

# Syllabus for UWXRE101

## Introduction to Religion

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**NOTE:** This syllabus document contains the basic information of this course. The most current syllabus is available in the full course.

### Course Description

What is religion? Who does religion, and how does it happen? How do we study religion across history and in the modern world, and how have other scholars of religion studied this phenomenon? This course introduces students to the field of Religious Studies as it has been practiced historically and as it is practiced today, with a particular focus on the study of religion in the modern world. By critically reading excerpts from classic theorists of religion alongside recent case studies, students in the course will learn about a wide variety of methodologies in the study of religion.

Different from the study of theology (a method of studying religion from within a church-affiliated program), the academic study of religion (a.k.a. “comparative study of religion”) requires that we observe multiple religious traditions (including our own), critically analyzing the texts, rituals, and beliefs produced and performed by religious individuals and communities without asserting that any is correct or incorrect. As a General Education course in the University of Wisconsin system, and a Humanities course in the Collaborative Associate’s Degree (AAS), you will develop the **skills** required for a liberal education: **to read carefully, to think critically, to speak confidently, to work collaboratively, and to write clearly.**

### Prerequisite(s)

None

### Course Outcomes

Upon completing this course, you will be able to do the following:

- Recognize the various theories that scholars use to define and discuss religion in the academic field of Religious Studies
- Discuss the ways religion has been debated in the public sphere, especially as it has been challenged and championed in American public schools
- Compare the changing ways that different religious traditions emphasize the role of texts and their textual traditions
- Compare creation stories across different religious traditions, examining the role of such stories in contemporary American culture

- Examine the ways that ritual performances structure, and are structured by, issues related to gender, politics, and violence
- Theorize the ways that religious organizations apply certain religious texts, doctrines, and performances to their support of environmental issues
- Recognize the many uses of technology by individuals and groups seeking to strengthen connections with their faith

## Course Requirements/Components

### Unit Paper

This course consists of four units, at the conclusion of each you will write a Unit Paper. Since this course handles four different facets of religion, there will not be a final comprehensive essay at the end of the course; rather, each essay will serve to conclude and analyze the material from only that unit.

### Discussions

Weekly discussion posts are assigned for students to interact with their classmates and apply their understanding of the week's readings to current events or larger social issues. Each discussion will be comprised of three parts:

- Discussion Essay
- Responses
- Discussion Reflection

## Grading

The following grading scale will be used to evaluate all course requirements and to determine your final grade:

Percent	Letter Grade
93-100%	A
90-92%	A-
87-89%	B+
83-86%	B
80-82%	B-
77-79%	C+
73-76%	C
70-72%	C-
67-69%	D+
60-66%	D
59 and under	F