



**THEO-279-M01  
STUDIES IN NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS**

*At the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, religion plays a central role in public life and has become a significant identity marker. In our increasingly pluralistic societies, more inter-religious dialogue and cooperation are needed if conflict fuelled by religion is to be constructively addressed. Spiritual and religious traditions are a source of values that can defend dignified life for all; these traditions need to be explored.*

*We need new ways to understand particularity, universality and plurality; we must learn to live our faith with integrity while respecting and accepting each other.*  
(World Council of Churches Programme for Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation)

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**Office:** SIH 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Room 5  
**Office Hours:** WF 10:00-10:50 and by appointment

**MWF 12-12:50, PRH 6**  
**Semester: Spring 2014**  
**Core requirement: 3 Credits**  
**Prerequisite: THEO-100**

**Course description:**

This course will examine the historic and contemporary roles of religion in human experience. It will serve as an introduction to the origins, development, beliefs, practices, divisions, and social and political context of the world's major religions and new religious movements, with the goals of promoting respect, critical analysis, understanding, and peace.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

This course is designed to attend to the Five Dimensions of Saint Louis University's Mission:

1. **Knowledge:** THEO-279 will help you to build upon the foundation of THEO-100 by diversifying and deepening your theological knowledge. Specifically, you will learn to articulate and explain the core beliefs and practices of the world's major religions and be particularly well versed in your chosen topic of research. This will serve as preparation for further study and analysis of the role of religion in society and in the lives of individuals.
2. **Inquiry:** Through the lectures, class discussions, and student presentations, you will acquire tools for seeing and thinking about the world in theological terms, the ability to express your insights, convictions, and questions, and to listen to those of others.

3. **Community:** Upon completion of this course, you will be better equipped to engage in dialogue with those of different faiths in order to promote peace and understanding on campus and around the world.
4. **Leadership:** In your current and future leadership roles, you will benefit from the knowledge of religion that you will acquire in this course, as faith is a vital dimension of the lives of the majority of the world's population. Through learning how people of different faiths understand what it means to live ethically and responsibly in the world, my hope is that you will better understand your own calling to be "men and women for others."
5. **Spirituality:** Over the course of the semester, you will be exposed to the diverse ways in which people live out their spirituality and acquire critical insight into how people make ethical decisions in line, and at times in contradiction, with the faith that they profess. If you apply both mind and heart to your studies, you may grow and deepen both intellectually and spiritually through your exposure to ancient wisdom and modern journeys of faith.

You are also encouraged to formulate your own objectives for this course and to share them with me if you like:

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**Required texts:**

Fisher, Mary Pat, *Living Religions: A Brief Introduction*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (Pearson: 2012).  
 Supplementary study resources available for purchase at [www.myreligionlab.com](http://www.myreligionlab.com).

Click: Join a Class. Enter Class ID: cm989249.

Selected readings from primary sources (to be distributed and/or posted on Blackboard)

**Required work and grading policy:**

The final grade will be determined in accordance with the following Learning Goals established by the SLU Theology Department for 200 level courses:

<b>Thinking theologically:</b> Students will demonstrate critical thinking by analyzing themes, concepts and presuppositions within this particular theological sub-discipline.
<b>Reading theologically:</b> Students will analyze and critique the coherence and argumentation of discipline-specific course contents within their historical and/or contemporary contexts.
<b>Researching theologically:</b> Students will be able to find, cite and use appropriate essays and articles, including print journals, essays in books, online journals, etc.
<b>Speaking theologically:</b> Students will analyze discipline-specific topics and the relationship between them.
<b>Writing theologically:</b> Students will formulate a thesis and develop a written argument on a discipline-specific topic in relationship to the course content.
<b>Indicators of goals being met:</b> "This course challenged me to analyze the theological themes of the course content." "As a result of this course, I am better able to formulate an informed

critique of the theological themes treated in this course.”

The final grade will be calculated in your choice of one of the following ways:

**OPTION 1:**

Attendance and Participation	5%
Report on visit to place of worship	5%
Current Event Presentation (CEP):	5%
First Midterm Examination:	15%
Second Midterm Examination:	15%
Research Paper:	20%
Research Paper Presentation:	15%
Final Examination:	20%

**OPTION 2:**

Attendance and Participation	5%
Report on visit to place of worship	5%
Current Event Presentation (CEP):	5%
First Midterm Examination:	20%
Second Midterm Examination:	20%
Research Paper:	20%
Final Examination:	25%

**Assessment:**

Saint Louis University - Madrid Campus is committed to excellent and innovative educational practices. In order to maintain quality academic offerings and to conform to relevant accreditation requirements, we regularly assess our teaching, services, and programs for evidence of student learning outcomes achievement. For this purpose we keep on file anonymous representative examples of student work from all courses and programs such as: assignments, papers, exams, portfolios, and results from student surveys, focus groups, and reflective exercises. Thus, copies of your work for this course may be kept on file for institutional research, assessment and accreditation purposes. If you prefer that Saint Louis University-Madrid Campus does not keep your work on file, you will need to communicate your decision in writing to your professor.

**Assignment Descriptions:**

1. **Worship Visit Report:** On your own or with the class (dates pending), visit a religious place of worship with which you are not familiar. Examine the architecture, the layout, art, hymnals, reading material, people present, rituals observed, technology used, and the like. How can you connect what you see with what you have learned about the history of the religion practiced at the site? (Due: April 21)
2. **Current Event Presentation (CEP):**
  - a. Choose a print or online article that is pertinent to the theme of the day (where possible) and that discusses the role of religion, an event related to religion, or a topic of debate that is current and relevant.
  - b. Turn in an electronic or print copy of the article to your professor in advance.
  - c. Orally present the article in your own words to the class, explaining its relevance, giving a bit of your own analysis, and proposing a question or two for class discussion.
  - d. Total time: 5-10 minutes.

3. **Examinations:** These will be of short essay format, based on previously distributed questions, and may only be rescheduled in strict accordance with university policy. Final examination: Tuesday, May 13, 12-15:00.
4. **Research paper guidelines (and checklist to be used before turning in final draft):**
- By March 10<sup>th</sup>, choose a topic of interest that is related to a particular religion or that is common to various religions. Turn in your topic worksheet to your professor. My Topic:  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - Formulate a thesis statement and carry it throughout your paper. My Thesis Statement:  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - Make use of headings and subheadings, e.g., Introduction, Conclusion... \_\_\_\_
  - The paper is to be 6-8 pages (and include page numbers \_\_\_\_), typed, double-spaced, TNR font or similar, and turned in electronically.
  - Cite your sources (at least five) according to a standard format, using footnotes, parenthetical citations or endnotes. \_\_\_\_
  - Include a bibliography, which will include (in alphabetical order) essays and articles from the library and available data bases, reliable internet sources (.edu, .org, etc), and perhaps books. Remember to distinguish scholarly works from those which seek to preach elements of a particular religion. The latter may be used, but one must discern and make note of the difference in drawing conclusions. \_\_\_\_
  - Make sure quotations and paraphrases are relevant, well-selected and cited. Quotations of three lines or more should be single-spaced and indented. \_\_\_\_ For ways to avoid plagiarism, see:  
[http://spain.slu.edu/academics/academic\\_advising/docs/Academic\\_integrity.pdf](http://spain.slu.edu/academics/academic_advising/docs/Academic_integrity.pdf)
  - Make sure to proofread for grammar, spelling, homonyms and typographic errors. The English Writing Center is available to help you if you help yourself first. \_\_\_\_  
[http://spain.slu.edu/academics/degrees\\_&\\_programs/undergraduate\\_programs/english/english\\_writing\\_center.html](http://spain.slu.edu/academics/degrees_&_programs/undergraduate_programs/english/english_writing_center.html)
  - If you use graphics, make sure they are relevant, well-placed and clearly and accurately captioned—not merely decorative nor to fill up space. \_\_\_\_
  - My Research Paper Presentation (if this option is chosen): \_\_\_\_\_
5. **Research paper presentation:**
- Each student who so chooses will present his or her research to the class in a scholarly and engaging manner.
  - The use of visual aids is strongly encouraged (e.g., slides). A copy is to be submitted to the professor in advance or at the beginning of the presentation.
  - Each student will have 10-15 minutes to present (depending on the number of students doing so) and to engage the class in discussion.

**Grade scale:**

A	94-100	B+	87-89	B-	80-82	C	73-76	D	60-69
A-	90-93	B	83-86	C+	77-79	C-	70-72	F	0-59

**Policy on late-work:**

1. For every day a paper is late, five points will be subtracted from the grade.
2. Failing to turn in your research paper worksheet on time and/or to bring in your draft on May 3<sup>rd</sup> will be reflected in the final paper grade.
3. If you are to present in class and are unable to do so, you must request a date change in advance or be penalized.
4. If you are unable to attend class, you may send assignments to the professor by e-mail, entrust them to a classmate, or leave them in my box in SIH.

**Attendance policy:**

Regular, punctual, participatory attendance is expected and essential to everyone's learning process in this course. More than three absences will affect your grade and tardiness will be noted. It is always advisable to inform me when you will be absent, and it is crucial to recover any material missed. Active, relevant participation in class, while not a replacement for regular attendance and the completion of required assignments, may boost your grade. Extra credit assignments may be an option to make up for some absences, especially in the case of trips which can be made to include religious sites and experiences. Also, writing up the class discussion assignments can make up for an absence on the day of the discussion.

**Academic integrity:**

Please note that, as a student in this course, you are required to adhere to the university's Academic Honesty Policy. Cheating, falsification, and plagiarism are strictly forbidden. Plagiarism is the intentional representation of someone else's thoughts or words as if they were one's own. Any violation of this policy will result in an 'F' for the pertinent academic exercise.

A detailed statement of the policy may be found at:

[http://spain.slu.edu/academics/policies\\_&\\_procedures/docs/Academic\\_integrity.pdf](http://spain.slu.edu/academics/policies_&_procedures/docs/Academic_integrity.pdf).

**Accommodations:** In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.

University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Academic Dean's Office (San Ignacio Hall) or by going to [http://spain.slu.edu/academics/learning\\_resources.html](http://spain.slu.edu/academics/learning_resources.html).

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at +34 915 54 58 58, ext. 204,

send an e-mail to [counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu](mailto:counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu), or to visit the Counseling Office (San Ignacio Hall). Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.

### CALENDAR

**Monday, January 13:** Introduction to course and participants.

**Read:** Living Religions (LR) Chapter 1: Religious Responses

**Wednesday, January 15:** Religious Responses: Understanding Religion and its Purpose.

**Assignment for class discussion on Monday:** Bring examples of some of the positive contributions that some religions have made to human affairs—or—Bring examples of some of the horrors which people have perpetrated upon each other in the name of religion. In trying to understand the negative side of organized religion, some people argue that religious violence is carried out when people misuse or misinterpret their religion. Others argue that the widespread nature of religious violence suggests that religion itself may be the problem. Which view do you find more convincing? Why?

**Friday, January 17:** Religious Responses: Understanding Religion and its Purpose.

**Monday, January 20:** Religious Responses: Debate with Critics of Organized Religion. CEP Sign-up.

**Wednesday, January 22:** Film: *Oh My God*

**Read:** LR Chapter 2: Indigenous Sacred Ways

**Friday, January 24:** Film discussion. Indigenous Sacred Ways.

**Last day to ADD a class or to DROP a class without a grade of "W"**

**Monday, January 27:** Indigenous Sacred Ways. CEP

**Assignment for discussion on Wednesday:** Investigate the history of your region to discover whether there has been, or still is, an indigenous religion there. If so, what native religion? Are any of its major characteristics explained in this chapter?

**Application deadline for Spring Semester Degree Candidates**

**Wednesday, January 29:** Indigenous Sacred Ways. Local groups. CEP

**Friday, January 31: NO CLASS**

**Read:** LR Chapter 3: Hinduism

**Assignment for discussion on Monday:** Do an Internet search using terms such as Indus

Valley Civilization” and evaluate at least two websites. What does this teach you about the different views concerning the earliest history of Hinduism? What does this reveal about myth and fact in religion, as well as the importance of each?

**Monday, February 3:** Hinduism. Debate about Origins and Myths. CEP.

**Worship Visit Opportunities:**

<http://www.harekrishna.es/templos/madrid/> (Weekday chants and meal, etc.)  
Asociación Jhulelal Mandir: C/. Federico Moreno Torroba, 1 (Friday evenings)

**Wednesday, February 5:** Hinduism. CEP.

**Friday, February 7:** Hinduism. CEP.

**Monday, February 10:** Hinduism. CEP.

**Read:** LR Chapter 4: Jainism

**Last day to choose AUDIT or Pass/No Pass status**

**Wednesday, February 12:** Jainism. CEP.

**Assignment for discussion on Friday:** Imagine that Jains have decided to send missionaries to your country. What message do you think they would offer to your fellow citizens about their lifestyles, and what types of responses might they receive?

**Registration for Summer 2014 Sessions begins.**

**Friday, February 14:** Jainism. A Countercultural religion in the West? CEP.

**Read:** LR Chapter 5: Buddhism

**Monday, February 17:** From the East to the World: Buddhism. CEP.

**Worship Visit Opportunity:** <http://budismotibetanomadrid.org/>

**Wednesday, February 19:** Buddhism. CEP.

**Friday, February 21:** Buddhism. CEP. First Midterm questions to be distributed.

**Monday, February 24:** Buddhism. CEP.

**Wednesday, February 26:** MIDTERM EXAMINATION

**Read:** LR Chapter 6: Daoism and Confucianism

**Friday, February 28:** Ancient Chinese Religion: Daoism and Confucianism. CEP.

**Optional Student Life Trips: Rome and Morocco (Feb. 28-March 4)**

[http://spain.slu.edu/student\\_life/trips/](http://spain.slu.edu/student_life/trips/)

**WINTER BREAK: Saturday, March 1 – Tuesday, March 4**

**Wednesday, March 5:** Daoism and Confucianism. CEP.

**Assignment:** Research Paper Worksheet (Due: Monday, March 10)

**Friday, March 7:** Daoism and Confucianism. CEP.

**Optional Student Life Trip: Loyola (March 7-9)**

[http://spain.slu.edu/student\\_life/trips/](http://spain.slu.edu/student_life/trips/)

**Monday, March 10:** Daoism and Confucianism. CEP.

**Read:** LR Chapter 7: Shinto

**Due:** Research Paper Worksheet

**Wednesday, March 12:** Japanese Religion: Shinto. CEP.

**Last day to DROP a class and receive a grade of "W"**

**Friday, March 14:** Shinto. CEP.

**Monday, March 17:** Shinto. Second Midterm questions to be distributed.

**Read:** LR 142-146

**Last day to submit transfer application for fall semester**

**Wednesday, March 19:** Zoroastrianism. CEP.

**Read:** LR Chapter 8

**Friday, March 21:** SECOND MIDTERM EXAMINATION

**Monday, March 24:** Judaism. CEP.

**"Worship" Visit Opportunity:** Jewish bookstore <http://www.davar.es/>

**Wednesday, March 26:** Judaism. CEP.

**Friday, March 28:** Judaism. CEP.

**Monday, March 31:** Judaism. CEP.

**Read:** LR Chapter 10: Islam

**Wednesday, April 2:** Islam. CEP.

**"Worship" Visit Opportunity:** Centro Islámico <http://www.ccislamico.com/home2.html>

**Friday, April 4:** Islam. CEP.

**Monday, April 7:** Islam. CEP.

**Assignment for discussion on Wednesday:** Think about your impressions of Muslim women and consider how those impressions have been formed. What image might people outside the United States have of American women based on the popular media (e.g. television shows such as “Baywatch” and American action movies which are very popular worldwide)? Do modern media images oversimplify matters?

**Wednesday, April 9:** Islam. CEP.

**Read:** LR Chapter 11: Sikhism

**Registration for Fall Semester begins.**

**Friday, April 11:** Sikhism. CEP.

**Assignment:** Worship visit reports are due by Monday, April, 21.

**HOLY WEEK HOLIDAYS: Saturday, April 12 – Sunday, April 20**

**Monday, April 21:** Sikhism. CEP.

**Due:** Worship Visit Reports

**Wednesday, April 23:** RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTATIONS

**Friday, April 25:** RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTATIONS

**Monday, April 27:** RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTATIONS

**Wednesday, April 29:** RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTATIONS

**Assignment:** Bring in written or electronic draft of research paper on Friday, May 3.

**DIA DEL TRABAJADOR HOLIDAY: Thursday, May 1**

**COMUNIDAD DE MADRID HOLIDAY: Friday, May 2**

**Friday, May 3:** Peer review of paper drafts. Final Examination questions to be distributed and discussed.

**Monday, May 5:** Religion in a New Era. Last day of class.

**Due:** RESEARCH PAPER (to be turned in electronically)

**Tuesday, May 13, 12-15:00:** FINAL EXAMINATION



