

New Jersey Institute of Technology  
Phil 337  
Face-to-Face

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**Phil 337**  
**World Religions**  
**Spring 2024**

**Course Description**

This course explores the religion as part of human culture. It will cover what we know about religion from the earliest periods of human existence; the functions of religion in human life, the varieties of religious beliefs, practices, and experiences; how religion relates to other parts of culture; and the relevance of religion to modern societies. The course takes an anthropological perspective which considers all cultural phenomena as valid in their own contexts and requires the student to explore beyond the bounds of any personal beliefs without judgment or criticism. The class also looks at the religions of the world as they exist at the present time, exploring their cosmology, dogma, ritual, and myth.

**Student Learning Objectives**

1. Students will be able to define religion from an anthropological perspective.
2. Students will be able to explain the relationship between religion and culture.
3. Students will be able to define and give examples of shamanism, witchcraft, and sorcery.
4. Students will be able to discuss the universality of religion.
5. Students will be able to explain the common functions of all religions.
6. Students will demonstrate their knowledge of the world's major religions.
7. Students will be able to use the comparative method to analyze religious similarities and differences

**Optional Text**

Malefijt, Annemarie de Wall. Religion and Culture: an Introduction to the Anthropology of Religion. Waveland Press, 1968. ISBN 0-88133-483-9

**Grading**

The final grade for the class will be calculated as follows:

Class Engagement: 20%

This includes attending class and engaging in discussions, spending sufficient and regular time weekly on the Canvas Website.

Module 9 Essay: 25%

This includes following the instructions provided concerning the essay and having the topic approved by the instructor.

Final Exam: 30%

A= 92-100  
B+= 87-91  
B= 82-86  
C+= 77-81  
C= 70-77  
D= 60-69  
F= <60

**Academic Integrity**

All students must abide by the university's policy on academic integrity. Please review:

*Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity policy that is found at:*

<http://www5.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf>.

*Please note that it is the instructor's professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at [dos@njit.edu](mailto:dos@njit.edu)*

Module 1: Introduction and Basic Concepts

**Culture and Religion: Definitions**

**The Study of Religion**

**Animism, magic, witchcraft, ghosts**

**All course resources are posted  
on the course Moodle Site.**

Module 2

**Shamanism and sorcery**

Module 3

**Indicators of prehistoric religion**

Module 4

**Religious Change**

**Revitalization Movements**

**New Religious Movement**

Basic Concepts Exam

Module 5

**Hinduism and Buddhism**

Module 6

**Judaism**

Module 7

**Christianity**

Module 8  
**Islam**

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Module 9  
**Other significant religions**  
Your essay is part of this module. Read the essay instructions carefully.

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Module 10  
**Religion and the State**  
**The First Amendment**  
**Religion and Violence**

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**Final Exam**  
The final exam will posted the last week of class.

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