



# GLOBAL RELIGIONS

PHIL111 | #NUGLOBALREL | FALL 2018

# WHY STUDY RELIGION?

This course will introduce you to the academic study of religion – scholarly engagement with practices, communities, texts, beliefs, and commitments. We will focus on three course commitments: understanding religion's multiple meanings, exploring how people live their religions, and analyzing how creativity and conflict help us better understand this phenomenon.

These discussions will help you to develop a nuanced understanding of the ways religion shapes and is shaped by culture(s); apply core concepts in humanities scholarship to the study of religion; and critically engage scholarly and confessional sources, including sermons, interviews, creative nonfiction, poetry, and sacred literature.



## CLASS FORMAT

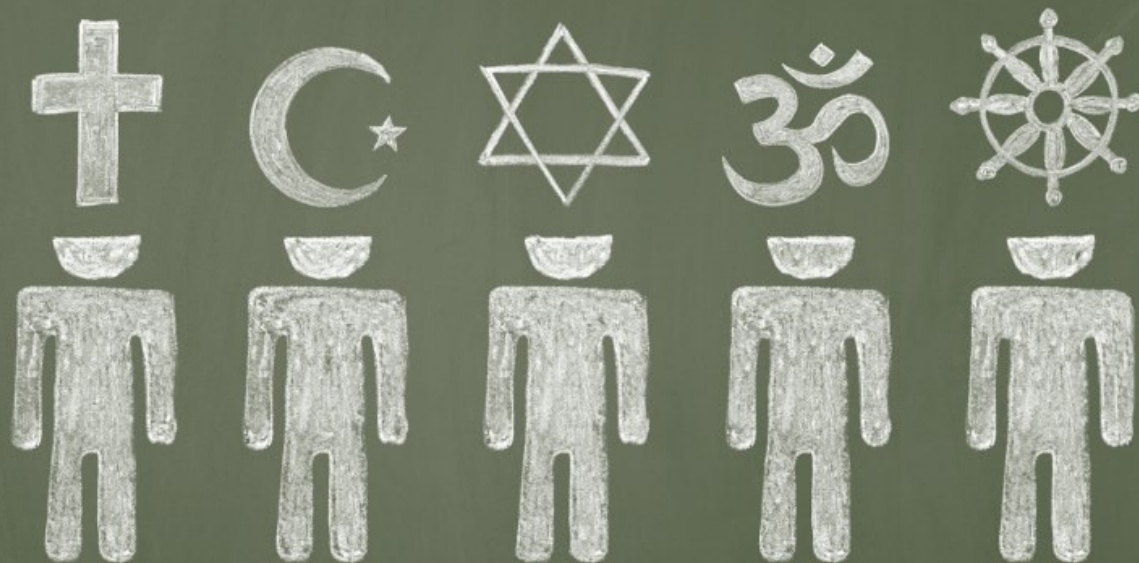
Each class will include lecture, map work, close reading, and discussion elements. Some will include short films or student presentations. None of these work unless you **attend class regularly and read the assignments carefully**. Please come to class ready to analyze and respond to the readings, as well as to the contributions of your fellow students. **Bring the readings to class with you.** Remember: engagement includes active listening!



# EXPECTATIONS

This is an introductory course. **I don't expect you to know anything about religious studies.** If you are unfamiliar with humanities scholarship—particularly reading and analyzing scholarly articles or writing in standard humanities styles—you might find some course assignments challenging. Please be sure to read directions closely and seek additional assistance as needed well in advance of deadlines. Regardless of your academic background, **treat every student and every concept you encounter with scholarly respect.**

Challenge your assumptions and position(s) of privilege. Speak from your own experiences and understandings of the issues, and assume that each class member operates from their own best intentions. As scholars of religion, **it is not our job to evaluate the truth or validity of any religious tradition.** We only scrutinize the evidence we have, to position that tradition's beliefs, practices, teachings, and products in the broader context of religion(s) and culture(s).



## REQUIRED TEXTS

Van Vorst, *RELG* (any edition)  
O'Brien & Palmer, *The Atlas of Religion*

All other readings will be available on Blackboard.

Attendance is mandatory.  
Take your coursework seriously.  
**You are permitted two absences (no excuses necessary).**

After that, you lose a letter grade for every class meeting missed unless you have an emergency OR come meet with me in office hours to discuss alternative arrangements.  
**If you're having a hard time making it to class, please come talk to me.**

# SHOW UP

# PARTICIPATION

Attendance isn't enough. To succeed in this class, you must fully engage in activities and discussions. These criteria determine your participation grade. **In short: speak up!**

You're present, prepared, & engaged. You reference readings, lectures, & class discussions. You encourage other students' comments & questions in a productive and respectful manner.

EXCELLENT

You're present, prepared, and offer thoughtful questions & comments that show your preparation for discussion and attention to readings and lectures.

GOOD

You're present and prepared, but limit your contributions to several surface-level observations or clarifying questions about lectures or readings.

ADEQUATE

You usually make a single comment during discussions in response to another student's observations or insights. ("I agree with them.")

MINIMAL

Unless you need them for learning accessibility, only use your **laptops and other devices in the classroom for specified class activities**. You'll also need to know how to use Twitter, to create a PDF document, & submit it via Blackboard in a timely manner. (We'll discuss these in class.)

Please note: **I only accept electronic submissions in PDF format, and only via Blackboard**. I will not accept assignments as \*.doc or \*.docx files or assignments sent to my email address.

TECH



I am committed to making our classroom and our campus a supportive learning environment for people of all races, genders, ethnicities, abilities, classes, ages, sexualities, & statuses of documentation.

# KNOW YR IX

# ACCESSIBILITY

Sex and gender-based violence and harassment are Civil Rights offenses. Offenders are subject to the same kinds of penalties applied to offenses against other protected categories (such as race, national origin, etc.). **Survivors are entitled to confidential support.** If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, Northeastern wants to help.

**Here are our resources.**

You will be graded on HOW you think—not WHAT you think—in this class. In other words, **you will not be graded on your beliefs, opinions, or the positions you advance.** I evaluate how well you articulate your thoughts and positions, how closely you read the assigned texts, and how much your ability to think critically and synthetically about course themes develops throughout the semester.



*"Religion is the opium of the people, Fred."*

*"Just say no, Karl."*

If you require accommodations for in-class discussions or activities, have emergency medical information, or need special arrangements during a building evacuation, **please let me know as soon as possible.** Be sure to **register with the DRC** and inform me of your needs during the first week of classes. Please note that you may not use your personal computer to take tests for this course.

Attendance	10%
Participation	10%
Religion in the News	15%
Reading Notes	15%
Midterm 1	15%
Midterm 2	15%
Final Exam	20%

# GRADING

# RUBRIC



# ASIGNMENTS

## Reading Notes

Learning to read, understand, and think critically about challenging material is a key skill for liberal arts scholarship. This assignment will help you become a more careful reader of these texts. Submit reading notes for each text in bold on the class schedule. Reading notes are due by midnight before the class meets. Please review the assignment sheet, and rubric for further instructions.

## Religion in the News

Before each class, share a news item pertinent to our course discussions on **#NUglobalrel**. Link to a story from a credible news source, explain the story's relevance to the class, and note whether or not it corresponds with our discussions. (You can thread tweets if you can't fit your analysis into 240 characters.) Every student will share a news item with the class at least once a semester.



Cheating = failing. Please don't. Complete this **plagiarism tutorial** by 11 September. Check out the "What is Plagiarism?" handout on Blackboard or Northeastern's **Academic Integrity Policy** for more info. "I didn't know" is not an excuse. Go know.



# CLASS SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
F 7 September	Introductions	
T 11 September	Religion(s) in a global context	Van Voorst, "Beginning Your Study of World Religions" Bellah, "Sheilaism" Cullavagga, "Founding of the order of Buddhist nuns" NYT, "Globally, religion defies easily identified patterns"
F 14 September	Complicating "world religion(s)"	Prothero, intro to <i>God Is Not One</i> Hurd, "Does Religious Freedom Favor Some Religions?" PRC, "Global Uptick in Gov. Restrictions on Religion" ProPublica, "Intolerance Has Become Routine"
T 18 September	Reading Strategies	NPR, "A Finder's Guide to Facts" HuffPo, "How to Recognize a Fake News Story" Vox, "How Search Engines Are Making Us More Racist"
F 21 September	Indigenous Religions	VV, "Encountering Indigenous Religions" 2.1-2.4 <b>Zitkala-sa, "Why I Am a Pagan"</b> Bailey, "It's about Religion"
T 25 September	Diasporic Religions	VV, "Encountering Indigenous Religions" 2.5-2.6 Wagner, from <i>Hold Tight, Don't Let Go</i> Handouts on African Diasporic Rels, Vodou, Yoruba
F 28 September	Hinduism	VV, "Encountering Hinduism" <b>"The Four Castes"</b>
T 2 October	Zoroastrianism	VV, "Encountering Zoroastrianism" WSJ, "India Urges One Community" <b>"Judgment of the Soul on the Chinvat Bridge"</b>
<b>F 5 October</b>	<b>EXAM 1</b>	
T 9 October	Sacred Texts	Excerpt from Enuma Elish Gen 1-2 (NRSV) "The Creation of Lilith" Surat 3:78, 4:46, 5:13 Lakota creation myths "The World is Uncreated"
F 12 October	Buddhism	VV, "Encountering Buddhism" RNS, "Hindus in India Are Converting to Buddhism" <b>"Diamond Sutra"</b>

# CLASS SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
T 16 October	Sikhi	VV, "Encountering Sikhism" Oberoi, "From Punjab to Palestine" <b>Guru Nanak Dev, Var Asa, Ang 473.8-9</b>
F 19 October	Daoism & Confucianism	VV, "Encountering Daoism and Confucianism" <b><i>Dao de Jing</i> excerpts</b> <b><i>Analects</i>, "On the Character of Confucius"</b>
T 23 October	Shinto	VV, "Encountering Shinto" "Shinto Statement on Ecology" <b>"Directive for the Disestablishment of State Shinto"</b>
<b>F 26 October</b>	<b>EXAM 2</b>	
T 30 October	Judaism (1)	VV, "Encountering Judaism" <b><i>Shma</i></b>
F 2 November	Judaism (2)	Goldstone, "No Shelter Here" Winston, "Whitefish Jews Fight Neo-Nazis with Faith"
T 6 November	Islam (1)	VV, "Encountering Islam"
F 9 November	Islam (2)	Mustafa, "My Body is My Own Business" <b>X, "Interview with <i>Al-Muslimoon</i>"</b>
T 13 November	Christianity (1)	VV, "Encountering Christianity"
<b>F 16 November</b>	<b>No class</b>	
<b>T 20 November</b>		
<b>F 23 November</b>		
T 27 November	Christianity (2)	Killermann, "30+ Examples of Christian Privilege" <b>Chavez, "The Mexican American and the Church"</b> NPR Codeswitch, "Of Bloodlines and Conquistadors" Goodstein, "Conservative Rel. Leaders Are Denouncing Immigration Policies"
F 30 November	New Religious Movements	VV, "Encountering New Religious Movements" <i>Chicago Tribune</i> , "An Afterschool Satan Club" <b>Satanic Temple, "Our Mission" and "Tenets"</b>
T 4 December	Review Session	





**Prof. Megan Goodwin**

me.goodwin@northeastern.edu

Twitter: @mpgphd

Office: Holmes Hall 368

Office Hours: W 10-11 or  
by appointment

**PHIL1111**

TF 1:35-3:15pm

Robinson Hall 109

GLOBAL RELIGIONS