability-related services or accommodations to access their educational experience can register with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). The Office of Accessible



Education (OAE) is committed to ensuring equal educational access and opportunity for all members of our academic community. Students will be provided equitable and reasonable accommodations and services that are in compliance with [Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#) and the [Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 \(ADA\)/Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 \(ADAA\)](#). Registration with OAE is on a voluntary, self-identifying basis. Please visit the [Office of Accessible Education \(OAE\) website](#) for more information about how to register for services, eligibility requirements, and information about potential academic accommodations and services.

Our university is committed to ensuring equal access for all students. Let us know about any accessibility barriers you encounter using any of our online systems or websites by submitting a [Feedback or Accessibility Concern Submission Form](#). We'll do our best to improve things and get you the information you need.

## UMass Global's CARES Team

The [CARES team](#) is a campus-wide team of appointed staff and faculty responsible for identifying, assessing, and responding to concerns and/or disruptive behaviors by students, faculty/staff, and community members who struggle academically, emotionally, or psychologically, or who present a risk to the health or safety of the university or its members.

Individuals may refer themselves or other community members of concern by emailing [cares@umassglobal.edu](mailto:cares@umassglobal.edu) or by filling out a referral form [here](#). The CARES Team provides short term assessment, intervention, support, and recommendations of resources to those referred and engaged in the process.

## UMass Global's Title IX Statement

The University of Massachusetts Global strives to maintain and foster a climate that promotes respect and human dignity. Sexual misconduct and relationship violence in any form is antithetical to the university's mission and core values, violates university policies, and may also violate federal and state law. The office of Title IX is primarily concerned for students' safety and well-being and is tasked with investigating all reports of sexual misconduct experienced by our community members. Title IX prohibits sex-based and gender-based discrimination and harassment, which includes discrimination based on pregnancy and/or pregnancy-related complications, parental status, and marital status. Students expecting or experiencing pregnancy-related complications, that may require educational accommodations, should contact the University's Title IX Coordinator and/or the Office of Accessible Education.

The University and Title IX's prohibition of sex discrimination also covers sexual harassment, sexual violence, and any other form of sexual misconduct. We offer options and resources to all students

affected by these issues and are committed to providing a fair, thorough, and prompt investigation and adjudication process. If you or someone you know has been impacted by sexual assault, dating, and domestic violence, stalking, or sexual exploitation, please visit the [University's Title IX Resource Page](#) to access additional resources and information.

UMass Global's staff and faculty are tasked with reporting any possible sex or gender-based discrimination or Title IX violations to the University's Title IX Coordinator at [civilrightscomplaints@umassglobal.edu](mailto:civilrightscomplaints@umassglobal.edu).

[Click on this Link to our University Title IX Policy.](#)