

## World Religions HRT3M Course Syllabus 2018-2019

Instructor: D. Vance

Email: [dvance@rchs.on.ca](mailto:dvance@rchs.on.ca)

Religious thinking and experience is rooted in geography, history, culture, and personal experience. We will study a variety of world religions, though this course places slightly more emphasis on Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in order to examine the forces which have shaped the three great monotheist religions and how each tradition is influencing present society. The course also traces some of the other great religious traditions that have been born and developed in Asia, particularly Hinduism and Buddhism. In addition to the ways of thinking that religions produce, a host of “visible signs” of religious impact exist in our world. These include how we build buildings, make music and art, cook, write poetry and tell stories. Religion is not static. It continues to influence our world, our thinking and the issues that we face each day.

There are a variety of reasons why anyone may wish to study religion. In a pluralistic society such as Canada, Christians can no longer claim special status. They are, however, still called by Jesus to be “salt” and “light” and to bring the good news of the coming of God’s Kingdom. We will be much more effective as we understand our neighbours, whom we are called to love, if we understand their beliefs and practices. Thus, familiarity with the other faiths that surround us gives as a better basis for appreciating our own and sharing it with those who do not follow Jesus.

Unit #	Unit Title	Hours
1	Introduction Students are introduced to the foundations of all religions and discuss worldview and analytical frameworks which they can use to try and understand how all religions view the world.	10
2	Judaism An in-depth study of the religion of Judaism and evaluation of that religion according to the religious framework.	16
3	Christianity An in-depth study of the Christian faith and an evaluation of that religion according to the religious framework.	16
4	Islam An in-depth study of the religion of Islam and evaluation of that religion according to the religious framework.	16
5	Hinduism An in-depth study of the religion of Hinduism and evaluation of that religion according to the religious framework.	11
6	Buddhism An in-depth study of the religion of Buddhism and evaluation of that religion according to the religious framework.	11
7	Conclusion An overview of course themes and re-evaluation of key questions.	5
	Research summative An in-depth study of a religion or aspect thereof, of the students’ choice	15
	Independent reading and book report	5
	Final exam prep	5
TOTAL		110

## Assessment and evaluation

Assessments **as** and **for** learning are used to help you learn throughout the course, as you reflect on your own learning and the teacher provides you with feedback and guidance. Quizzes, discussion, daily homework reading and questions, and other activities will help you master the material.

Assessments **of** learning are used to evaluate what you learned and are what your final grade is based on.

You are assessed on the 4 knowledge categories. Each evaluated assessment has different weights assigned to the categories, depending on the nature of the task. The final grade is based approximately on the weighting in the chart.

Assessments of learning	% of final grade
Tests	30
Unit assignments	24
Current events presentation	8
Book report	8
Research summative	10
Final Exam	30

Knowledge & Understanding	30
Thinking and Inquiry	30
Communication	20
Application	20

## Classroom Expectations

At RCHS, we are striving to be a Christian community of learning. We recognise and affirm that God has created us, and that He loves each one of us so much that He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, as a sacrifice in our place. Therefore, we are called, as adopted members of God's family, to be conduits of Christ's love to the world.

**Politeness:** We will always be polite to each other, and listen quietly when it is appropriate.

**Preparedness:** When the bell rings, be at your desk ready to work, both physically and mentally. Bring all needed materials to every class: textbook, binder, paper, pen/pencil, eraser, and your agenda. Those needing to retrieve materials after the bell will need to ask for a late slip.

### Guidelines for homework assignments and tests/quizzes:

All homework assignments are expected to be completed neatly and on time.

Tests missed for a legitimate reason will be written on the day you return to school at lunch. If you miss a test because you skipped, or did not have a valid reason, you will be given a "0". If you are late for class on the day of a test, you will not be given extra time to complete it, unless there is a valid reason for your lateness. Parents will contact the school to explain the absence.

**Evaluated assignments are to be completed by the due date. They must be submitted by the beginning of class to turnitin.com.** For each day that an assignment is overdue, there will be a 10% deduction from the final grade, and no marks will be given after 5 days. Parents will be contacted when assignments are late and student will be expected to attend study hall until it all work is complete (even if the assignment is more than 5 days late).

The RCHS Plagiarism Policy will be enforced. Most evaluated assignments will be submitted through TurnItIn.

**Course ID – 18946529 Password – Logos**

I would like to encourage ongoing communication between teacher, student and parents/guardians throughout the course. I can be contacted at school most efficiently by email at [dvance@rchs.on.ca](mailto:dvance@rchs.on.ca). Have a great semester!

# Rules for Classroom Discussions<sup>1</sup>

## Ground rules:

Ephesians 4:29, 31 (see below)

Romans 12:10, 18, 21 (see below)

We are all made in the image of God and have equal value as people created and belonging to God:

- So we must avoid hating/dehumanizing any individual or group. No exceptions. Let's be kind, especially when others are not.
- If you perceive hatred/anger in yourself toward another person or group, or become aware of a desire to dehumanize or harm (verbally or otherwise) seek help to find the root of those emotions in order to get healing.

## Principles:

### 1. Disagreement does not equal dislike or disrespect.

- We need to be able to disagree with each other respectfully. This is good training for university discussions as well as life in general.

### 2. Stay Engaged.

- It's important that you try to stay present in the room. Pay attention to when you are shutting down. Discomfort and anxiety are normal parts of important and honest conversations.

### 3. Speak Your Perspective.

- We often avoid speaking our perspective for fear of what others might say. It's important that we create a safe environment where everyone is free to speak openly.
- Keep in mind that people are in different places with any issue. In order for us to grow, it's important that people are able to share their thoughts in a way that's comfortable for them. When we share our thoughts, it often creates an emotional reaction from others. Being able to speak your perspective does not mean that people will not respond emotionally. Be prepared to experience the discomfort that tough conversations bring.
- Speaking our perspective does not mean stomping on others' heads. Before speaking, think about what it is that you want others to know. How can they best hear you?
- Remember that everyone does not communicate in the same way that you do. If someone gets loud in the room, it doesn't mean they are angry. If they are angry, it doesn't necessarily mean they are angry with you. If they are angry at something you said, it doesn't mean that that person no longer has a relationship with you. Often times these conversations bring up a lot of emotions from past and present experiences. Try and allow others to experience their emotions without your shutting down.

### 4. Experience Discomfort.

- One way to think about this is, "Be comfortable with being uncomfortable". In other words, discomfort is to be expected.
- If you are not feeling any sense of discomfort in the dialogue, ask yourself, Are you fully engaged? Are you giving of yourself fully and taking risks?

### 5. Expect and Accept Non-closure.

- We often want to feel some sense of closure, regardless of the issue. Engaging in significant, honest conversations means there will be times of no closure. This is on-going work that does not necessarily leave one walking away feeling like everything turned out the way you hoped. Be willing

---

<sup>1</sup> This list has been significantly adapted from principles created by Micah Elson as well as G. Singleton. See: Singleton, G. and Curtis Linton. *Courageous Conversations About Race*. Corwin Press, Inc., 2005. "Norms for Facilitating Courageous Conversations." *Cultures Connecting: Addressing Race Relations in the Twenty-First Century*. <http://www.culturesconnecting.com/docs/Norms.pdf>.

to take risks and accept that much of this is about changing yourself, not others.

**6. Listen for Understanding.**

- Try and understand where another person is coming from as best you can.
- Be careful not to compare your experiences with another person's. This often invalidates or minimizes a person's experiences.
- Listen without thinking about how you are going to respond.
- Stay present in their pain and your discomfort as you listen.
- If someone is pointing out how what you said left them feeling, try not to explain or rationalize what you said or why you said it. For example, sometimes it's necessary to just say, "I didn't realize what I said was inappropriate...or hurt you in that way, I'm sorry," etc.
- Think about your comments before saying them. Resist the need to explain. Sometimes positive intent is not enough (intent vs. impact).
- Be careful not to lose the opportunity to just listen by putting the focus back on you.

**Ask myself these questions**

**when speaking to myself and others:**

**Ephesians 4:29**

Do not let any unwholesome talk  
Come out of your mouths,  
But only what is helpful for building others up  
According to their needs,  
That it may benefit those who listen.

1. Is it wholesome?
2. Does it build the person up?  
-based on their needs
3. Would someone else also benefit from hearing this conversation?

**Ephesians 4:32**

Be kind and compassionate to one another,  
forgiving each other,  
just as in Christ  
God forgave you.

4. Is it kind?
5. Is it compassionate?
6. Does it offer the opportunity of forgiveness/reconciliation?

**Romans 12:10, 17a, 18, 21**

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves.  
Do not repay anyone evil for evil.  
If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.  
Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.