



**WBUonline Campus**  
**School of Christian Studies**

**UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT**

Wayland Baptist University exists to educate students in an academically challenging, learning-focused and distinctively Christian environment for professional success and service to God and humankind.

**COURSE NUMBER & NAME:**

PHIL/THST 5333 World Religions

**TERM & DATES:**

Fall 2019      Aug 19-Nov 2, 2019

**INSTRUCTOR:**

Dr. J. M. Givens Jr., Professor of Theological Studies, Director of Online Christian Studies Programs

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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**OFFICE HOURS, BUILDING & LOCATION:**

Flores Bible Building office suite

Posted in Blackboard under instructor information

**COURSE MEETING TIME & LOCATION:**

Asynchronous interaction with specific deadlines managed through [Blackboard](#)

**CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

Research in the origin, personalities, historical development, and basic thought of major religions of the world.

**PREREQUISITE:**

None

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOK AND RESOURCE MATERIAL:**

1. Jeffrey Brodd, et al., *Invitation to World Religions*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Oxford (**NOTE:** third edition)
2. Bible, any modern translation recognized by mainstream Christianity (if unsure, check with instructor)

Texts and ISBN information available from [WBU bookstore](#).

**3. INTERNET EQUIPPED COMPUTER**

- A. Must conform to [minimum recommended settings](#) identified by WBUonline
- B. Should use compatible browser and have [correct settings](#) as recommended by Blackboard
- C. Must utilize WBU [student email account](#) for official university communications

**4. WBU BLACKBOARD COURSE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE**

- A. All assignments and other class issues will be available through [Blackboard](#).
- B. WBUonline technical support can assist you with log in issues, such as username and password.
- C. Contact to technical support is available on the login page of Blackboard. Support is 24/7 support by phone and available also by chat or creating a case.

**5. WBU MABEE LEARNING RESOURCES CENTER**

- A. Use the [LRC website](#) to search for book (sent via priority mail), articles, online articles and e-books, and other resources.
- B. The website also has tutorials for using their services.
- C. [Email](#) the Distance Learning Librarian with questions on LRC and assistance identifying/securing resources for papers.

**OPTIONAL MATERIALS**

1. Terry Muck & Frances S. Adeney, *Christianity Encountering World Religions: The Practice of Mission in the Twenty-first Century*, Baker  
*Explores issues related to Christian witness to other faith traditions.*
2. Gerald McDermott, *God's Rivals: Why Has God Allowed Different Religions? Insights from the Bible and the Early Church*, InterVarsity  
*Explores perspectives from the Bible and early Christian theologians on the existence of other faiths and how Christians should approach these faiths in witness and interaction.*
3. Gerald McDermott, *Can Evangelicals Learn from World Religions: Jesus, Revelation & Religious Traditions*, InterVarsity  
*Explores the concept of revelation in the Bible and theology, then discusses possible insights Christians can learn from the general revelation found in other religions.*
4. James W. Laine, *Meta-Religion: Religion and Power in World History*, University of California  
*Explores the interaction of religions and world powers from Alexander the Great and Ashoka through the modern era.*

**COURSE OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCIES:**

The student will:

1. be able to identify the fundamental beliefs and define the basic vocabulary of the major world religions
2. be able to discuss the significant historical events, persons, and groups related to the origin and development of the major world religions
3. be able to identify areas of commonality and difference between Christianity and the other major world religions which might promote an effective witness
4. encounter and interact with adherents of other faith communities

**ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS:**

1. Attendance for online courses is defined fully in the [university catalog](#).
2. Students are expected to participate in all required instructional activities in their courses.
3. Student "attendance" in an online course is defined as active participation in the course as described in the course syllabus (completing weekly assignments).
4. Students aware of necessary absences must inform the professor with as much advance notice as possible in order to make appropriate arrangements.
5. Any student absent 25 percent or more of the online course, i.e., non-participatory during 3 or more weeks of an 11 week term, may receive an F for that course.
6. Any student who has not actively participated in an online class prior to the census date for any given term is considered a "no-show" and will be administratively withdrawn from the class without record. To be counted as actively participating, it is not sufficient to log in and view the course. The student must be submitting work as described in the course syllabus.
7. When a student reaches a number of absences considered by the instructor to be excessive, the instructor will submit a Report of Unsatisfactory Progress to the student's WBU student email account and to appropriate university personnel.

#### **STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM & ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:**

Wayland Baptist University observes a zero tolerance policy regarding academic dishonesty. Per university policy as described in the academic catalog, all cases of academic dishonesty will be reported and second offenses will result in suspension from the university.

#### **DISABILITY STATEMENT:**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), it is the policy of Wayland Baptist University that no otherwise qualified person with a disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity in the university. The Coordinator of Counseling Services serves as the coordinator of students with a disability and should be contacted concerning accommodation requests at (806) 291-3765. Documentation of a disability must accompany any request for accommodations.

#### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS and GRADING CRITERIA:**

1. *Blackboard Scavenger Hunt*. The hunt is designed to help familiarize you with the essential features of Blackboard. **Complete by Wednesday of Week 1 (3<sup>rd</sup> day of class). 1 point** will be deducted each day for **late submissions**.
2. *Weekly Reading Quizzes*. Students will take quizzes over chapters in Brodd text. Quizzes may be repeated as students' desire and the highest grade for each quiz will be retained.
3. *Weekly Discussion*. Student interaction through class discussion enhances learning and understanding. Discussion will be over the Brodd text and often another reading. Discussions will help students understand one or more aspects of the religion more fully. Initial posts should be substantive, informative, and should enhance the learning experience for the student and colleagues. Interaction is expected, so subsequent responses to student posts or to instructor inquiries, and questions to others about their posts to gain clarity or deeper understanding will be part of the evaluation. See weekly grading rubric and the Course Info section of the course in Blackboard for detailed description of expectations.

4. *Weekly Investigations.* Students will have the opportunity to explore selected aspects of each religion in more detail through additional readings, web content, videos, and other means. The intent of these explorations is to allow students the opportunity to engage areas of interest as well as to see how the religion is lived out or impacts practitioners. Interaction with classmates is not expected but reading their posts would be informative. See weekly grading rubric and the Course Info section of the course in Blackboard for detailed description of expectations.
5. *Field Trip.* Students will attend worship services/meetings of other faiths to provide an opportunity to encounter "real-life" adherents of other religions rather than just scholarly statements/analysis of these religions. A report will be submitted for the visit. Details of the report will be posted in Blackboard. **One field trip is required. Extra credit** will be available to students for additional field trips with accompanying reports. Outcome 4.

**MAKEUPS.** Students should **plan early** to complete the required trips. Organizations must be approved by instructor **prior** to attendance. Students need to **contact instructor immediately** if they foresee that they will have difficulties completing this assignment so that the instructor can assist in resolving the issue or in developing an alternative exercise.

6. *Research Project.* All students will write a research paper of 10-15 pages of text (not counting frontal material or bibliography) on the interaction of two or more world religions as selected by the student with approval of instructor. The paper should do the following:
  - A. Discuss the history of encounter between the two religions
  - B. What type(s) of encounter was there? (cooperative; hostile; dominating; etc.)
  - C. What role(s) did government play in the encounter(s)? (pluralism; imperial support of one; imperial persecution of one or both; etc.)
  - D. How was each religion impacted by the encounter(s)? For example, did any ideas and/or practices modify through encounter? Explain.
  - E. What lessons can be learned from the encounter(s) for Christian mission and political pluralism (many religions living in one state)?
  - F. Select one of the following (dates may be narrowed in consultation with instructor)
    - a. Judaism and Zoroastrianism in Babylon and Persia (6<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> cents BC)
    - b. Hinduism and Buddhism in India (250 BC-AD 250)
    - c. Confucianism and Daoism (and Buddhism?) in Han Dynasty of China (2<sup>nd</sup> cent BC – 3<sup>rd</sup> cent AD)
    - d. Judaism and Christianity in the Roman Empire (1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> cents AD)
    - e. ??Church of the East (Nestorian Christians) in Tang Dynasty China (7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> cents AD)
    - f. Church of the East (Nestorian Christians) and Islam (and Judaism?) in the Abbasid Caliphate of Baghdad (8<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> cents AD)
    - g. Catholic Christianity and Islam in the Holy Land Crusades (11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> cents AD)
    - h. Christianity, Judaism, and Islam on the Iberian Peninsula (10<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> cents AD)
    - i. Orthodox Christianity and Islam in the Ottoman Empire (15<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> cents AD)
    - j. Christianity, Buddhism, and Shinto during the Edo Period of Japan (17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> cents AD)
    - k. Hinduism and Islam in India (9<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> cents AD)

Research must utilize a minimum of ten sources, preferably both primary and secondary sources, from published works, journal articles (at least one), and approved Internet resources. Students must secure instructor approval of Internet resources prior to their use in papers, and may only use one Internet source in the paper unless more are allowed by the instructor. Your textbooks may be used in your paper but do not count toward the minimum number of resources. Optional texts may be used, especially the Laine text.

7. *Examination.* There will be a final exam for the course. The questions will be over reading assignments, handouts and other material provided by the instructor, as well as class discussion. Further instructions will be posted on Blackboard prior to the exam.

**MAKEUPS.** Students *must* secure prior permission to take the exam at a time other than the scheduled testing period. Because the testing is given over a period of time, late testing will *only* be allowed in the most unusual of circumstances. Lack of preparation or planning does not constitute an emergency situation.

8. *Extra Credit.* As stated above, additional field trips may be completed (including reports) for extra credit in the course. In addition, students “on the bubble” between two grades will be evaluated for overall community development during the term. How frequent/helpful were their interactions on the weekly discussion board? How much did they participate in non-graded discussions, such as prayer requests or religion in the news? How much additional effort did they demonstrate on assignments such as the scavenger hunt? These could help push a student over the edge of a grade break.

**GRADING CRITERIA**

1. Scavenger Hunt .....	2%
2. Weekly Reading Quizzes .....	18%
3. Weekly Discussion.....	15%
4. Weekly Investigations .....	15%
5. Field trip report .....	10%
6. Research project .....	20%
7. Examination .....	20%

**Grade Appeal Statement:** Students shall have protection through orderly procedures against prejudices or capricious academic evaluation. A student who believes that he or she has not been held to realistic academic standards, just evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course by using the student grade appeal process described in the Academic Catalog. Appeals may not be made for advanced placement examinations or course bypass examinations. Appeals are limited to the final course grade, which may be upheld, raised, or lowered at any stage of the appeal process. Any recommendation to lower a course grade must be submitted through the Vice President of Academic Affairs/Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee for review and approval. The Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee may instruct that the course grade be upheld, raised, or lowered to a more proper evaluation.

## COURSE CONTENT & OUTLINE

Week 1	An Invitation to the Study of World Religions – Brodd ch 1
Week 2	Hinduism – Brodd ch 4
Week 3	Jainism – Brodd ch 6
Week 4	Buddhism – Brodd ch 5
Week 5	Confucianism and Daoism – Brodd ch 8
Week 6	Shinto and Zoroastrianism – Brodd chs 9 and 10
Week 7	Judaism – Brodd ch 11
Week 8	Christianity – Brodd ch 12
Week 9	Islam – Brodd ch 13
	<b>Research paper due</b>
Week 10	Sikhism – Brodd ch 7
	<b>Field trip report due</b>
Week 11	<b>Final exam</b>

## INSTRUCTOR'S CONFESSONAL STATEMENT

The following will help you understand the instructor's view about World Religions. It is the instructor's belief that God is triune—Father, Son, and Spirit. The Son is the Word of God, bearing witness and revealing the Father to the world (John 1:18). The Spirit enables humans to understand and act upon the revelation of the Word of God (John 16:13). The Word gives light to every human in the world (John 1:3), though never as clearly as in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, God's final Word (Heb 1:2). In Jesus, the Word became flesh (John 1:14), and we have beheld the fullness of God (Col 1:19), the exact representation of his being (Heb 1:3). Without this final Word—i.e., the gospel of Jesus Christ—the Spirit is limited in helping humans understand the witness of the Word of God that comes to every human (Eph 3:5). With the proclamation of the gospel, however, the Spirit of God is poured out on all flesh in power (Acts 10:45). Thus, it is central to the Christian life to bear witness to the Word of God, so that all might know him and respond to him (Acts 1:8).

The instructor is also committed to the historic position of Baptists that religious liberty is for all . . . including his students. ☺

*Let them be heretics, Turks [i.e., Muslims], Jews, or whatsoever, it appertains not to the earthly power to punish them.*

- Thomas Helwys, British Baptist and author of *The Mystery of Iniquity*, the first defense of religious liberty in the English language; quoted in *Baptist Theologians* by Timothy George and David Dockery (1990, p. 15).

*The liberty I contend for, is more than toleration. The very idea of toleration, is despicable; it supposes that some have a pre-eminence above the rest, to grant indulgence; whereas, all should be equally free, Jews, Turks, Pagans and Christians. Test oaths and established creeds should be avoided as the worst of evils.*

- John Leland, Virginia Baptist and advocate for the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution; quoted in *Baptist Ways* by Bill Leonard (2003, pp. 130-31).

## FINAL OBSERVATIONS

1. Few topics are as important as this course for Christian witness in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
2. This will be a great class if you enjoy learning and are willing to participate.
3. Minor changes may occur to the syllabus between the time it is posted on the Virtual Campus schedule and the start of term. **Please use the syllabus stored in Blackboard, which will be available the first day of the class.**