I. Contact Information
Communication is a two way process. You must take an active part in this process if we are to communicate successfully this semester.

The Journal
Use the Journal link for all email messages to me. The Journal link is on the left side of the page just under Course Content. Your Journal is a private site between you and me and is very useful for student-teacher interaction. Check the Journal whenever you check into the course - I may write to you even if you haven’t written to me.

Announcements
I send Announcements on a regular basis to teach, to send reminders, to provide access to relevant material, and to offer short extra credit opportunities.

Always check for Announcements when you check into Blackboard. They are an integral part of this course. I will assume that you have read all of my Announcements.

Online Office hours
Online Office Hours work like Skype and can be arranged individually with students. You will find this link in the Course Menu.

Class days and times
This is an asynchronous online class. We do not meet at specified times. I expect you to check into the course daily to keep up with required work and scheduled assignments, Journal contacts, and Announcements. I expect you to follow the weekly schedules for each Unit of the class in Course Content.

KEEPING UP WITH SCHEDULED WORK, SUBMITTING WORK CORRECTLY AND ON TIME, ARE YOUR KEYS TO SUCCESS IN THIS CLASS.
II. Course Description and Goals

In RELS 332: World Religions and Global Issues, we study global issues in order to become more informed global citizens. Unit Titles are:
UNIT 1: War & Conflict
UNIT 2: Human Rights & Social Justice
UNIT 3: The Environmental Crisis.

In each 5-week Unit we will have a specific case study to help focus our work. We will explore the root causes of these issues, the problems they pose, and the challenges they present for the future. We will also look at the role religions play in global affairs. Are religions one of the roots of global problems? Do religious traditions offer ways to deal with some of these issues? Do different religions have different views on human rights, the environment, war & conflict?

It's surprising to realize how relevant religions have become in the 21st century. To be an informed global citizen, a working knowledge of the world's religions is very helpful. In this course we will get an introductory knowledge of important religious traditions like Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism, and we'll learn about interesting theological and philosophical developments like Liberation Theology, Deep Ecology, and some aspects of Native American traditions.

This course is ambitious in scope, we study significant global issues, some of the world’s great religions, and we read about history and fundamental ideas and concepts related to politics and international relations. One purpose of this course is to equip ourselves with important knowledge about serious global issues, and to examine the role we play as global citizens living with the problems of the 21st century.

Pathways

Prerequisites
There are no prerequisites for this course, but be aware that this is an Upper Division University course with reading and writing expectations consistent with that level of University work.

III. Required Texts and Materials
These books are available in the AS Bookstore or online, at your discretion. You will need *Justice & Peace* immediately for the 1st week of class, and *Palestine* soon after that.

**Purchase these books right away; I am not going to backtrack for students who delay getting necessary course materials.**

**Other Readings and Course Materials**
All other readings, videos, and video lectures for the class are available in *Course Content*.

**Equipment**
1. You need a computer with the capacity to handle Blackboard, read PDF files, and stream videos.
2. You will need to submit work in .docx or .pdf formats.
3. You will need a reliable Internet connection.

**Student Learning Objectives**
Specific Student Learning Objectives are identified for each week of the course. However, upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Show a mastery of critical ideas and concepts of diverse religious worldviews.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the role religions play in specific global issues.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the special vocabularies associated with the study of religion, international relations, human rights, and environmental studies.
4. Demonstrate openness to different cultural and religious worldviews, beliefs, and practices.
5. Articulate the strengths and weaknesses of different viewpoints on important global issues.
6. Critically examine the strengths and weaknesses of their own beliefs, opinions, and views on global issues.

**IV. Course Usage of Blackboard**

**NOTE WELL:** As an online student you are expected to use Blackboard effectively for this course. *It is your choice to enroll in an online course, so it is your responsibility to know, or to quickly learn, how to work online.*

You will be expected to develop technical competency in using Blackboard. Developing computer skills is important for the contemporary job market, and online courses give you the opportunity to work on those skills.

**If you experience technical difficulties, first contact ITSS/Student Support.**
There is a link to Student Support at the top of the page in Blackboard. They have
the technical expertise to resolve your problems. You can contact me to let me know what’s going on, but I am not your tech person.

During this course you may be asked to do some of the following in Blackboard:
1. Efficiently navigate this course.
2. Use the text editor in Blackboard (for assignments, discussion boards, blogs, and essay exams).
3. Attach, open, and create PDF documents.
4. Use email in a professional manner (we use the Journal link for all course email). This means appropriately addressing the person you are writing to, using proper tone in your message, and responding promptly to messages.
5. Watch online videos using a variety of video players like QuickTime, YouTube, and others.
6. Take online quizzes, exams, and surveys.
7. Submit assignments correctly via Blackboard.
8. Take a screen shot and send it to me.

HINTS:
- If you are experiencing issues with software (video players, Adobe, Java), try updating the software.
- Some issues can be resolved by trying a different Internet browser: Safari, Firefox, Google Chrome, and Internet Explorer are some of your options.
- Sometimes clearing your browsing history can help, as can restarting your computer.

Weekly schedules, weekly learning objectives, links to readings, videos, and required work are all found in Course Content. Right now you have access to the 5 weeks of UNIT 1 of the class, so you can look at all the work for those 5 weeks, and you can make a calendar of work and due dates. UNITS 2 & 3 of the class will be made available to you at the appropriate time.

CLICK AND SCROLL, CLICK AND SCROLL!!!
This is how you learn to navigate what is on a web page, and find live links to necessary material. Explore what’s on a page before asking questions.

"Chico State Online" app
This is a free app that may be helpful for accessing Blackboard from mobile devices.

Online Etiquette
Keep in mind that we are using our computers to talk with other people.
- Be respectful at all times.
- Religion is a sensitive topic, as are other topics we’ll be dealing with. Let’s avoid judgmental comments, prejudices, and stereotypes. Our purpose here is to help each
other learn, to be open-minded, to be willing to examine our own ideas and beliefs, and to consider new points of view.
- If we interact with each other in respectful ways, then just about anything can be a part of our conversation.

V. Dropping and Adding
- You are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. found http://www.csuchico.edu/catalog/. You should be aware of the new deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes.
- If you stop participating in this class but remain enrolled, you will appear on the final grade roster and I will have to give you a final grade. If you intend to drop the course, it is your responsibility to do that, not mine.

VI. Assignments and Grading Policies
1. This class has 3 Units. Each Unit is five-weeks long.
2. Each Unit includes video lectures, readings, videos, and written work. For each Unit there will be:
   1 or 2 written assignments (25 points each);
   4 or 5 discussion topics (10 points each);
   1 quiz (50 points each);
   1 essay exam (100 points each)
3. I expect to see evidence in your work from the readings, lectures, and videos of the course. Part of your grade will be based on demonstrating knowledge of course material.
4. **TO BE SUCCESSFUL: Make a calendar of due dates for all graded work for each 5-week Unit of the class.** Keep up with scheduled work; submit your work on time and in the correct way.
5. Due Dates and Times for our 3 Exams:
   Exam #1 (Unit 1) due Feb. 20, 5:00pm
   Exam #2 (Unit 2) due April 3, 5:00pm
   Exam #3 (Unit 3) due May 13, 5:00pm (this is the Wednesday of Finals Week)

Late or Incorrectly Submitted Work
- I don’t accept late Assignments, Quizzes, or Exams or work that is not submitted correctly.
- Some work is available for a limited time period, and availability and due dates are indicated in the weekly schedules. It is your responsibility to keep track of when work is available and when it is due.
- Reprogramming Blackboard for late or incorrectly submitted work is a very inefficient use of my time, and it makes an online course unmanageable. This policy is in place for very good reasons, and **you are not the exception to this policy.** If I make an exception for 1 student then I am obligated, in all fairness, to make the
same exception for everyone. Then the policy is no longer a policy, and the course becomes unmanageable.

- **SUBMITTING YOUR WORK CORRECTLY AND ON TIME IS A KEY TO SUCCESS IN THIS CLASS** (have I said that often enough yet?). Learn how to use Blackboard correctly.

**Extra credit**

From time to time, I will include an extra credit opportunity in **Announcements**. They will be very short, focused questions on course material. You will have a limited time (usually 24-48 hours) to submit your responses in the **Journal**. Typically each extra credit is worth up to 5 points. Late responses will not get any points so there is no point in submitting late answers to extra credit opportunities. Do not expect me to do otherwise.

**Grading**

- Reading and writing skills are important for doing well in this course.
- In section VII below, I outline my expectations for each type of writing we do (I’ve included these expectations as a separate document on our class Home Page for easy reference). It is your responsibility to know what my expectations are, and to ask any questions you have before work gets submitted.
- I assess your work according to the expectations as described, your demonstrated knowledge of course material, your ability to follow directions, and your writing ability.
- I do not break these down into separate components. I grade holistically, meaning I take all these factors into consideration as I read.
- The grading scale is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93% - 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90% - 92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88% - 89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83% - 87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80% - 82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>78% - 79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73% - 77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70% - 72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>68% - 69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60% - 67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Any question about a grade, should be raised within one week of that work, no later. In addition, I expect you to have specific reasons for your concerns. “I think I deserve a better grade” is not a reason. Re-read the assignment, review the course material the assignment is based on, look closely at the work you submitted, and give me specific reasons why you think your work should be reassessed.
**VII. Description of My Writing Expectations**

**Writing Assignments**
- Writing Assignments should be well organized and clearly written responses to the Assignment, they should do everything that is asked in the Assignment, and they should demonstrate knowledge of the course material the Assignment is based on. I am not interested in opinions; I am interested in informed and thoughtful responses. Assignments must be submitted correctly through Blackboard.

- Consult the document on How To Submit Work (on the Home Page) for instructions on submitting Assignments correctly. Discussions, Quizzes, and Exams are more straightforward, so it is important that you learn how to submit Assignments correctly. I explain this in the Welcome Lecture and the How to Submit Work document on the Home Page.

**Discussions**
Discussions are our opportunity to interact with each other in a more informal way. They are a valuable part of this class for that reason.

- A conversational style of writing is acceptable for Discussions, but write clearly. You are trying to communicate with others.

- Your Discussion posts should show knowledge of relevant class material and ideas we have been learning in the class. However, Discussions are also a place where you can include your own experience, knowledge from other classes, and knowledge of current events.

- Keep your posts to a reasonable length so others can read them easily (2 paragraphs maximum).

1. **Your first post for a Discussion Topic is the one that I grade.** Write your first post before you read and respond to other people's posts.

2. **Once you've posted your main discussion post, respond to two other people. Responses must be substantive, more than telling someone you agree with what she's said.**

- Post Discussions By the Due Date. Since Discussions are interactive, I expect you to be active between the time a Discussion is assigned and when it is due. Participating in a Discussion too early or too late is like speaking to an empty classroom.

- Remember that we deal with some sensitive topics. It's inevitable that we will
disagree and I welcome that, but let's be respectful when we do so. Thoughtful disagreement and diversity of views are vital to a good learning experience.

- I may challenge you from time to time. That's part of my job. It doesn't mean I want you to agree with me, and it doesn't mean I don't value your Discussion post. It means I want you to think about what I'm saying in relation to your thoughts and ideas. This is what I would do in a traditional classroom, so I do it here as well.

- In online Discussions we can't see or hear each other, we lack that valuable input. All we have is what we've written. Experience has shown me that we will misunderstand each other from time to time. If we can be generous with each other and assume the best intentions, we will be fine.

- IMPORTANT: I am an active participant in Discussions. I do some teaching in my responses that I consider to be a vital part of the class, as if we were in a traditional classroom. I expect you to read my contributions to Discussions just as I read yours.

**Quizzes**

Quizzes will consist of short answer questions based on the readings and my lectures about the religions we study.

- **Quizzes are closed book and no notes.** I understand that there is a lot of material, and you are working from memory, so I grade accordingly. If I think you are consulting the readings for your answers I will deduct points from your answer. For example, after 1 reading most of us will not typically remember, and spell correctly, the Sanskrit or Pali terms for the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism, nor will we remember the names of all the prominent theologians of Liberation Theology.

- **Quizzes are timed, and must be completed in a single sitting.** You will have a 10 minute grace period past the time limit, but anything more than that and I will deduct points.

- Short answers of a few sentences are appropriate for Quiz questions. **Always use complete sentences in your answers, and respond to all parts of each quiz question.**

- Demonstrate knowledge of assigned readings and lectures in your answers. Do not add extraneous information; answer the question I’ve asked, no more, no less. Long, rambling answers are not good answers.

**Essay Exams**

- **I expect formal essay responses on exams.** An academic essay has a specific form that includes a thesis, a clear, reasoned development of the thesis using course materials, and a concluding statement of some kind. Essays should be clearly
structured and organized in a way that develops an analysis of the topic. You will have access to exam questions a week ahead of time, so I expect you to take the time work on and compose your essays.

- **ALWAYS read exam instructions and directions** before you begin work on your essay. Following all directions is part of the grading criteria for exams.

- **Always check your formatting before you submit your exam essay.** Make any changes necessary before you click "Submit."

**Citing Sources On Exams.**
1. Use parenthetical citations for all direct quotations, all paraphrased ideas or information, and all references to information or ideas that come from class material. Even if you put someone else's ideas or information in your own words, you must cite the source. We cite sources to acknowledge someone else's intellectual property. In the world of the University, not citing sources is the same thing as theft.

2. We will use simplified citations on exams since we are only using course materials for exams:
   - **Books and articles** - cite author's last name and page number (*Thompson, p. 21*).
   - **Video Lectures** - cite my last name and lecture number or title (*Parker, Lecture 4*).
   - **Videos** - cite the title (*Inside Islam*).
   - **Discussions** - cite person's last name & Discussion number (*Smith, Discussion 3*).

3. Very little of what we study is considered common knowledge, so you should have frequent citations in your exam essays.

4. Never cite a whole book or article (*Sacco, pp. 1-285*). The purpose of citations is to direct your reader to the specific passage in the book or article that you are referring to. Citing a whole book is useless.

5. **Never rely primarily on a single source in your essay.** That makes for a weak argument, and it also fails to demonstrate knowledge of course material.

6. Keep **direct quotations short and to a minimum in your essay.** I've read all this material multiple times and I do not want to re-read it in your exams. I want to read your writing, and how you are working with this material.

7. **Do not use outside sources on exams!** These are not research papers; they are exams asking you to think about what we've covered in class, and present your thoughts based on course material and our conversations.
VIII. University Policies and Campus Resources

Academic integrity
Students are expected to be familiar with the University’s Academic Integrity Policies. Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at California State University, Chico, and the University’s Academic Integrity Policy requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Violations of academic honesty can result in ‘0’ points for an assignment or exam, or a ‘F’ in the class. When in doubt, check with me and I will clarify standards for you. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. The policy on academic integrity and other resources related to student conduct can be found at: http://www.csuchico.edu/sjd/integrity.shtml.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act
- Students with disabilities that require special accommodations must register with the DSS Office (Disability Support Services) to establish a record of their disability. As a professor I do not decide who has a disability or who gets special accommodations, and I cannot provide special accommodations until DSS has verified that student's disability. This record from DSS needs to be sent to me. Do not wait to raise these concerns.

- Also contact Accessibility Resource Center (ARC) as they are the designated department responsible for approving and coordinating reasonable accommodations and services for students with disabilities. ARC will help you understand your rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act and provide you further assistance with requesting and arranging accommodations.

  Accessibility Resource Center
  http://www.csuchico.edu/arc
  530-898-5959
  Student Services Center 170
  arcdept@csuchico.edu

- I will work out, with the student involved, whatever accommodations are needed unless they are things I can’t provide. If special accommodations involve issues regarding technology, the student will have to work that out with the DSS Office directly.
**IT Support Services/Student Support**

**IMPORTANT: I am not your tech person**, use IT Support Services/Student Support as your first call for help for computer problems and Blackboard problems. There is a Student Support link at the top of the page in Blackboard.

Chico State computer labs for student use are located on the first and fourth floor of the Meriam Library, Room 116 and 450, Tehama Hall Room 131, and the Bell Memorial Union (BMU) basement. You can get help from IT Support Services; contact them through their website, [http://www.csuchico.edu/itss](http://www.csuchico.edu/itss).

**Student Services**

Student services are designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to motivate them to become self-directed learners. Students can find support for services such as skills assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development. Student services information can be found at: [http://www.csuchico.edu/current-students](http://www.csuchico.edu/current-students).

**Student Learning Center**

The mission of the Student Learning Center (SLC) is to provide services that will assist CSU, Chico students to become independent learners. The SLC prepares and supports students in their college course work by offering a variety of programs and resources to meet student needs. The SLC facilitates the academic transition and retention of students from high schools and community colleges by providing study strategy information, content subject tutoring, and supplemental instruction. The SLC is online at [http://www.csuchico.edu/slc](http://www.csuchico.edu/slc). The University Writing Center has been combined with the Student Learning Center.