





Religious Studies (RELS) 211

Death and Dying in World Religions (Revision 2)

Status: Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#)  for the current revision 

Delivery mode: [Individualized study online](#) 

Credits: 3

Areas of study: Arts or Humanities

Prerequisite: None

Precluded: None

Challenge: RELS 211 is not available for challenge.

Faculty: [Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences](#) 

Overview

Religious Studies 211: Death and Dying in World Religions, a general survey course about the conceptions of the afterlife in Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism, and various rituals and experiences associated with death in each of these traditions. This course does not require any prior experience in the academic study of religion, nor does it require you to have a prior knowledge of any of the religions covered in this course. The Study Guide, assigned readings, and videos will provide you with all the information necessary to help you achieve the following course objectives and successfully complete the course.

Outline

- Unit 1: Course Overview
- Unit 2: An Overview of Judaism and Jewish Views of Death and the Afterlife
- Unit 3: An Overview of Christianity and Christian Views of Death and the Afterlife
- Unit 4: An Overview of Islam and Islamic Views of Death and the Afterlife
- Unit 5: An Overview of Hinduism and Hindu Views of Death and the Afterlife
- Unit 6: An Overview of Buddhism and Buddhist Views of Death and the Afterlife
- Unit 7: Near-Death Experiences
- Unit 8: Death and Funerary Rituals
- Unit 9: Grieving, Mourning, and Remembrance
- Unit 10: Dying the Good Death

Objectives

1. Describe the basic religious worldviews of the four major world religions.
2. Outline the historical development of beliefs pertaining to death and the afterlife in each of these religions.
3. Explain the different funerary and mourning rituals associated with each religion, and some of the analytical frameworks that scholars use when

engaging the cross-cultural studies of death.

4. Describe the various ways in which the members of different religious traditions deal with the process of grieving.
5. Explain the integration of death practices and rituals into the process of palliative care.

Evaluation

To **receive credit** [↗](#) for RELS 211, students must complete all their quizzes and hand in all their assignments by the end of the stipulated contract date, and complete the Final Examination.


Students must also achieve a course composite grade of at least **D (50 percent)** [↗](#), and pass the Final Examination with a grade of at least D (50 percent). The weighting of the evaluative activities is summarized in the table below.


Activity	Weight
3 Online Quizzes(10% each)	30%
Research Essay	35%
Final Examination	35%
Total	100%


The **final examination** for this course must be requested in advance and written under the supervision of an AU-approved exam invigilator. Invigilators include either ProctorU or an approved in-person invigilation centre that can accommodate online exams. Students are responsible for payment of any invigilation fees. Information on exam request deadlines, invigilators, and other exam-related questions, can be found at the **Exams and grades** [↗](#) section of the Calendar.

To learn more about assignments and examinations, please refer to Athabasca University's **online Calendar** [↗](#).

Materials

Moreman, Christopher. *Beyond the Threshold: Afterlife Beliefs and Experiences in World Religions*, 2nd ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2018.  (Print)





Katzir, Yael. *Shivah for my Mother: Seven Days of Mourning*. Directed by Yael Katzir. 2003. Los Angeles: New Love Films, 2005.  (Audio/Video)

Nakazawa, Shinichi and Douglas Penick. *The Tibetan Book of the Dead: A Way of Life / The Great Liberation*. Directed by Hiroaki Mori, Yukari Hayashi, and Barrie Mclean. 1994. New York: Kino Lorber, 2009. DVD.  (Audio/Video)

Other Materials

All other materials, including additional required readings, are available online.

Important links

- › [Academic advising](#) 
- › [Program planning](#) 
- › [Request assistance](#) 
- › [Support services](#) 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

Updated June 4, 2024

View **previous revision** 
