

# History of World Religions

Mr. John Marsh, Instructor

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Office: Wagoner 150

Office Hours: MWF 12:00-12:40 & 4:00-5:00

Tuesday 10:30-3:30 When I have a 1:00 meeting on Tuesday, my hours will run to 4:30

Spring 2021

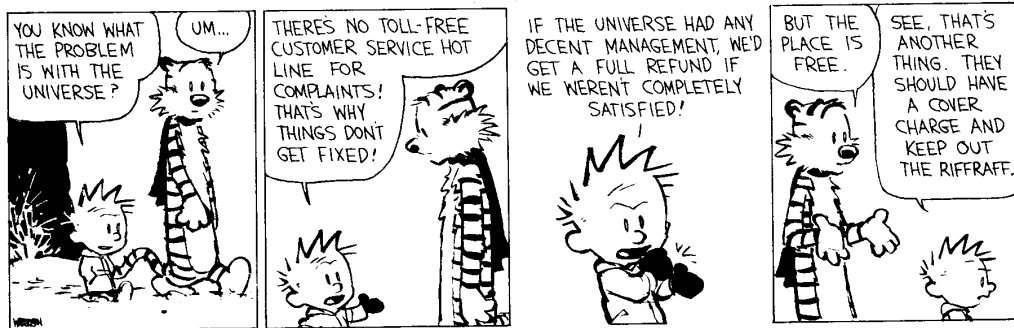
Google Phone: (765) 287-5347

## OPENING STATEMENT

This is going to be another great semester! The pandemic has presented us with a great many challenges this year, and I have been very impressed with the way Academy students have responded. I look forward to another semester where we turn those challenges into growth opportunities, and we find new ways to work together. By the end of May, we will all feel a well-deserved sense of accomplishment.

## CONTACTING ME

If at any time you have questions, comments, problems, or suggestions please talk to me. If you are having difficulty in the course, don't wait. There are things we can discuss to



help you. In addition to my regular office hours, appointments are available. You don't need to be having a problem to contact me. We can have a chat just to get better acquainted.

During my office hours, one way to contact me is by email or phone. Please email me or call me on my Google phone (287-5347), as I will be monitoring them. I will email you back with a Zoom link so we can video conference right then, or we can just talk on the phone if video is not required. If you don't get an answer on my email, please call me on my Google phone. That rings to my cell phone, so I can answer you even if I have stepped away from my desk.

I will be monitoring my email and/or phone during my office hours, but sometimes I won't be physically in my office. However, I will usually be in my office, particularly on MWF. My office is large enough to be sufficiently socially distant. So, you also are welcome to stop by my office in person to see me, and we will wear our masks. In-person visits can be particularly useful if you need help with notetaking, or some other issue on paper or laptop, as we can study it right there. The office can only accommodate the two of us, but I know that sometimes it is helpful to visit with me along with another student or two. I am more than happy to move to a larger space (maybe outside when the weather warms in the spring), so that three or more of us can meet. We can probably find an alternate location when you come by, or we can set it up in advance.

Outside of my office hours, please feel free to email me at any time. Of course, if it is in the evening, you may not get an answer until the next day. If the matter is of some urgency and I don't answer my email, you may call me on my Google phone, preferably before 8pm. If you are fretting over an assignment, or confused about something, it's fine to call. I'd hate to have you worrying needlessly. If

you are sick and will be missing the next day, you do **not** need to call. Email is fine. You will be given ample time to makeup missed work. Those policies are explained later in the syllabus.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION FROM ACADEMY CATALOG

This course will explore the development of religions around the world from prehistoric to modern times. The major world religions will be studied, along with religions of the ancient world, non-literate peoples, and small-scale religions. Primary sources will be emphasized to understand the key components of various religions. Special emphasis will also be placed on exploring the interaction between different religions, as well as the relation of religions to the historical time periods through which they develop.

## REQUIRED TEXTS AND READINGS

*The World's Religions*, second edition, Smart

*Scriptures of the World's Religions*, Sixth edition, Fieser

*Atlas of the World's Religions*, second edition, Smart

## Abbreviation in schedule

“Text”

“Scriptures”

“Atlas”



“Now! That should clear up a few things around here!”

It is your responsibility to see that you have all 3 required books. There will also be some reading assignments from short articles, documents, etc., which will be made available on Canvas (and/or emailed to you). They are listed on the schedule as “Canvas.” Again, it is your responsibility to make sure you have, or can access, the readings for a class.

## BASIC COURSE STRUCTURE

A variety of methods will be used to present and analyze the course material including lecture, discussions, audio-visual materials, activities and simulations. Likewise, grading will be based on a variety of methods including short answer/essay tests, objective tests, projects, and class participation.

Concentration and good notetaking are very important during class time. **Students are expected to read and**

**study the given assignments BEFORE class.** That is essential to their ability to follow the lectures and participate in class discussions. Failure to study the assignments will result in a lower grade in class participation, and of course lower exam scores.

## CLASS POLICIES

**ATTENDANCE AND TARDIES:** The policies in the Student Handbook regarding attendance and tardies will be followed. Students are expected to attend, and be on time, for every class. If you are not in the classroom by the official starting time, you will be marked tardy. If you arrive more than 15 minutes late, you will be marked absent, however you will still be able to turn in assignments, per late policy listed below, and participate in the educational activities of the day, so it is definitely in your

best interest to attend. You must notify me in advance in the case of pre-arranged absences. Academy policy allows a faculty member to report a student as having an unexcused absence for sleeping in class.

**MAKEUP WORK FOR EXCUSED ABSENCES:** Exams, projects and other assignments missed must be made up within 1 week from the date of your return, unless other arrangements are made with me in advance. Do not wait for me to contact you regarding a makeup. It is your responsibility to contact me to schedule a makeup exam. Likewise, for homework and class material, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed and how to make it up.

**UNEXCUSED ABSENCES:** There is no right to makeup exams, quizzes or assignments missed for unexcused absences. However, you still need to discuss the situation with me.

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS:** Any assigned projects or papers would be due at the start of the class period. Late work will only be accepted under the following 2 conditions:

1. If you turn it in later in the class period, or later that same day, there will be a penalty of  $\frac{1}{2}$  letter grade. You must turn in to me in a paper version, so keep in mind that problems with printers or computers are NOT an excuse. As you are well aware, printers can malfunction, so don't wait until 5 minutes before class to print your assignment. Also, if you run back to get your paper, and are consequently late for class, you will be counted tardy.
2. After the due date, if you turn it in within one week, there will be a penalty of one letter grade. Work turned in after that will not be accepted unless I determine there are extenuating circumstances which merit some form of credit.

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:** Academic dishonesty (cheating) will not be tolerated. Some examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to: copying or facilitating copying during exams, turning in written assignments with the same language as others, and copying from internet or print sources without proper citation. Cases of academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to the policies in the Student Handbook. If you have any questions on what constitutes academic dishonesty, I strongly encourage you to consult the Student Handbook, or discuss it with me.

**LAPTOPS:** You may use your laptop to take notes. On days when we have a reading assignment that was given out in electronic format (e-mailed to you or posted on Canvas), you are required to either bring your laptop OR a printout



of the reading assignment to class. Otherwise, you are not required to bring your laptops to class unless I tell you in advance. **Surfing the web, e-mailing, using Instagram or any other activities are strictly forbidden during class. Using your laptop for anything other than educational purposes connected to the class will result in an unexcused absence for that class period, plus 5 points will**

**automatically be subtracted from your participation grade.** A second infraction will result in another unexcused absence, 5 more lost points, and you will be banned from bringing your laptop to class. I reserve the right to check your screen and currently running programs at any time during the class. Use of your laptop in class is a privilege, not a right.

**CLASS ATMOSPHERE:** Feel free to ask questions during the lectures, but always raise your hand and be recognized. Sometimes, if I am in the middle of making a point, I may signal that I have seen you, and will go ahead and complete my point before getting to your question. During class discussions as well, please raise your hand before speaking. Just as in the professional world, an atmosphere of mutual respect and appropriate behavior will be expected at all times. That includes listening to your fellow students as respectfully as you would to me. In addition, it is important to remember that topics we explore during class discussions will be on the exams as well. So, don't relax your concentration on the material just because I'm not lecturing.

### **HISTORY DEPARTMENT CONTENT WARNING STATEMENT**

As with many history classes, the lectures, readings, and discussions will include a range of topics that may be triggering, emotionally distressing, and difficult for some students. Engaging with topics such as slavery and human suffering is essential to this discipline. History seeks to understand the experiences and thought processes of former generations, whether for good or ill. Sometimes the language and word choices used by people in the past may be insensitive or politically incorrect today. Nevertheless, the goal of history is to understand the past within its own context and time. If a reading, image shown in class, or discussion is truly troubling to anyone, please do not hesitate to talk to your instructor. In some circumstances, an alternative reading can be assigned.

### **INDIANA ACADEMY MASK POLICY**



#### **Requirement**

The Indiana Academy will follow [Ball State University's mask policy](#).

Effective July 1, 2020, all people on campus—including faculty, staff, students, vendors, contractors, suppliers, and visitors—should wear face masks (covering nose and mouth) while inside campus buildings. Face masks are specifically required in the following situations:

When in the presence of others (indoors or outdoors) and physical distancing is difficult to maintain, such as in hallways, elevators, stairs, public spaces, and common areas;

When in a classroom or laboratory;

When using campus transportation (such as a shuttle bus);

When multiple individuals are in a University vehicle.

Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to bring their own mask. Masks will be provided to anyone who is unable to bring a mask or their mask is damaged.

## Non-compliance

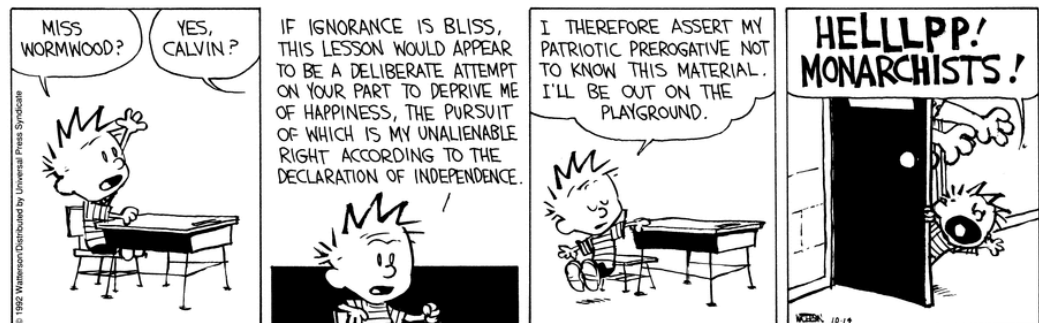
If a student declines to wear a face mask as required, the student will be referred to the Director of Academic Affairs or the Director of Residential Affairs. If the situation occurs in a classroom or other academic setting, it is considered a classroom management issue, and the teacher will remind the student of the requirement and give the student a chance to comply with it prior to referring the matter to the Director of Academic Affairs or the Director of Residential Affairs. Wearing masks is crucial to preventing the spread of COVID-19 to others.

## BSU DIVERSITY POLICY

Ball State University aspires to be a university that attracts and retains a diverse faculty, staff, and student body. We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse as expressed in our Beneficence Pledge and through university resources found at <http://cms.bsu.edu/campuslife/multiculturalcenter>.

## TAKING NOTES

This course has a certain amount of lecture, and I will do my best to present the information in an organized and interesting manner. Concentration and



good notetaking, during lectures as well as discussions, are essential for success in this course. Please talk to me if you are having any trouble taking notes. Here are a few basic tips on notes:

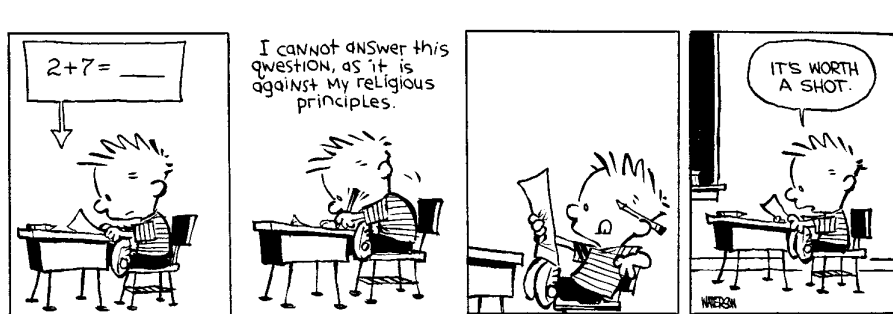
- Read the assigned sections in the text before class. Even if you don't fully grasp it all the first time through, it will provide helpful context for the lecture.
- During lecture, focus on the main points. You can't possibly write down every word I say, but you can write down phrases, names, examples, concepts, and basic elements of a story.
- Be sure to write down any lists, summations, and conclusions I make, as well as anything I repeat.
- If you didn't hear or understand something, you may raise your hand and ask me. Otherwise, skip it and talk to me or a fellow student after class. Do NOT ask your neighbor during lecture as you will miss the current comments and fall farther behind. In addition, it will distract those around you.
- Read your notes as soon as you can after class, and make additions, corrections, or organizational changes while the lecture is still fresh in your mind. Also, if you are unclear on any material, you can ask me about it. This way you will have thorough notes, which you have already reviewed once, when it's time to study for an exam. On the other hand, if you wait until the night before the exam to read your notes, some points will seem unclear and any gaps will

be harder to fill in.

- Review the PowerPoints posted on Canvas and compare them with your notes. However, please note that the PowerPoints are mostly images. They are not a substitute for your notes!
- You may record the lectures if you wish.
- Make sure your note-taking system is organized. If you have to hunt all over your computer to match up notes from 2 successive days of class, then you need a better system.
- Remember, paying close attention and taking good notes during lecture is the first big step in studying for the exams.

## EXAMS & QUIZZES

There will be 5 regular exams which will be mostly short answer/essay. There will be a late midterm exam, comprised entirely of objective questions, which will cover all the material from the first 3 exams. Likewise, there will be a final, comprised entirely of objective questions, covering the material from Exams 4 and 5 plus some additional concluding material. There will usually be a review session prior to the exams.



I reserve the right to give pop quizzes at any time, for any reason. Obviously, the main purpose of those quizzes will be to assure that you are doing the assigned readings before every class, or are engaged and participating in the class. There will be no make ups for

pop quizzes. If you have an excused absence, that quiz will not be used in calculating your grade. If you have an unexcused absence, you will receive a zero for the quiz.

## CLASS PARTICIPATION

Learning is an active process, and the more you are engaged, the more you will get out of this course. There will be a lot of discussion in this course, and it is essential that students come prepared to participate. **I reserve 100 points during the semester for a participation grade.** The participation grade is based on my assessment of your performance in the following areas:

- Attentiveness during lectures
- Studying assignments prior to class, taking notes on readings, and bringing the necessary readings to class
- Participation in class discussions, simulations, and activities
- Participation and effort in group projects
- Adherence to the standards of classroom conduct

Remember, improper use of your laptop during class will cost you 5 points for each infraction. To put that in perspective, losing 5 points is equivalent to dropping an entire letter grade on one of the regular exams. Don't risk it.



I will post 50 points of your participation grade at the end of the third quarter, and the other 50 points at the end of the semester. If you have any questions regarding your standing in that category, at any point during the semester, please talk to me.

## PROJECTS & PAPERS

There will be 1 project and a brief paper in this course. The sacred object/site project is explained in detail at the end of the syllabus. I will give you the details on the art museum paper as we get closer to it.

## GRADES

The following is a list of projected exams/assignments which will apply toward the course grade. I reserve the right to modify this list during the course of the semester. Any significant change will be at announced in class well in advance.

Quiz - prehistoric religion	10 points
Exam 1	50 points
Exam 2	50 points
Quarter 3 class participation	50 points
Sacred object/site project	75 points
Exam 3	50 points
Midterm exam	60 points
Art Museum paper	20 points
Exam 4	50 points
Exam 5	50 points
Final Exam	60 points
Quarter 4 class participation	50 points

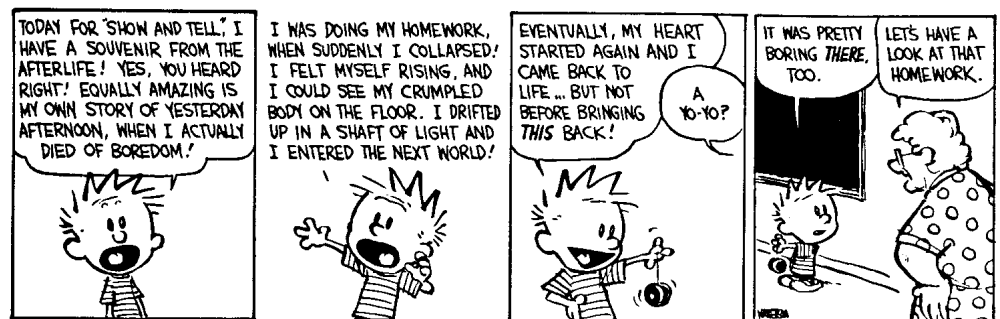
Final grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

A = 92-100%	B+ = 88-89%	B- = 80-81%	C = 72-77%	D* = <70%
A- = 90-91%	B = 82-87%	C+ = 78-79%	C- = 70-71%	

## ASSIGNMENTS

I have listed below the reading assignments for the first month of classes.

**You must read the assignments prior to class on the designated day.** I have also included the tentative dates for exams and projects.



**You are required to bring the scriptures book to class on any day there is an assignment from it (which will be most days).** This is very important, as we will be using those readings in class

discussion. If you received a reading in electronic form (by e-mail or on Canvas), then you must either bring your computer or print out the reading and bring it.

**As the course progresses, it may be necessary to modify some assignments.** I will give you notice of a week or more on changes to exams or major assignments. I will generally give you notice of several days or more if I change a reading assignment. However, circumstances occasionally require minor last-minute changes or additions. I will e-mail to you any such changes no later than 6:00pm on the day before class. **So, you are responsible for checking your e-mail after 6:00pm on the night before class.**

## SCHEDULE

“Canvas” = an electronic reading (Canvas and/or e-mail)

“Text” = *The World's Religions*

“Scriptures” = *Scriptures of the World's Religions* (Often I will give a range of pages and then tell you which ones you can skip from that section, or in some cases, I will list the ones to read from that section.)

“Atlas” = *Atlas of the World's Religions*

As you know, **the first 2 weeks of class are scheduled to be online.** As of now, I am planning to have **live Zoom classes** for all 6 of those days. That is subject to change.

Visual cues and expressions are an important part of human interaction. **I require that your camera be on** unless you have arranged with me in advance to have it off, due to technical or other issues. Obviously, technical issues can arise during a class session. If that happens, just notify me about the situation as soon as you can.

Since you won't have your textbooks yet, scans from the books will be posted on Canvas for those first few weeks.

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		<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings</b>
M	Jan 4	Course Intro, Syllabus	<b>Canvas:</b> Syllabus
		<i>Live on Zoom</i>	
W	Jan 6	What is religion?	<b>Canvas:</b> Textbook scan pages 10-28
		<i>Live on Zoom</i>	
F	Jan 8	Prehistoric religion	<b>Canvas:</b> Textbook scan pages 32-42
		<i>Live on Zoom</i>	<b>Canvas:</b> The Birth of Religion

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M	Jan 11 <i>Live on Zoom</i>	Religion in the world today Overview of South Asia	<b>Canvas:</b> General Ingredients of South Asia Religion <b>Canvas:</b> Textbook scan pages 43-57
		<b>Prehistoric Religion Quiz on Online on Canvas</b>	<b>Take it online on your own time any time after Friday's class. DUE 9pm on this day</b>
W	Jan 13 <i>Live on Zoom</i>	South Asia 1 Early Hinduism - Vedic Brahminism	<b>Canvas:</b> Scripture book scan pages 1-5, 13-26 (All except for "Burning Dead Bodies" and "The Horse Sacrifice." You may skip those two.)
F	Jan 15 <i>Live on Zoom</i>	South Asia 2 Buddhism	<b>Canvas:</b> Textbook scan pages 57-68 <b>Canvas:</b> Scripture book scan pages 97-102, 111-130
W	Jan 20 <i>Back in the classroom</i>	South Asia 3 Jainism	<b>Text:</b> 68-72 <b>Scripture:</b> 75-95 <b>Discussion Questions on Canvas</b>
F	Jan 22	South Asia 4 Upanishads and classical Hinduism	<b>Text:</b> 72-75, 87-91 <b>Scripture:</b> 5-9, 26-37 <b>Atlas:</b> 52-59
M	Jan 25	South Asia 5 Hindu Scripture	<b>Scripture:</b> The following selections from pages 37-74: The Meaning of Yoga, Yogic Techniques, Yogic Attainments, The Four Ages, The Buddha a False Teacher, Rama a God among Humans, The Bhagavad-Gita, Praise of the Goddess, Actions and their Results, The Four Stages of Life, Leaving Home Life, Duties of the Four Social Classes, How Women Should Live, Manu's Instructions for Finding the Right Mate
W	Jan 27	Finish discussing Hindu Scripture Review session for Exam I	No new reading assignment. You can review the study terms, notes and readings from Jan 11-Jan 25 to prep for the review session

F	Jan 29	<b>EXAM 1</b>	
W	Feb 3	Discuss Sacred Site/Object Projects  Introduce Theravada & Mahayana Buddhism	Review project description from the <b>Syllabus</b> pages 10-13 <b>Canvas:</b> Theravada-Mahayana Chart

### TENTATIVE EXAM & PROJECT DATES

Jan 29	Exam 1
Late-Feb	Exam 2
Mid-March	Exam 3
Mid-March	Midterm Exam
Late March	Sacred object/site project due
Early April	Exam 4
Late April	Exam 5
May 10-14	Final Exam TBA

### SACRED OBJECT/SITE PROJECT

For this project, you will select and create a replica, model, drawing, or other representation, of an object, structure, complex, natural site, deity, or narrative scene which has significance to one (or possibly more) of the world's religions. Your project can be a three-dimensional item or a flat representation. It does need to represent an actual, not a made up, object, structure, complex, or natural site.



Examples of objects for your subject include, but are not limited to: carvings, amulets, figurines, ritual equipment, masks, headdresses, scrolls, or relics. You could also make a model of a temple, religious complex, ruins, sacred natural site, statue, shrine, or megaliths. You could do a drawing or other representation of a painting, temple layout, or sacred city.

If you're making a three-dimensional object, you need to keep it of manageable size— say, no larger than roughly 2' x 2' x 2'. If you really feel your object needs to be larger than that, then I want you to talk to me ahead of time and get my approval. If you are making a flat representation, then it can be as large as a poster board size— roughly 2' x 3'.

Besides the actual product you create, the other component of this project is a set of accompanying materials. This set must include the following 3 items:

1. A page listing the basic information on your subject (2 copies) *This is going to function as the sign for your project when it is on display, so please keep that in mind as you layout the page*
  - the name or title of the piece *Please make this large - at least 28 pt.*

- the religion(s) involved
  - the date or time period it was created and used
  - the geographical location(s)
  - the materials used in the actual item
  - the condition or whereabouts today (if known)
  - a photo or photos of the actual item
  - a paragraph or two describing how you created your product
2. **A two-page description of why the item was (is) religiously significant, and how it was (is) used.** (2 copies). In other words, what did (does) it mean to the followers of that faith, what would they do with it (or do there), and what do they think that activity or object will do for them?
  3. The grading rubric

**You must turn in 2 copies of the first two items (info page, description).** The reason is that we will put these projects on display for the whole Academy. I will grade one set and return it to you, and the other set (without grading marks) will go on display with the object.

One of the goals of this class is of course to expose you to the rich tapestry of religion in the world. As such, I want you to choose a subject from a religion of which you are not personally a practitioner. However, at no time in this course will I ever ask you about your personal religious views or affiliation, so this requirement will have to be on the honor system. It is obvious though, that if you are, for example, a practicing Roman Catholic, then making a set of rosary beads and describing how they are used and what they mean to a Catholic, would not be particularly educational for you. Also, in keeping with the academic approach of this course, your description of your subject cannot include derogatory or insensitive comments regarding the item or the associated religious faith.

The project is worth 75 points, which is equivalent to one and a half of our regular exams, so it's worth a strong effort on your part. Plus, for clearly exceptional projects, I may award extra credit. I have included the grading rubric at the end of the syllabus. You should definitely study it to get an idea how the project will be graded. You are required to write your name, and the title of your project on the rubric and turn it in with your project. Also, if time and circumstances permit, we may put the projects on display in one of the lounges for a period of time.

I hope you let your creative juices flow, learn some entirely new information, and have some fun with this project. It is after all a chance to earn some points by doing something other than studying for a test.

#### FAQs

*I'm having trouble thinking of something to do. Do you have any suggestions?*

You have the whole field of world religions, past and present, to choose from. Here are some things you can do to generate ideas:

- Think about what religions, religious ideas, shrines, or ancient ruins intrigue you; or which you know very little about
- Flip through the books for this course

- Keep an eye out during our class sessions and reading assignments for something of interest.
- Surf the Internet
- Take a trip to the BSU Art Museum
- Or, instead of starting with the subject matter, you could start by thinking of what type of product you want to make (drawing, wooden model, etc.), and then let that lead you toward a subject
- You can come talk to me about it

*I'm not much of an artist. Will that hurt my grade?*

Not at all. There are number of projects you can do that don't require specific artistic ability.

Furthermore, I am looking to see that you put thought and effort into this project. That clearly shows through in a variety of ways, regardless of artistic ability.

*Can I use a kit?*

Yes. For example, if you get a kit where you make a plaster cast of a statue of an Egyptian God, and then paint it, that would be fine. You can even get free kits. For example, I've seen free patterns online for making a paper folding model of Angkor Wat. A kit would be another way to make a product that would not necessarily require a great deal of artistic ability. **However**, let me remind you that one of the key things I will be grading on is effort. Some kits would obviously require a certain amount of effort, and others not so much. If all you do is paint eyes on a pre-made statue, or string a few ready-made beads and an amulet on a chain, even though the product might look great, the amount of effort is not going to be too impressive.

**RUBRIC: The rubric is only one page.** However, computer setups and printers vary, so occasionally the lines or spacing get messed up, or the rubric turns into 2 pages. **Please check it before you print it out, and make any necessary adjustments.**



# Sacred Object/Site Project — Grading Rubric

*You must turn in this form with your project  
Circled items on grading indicate a problem*

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Project Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Basics included

Basic information, photograph, rubric 10 points \_\_\_\_\_

## Two-page description

Accurate information

Readability

Grammar and spelling 25 points \_\_\_\_\_

## Product

Complexity, Effort

Appearance

Meets requirements 40 points \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL** 75 points \_\_\_\_\_