Note to instructors: [Material in brackets must be personalized for each course.]
Blue text indicates suggestions or guidance for course policies.
Black text must not be edited.

Introduction to Comparative Religion (PHIL 1304-SYN ##### and Section ##)

[Campus, Room, Time]

Instructor Information

- [Instructor's name]
- [Phone number (office phone or voice box)]
- [Office hours and location of office]
- [Information on how conferences outside of offices can be arranged]
- [ACC e-mail address]
- [Other contact information, blackboard URL, etc.]

Course Description

- Credit hours: 3
- Classroom Contact Hours Per Week: 3 [Modify as appropriate]

In this class, you will be introduced to the comparative study of religion and to major world religions. You can expect to learn fundamentals of several religious traditions and to think critically about the issues that religion presents to the world today. You will also gain an understanding of the approaches scholars use to understand religion.

[Include any additional general information and information on any required field activity, service learning, or other activity outside of class.]

Course Rationale: Religion has been and continues to be one of the principal forces that shape human societies and history. For this reason, a basic understanding of the major religions of the world affords both a deeper appreciation of other cultures' traditions and a richer understanding of ourselves. In addition, the study of religion provides an excellent venue for developing basic critical thinking, reading, and writing skills.

Departmental Course Student Learning Outcomes

- Students will demonstrate understanding of the central beliefs and concepts of major living religious traditions of the world, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
- Students will demonstrate familiarity with the structure and ritual life of religious communities, including significant holidays and rituals.
- Students will demonstrate a basic grasp of the methodology of the study of religion.

Instructor Course Level Outcomes

[Instructors are encouraged to set appropriate outcomes unique to their course. A list of sample outcomes is maintained on the PRH team drive]

General Education Competencies

- Communication Skills: Develop, interpret, and express ideas and information through written, oral and visual communication that is adapted to purpose, structure, audience, and medium.
- Critical Thinking Skills: Gather, analyze, synthesize, evaluate and apply information for the purposes of innovation, inquiry, and creative thinking.
- Personal Responsibility: Identify and apply ethical principles and practices to decision-making by connecting choices, actions and consequences.
- Social Responsibility (Civic and Cultural Awareness): Analyze differences and commonalities among peoples, ideas, aesthetic traditions, and cultural practices to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.

Required Course Materials

[List all required textbooks, readings, or other course materials. Also list any recommended or optional materials as such.]

Instructional Methodology

[Include a statement that identifies the format of the class and the general approach to instruction (ie. lecture, group work, team-based learning, project-based learning, etc.]

DISTANCE EDUCATION *(for online or hybrid courses only)*

Advise students, many of whom may be new to online learning, about the differences between online and traditional face-to-face learning. In particular, advise students of the time management and study skills required to be a successful online student. Encourage students new to distance education to review the ACC Distance Education General Information available at https://online.austincc.edu/faq/ Likewise, use of the college-approved learning management system should be clearly stated for hybrid and online courses.

Some suggested wording might be:

Students will use the Blackboard learning management system for assignment instructions, submitting assignments, and collaboration.

STUDENT TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

Austin Community College provides free, secure drive-up WiFi to students and employees in the parking lots of all campus locations. WiFi can be accessed seven days a week, 7 am to 11 pm. Additional details are available at Student Technology Access.

Students who do not have the necessary technology to complete their ACC courses can request to borrow devices from Student Technology Services. Available devices include iPads, webcams, headsets, calculators, etc. Students must be registered for a credit course, Adult Education, or Continuing Education

course to be eligible. For more information, including how to request a device, visit Student Technology Access.

Student Technology Services offers phone, live-chat, and email-based technical support for students and can provide support on topics such as password resets, accessing or using Blackboard, access to technology, etc. To view hours of operation and ways to request support, visit Student Technology Access

GRADING SYSTEM

It is a departmental expectation that each course include at least one closely graded written assignment of **750 words or more**, accompanied by substantive instructor feedback. Additional writing assignments may take a variety of forms, including, but not limited to, essays, research papers, reflection journals, and discussion board posts.

Grading criteria should be clearly explained in the syllabus. The criteria should specify the number of exams and other graded material (exercises, term papers, homework, assignments, projects, etc.), and the weight assigned to them. Instructors should discuss the format of exams (multiple choice, short answer, essay, matching, combination, etc.). Guidelines for other graded materials, such as homework or projects, should also be included in the syllabus. Having explicit detail in this section helps to more easily resolve issues with student grades should they arise. Links to grading and evaluation rubrics could also be included here.

COURSE POLICIES

Policy on Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI)

Beginning in Fall 2025, all faculty will be required to provide their students with an AI policy in their syllabi for their courses that includes:

Introduction – *I*ntroduce your policy on GAI (generative artificial intelligence) use in the course

- **Rationale –** State why GAI is prohibited/permitted/required to be used in the course
- **Definition of GAI –** Define what GAI is in the context of the course
- **Resources –** In courses that permit or require GAI, provide resources that guide students on how to properly use GAI in the course
- **Assessment –** In courses that permit or require GAI, clarify if and how its use will be assessed in the completion of activities
- **Penalties –** Clearly state the consequences of violating the GAI policy
- **Exceptions –** Explain any conditions under which there may be an exception to the GAI policy in the course
- **Usage Permissions –**
    - **Prohibited –** Clearly state what GAI activities are not allowed
    - **Permitted –** Clearly state what GAI activities are allowed
    - **Required –** Clearly state what GAI activities are required

Attendance/Class Participation

Although you are not required to take attendance or require class participation, you are required to provide a clear statement of your policy regarding attendance and your expectations regarding participation. For

online courses make clear what your expectations are in terms of regular participation in the class, such as in discussion boards.

Some suggested wording is:
Regular and punctual class and laboratory attendance is expected of all students. If attendance or compliance with other course policies is unsatisfactory, the instructor may withdraw students from the class.

Or for online courses:
Regular and timely class participation in discussions and completion of work is expected of all students. If attendance or compliance with other course policies is unsatisfactory, the instructor may withdraw students from the class.

And to cover situations where classes are cancelled because of weather, pandemic, or other emergencies:
The student is responsible for communicating with their professor during the closure and completing any assignments or other activities designated by their professor.

Withdrawal Policy

The College defines withdrawals as occurring after the official reporting date of the semester. In addition, the Legislature has mandated the Rule of Six (see below). There may also be financial aid issues.

It is the responsibility of each student to ensure that his or her name is removed from the rolls should they decide to withdraw from the class. The instructor does, however, reserve the right to drop a student should he or she feel it is necessary. If a student decides to withdraw, he or she should also verify that the withdrawal is recorded before the Final Withdrawal Date. **The Final Withdrawal Date for this semester is [insert date here]**. The student is also strongly encouraged to keep any paperwork in case a problem arises.

Students are responsible for understanding the impact that withdrawal from a course may have on their financial aid, veterans' benefits, and international student status. Per state law, students enrolling for the first time in Fall 2007 or later at any public Texas college or university may not withdraw (receive a "W") from more than six courses during their undergraduate college education. Some exemptions for good cause could allow a student to withdraw from a course without having it count toward this limit. Students are strongly encouraged to meet with an advisor when making decisions about course selection, course loads, and course withdrawals.

Missed Exam and Late Work Policies

Each instructor should clearly express their policies with regard to missed exams, late homework or laboratory exercises, etc. Again, this helps immensely when dealing with student grade disputes.

Incompletes

An incomplete (grade of "I") will only be given for extenuating circumstances. What constitutes "extenuating circumstances" is left to the instructor's discretion, while following any rules or guidelines set by the department. If a grade of I is given, the remaining coursework must be completed by a date set by the student and professor and given on the "Report of Incomplete" form. This date is often about three weeks prior to the end of the following semester. A grade of I also requires completion and submission of the Incomplete Grade form, to be signed by the faculty member (and student if possible) and submitted to the department chair.

Students may request an Incomplete from their faculty member if they believe circumstances warrant. The faculty member will determine whether the Incomplete is appropriate to award or not.

If an Incomplete is not resolved by the deadline, the grade automatically converts to an "F." Approval to carry an Incomplete for longer than the following semester or session deadline is not frequently granted.

PROBLEM RESOLUTION

If you are having a problem related to this course or related to me as your professor your first step generally should be to speak with me. If I cannot resolve the problem or satisfy your concern, or, if for some reason you would prefer not to address the issue with me, you can appeal to the Chair of the Department for help.

Please contact the Department Chair of Philosophy, Religion and Humanities:

Jean Anne Lauer, PhD

Office: Highland Campus Building 1000, Room 1.1427.0 (Lower Level)

mail: jlauer@austincc.edu

HLC Office: +1-512-223-7916

COLLEGE POLICIES

Important: Please be sure to review the **College Policies** available to you through the Blackboard link College Policies & Student Support Services — this site details additional official Syllabus policies for all Faculty and Students.

COURSE OUTLINE/CALENDAR

The syllabus MUST contain a course outline for the lecture (and laboratory), outlining what students will be doing on what days, identifying test dates, and other due dates.

Instructors are encouraged to add a statement of variance, such as:

Please note that schedule changes may occur during the semester. Any changes will be announced in class and posted as a Blackboard Announcement (or other resource the faculty is using to communicate.