

15800 Calvary Road
Kansas City, MO 64147-1341

Course: RP330 World Religions
Credit: 3 Semester Hours
Semester: Fall 2026
Time: Wednesday (2:30-3:20) / Friday (2:30-4:30)
Location: CABRE 100; Online through Canvas/Teams; occasional excursions
Instructor: Dr. Joshua Paxton, Joshua.paxton@calvary.edu, (816)322-5152 ext. 1353
(816)679-9387(cell)
Office: CABRE 108

I. DESCRIPTION

A study of selected major religious/cults influencing America and the world. Comparisons are made between their doctrinal tenets and those of revealed biblical truth. The practical concern of this course is to help the student discern truth from error in these religious systems and to effectively teach and witness with an adequate understanding of their beliefs and with tact and kindness reflecting the love of Christ. (Prerequisite RP100).

This course is offered in two formats: in-person and online. Students registered for in-person attend the classes in person, online students attend the classes via the online classroom. For both in-person and online students, assignments, and interaction outside of the class period are done in the learning management system.

II. OBJECTIVES

A. General competencies to be achieved:

1. Understand the basic history and teaching of world religions and cults. (PLO 1, 2, 3, 4) (A 1, 2, 4, 5)
2. Understand how the theologies of the religions and cults compare to the essential features of historical biblical Christianity. (PLO 1, 2, 3, 4) (A 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

B. Specific competencies to be achieved:

1. Identify the positive and negative features of the belief systems studies in class. (PLO 1, 2, 3, 4) (A 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
2. Describe, compare, and contrast the various belief systems studied. (PLO 1, 2, 3, 4) (A 2, 3, 4, 5)
3. Begin to learn to defend biblical Christianity in the primary areas of theology in which it differs from the belief systems studied. (PLO 1, 2, 3, 4) (A 2, 3, 4, 5)
4. Receive ideas/suggestions for reaching out in witness to each group studied. (PLO 1, 2, 3, 4) (A 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

Our Mission: "...to prepare Christians to live and serve in the church and in the world according to the Biblical worldview."

III. REQUIREMENTS

1. Reading

Read both textbooks according to the schedule for the subjects covered. The whole textbook must be completed by the end of the course. The student will write a 5-page review of each textbook. Summarizing key lessons from each religious system from the book. See Canvas for more details, non-research Turabian format. See also, the document in Canvas, "How to Write a Book Review."

2. Study Questions

Prior to each class session students will answer the set of study questions for the particular religion under examination. Study questions can be found in Canvas.

3. Forum Discussions

Following each class session, all students, are to return to Canvas and give 3 key differences between the religion studied and biblical Christianity. Students should give their own response as well as comment on the response of 2 other students for full credit..

4. Field Trips / Interviews

This course has an unusual schedule so that time may be set aside on Friday's for occasional field trips. Kansas City has a wide and varied religious landscape. The professor intends to take advantage of that by scheduling field trips to different religious locations around the city (Mormon Temple, Mosques, Hindu Temple, Synagogues, etc...) Following the field trips, students are to write a 2–3-page reflection of their experience.

Online students who are unable to accompany us are encouraged to tour similar religious locations near them and write a 2–3-page reflection. If this is not available, the professor will accept an alternative assignment in which the student interviews a practitioner of one of the religions discussed in the class. The student should then turn in a 10-page paper based on that interview.

5. Final Project

For the final project, the student will choose one of the religions covered in class (can be the same as your interview). Then either write a 10-page research paper going deeper into this belief system or create a video presentation to be used in a classroom or church setting where you teach other believers about this religion. Be sure to cover the following.

- Underlying worldview
- Particular beliefs and practices
- Where this religion is most commonly found including number of adherents

- and any branches (denominations)
- Arguments for or against it
- Relationship to Christianity
- How would you share the Gospel with an adherent of this religion?

Additional instructions and formatting/rubric are in Canvas.

IV. METHODS

A. In-class methods: listening to lectures, participating in class discussions, writing, and taking tests.

B. Out-of-class methods: reading, writing, research, and studying for tests.

1. Grading:

	Points
1. <i>12 Major World Religions</i> Paper.....	100
2. <i>The Popular Handbook</i> Paper.....	100
3. Study Questions.....	400
4. Forum Discussions.....	100
5. Field Trips/Interview.....	100
6. Final Project.....	200
Total	1000

2. "See Grading Scale in the University Catalog"

C. The Bible is a required textbook in every course at Calvary University. To facilitate academic level study, students are required to use for assignments and research an English translation or version of the Bible based on formal equivalence (*meaning that the translation is generally word-for-word from the original languages*), including any of the following: New American Standard (NASB, English Standard Version (ESV), New King James (NKJV), or King James (KJV). Other translations and versions based on dynamic equivalence (*paraphrases, and thought-for-thought translations like NLT and NIV*) may be used as supplemental sources. Please ask the professor if you have questions about a particular translation or version.

D. All class papers must follow the Turabian style according to *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th edition. Unless otherwise indicated book reports and study questions may be in non-research format, interviews and other research papers should be in research paper format. A copy of the Turabian Style Guide is available on the Clark Academic Center page of Calvary’s website.

E. Late Assignments: Assignments will be penalized according to the professor’s late policy as explained in Canvas.

F. Plagiarism: Plagiarism is defined as copying any content without identifying the source. This also includes taking another person’s or AI entity’s ideas or constructs and presenting them as your own. Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. Most assignments at Calvary require the student to produce original work. Therefore, unless specifically permitted by the instructor, the use of AI-generated content is prohibited (even if cited) as it does not represent original

work created by the student and is an unreliable aggregate of ideas from other sources. AI, however, may be utilized in cases where the instructor has explicitly permitted its use to accomplish specific tasks. It is only in these cases that AI-generated (or modified) content may be submitted by the student. If there are any questions as to the permissibility of AI use for an assignment, please ask your instructor for clarification.

Any assignment that includes plagiarism will receive a zero (0) grade. Students should note that papers will be submitted in Canvas via "Turn-It-In". This program automatically gives the student's work a plagiarism score, students should strive for a score less than 20.

G. Disabilities: Students with disabilities have the responsibility of informing the Accommodations Support Coordinator (aso@calvary.edu) of any disabling condition that may require support

H. The Clark Academic Center (learning@calvary.edu), located in the library building, is dedicated to providing free academic assistance for all CU students. Student tutors aid with all facets of the writing process, tutor in various subject areas, prepare students for exams and facilitate tests. Please take advantage of this service.

I. Attendance Policy – Calvary has no official attendance policy, the attendance policy of the professor will be explained in class and in Canvas.

V. REQUIRED MATERIALS

The Bible (Instructor will use ESV)

Boyett, Jason. 2016. *12 Major World Religions: The Beliefs, Rituals, and Traditions of Humanity's Most Influential Faiths*. Oakland: Calisto. (ISBN-13: 978-1623156923) (Amazon \$12.17, Kindle \$9.99).

McCoy, Daniel J. Ed. 2021. *The Popular Handbook of World Religions*. Eugene: Harvest House Publishers. (ISBN-13: 978-0736979092) (Amazon \$23.80, Kindle \$22.61).

VI. TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

A schedule will be posted in Canvas prior to the start of class