

Course Expectation Resource Sheet - REL 110

“What can students expect if they choose this course?”

Course: REL 110 - World Religions

Department: Languages, Cultures, & Religions

Credit Hours: 3

Prerequisite: None

Catalog Description: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and other world religions have an important impact on public affairs. By surveying the world’s religions, this course equips students to understand the perspectives of various faith communities, to think critically about the role of religion in human experience past and present, and to engage constructively with religious and cultural diversity.

Catalog: 2025-2026 **Last Updated:** 9/19/2025

Gen Ed Course: Yes

Gen Ed Area: PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Gen Ed Requirement: Cultural Competence
(GEC 115)

CORE-42 Course: Yes

CORE-42 Area: Humanities & Fine Arts

MOTR Code - MOTR Title: RELG 100 - World
Religion

Is credit also available through:

Advanced Placement (AP)?: No

College Level Exam Program (CLEP)?: No

International Baccalaureate (IB)?: Yes

(click link for more information and required scores)

Responses and Advice from Department Representatives

Last Updated: 12/17/2025

The following responses apply to: Both seated and online courses

What expectations do you have for students in this course?

Intellectual curiosity and a sense of adventure about learning new things

Recognize that studying religion academically is not the same as practicing it.

Be open to learning about traditions that may differ from your own beliefs.

Ask thoughtful questions and engage genuinely with unfamiliar ideas.

Complete assigned readings and other assignments before class.

Take notes and come prepared with questions or points you found interesting, confusing, or challenging.

Participation includes contributing to discussions, responding to peers, and bringing in connections from real-world contexts.

What types of study skills do you expect students to use in this course?

Comprehensive and strategic reading skills

Effective note-taking skills

Ability to attend to class lecture and discussion

Basic time-management skills

What study techniques seem to work best for students who do well in this course?

Highlight important terms in reading, write these down along with key ideas in your notes

Look up and learn definitions for unfamiliar words—a vast vocabulary is always something to strive towards!

Be able to summarize each religion's core beliefs, key figures, rites, rituals, and holy days, as well as historical context in your own words.

Willingness to work with class peers to form study groups for exam preparation or accountability

Willingness to seek help and clarification from instructors or graduate assistants to address concerns

What behaviors or habits seem to cause students to struggle in this course?

Not submitting assignments in a timely manner and/or not asking for help when falling behind

Poor class attendance and/or not communicating with the instructor about absences

Isolating in the classroom and not interacting with instructor or peers

Procrastination regarding reading, preparing for assessments, asking for help

Thinking that one's questions are silly or dumb and not asking them

What types of struggles do you see most often? What recommendations do you give to students who struggle in this course? What other advice do you offer to students for success in this course?

Struggle: Not submitting assignments in a timely manner

Recommendation: Use a student planner to record important due dates and check regularly

Struggle: Poor class attendance

Recommendation: Attend class regularly if you find that you are struggling

Struggle: Fear of questions sounding stupid, fear of looking foolish in class discussion

Recommendation: use the class to learn how to be wrong while working out your thoughts in this low-stakes environment where you can develop your own voice in a supportive community

Recommendation: Communicate with instructor on a regular basis

How do you describe the course to students when they ask “What is this class about?” (without using the catalog description)?

This course is an adventure into the major religions of the world: Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. When, where, and how these religions started and why they are still practiced by millions of people today. Religious literacy is a key factor in better understanding both the contemporary world in which we live and the billions of people with whom we share this planet. To be culturally competent and aware is to show respect and consideration for our fellow humans and the aspects of life that are important to them.

The class is all about stories. The stories of people all over the world, and your own story. How learning the stories of others can shed light on your own story.

Beyond meeting a General Education requirement, what benefits can students realize from choosing this course?

REL 110 develops knowledge and an appreciation of diverse cultures and religions, enabling students to have a positive impact on others.

Further develop cultural literacy skills: To help you navigate an increasingly interconnected world with greater insight and confidence. Given the important role that religion plays in today's world, knowledge of the beliefs, values, and practices of world religions is vital for culturally competent global citizens.

Students will be able to describe the history, development, and practices of major religions from around the world, as well as understand diverse religions as cultural systems that help shape and articulate the values, beliefs, and behaviors of individuals and communities.

Strengthen critical thinking skills: In this course, you will explore and learn to analyze texts, compare traditions, evaluate religious claims, and reflect on how religions influence societies and histories. The course will challenge you to ask thoughtful questions instead of accepting oversimplified explanations. Students will learn how the religions of the world have affected individual and cultural identities in history and in today's world.

Deepen empathy and understanding: Students will learn to recognize and appreciate diversity in terms of religious affiliation and cultural belonging. Studying diverse traditions encourages you to see the world through perspectives very different from your own. This increases your ability to communicate respectfully and adapt to diverse cultural settings, valuable in any career.

Enhance communication skills: This World Religions course emphasizes discussion, interpretation, and personal reflection. You practice articulating complex ideas clearly, supporting arguments with evidence, and engaging in meaningful dialogue across differing viewpoints.

Encourages civic engagement: Religious literacy is essential for working in diverse communities and for participating responsibly in a pluralistic society. This course helps you move beyond stereotypes and approach difference with curiosity rather than judgment. You will learn how to assess the relevance of religions to contemporary issues and evaluate how they both contribute and respond to challenges facing contemporary societies.

In this course you are invited to participate in the critical study of religion. Being critical does not mean finding fault in this context, but exercising or involving careful judgment or judicious evaluation. In REL 110, we will study and speak about religion in a respectful and impartial manner. The course is not intended to make you religious if you were not. Nor is it intended to make you antireligious if you were religious. Rather, it is intended to make you more careful and judicious in your understanding of religion.

Other than your major/minor/certificate students, what groups of students could find this course relevant to their degree program or career path?

Quick answer: everyone. Everyone benefits from studying religion, because everyone is affected by religion in some way.

Specifically: the practical benefits of a World Religions course support many majors and career paths: Business, Nursing, Pre-Med and other areas of Healthcare, Education, Criminology, Political Science, Media, Journalism, Film, Sociology, Diversity Studies, Education, international relations, counseling, law, business, social work, and public service all involve interacting with people from different backgrounds. Understanding religion gives you an advantage in each of these fields. Adding a religious studies component to any degree will make that degree stronger as well as mark the person as curious, culturally-competent, and sophisticated, characteristics that stand out in a job search of any kind.

*Prepared by the Reynolds College Center for Student Success
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