

PHIL1040: World Religions

Callaghan and Online
Semester 1 - 2024



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

The School of Humanities, Creative Industries and Social Sciences is committed to providing an inclusive environment in which all cultures are accorded respect and all students and staff are expected to act with honesty, fairness, trustworthiness and accountability in dealings with others. The School recognises and respects the unique histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their unbroken relationship with the lands and the waters of Australia over millennia, and the validity of Aboriginal ways of knowing. We are dedicated to reconciliation and to offering opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to access and succeed in higher education.

OVERVIEW

Course Description	This course provides an introduction to the principal features of the world's major religions through reference to key events, characters, beliefs and related phenomena. With regard to each tradition, there will be a focus on both historical and contemporary events relevant to the understanding of religion today.
Academic Progress Requirements	Nil
Contact Hours	Callaghan Lecture Face to Face On Campus 2 hours per week for 12 weeks Online Lecture Online 2 hours per week for 12 weeks
Unit Weighting	10
Workload	Students are required to spend on average 120-140 hours of effort (contact and non-contact) including assessments per 10 unit course.

CONTACTS

Course Coordinator	Callaghan and Online Dr Timothy Stanley timothy.stanley@newcastle.edu.au (02) 4921 7927 Consultation times can be booked on my Outlook booking page .
Teaching Staff	Other teaching staff will be advised on the course website.
School Office	School of Humanities, Creative Industries and Social Sciences Social Sciences Building, Callaghan HCISS@newcastle.edu.au 02 4985 4500

COURSE OUTLINE

SYLLABUS

Course Content

The course introduces students to the major religious traditions. Thinkers discussed may include Philo of Alexandria, Origen of Caesarea Maritima, Dōgen Zenji [Kigen], Muhammad Rumi, Julian of Norwich, Theodor Herzl, Mohandas Gandhi, and Vine Deloria Jr.

Course Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify key events, characters and beliefs of the religions being studied;
2. Critically analyse historical developments within religious traditions in light of their relevance today;
3. Apply humanities methods relevant to the study of philosophy and religion;
4. Demonstrate writing, research and information technology skills appropriate to studies of philosophy, religion, and the history of ideas.

Course Materials

Meetings: Tues 4-6pm
Video lectures will be posted online within 24 hours of meeting times.

Room: SR192

The course introduces the world's religions through the eyes of others. Each week evaluates influential thinkers' written works in their historical contexts. The aim is to reflect upon their diverse ideas in order to gain critical insights into religious plurality today. Lectures focus on assigned readings as well as provide examples of how to succeed on quiz and essay assessments due throughout the course. For instance, the week two lecture on Philo explicates his primary written works as well as introduces secondary scholarly commentary on his importance. Week five similarly introduces Dogen's works as well as scholarly ways to approach mysticism and sacred space in the academic study of religion. Lectures thus interact with written works as a lab space to explore the world's religions.

All course materials and feedback on student assessments will be provided on the website canvas.newcastle.edu.au. It is expected that students attend and/or stream lecture discussions prior to engaging readings. Lectures aim to orient students to readings so they can read more actively. As well, a very helpful general textbook that provides broad background for topics covered in the course is *World Religions Today* (OUP), edited by John Esposito, Darrell Fasching and Todd Lewis. Copies of the 4th, 5th and 6th editions are available in the library here: library.newcastle.edu.au/record=b3108430~S16. Used editions are widely available for purchase at reasonable prices at abebooks.com.

SCHEDULE

Week 1 – Introduction: Plurality and Tolerance in the Study of Religion

Part I: Monotheism, Monism and Cosmopolitan Challenges

Week 2 – Philo Judaeus of Alexandria (c. 25 BCE - c. 50 CE) and Jewish Monotheism

Week 3 – Origen of Caesarea Maritima (c.184 - c.254) and Christian Monotheism

Week 4 – Adi Shankara (c. 700 - 750) and Advaita Vedanta Monism

Part II: Religious Mystics in Sacred Spaces

Week 5 – Dōgen Zenji [Kigen] (1200-1253) and Zen Buddhism

Week 6 – Muhammad Rumi (1207-1274) and Sufi Islamic Mysticism (online only)

Week 7 – Julian of Norwich (1342-416) and Christian Mysticism

Part III: Religious Dissent in Troubled Times

Week 8 – Theodor Herzl (1860-1904) and Jewish Zionism

Week 9 – Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) and Church State Relations

Week 10 – Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) and Modern Islamic Politics

Part IV: Religions after Colonial Encounters

Week 11 – Mohandas Gandhi (1869-1948) and South Asian Traditions

Week 12 – Vine Deloria Jr. (1933-2005) and Indigenous Traditions

ASSESSMENTS

This course has 3 assessments. Each assessment is described in more detail in the sections below.

	Assessment Name	Due Date	Involvement	Weighting	Learning Outcomes
1	Quizzes	5pm Mon 25 Mar, 15 Apr, 20 May and 3 Jun	Individual	30% (4x7.5%)	1
2	Virtual reality analysis	5pm Mon 29 Apr	Individual	30%	1, 2, 3, 4
3	Research essay	5pm Mon 3 Jun	Individual	40%	1, 2, 3, 4

Late Submissions

The mark for an assessment item submitted after the designated time on the due date, without an approved extension of time, will be reduced by 10% of the possible maximum mark for that assessment item for each day or part day that the assessment item is late. Note: this applies equally to week and weekend days.

Assessment 1 – 4 x 60 Minute Online Quizzes

Assessment Type

Quiz

Description

Each quiz assesses students' knowledge of readings, topics and content discussed in weekly lecture discussions. Quiz one covers weeks 2-4, quiz two covers weeks 5-7, quiz three covers weeks 8-10, and quiz four covers weeks 11-12. Questions are in the form of multiple choice, selection, true/false and fill in the blank.

Weighting

30% (4x7.5%) contribution to your final grade.

Length

60 minutes for each quiz

Due Dates

5pm on Mon 25 Mar, 15 Apr, 20 May and 3 Jun

Submission Method

Online at canvas.newcastle.edu.au

Assessment Criteria

Online at canvas.newcastle.edu.au

Return Method

Online at canvas.newcastle.edu.au

Feedback Provided

Online at canvas.newcastle.edu.au

Assessment 2 – 1200 Word Virtual Reality Analysis

Assessment Type

Online Learning Activity

Description

This task requires students to critically analyse a virtual reality example of sacred space for the traditions discussed in weeks 5-7. A methodological approach will be provided in those weeks which students will apply to their chosen sacred space. Further advice, readings and examples will be provided in lectures and at canvas.newcastle.edu.au.

Weighting

30% contribution to your final grade.

Length

1200 words (+/-10%)

Due Date

5pm Mon 29 April

Submission Method

Online at canvas.newcastle.edu.au

Assessment Criteria

Online at canvas.newcastle.edu.au

Return Method

Online at canvas.newcastle.edu.au

Feedback Provided

Online at canvas.newcastle.edu.au

Referencing Style

Chicago author-date: chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html

Assessment 3 – 1800 Word Research Essay

Assessment Type

Essay

Description

This task will require students to conduct research into scholarly primary and secondary sources and draw upon their findings to present an argument in essay form. Students should choose one of the thinkers discussed in weeks 2-4 and 8-12. Further advice, readings and examples will be provided in lectures and at canvas.newcastle.edu.au.

Weighting

40% contribution to your final grade.

Length

1800 words (+/-10%)

Due Date

5pm Mon 3 June

Submission Method

Online at canvas.newcastle.edu.au

Assessment Criteria

Linked at canvas.newcastle.edu.au

Return Method

Online at canvas.newcastle.edu.au

Feedback Provided

Online at canvas.newcastle.edu.au

Referencing Style

Chicago author-date: chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Grading Scheme

Specific rubrics used to mark assessments will be provided on the course website. A general indication of grading bands is included here.

*Skills are those identified for the purposes of assessment task(s).

Range of Marks	Grade	Description
85-100	High Distinction (HD)	Outstanding standard indicating comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an outstanding level of academic ability; mastery of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
75-84	Distinction (D)	Excellent standard indicating a very high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a very high level of academic ability; sound development of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
65-74	Credit (C)	Very Good standard indicating a high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a high level of academic ability; reasonable development of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
50-64	Pass (P)	Satisfactory standard indicating an adequate knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an adequate level of academic ability; satisfactory development of skills*; and achievement of most assessment objectives.
0-49	Fail (FF)	Failure to satisfactorily achieve assessment objectives or compulsory course requirements. A fail grade may also be awarded following disciplinary action.

Communication Methods

Communication methods used in this course include the Canvas course site and email via university accounts.

Course Evaluation

Each year feedback is sought from students and other stakeholders about the courses offered in the University for the purposes of identifying areas of excellence and potential improvement. Constructive comments are always welcome.

Oral Interviews (Vivas)

As part of the evaluation process of any assessment item in this course an oral examination may be conducted. The purpose of the oral examination is to verify the authorship of the material submitted in response to the assessment task. The oral examination will be conducted in accordance with the principles set out in the [Oral Examination Guidelines](#). In cases where the oral examination reveals the assessment item may not be the student's own work the case will be dealt with under the [Student Conduct Rule](#).

Academic Misconduct

All students are required to meet the academic integrity standards of the University. These standards reinforce the importance of integrity and honesty in an academic environment. Academic Integrity policies apply to all students of the University in all modes of study and in all locations. For the Student Academic Integrity policy, refer to <https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=35>.

Adverse Circumstances

The University acknowledges the right of students to seek consideration for the impact of allowable adverse circumstances that may affect their performance in assessment item(s). Applications for special consideration due to adverse circumstances will be made using the online Adverse Circumstances system where: 1) the assessment item is a major assessment item; or 2) the assessment item is a minor assessment item and the Course Co-ordinator has specified in the Course Outline that students may apply the online Adverse Circumstances system; 3) you are requesting a change of placement; or 4) the course has a compulsory attendance requirement. Before applying you must refer to the Adverse Circumstance Affecting Assessment Items Procedure available at: <https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=236>.

Important Policy Information

The Help button in the Canvas Navigation menu contains helpful information for using the Learning Management System. Students should familiarise themselves with the policies and procedures at <https://www.newcastle.edu.au/current-students/no-room-for/policies-and-procedures> that support a safe and respectful environment at the University.

This course outline was approved by the Head of School. No alteration of this course outline is permitted without Head of School approval. If a change is approved, students will be notified and an amended course outline will be provided in the same manner as the original. © 2024 The University of Newcastle, Australia.