

World Religions and Biblical Witness  
Western Reformed Seminary (<http://wrs.edu>)  
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Fall 2012

# COURSE INFORMATION

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## Purpose of course

This course will survey of the scriptures and distinctive beliefs of major non-Christian religions of the world and the most effective Christian witness to them. As an elective course, it will emphasize readings, discussions, and student projects and presentations. You will learn the basic types of religions in the world, the important distinctives of the major religions, and more in-depth details about selected ones. You will learn from your and the class's own research and from active Christian missionaries and apologists recommended ways to present the Christian witness to them. You will emphasize one of these religions and report your findings to the class.

## Class attendance and discussion

Since this class emphasizes class discussions and interaction, attendance is required. Absences after the first one will lower the final grade. Good attendance and active participation will be figured into the final grade.

## Reading assignments

### Required reading

- Winfried Couduan, *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions* (IVP, 1998)

### Required reference

- H. Wayne House, *Charts of World Religions* (Zondervan, 2006)

### Recommended reference

- Arvind Sharma, ed., *Our Religions: The Seven World Religions Introduced by Preeminent Scholars from Each Tradition* (Harper, 1993)
- Michael D. Coogan, ed., *The Illustrated Guide to World Religions* (Metro Books, 2003)

## Your selected world religion

You will select one major world religion for your special study and presentations to the class. We will try to avoid duplication in the selection of these religions.

## Correspondence with expert

You will select a Christian expert in one of the major world religions, such as an apologist or missionary. This person is to have rich experience in actual personal interaction with people of that religion. You will be reporting to the class about the expert you have chosen, including the person's work and experience, and interesting or relevant personal information. The class will pray for this person and his or her ministry.

You will correspond with this expert either orally or in writing, find out about his or her ministry, discover the main opportunities and difficulties in witnessing to this group, and learn what helpful advice can be gained by this person's experience. You will keep a log and notes of these discussions to submit to the class.

## Presentations

You will give two presentations to the class, each about 40 minutes long. Each presentation will require either a PowerPoint presentation or a printed handout or both.

Presentation 1: Having selected a major world religion, you will explain to the class its basic beliefs and features and its contrasts with Christianity.

Presentation 2: Report to the class what you learned about giving a Christian witness to adherents of the religion you are studying. This will include material gathered from your reading, research, and personal interviews with an expert.

## Written assignment

This course will have no examination. Instead, you will compose a written pamphlet or booklet that would be appropriate to give to an adherent of the world religion you have chosen to study. This document basically should be a positive presentation of the gospel of Christ especially suited to the person, given in the spirit of "gentleness and respect."

## Grading

- Attendance and participation 15%
- Required reading 10%
- Report on expert 5%

- First Presentation 25%
- Second Presentation 25%
- Written assignment 20%

## Class schedule

Sept.	5	
	12	
	19	(no class)
	29	(G. W. Presbytery; no class)
Oct.	3	
	10	Reading requirement due
	17	Report on expert due
	24	(no class)
	31	First presentations begin
Nov.	7	
	14	
	21	Second presentations begin
	28	
Dec.	5	
	12	Written assignment due