

Welcome to RELS7! You have been officially Rick-rolled! This is a tradition in my classes.

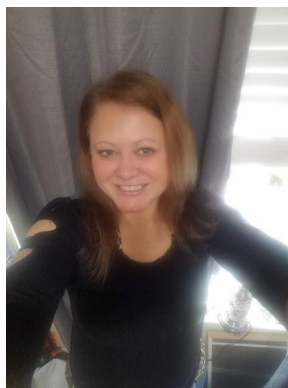
Rick Astley - Never Gonna Give You Up (Video)



*If you aren't sure what just happened, you have been [Rick-rolled](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rickrolling) (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rickrolling>). Please click the link to find out more.

**Your instructor for this course is not Rick Astley. Scroll down for more information.

Contact Information



←-----

Instructor: Sarah Whyllly (this is me)

Classroom: On the Interwebs @ the Zoom spot. Check the Canvas navigation



(<https://canvas.santarosa.edu/courses/51537/files/4046067?wrap=1>)

for the Zoom link where mandatory lectures will be listed.

Email: swhyly@santarosa.edu
(<mailto:swhyly@santarosa.edu>)

(<mailto:swhyly@santarosa.edu>)

Phone: 707.307.3034 (text please, I'm a Millennial and phone conversations terrify me)

Office: Canvas messaging system, email, phone (text messages preferred) or Zoom tool (in Canvas) linked on left-side navigation

Office Hours: Thursdays from 4-5 pm in Zoom

Interactive Lecture Sessions: TBA

Class Runs: 1/26 - 5/21/21

Class Times: Check the modules for any announced live video lecture times.

These will be mandatory and held during the time period reserved on the schedule, Tuesdays from 12-1:30 pm

Teaching Assistant: Jesse Hayes

Email: jessejosephh@gmail.com
(<mailto:jessejosephh@gmail.com>)

Text: 707.490.8505



<-----This is Jesse, if any
of you were wondering.

The following deadline dates have been established for this section:

Day Class Begins:	Tuesday, January 26, 2021
Day Class Ends:	Friday, May 21, 2021
Day/Time of Final Exam:	To be Arranged
Last Day to Add without instructor's approval:	Tuesday, January 26, 2021
Last Day to Add with instructor's approval:	Sunday, February 7, 2021
Last Day to Drop and be eligible for enrollment/course fee refund:	Sunday, January 31, 2021
Last Day to Drop without a 'W' symbol:	Sunday, February 7, 2021
Last Day to Drop with a 'W' symbol:	Sunday, April 25, 2021
Last Day to Opt for Pass/No Pass:	Friday, May 21, 2021
First Census Date:	Monday, February 8, 2021
Mid-Term Date:	3/29/2021 - 4/25/2021

DESCRIPTION

This class is an introductory survey of the religious traditions, beliefs, and practices of ancient and modern India, ancient and medieval China, and medieval and modern Japan.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Describe several religious practices, beliefs, and major tenets of religions originating from South Asia: Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, and Buddhism.
2. Describe several religious practices, beliefs, and major tenets of religions originating from East Asia: Chinese folk traditions, Taoism, and Shinto.

TEXTBOOK(s)

Scribd.com Membership [_ \(https://www.scribd.com/g/5yuqn\)](https://www.scribd.com/g/5yuqn) - linked is the site where you can purchase the online subscription to gain access to the book collection for this course. The link will give you 2 months free. After the first two months the subscription is \$8.99 and you will need it for the remainder of the course.

A link to our course collection is provided in the first module and each individual reading assigned will also be linked in the relevant module.

Total Cost for books for course: \$0.00 - 8.99.

Once you have purchased the membership, please click on the link below to access the course bookshelf:

RELS7: Wisdom Traditions of Asia [_ \(https://www.scribd.com/lists/18100273/RELS7-Wisdom-Religions-of-Asia\)](https://www.scribd.com/lists/18100273/RELS7-Wisdom-Religions-of-Asia)

Course Component Terminology:

This course is going to be run with elements of a multiplayer role-playing game. I will explain to all of you what this means as we progress but essentially we will be treating some of the work and activities of the class as part of a giant role-playing game. If you don't know what this is, please don't let that scare you, I am very patient and I guarantee we will have a lot of fun together.

XP – Experience points or, in other classes, points.

Guilds – Groups; I will be organizing you all into guilds. You will need a name for your guild so this will be your first collective decision to make!

RPG – Role-playing game

Interaction/Work Modes:

Course Site: This is a Canvas course. Make sure you understand how to access the site for this course. We will go over some of the details of how to navigate Canvas in the Getting Started Module in the Modules area. I will post any announcements for class on Canvas, and it should be checked at least four times a week. All work completed for the course will be submitted to a submission area within the modules area of the course designated for that particular assignment. No submissions will be accepted via any other means, including email.

Groups & Group Discussions - Also, known as guild work/guild discussions. You will be completing certain assignments within groups using certain features of Canvas that will be described in the assignments within the modules of the course. Please be aware that this will require you to plan online meeting times with your assigned group-mates. Working with your group is part of your grade for the course and your participation is required.

Zoom Sessions - A series of Zoom lecture Sessions will be held throughout the semester and your attendance is optional at these. If you cannot attend the session in person, you must view the archived, recorded lecture. Make sure you have downloaded and know how to use Zoom. Your instructor cannot provide support for this tool but there is support that can be access through Zoom and our media services specialists. The webpage for [downloading and learning about Zoom](https://media.santarosa.edu/zoom) (<https://media.santarosa.edu/zoom>) is on our Media Services site.

Points Structure of the Course:

The student will, by doing the assigned work for the course, accumulate experience points which will determine the final grade.

Your grade will be based on XP you earn divided by the total number of XP possible from required assignments for the course.

Grading:

The student will, by doing the assigned work for the course, accumulate points which will determine the final grade.

As this is a three unit, UC transferrable course, the student is expected to do 6-9 hours of homework every week (2 hours outside class for every one hour inside class is the legal definition of a unit in a lecture class).

Assignment Descriptions:

Critical Response Papers/Scroll Crafting: Two times during the course I will ask you to submit a paper to address a challenge question on a topic. You will choose at least 3 of the readings from the ones assigned in the class to help you answer the question. You will need to include MLA citations and references to refer to the readings. **These should be at least 3-4 full pages in length, double-spaced, 12 point font, with 1 inch margins and no header. I can only accept file submissions in Word or Google Docs and the papers will need to be uploaded to Canvas as a file. I cannot open and so do not accept, .pages files. There is a list of specific formatting requirements for papers for the class that are shared here in the syllabus.**

Discussion Boards: Students will address questions/prompts posted several times during the semester. Each discussion board assignment will have instructions based on what you need to do and whether you are working with your guild or on your own for the assignment. The post should reflect an understanding of the reading materials associated with the prompt and make use of specific passages from the reading to support students' answers. Some of these will reference adventuring in a role-playing environment which will be discussed later. **Sometimes these are guild assignment and other times they are solo ones.** Specific instructions will be given for each of

these.

Quizzes: There will be 4-5 in the class and the format of these will be decided.

Zoom Classroom Assignments: These will be worth a small number of points per assignment and will only be available to be completed during class time. Students must attend class in order to complete the assignment. Even if an class absence is excused, if one of these assignments is worked on during a class time, the assignment cannot be made up later.

Miscellaneous Additional Credit Assignments: These assignments are given at the instructor's discretion and they will allow you to earn additional points to help yourself. These will be announced randomly.

Classwork and Homework Activities (This is how you earn XP):

Guild Work:

This is group work. You will be playing a particular role within a scenario that will be described to you. Your TA Jesse is in charge of the fun in this area. I will explain more about this as we go.

Guild Adventures:

- 25 XP each 2-4 times per semester

Classroom Zoom Adventures:

- 10-15 points per adventure

Solo Adventures:

This is work you will do on your own without help from your guild.

Scroll Crafting/Critical Response papers:

- 100 XP each; 2 due in total

Individual Discussion Boards:

- 50 XP each; 4 in total

Quizzes

- 50 XP each; 4-5 in total

Paper Formatting Expectations:

Please ensure that all submitted papers meet all of the following parameters:

- 1 inch margins on all sides
- 12 point font; either Times New Roman or Cambria. If another font is chosen, it will need to use the same spacing of letters proportional to each other that is used in Times New Roman or Cambria. If I copy and paste your document into Word and find that the proportions or spacing differ significantly and if this causes the writing to be shorter than the required length, your score will be penalized.
- MLA citation at the top of the first page
- No use of a header; your submission will be tagged with your name, the date, and the course when it is submitted to Canvas, therefore it does not require a header.
- Double-spaced, including between paragraphs. Do not use quadruple spacing between paragraphs.
- Quotes should be no longer than 2-3 lines of the submission. Please do not use multiple quotes. Use [ellipses](https://www.thepunctuationguide.com/ellipses.html) [\(https://www.thepunctuationguide.com/ellipses.html\)](https://www.thepunctuationguide.com/ellipses.html) to indicated portions of the quote you wish to call attention to. (Please use the link if you aren't sure how to do this.)
- Please use spell/grammar check and ensure that you have spelled names, titles, etc. correctly and used proper capitalization and punctuation for proper names.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM & INTEGRITY

Teaching religion is a very tricky business. I, or a student, may call something a “myth” that someone in the class believes is factually true. Some people’s religious beliefs may be offended or even directly refuted during this class. Below are some principles that are intended to govern the discussion. These are important given we are in a diverse, pluralistic and secular institution (and society, according to the Constitution) and given that probably more people have been tortured and killed over religious beliefs than any other reason in the history of the world.

1. **Academic Freedom.** No opinion is taboo. No one in my class will ever be silenced on the basis of the content of an opinion they express. Grades will never be based on the content of one's opinion. Academic freedom is a core value; education (as opposed to indoctrination) cannot really happen without it. This applies equally to instructor and student.
2. **Respect for Diversity.** While one may express any opinion in terms of its content; that freedom does not absolutely apply to the WAY something is said. I will not protect anyone from an offensive opinion. Indeed, one cannot simultaneously protect freedom of speech and freedom from offence. However, I will insist that opinions are expressed with respect for persons. You may argue against someone’s religious beliefs in class, but you may not ridicule them (ad hominem) or put them down as a person or judge them based on their membership in a particular group or classification, real or imagined (stereotyping).

3. **Academic rigor.** The basis of the class is that we engage in historical survey and critical analysis of the religious ideas, practices, and texts we study. It is not an “appreciation” class or a devotional study or spiritual exercise. Because of the analytical nature of the class, cherished beliefs might feel threatened regardless of the respectful intentions of the speaker. While no one will be silenced, or graded down because they express a particular opinion, everyone will be held accountable to give real evidence and valid arguments for their opinions. By argument I mean a series of reasons given to support a particular conclusion (belief). An argument is invalid if the reasons don’t actually support the conclusion. By critical I mean the position that a claim, a belief, to be worthy of being accepted, must be made of good reasons and is subject to be judged as true/false, better/worse on the basis of the quality of the reasons given.
4. **Academic Integrity for Instructors.** It is my responsibility to distinguish personal conviction from professionally accepted views in the discipline and present data and information fairly and objectively. The student is urged to keep in mind from the get-go that “Professionally accepted views in the discipline” are not the same as “what I learned in Sunday school.” In fact, those two things are usually very different.

Academic Integrity for Students. It is your responsibility to do your own, honest, research, study and writing, to back up what you claim with evidence and always cite--AND VERIFY when possible--your source. Cheating of any kind will not be tolerated. Copying another student’s work or committing plagiarism will result in automatic zero for the assignment (first offense). Repeat offenders are subject to automatic F for the course or even expulsion.

An Overview of the SRJC Academic Integrity Policy:

Types of Academic Dishonesty

Acts of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Cheating:** Any act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through the use of dishonest, deceptive or fraudulent means.
- **Plagiarism:** Any act of submitting the work of another, in whole or in part, as one’s own without properly referencing the source. This includes use of direct quotations, paraphrases, ideas and facts which are not common knowledge, whether the sources are published or unpublished. This can even happen with one’s work previous work.
- **Collusion:** Any act where a student knowingly or intentionally helps or is helped by another student(s) to commit an act of academic dishonesty.
- **Other Academic Misconduct:** Any act such as stealing, altering grades, forging, sabotaging the work of others, lying or any other acts of academic dishonesty as deemed by instructor.

Actions

1. **Exoneration.** If, after meeting with the student, the instructor determines the allegations are false, the student will be exonerated, and no Academic Dishonesty Incident Report form will be filed. In the case of team/collaborative projects, if an offending team member is determined to have acted alone, the other members will be exonerated.
2. **Sanctions** for acts of academic dishonesty may be academic and/or administrative. Team/collaborative projects where a single student may have committed an act of dishonesty can lead to sanctions against the entire team unless the offending student admits to committing the act independent of others.

Academic Sanction: If an instructor determines that an act of academic dishonesty has occurred, he or she shall apply the appropriate sanction. A failing grade for the entire course is not an allowable academic sanction. However, an assignment for which a grade of zero is given could lead to unsuccessful course completion depending on the weight of the assignment in the course grading system if it drops the student's grade below a passing average.

1. If, following the meeting with the instructor, the student admits to the incident of academic dishonesty, the instructor will determine the appropriate sanction. This can include, but is not limited to, requiring that the assignment be resubmitted, deducting grade points, and/or awarding a grade of zero on the assignment in question.
2. If the instructor considers that the incident warrants greater sanction, he/she must review the incident with the Department Chair/Program Director or Supervising Administrator and may issue a Reprimand or Removal from Class by Instructor (not to exceed two (2) class meetings) and/or indicate the need for immediate administrative review on the Academic Dishonesty Incident Report. A copy of the incident report will be placed in the student's confidential discipline file.
3. If, following the meeting with the instructor, the student disputes the instructor's findings or questions the fairness of the sanction, the instructor, Department Chair/Program Director, or Supervising Administrator or Vice President of Student Services or designee will inform the student of his or her right to file a complaint regarding this decision under the [Student Grievances/Complaints procedure \(https://rightsresponsibilities.santarosa.edu/complaints-grievances\)](https://rightsresponsibilities.santarosa.edu/complaints-grievances).

WARNING! BIOHAZARD!

Actual Students, Potential Students, and Everybody Else:

Please consider the following carefully. As a college instructor in the field of the study of religion (and Mythology, contrary to some popular notions, is Religious Studies, at least it is for this class and instructor) I get bombarded by faith-based questions, struggles, and objections all the time. So it is very important that the student understands some things about this enterprise from the outset.

There are, of course, different views of religion and myth, and different methods and assumptions behind the process of interpreting sacred texts and religious ideas. The one I take here is one I share

with many other experts in this field. In other words, my approach is not idiosyncratic, but one I share with an intellectual community of scholars. But--it should go without saying--my approach is not shared by all college teachers who handle myth and religion. There are many methods, many theories, many assumptions that individuals hold about what myth and religion are and how to teach them. I study and engage in dialogue pretty much all different approaches, and will share ideas in class often that are different from my own opinions on the matter. That is as it should be. But I also have my own convictions about the matter-- developed over decades of full-time study and reflection--and that is also as it should be. I regard the principles I briefly outline here as the most appropriate for a public, diverse, secular institution which this is. Another approach might be appropriate in a different kind of institutional context, for example, a Hindu school, a Rabbinical school or Christian seminary, but not here. So, for the purposes of what I do, and what my students will be measured by in assessing their work, these are the premises of this and all my classes.

The Objective or Outsider's Perspective

Every time I use the much maligned word "objective" someone objects that there is no such object. I am very aware of the postmodern critiques of "objectivity" and the problems in epistemology (the theory of knowledge) hotly debated by philosophers. I mean something fairly simple here and I will stick by it, epistemological debates notwithstanding. Scholars of religion frequently use "Outsider's View" instead of "objective", but I use them here as mutually explanatory synonyms: by "Objective" I MEAN "Outsider's Perspective." The very nature of religious beliefs and sacred texts makes this vitally important and necessary. Because of the diversity and contradictions among religious creeds and stories about the same topics and texts, to take a point of view that is partisan, that is loyal to, that advocates one particular religious persuasion in this business would be the defining characteristic of bias (bias, as I use the word, is the opposite of objective or outside-perspective).

It is possible to take a view that is not biased IN THIS SENSE. Yes, yes I know the common adage that we're all biased. I hear it all the time. While that may very well be true, we are not all biased to the same degree, in the same way, about the same things. It is quite possible to step up to a debated issue, and address it not have any investment--membership, ownership, debt to--any of the parties involved. That is the ideal position, I argue, for a scholar of religion. And that is, in my usage, what the word "secular" means.

Still have questions? Consult with your instructor!

The final requirement for this course....have fun! This course should inspire learning, make you think critically, spark creativity in whatever your chosen path happens to be, open up the pages of history for your use, and provide greater enjoyment of history!

Other Course Policies:

Attendance Policy:

You are permitted 3 unexcused absences during the 17 week course. Excused absences require documentation with clear evidence supporting the reason for the absence. Daily work completed in class cannot be made up regardless of the type of absence, however, if an excused absence is planned and discussed ahead of time, quizzes may be made up. Each student is eligible for one only of these make-up quizzes per semester and only in conjunction with the conditions laid out above. It is at the instructor's discretion to approve this. This is to ensure that students remain in contact with me throughout the semester so that I can assist if there are going to be absences and missed work.

Missed quizzes will be assigned a make-up date and time. It is the student's responsibility to make themselves available for the make-up quiz date and time should they need to take one. The content of make-up quizzes will not be the same as the content of the regularly scheduled quiz.

Late Submission Policy:

Please refer to the list of individual assignments for the late policy pertaining to each one. Due dates for the course must be strictly adhered to. Students are responsible for planning the completion of their work accordingly and arranging their schedules to be able to attend class and complete their work.

Electronic Device Policy:

I am perhaps odd amongst most of my peers in that I believe it is important to use technology wisely and I don't ban its use or frown upon it in my classroom. However, this largesse comes at a price. If I notice that you have your phone, tablet, laptop, etc. out in class, I will make copious use of it during our time together, asking you to answer questions, look things up, and generally be my 2nd brain. If you can live with this, excellent and come prepared. If not, beware! If I find that you are pre-occupied with your device and you are not paying attention in class; well, I am incredibly creative and that alone should scare you.

Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations should register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resources Department (SDRD). Please bring verification to class from the SDRD indicating your need and approval for academic accommodations. This should, ideally, be done within the first week of class.

Please speak with me if you have any questions.

You can visit the [Student Disabilities Resources Department](https://drd.santarosa.edu/) [\(https://drd.santarosa.edu/\)](https://drd.santarosa.edu/) for more information and to get registered.

