

# Course Syllabus and Schedule

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RELS 100— CRN 10530 — Fall 2016

## Imperial Valley College

Instructor: Rev. Dr. Ron Griffen

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Meetings: Monday and Wednesday 9:40 a.m.-11:05 a.m. — Room 1603

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### I. Course Description

RELS 100 is an introduction to the concepts of what makes a religion a religion and why that might matter. We will study the basic beliefs, history and traditions of several of the world's major religious traditions including Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Objectivity and openness are important characteristics of this study, seeking to understand the significance of religious pluralism.

Course Textbook: *12 Steps to a Compassionate Life*. Karen Armstrong. *World's Religions*. Huston Smith.

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### II. Course Requirements

Students are expected to attend all class meetings, arrive on time and remain for the entire class period.

Students are responsible for material covered in their absence.

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### III. Course Development and Grading

There will be short written assignments, homework, quizzes, group presentations, a **research paper/project (P &P)** a midterm and final exam.

## Grade Structure

<b>Class Participation &amp; Attendance</b>	<b>10%</b>
Written Assignments/ Homework	20%
Research P & P	25%
Quizzes	15%
Midterm Exam	15%
Final Exam	15%

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### IV. Grade Distribution

Course grade will be a percentage of the points earned divided by the points available.  
A: 94-100% A-: 90-93% B+: 87-89% B: 84-86% B-: 80-83% C+: 77-79% C: 74-76%  
C-: 70-73% D: 60-69% F: Less than or equal to 59%

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### V. IVC Drop Policy

A student who fails to attend the first meeting of a class may be dropped by the instructor immediately following that class. Regular attendance in all classes is expected of all students enrolled. Instructors are expected to take a student's attendance record into account in computing grades. A student may be excluded from further attendance in a class during any semester when absences after the close of registration have exceeded the number of class hours which the class meets per week. If you stop attending class and intend to drop, it is your responsibility to drop the class.

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### VI. Academic Integrity

Academic integrity includes a commitment neither to engage in nor tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty include cheating or copying, plagiarizing, submitting another person's work as one's own, using Internet sources without citation, stealing examinations, tampering with the academic work of another student, and facilitating other students' acts of academic dishonesty. Sanctions for breaches of academic integrity may range from F for the assignment to F for the course.

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## VII. Student Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of the course the student will be able to:

1. Identify the origin, characteristic beliefs, practices and terminology unique to the world's five major religions and indigenous sacred ways.
2. Identify and discuss the nature of religious revelation and interpretation of sacred texts.
3. Recognize the relationship between religion and culture and the relevance of religious belief and experience to modern life and the human condition.

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## VIII. Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS)

Any student with a documented disability who may need educational accommodations should notify the instructor of the DSPS office as soon as possible. The DSPS office is located in the Mel Wendrick Access Center, Building 2100  
760.355.6313 or 760.355.4174

**Please silence your cellphones for the duration of the class!!**

## Schedule — RELS 100 — Fall 2016

8/17 Introduction to the study of religion: what is it and why study it?  
Read: *Point of Departure*-Smith and *Wish for a Better World*-Armstrong

8/19 Hinduism. Read: Smith— *What People Want* through *The Way to God through Psychophysical Exercises*

8/24 Hinduism. Read: Smith— *The Stages of Life* through *Many Paths to the Same Summit*

**Assignment: 700 word essay on the core beliefs of Hindus.**

8/26 **Essay on Hinduism due. Quiz - Hinduism** Jainism. Sikhism. Read: Smith— *Appendix on Sikhism*

8/31 Buddhism. Read: Smith— *The Man Who Woke Up* through *The Eight Fold Path*

9/5 **No Class - Labor Day**

9/7 Buddhism. Read: Smith— *Basic Buddhist Concepts* through *The Image of the Crossing*

**Assignment: 700 word essay on the Four Noble Truths.**

**9/12 Essay on Buddhism due. Quiz on Buddhism. Student Presentations**

9/14 Confucianism. Read: Smith— *The First Teacher* through *Ethics or Religion?*

9/19 Daoism Read: Smith— *The Old Master* through *Conclusion*

**9/21 Exam. Covering Eastern Religious Traditions.**

9/26 Judaism. Read: Smith— *Meaning in God* through *Meaning in Messianism*

**Assignment: 700 word essay on Jewish Holy Day.**

9/28 Judaism. Read: Smith— *The Hallowing of Life* through *Israel*.

**10/3 Quiz on Judaism. Essay on Judaism due. Student Presentations**

10/5 Christianity. Read: Smith— *The Historical Jesus* through *The Mystical body of Christ*

**Assignment: 700 word essay on Christian Pluralism**

10/10 Christianity. Read: Smith— *The Mind of the Church* through *Protestantism*

**10/12 Quiz on Christianity. Essay due on Christian Pluralism. Student Presentations**

10/17 Islam. Read: Smith— *Background* through *Basic Theological Concepts*

10/19 Islam. Read: Smith— *The Five Pillars* through *Whither Islam?*

**Assignment: 700 word essay on The Five Pillars of Faith**

10/24 Quiz on Islam. Essay due on the Five Pillars. Student Presentations

10/26 Indigenous Religion. Read: Smith— *The Australian Experience* through *Conclusion*

10/31 Toward a Compassionate Life. Read: Armstrong— *The First Step* through *The Third Step*

11/2 Toward a Compassionate Life. Read: Armstrong— *The Fourth Step* through *The Sixth Step*

**11/7            Student Presentations**

11/9            Toward a Compassionate Life. Read: Armstrong— *The Seventh Step* through *The Ninth Step*

11/14          No Class - Veterans Day

11/16          Toward a Compassionate Life. Read: Armstrong— *The Tenth Step* through *The Twelfth Step*

**11/21 - 11/25 Thanksgiving Break**

11/28          Religion in the World Today: Important or Not?

**11/30          Final Exam Prep/ Student Presentations (If needed)**

**12/5            Final Examination**