Handbook for Instructors of REL1300 Online

Department of Religion

Florida State University

(note: this handbook does not apply to sections of 1300 that are taught remotely)

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COVID-19 Statement

The 2020-2021 academic year will be impacted by the Corona virus. Policies and guidelines stipulated here may change in the context of this fluid situation. FSU updates regarding the virus may be found here: https://news.fsu.edu/tag/coronavirus/. If you have questions about how the current situation changes how this class is administered, please contact Prof. Drew Durdin (adurdin@fsu.edu).

I. Introduction

This handbook is designed as a resource for instructors of the Religion Department's online version of REL1300. It does NOT apply to versions of REL 1300 that are taught remotely. While it is especially intended as a manual for first-time instructors of the course, experienced instructors are also encouraged to review it as there may be certain procedures or design features with which they are unfamiliar. The handbook is not structured in any particular order other than the section "Getting Started," which should be consulted first for instructions on initially setting up the course in Canvas. Thereafter, the reader may review the handbook in order or may consult particular items of interest as needed. **First-time instructors are, however, required to review the handbook in its entirety.**

In teaching a fully online course, there are many aspects of a technical and logistical nature that differ from a traditional campus course which utilizes Canvas to a comparatively limited degree. It is those aspects, which an instructor experienced in a campus format might not have previously encountered, that this handbook seeks to address. This entails, however, that the base knowledge which is required for all instructors, regardless of course format, is assumed and is not discussed herein. It is assumed, for instance, that the reader of this handbook knows how to create or modify quizzes and exams in Canvas, how to post announcements to students, how to submit first-day attendance and final grades through myFSU, etc. These and other procedures are considered to be required knowledge for all instructors in the Religion department, irrespective of teaching an online or campus course, and it is the instructor's responsibility to acquire facility in these areas. Help for any of that which is not covered in this handbook may be sought in another resource—either one of the other departmental handbooks posted on the website, the technical and Distance Learning support staff, or a faculty supervisor.

If you the reader believe an item should be added to this handbook, please contact Prof. Durdin (adurdin@fsu.edu) for consideration.

II. Getting Started

1. Textbook orders: Although this course is fully online, a textbook is used and orders must be placed just like a campus course. Sometime before the start of the semester you will receive an e-mail from Jon Bridges requesting that you place your textbook order through myFSU or by e-mailing the relevant information to John. The timeframe for this procedure varies by semester, but the lead time decreases from the fall to spring to summer semester (i.e., less time between placing orders and start of semester). The textbook used for this course is: Otoxby et al., *A Concise Introduction to World Religions* (**3rd ed.**; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). **You may not deviate from this textbook as your base resource since the entire structure of the course in Canvas is based upon it (i.e., all quizzes, exams, discussion boards, etc.).** Should you wish, as a modification to the existing course design, to add another book as part of a review or response assignment, you may do so, and must place your order at this time as well. But note that this will entail time-consuming modifications to the syllabus, course layout in Canvas, grading scheme, etc. Because of the fully online nature of this course, any such modifications are generally much more time-intensive than for campus courses where many logistical aspects may be handled face to face in the classroom. **It is, therefore, prohibited for first-time instructors to add other required texts or otherwise deviate substantially from the existing course design.** After familiarizing yourself with the existing course design for a full semester you may in the future make such modifications, though you must consult with Prof. Durdin first.

2. Course copying/importing: At least one month before the start of the coming semester existing instructors should see the empty shell for your current/upcoming semester's course in your Canvas dashboard. First-time instructors may experience a delay since their status must be changed from TA to instructor in the FSU system, and when this occurs for the first time before the start of a fall semester it may result in gaining access to the course only a few weeks before the semester begins. Consult with Jon Bridges to make sure that your status is on track to be entered as instructor, and what the approximate date is when the change is expected to take effect.

Once the shell course for the upcoming semester is present in Canvas, you may proceed to copying/importing content and setting up the course site for your semester. The departmental REL1300 online base course must be copied into your shell course. **Contact Prof. Durdin to receive access to the shared departmental copy.** This copy is held in a dev site (a dummy Canvas course site established only for development and testing of potential courses, but not for use with enrolled students) to which Prof. Durdin may give you access for the purposes of copying/importing. **Do not in any way modify this dev course, as it is intended only for the purposes of copying/importing. Any modifications you wish to make (aside from typos or errors which you find in the dev course) should be made in your current semester's course site once the copying/importing has been completed. Any other changes proposed for the dev course must be discussed with Prof. Durdin first, and only he is authorized to make them.**

If you are an experienced instructor of REL1300 online, you will have access to your past semesters' copies of the course. If you have made modifications to the course in the past which you wish to retain for the current or future semesters, then it is acceptable to utilize one of those previous iterations rather than the dev course as your template. However, when you cease teaching REL1300 online do not propagate your versions of the course to the next instructor for the purposes of copying/importing. The new instructor must first use the departmental dev course as their template/source and make modifications from there (although they are free to consult with previous instructors for advice on recommended modifications). **This is to ensure that a pristine copy is used every semester (or at least initially for every new instructor) in order that the REL1300 online course does not progressively degrade, accumulate multiple copies of the same files, and manifest peculiarities over time from repeated use and copying by multiple instructors and iterations.** The procedure itself for copying a course and importing content may be found in FSU's technical resources for Canvas.

III. Syllabus

Now that all course content has been imported from the dev site into the current semester's shell course, you should first of all review the syllabus. The default syllabus is intended be ready-made in order to facilitate a minimum of changes necessary. However, there are some aspects which you will need to personalize with your own information (i.e., instructor/TA photo, background, contact info, etc.). Other fields may be altered depending on instructor preferences (i.e., the breadth of description for individual assignments in syllabus vs. in separate Canvas pages, late penalty policy, extra credit opportunities, etc.). If you find that you need to add a field, you may do so as well. Note, however, that any changes to the syllabus which affect grading, due dates, etc. must also be made exhaustively and consistently to the corresponding course content which is affected (i.e., availability dates for assignments, content pages giving assignment instructions, etc.). Bear in mind that as this is a fully online course, certain changes to the syllabus will therefore require extensive revision to other parts of the course content.

First-time instructors are discouraged from making syllabus changes, other than simply bringing the document up to date, until after the course is fully operational (but not yet "live" and published). At that point first-time instructors will have a better sense of the scope and ramifications of changes they might wish to make and are on superior footing to evaluate the costs and benefits of such changes in terms of time-expenditure. This policy is designed to ensure that first-time instructors become familiar with the course, its design, and its workings before making modifications.

Carefully review the entire syllabus to make sure that all information reflects current dates and is consistent throughout. **As instructor of record it is your responsibility to ensure that the syllabus is correct and adheres to FSU policies concerning the course and its requirements (i.e., standards for courses granting Liberal Studies and Writing credits required of undergraduates to graduate).** If you are unsure about any element, contact Prof. Durdin to advise.

Just as with campus courses, the final syllabus for REL1300 online must be sent to the department administrator so that it may be posted for public viewing and kept on file. This may be done any time before the beginning of the semester (if changes are made afterwards, an updated copy should be re-sent). Because the syllabus is a specialized Canvas tool, there is currently no function native to Canvas which allows it to be exported or saved separately. Instead, in order to retain a copy of the syllabus outside of Canvas, it is necessary to perform a "print to PDF" function while the viewing the syllabus page in Canvas.

IV. Course Schedule and Overview of Assignments

As a fully online course there are a very large number of assignments. Every week of the semester there are multiple assignments becoming available/open, coming due, and closing. Students must be provided a schedule of all relevant dates which includes opening date, due date, and closing date for each assignment (where applicable). **While the formatting and presentation of the course schedule is up to the instructor, it is not acceptable to rely upon the calendar which is automatically generated by Canvas when dates are input for individual assignments. This calendar will not generate a complete schedule of dates for the student.**

Regardless of the final format used for the course schedule, the instructor may exercise flexibility on the dates and times of certain assignments, while others must remain fixed. The design of certain assignments within the overall course structure and delivery also places restrictions on their parameters when set up each semester.

1. **Discussion boards:** Remain open for a limited time in order to fulfill their function as a substitute for the interactive classroom environment of a campus course. They open the weekend before the material is covered (Friday), require an initial response post due by the end of the week during which the material is covered (Friday), require a response post to another student's posting by the end of the weekend (Sunday), and close at the end of the weekend (Sunday). Late postings after the closing date are not accepted because it defeats the purposes of the assignment as a discussion. This pattern of opening/closing and due dates is consistent for the entire semester except for the last

week, when all postings and all assignments are due on Friday (not Sunday) before final exam week begins. This ensures both that students are not completing assignments just before taking final the exam and that the instructor and TA's have sufficient time to grade all assignments, including final exam, before grades must be submitted to the registrar.

2. **Quizzes:** Open the weekend before the material is covered (Friday), have no formal due date except the end of the semester, and remain open until the last day of class before final exam week. This is to allow students to use the quizzes as study aids for the midterm and final exams. Quizzes must be set up such that the highest attempt is the recorded grade and unlimited attempts are allowed with rotating questions randomly drawn from the question banks. The time limit is at the discretion of the instructor but must be suitably short so as to ensure that students must thoroughly read the textbook in order to achieve a high grade, forcing several repetitions through the quiz each week to achieve said grade. The intent of this design is help students learn the textbook material through repetition, to aid in studying for exams, and to induce them to become familiar with a broader sampling of quiz questions than one attempt would allow.

3. **Exams:** Each exam should be available for students to complete for at least one week (five days) in order to accommodate students' schedules, which is the very reason many of them take an online course. The midterm may be scheduled whenever the instructor desires, though it should obviously cover roughly half of the course content and should allow sufficient time for study and preparation after completing the last cumulative content before taking the exam (a minimum of a one-week gap is recommended). **If the instructor deviates from the default cumulative cutoff for the content of the midterm and final it falls upon the instructor to reformat each exam with the appropriate questions from the correct units.**

The final exam is restricted by FSU policy to final exam week. Concerning use of the testing center, see the appropriate section below. Exams are composed of multiple choice questions drawn from the same bank as the quizzes and short answers drawn from the discussion board prompts. Time limits are at the discretion of the instructor,

but the default is two hours. The time limit must be significantly less, however, if the testing center is not used and students have access to textbook, internet, etc. (un-proctored exams are prohibited unless there is a problem reserving space). Dates for proctor designation by the student and the start date for the sign-ups testing center appointments must be calculated and posted as well (on this "Testing Center and Proctoring" below).

4. **Essays:** Due dates are at the discretion of the instructor. The second essay requires a draft, however, so substantial time must be allowed between submitting the draft and the due date of the final essay such that students are able to receive feedback from the instructor and incorporate it into the final essay. **The draft assignment is not up to instructor discretion since the W requirement, which REL1300 meets, mandates that an opportunity for revision be given. Word counts must also meet the minimum set by the W requirement.** The default assignments are a religion creation essay and a comparative traditions/religions essay. **First-time instructors are prohibited from substituting alternative essay assignments.** Experienced instructors must discuss proposed alternative essay assignments with Prof. Durdin for approval.

V. First Day Attendance

Even for a fully online course, the FSU First Day Attendance policy is still in effect. There are, however, several important changes to how it is carried out. Students are given a deadline on the third day of class until which they may post in a discussion board (non-graded) as the marker of their "attendance." Instructions on completing this must be sent out on the first day of the semester when the course goes "live" as well as every day thereafter until the deadline passes. Instructions for the students' attendance post should also direct them to introduce themselves to the rest of the class by listing (for instance) their major, their year at FSU, their reason for taking the course, and what they hope to learn from the course. Once the deadline has passed, the instructor will go through the posts and use the myFSU first day attendance tool to mark students present who posted.

The instructor must check the enrollment/registration date of each student who did **not** post before marking the student absent. Enrollment for all FSU courses, but especially online courses, fluctuates drastically during the first week of each semester. While enrollment numbers typically settle in by the third day of class, some fluctuations are still likely. Instructors should not mark students as absent who enrolled **after** the instructions for first day attendance were sent out to the class and/or **after** the deadline for posting passed. These students were not aware of the need to post in the discussion board for attendance in the first place through no fault of their own, and should not be removed from the course. This is especially important for the online course since enrollment is often at capacity and empty slots from those removed by submitting the first day attendance roster are often filled immediately from a queue. If a student is erroneously or needlessly removed from the course through the first day attendance roster, there is a good chance that re-enrollment will not be possible due to lack of space, or that a late enrollment fee will be assessed against the student unfairly. In any of these instance, whether or not the fault lies with the instructor, it is likely that the result will be further e-mails and bureaucratic chores which are avoidable and a drain on the instructor's time.

VI. Testing Center and Proctoring

The most logistically involved aspect for instructors of the online course is navigating the use of the testing center and proctors for the midterm and final exams. Although it is possible to assign the exams without using the testing center and their proctoring services, this should only be done in the case of a technical problem on the part of the instructor or the testing center wherein space was not reserved for the course by the appropriate deadline. **Instructors may not eschew the testing center in favor of unproctored exams without cause since that will result in a potentially unmanageable situation during the exam window.** Without the use of proctors through the testing center, the instructor will have to respond to and resolve all technical problems encountered (or so claimed) by students during the course of the exam (i.e., login issues, screen timeout, internet interruption, glitches, etc.) and have no means to assess their validity. With enrollment capacities that can surpass 120 students, the sheer number of requests will overwhelm the instructor and render it impossible to address them all in an

acceptable amount of time. **If the testing center is unable to provide space for the exam/s, contact Prof. Durdin to advise on how to proceed.** Procedures and guidelines for utilizing the testing center are as follows:

1. **Reserving Space:** Before the start of each semester, the testing center staff will send out an e-mail to online instructors concerning procedures and dates for reserving space at the FSU testing center site (if the instructor is not receiving these e-mails and/or is not sure that they are on the listserv, make the request to be added to testing@fsu.edu). This e-mail will alert the instructor that/when the testing center will begin taking reservations for the coming semester. Space is limited and priority is given to online courses. However, the deadline should be borne in mind as it is possible that after that date the testing center will no longer be able to accommodate a course the size of REL1300 online with upwards of 120 students, or that close to the deadline the instructor's desired dates will already be full. In order to reserve space, the instructor must first complete the course schedule in order to determine the week in which the midterm will be assigned. The e-mail from the testing center will contain instructions on how to then reserve the needed space for the appropriate dates, but in brief:

    a. The instructor will complete and return a form giving all requested/relevant information on the course, the instructor, the number of students, the exam availability dates, etc.

    b. The testing center will review the form and return a copy signed by a testing center administrator for review.

    c. The instructor will review the form and confirm that the information is correct by signing as well.

2. **Proctor Designation:** Every student must designate a proctor for taking the exams. For students in or near the Tallahassee area, the proctor will be the FSU testing center. For students elsewhere in the United States, a partner proctoring site within a reasonable distance will be chosen by the student. Students outside the United States or who are unable to find a proctoring site within a reasonable distance should designate Examity as their proctor, but only if there are no alternative proctoring sites available. (Concerning Examity, see below.)

The process of designating a proctor should be completed by all students within the first few weeks of the semester. Designating a proctor does not involve making an appointment for a specific date/time at which to take the exam, but only choosing the site. (Concerning which, see below on "Making an appointment.") The hyperlink and instructions for proctor designation are normally sent to the instructor via e-mail from the testing center staff at the beginning of the semester. Proctoring sites only need to be designated once per semester. If the proctoring site needs to be changed for the final exam, the student must contact the testing center to make the change. If students have difficulties or questions concerning proctor designation, they must contact the testing center. **Instructors have no involvement in the process of proctor designation other than making available the relevant information, dates, and hyperlinks at the appropriate time.**

3. **Making an appointment:** Once a proctor has been designated, no other procedures are required by the student until the testing center announces via e-mail that they are taking reservations and sends out a Registerblast hyperlink. Once the instructor has received that announcement, students should be informed that they may begin making appointments to take the exam and provided the hyperlink. While there is no deadline for making appointments up until the exam window closes, the longer that students wait the fewer slots that will be available. **The process of making an appointment to take the exam is entirely between the student and the testing center. Instructors have no involvement in this process other than making available the relevant information, dates, and hyperlinks at the appropriate time.**

4. **Examity:** Examity is a proctoring service that should be utilized only in those rare cases in which a student does not have access to a proctoring site (i.e., military deployment, international travel, extreme and unreasonable distance from proctoring site, etc.). This service functions through a link to the student's computer. By monitoring the student during the exam through the microphone and webcam on the student's computer, an individual Examity employee proctors the exam from any location where the student happens to be, provided there is sufficient internet speed/stability and computer specifications. **Because of the technical requirements placed upon the student's computer, internet connection, testing environment, etc. it is extremely common**

for the Examity service to malfunction and preclude students from taking the exam. Therefore, Examity should not be utilized unless the situation allows for no other alternatives. The page on the course site with the hyperlink to Examity is password protected, forcing students to converse with the instructor first concerning their perceived need to use Examity. Only after the instructor is satisfied that no other options are available to the student should the use of Examity be approved. The student should be informed before proceeding, however, as to the high risk of the service's malfunction and the possibility of being unable to take the exam/s at all, and acknowledge their willingness to accept that risk. **Examity also charges a fee for students to utilize their services ($16/hr. per exam for first hour and $7/hr. after first hour), a datum which students should be informed of beforehand and must also be willing to accept.** In rare cases when a student cannot find an alternative proctor, and either cannot or will not use Examity, the instructor should consult with Prof. Durdin.

5. **Preparation for proctors:** The testing center requires little involvement from the instructor once they have communicated the relevant information concerning proctor designation and exam appointments to the students at the appropriate time. At some point before the exam window individual proctors will be added to the course by the testing center staff so that these individuals may address any technical problems that students have as they occur without the need to involve the instructor. Instructors are only asked not to remove the proctors from the course. Likewise, the exam should be password-protected, and that password should not be changed such that the proctors find themselves locked out when attempting to give students access.

Communication with partner sites should only be undertaken by the testing center, not the instructor (including Examity). If a student raises a problem to the instructor concerning their partner proctoring site, the instructor should direct the student to the testing center for resolution. The reason that the testing center discourages instructor involvement in these processes is so that there are fewer opportunities for error through multiple voices communicating different instructions. The testing center should be the only avenue connecting students to proctoring services, while the instructor should

provide only information and supply a fully operational exam. (It is advised that the instructor test the exam through the student view operation in Canvas before the exam window opens.) If the instructor has any question as to whether responsibility for a process/procedure lies with the instructor or with the testing center, testing center staff should be asked directly via e-mail. The only exception to this is the SDRC, for students who have supplied their official SDRC accommodation letter to the instructor at the start of the semester, have clearly notified the instructor of their intent to take the exam at the SDRC facility, and have reached appropriate accommodations with the instructor concerning exam completion time, number of attempts, etc. In this case, the instructor must make the appropriate changes to the exam settings for that individual student.

6. During the exam window: Generally, responsibility for technical problems during the exam window falls on the proctors except in cases where the exam itself is flawed. If a student misses their appointment, whether as a result of a legitimate reason/emergency or otherwise, they must contact the testing center to attempt to reschedule. **The rescheduling of missed appointments is at the testing center's discretion and in accordance with the availability of open slots, and is not guaranteed, as is the accommodation of last-minute appointments by students who failed to do so during the appropriate timeframe.** If a student contacts the instructor during the exam window concerning a failure of the Examity service partway through the exam, the instructor may allow further attempts at their discretion.

VII. Grading

The distribution of points among the various assignments is at the discretion of the instructor. It is advised, however, that the total value for the possible points in the course add up to 1,000. This allows for very easy manual calculation/verification of final grades and enables students to easily assess their standing in the course throughout the semester. The default late penalty for all assignments is 10% per day late, however it may be modified at the instructor's discretion. **First-time instructors should consult with Prof. Durdin before modifying the default point distributions for the assignments.**

The default point values for each assignment along with any relevant guidelines for grading them are as follows, with a chart provided at the end for reference:

1. **Quizzes:** Grading by the instructor is not necessary since these are self-graded by Canvas. There are ten quizzes spanning the fifteen weeks/units of the course (some of the traditions surveyed in the course comprise two weeks/units but only one quiz). There are ten questions per quiz, one point per question, with a total value of one hundred points for all the quizzes in the course total.

2. **Discussion boards:** Each student's post/s for each of the three weekly discussion boards must be graded manually. For each of the fifteen weeks of the course there are three discussion boards, totaling forty-five for the course. Each discussion board is worth ten points, with the total point value for all discussion boards in the semester being 450 points. This is roughly half of the course total, indicating the importance that these discussion boards hold. Each discussion board requires the student to make two posts, an initial response to the prompt and then a comment in response to another student. The initial post is worth eight points while the response post is worth two points. The initial post can be at most two days late before it will no longer be accepted at all. The response comment is either completed by the closing date of the discussion board, or not accepted at all, but a late post is not an option for the response comment. Thus, given the late penalty of 10% off per day late, each student's discussion board could be deducted as much as two points (one point per day late). Late posts should still be graded for quality and content, and any necessary deductions should be taken off of the reduced total value after imposing the late penalty.

   Guidelines/rubric for discussion board posts must be made accessible to students within the first week of the course so that they have some idea of what is expected (i.e., one paragraph per component of the prompt, three or four sentences per paragraph, substantive response to another student's post, proofread posts, use complete sentences, etc.). The instructor should meet initially with any TA's to jointly grade a few posts so as to make sure that all graders are similarly calibrated in their expectations.

The SpeedGrader function in Canvas will aid in grading discussion board posts as quickly as possible so that for the first few weeks of the semester, each week's posts can be graded before the next week comes due. This ensure that students are provided with clear feedback for improving their performance in a reasonable amount of time to make changes to their posts for the next week. During the first weeks of the semester while students are becoming acclimated to the assignments and the expectations, it is unfair to assign grades and feedback for the previous week **after** they have already completed the next week's posts and that feedback is no longer relevant to their performance.

Detailed feedback should be left for approximately the first two weeks of the course (i.e., first six discussion boards) so that students have a very clear understanding of the instructor's expectations and can adjust their performance accordingly for the remainder of the course. After that initial period, however, leaving detailed feedback is not viable on the basis of the time required to leave it on all discussion board responses. After the initial period only minimal feedback should be left (i.e., brief statements like "too short," "too superficial," "incomplete response," etc.), or only the grade alone and no feedback at all, with the stated understanding being that students may contact the instructor/TA at any time to obtain detailed feedback on a particular discussion board. Late penalties should always be noted in feedback. It must be made clear to students early in the semester that they should seek help from the instructor if they are not satisfied with the grades on their discussion board posts and are not seeing improvement.

3. **Exams:** The midterm and final exams are each composed of forty multiple choice questions (drawn from the quiz banks) worth one point each, and five short answer (drawn from the discussion board prompts) worth two points each, for a total of fifty points for each exam and one hundred points for both exams together in the course total. The multiple choice portion is self-graded by Canvas but the short answer must be graded manually. Feedback for the short answers is not necessary given the minimal points involved.

4. Essays: There are two essays assigned, worth 150 points each for a course total of 300 points. There is also a draft required for the second essay, worth fifty points, thus bringing the course total for all essay related assignments to 350 points.

The first essay is not research-based, but instead draws on the student's creativity and imagination. Along with these factors, the grade should also be assessed on the basis of organization, proofreading, grammar, and adherence to instructions (i.e., responding fully to the prompt, meeting word count, etc.). Feedback should clearly explain the final grade, but should focus on the writing component (i.e., proofreading, grammar, organization, etc.) since those elements will be expected to improve in the second essay.

The draft assignment for the second essay should be graded on the basis only of completion and adherence to instructions. Even drafts which provide untenable topics/theses should be given a high or perfect grade on the basis of the above standards. However, feedback should be extensive in regard to the viability of the topic/thesis. Students must be given significant help in developing their draft into a topic suitable for the final version, which is a research essay. Students should be alerted that a high or perfect grade on the draft does **not** mean there are no significant issues that must be addressed, and that it is unnecessary to view instructor/TA feedback. A failure to take feedback on the draft into account for the final essay will result in heavy point deductions. Feedback on the draft must be provided to students in time for them to reasonably incorporate it into the final version.

The second essay is research-based and should constitute the integration of all the student's previous writing experience in the course. Grading should be based on of the following factors, differentially weighted at the instructor's discretion:
  a. Proper command of writing skills: Grammar, proofreading, organization, etc.
  b. Adequate sources: A minimum of two sources, but full marks only for four sources, so as to present more than one source for each of the two religions/traditions being compared.

c. Quality of sources: Scholarly and not popular, confessional, etc.

d. Adherence to instructions: Minimum word count, inclusion of works cited page, only two traditions/religions compared, etc.

e. Proper and consistent citation: Per methods allowed by instructor (i.e., APA, MLA, Turabian, etc.) and where sources are used throughout the essay, not only in a works cited page.

f. Comparative analysis: Comparison requires the student not simply to list isolated datums about each religion/tradition being compared with respect to the stated topic of the essay, but also to account for them. This requires the student to explain the datum as similarity or difference and give some minimal analysis. Many students submit a final essay that reads like Wikipedia articles on two different religions/traditions, but they never go further to compare them explicitly on select points, nor provide any integrative analysis. Grading should account for the presence/absence/quality of the comparative analysis, but the instructor should also bear in mind that many students have not yet been taught how to move beyond the regurgitation of data to comparison and analysis. If the student performs well in other areas, then a failure in this one area—even though constituting the ultimate goal of the learning objectives—should not bring ruin to the final grade.

The above criteria must be made available to students so that they have clear knowledge of the basis for their final grade as they compose the essay.

Assignment/Assessment	Qty	Pts Each	Total Pts	% of Final Grade
Discussion Boards	45	10	450	45%
Quizzes	10	10	100	10%
Essays	2	150	300	30%
Second Essay Draft	1	50	50	5%
Mid-term Exam	1	50	50	5%
Final Exam	1	50	50	5%
Total			1000	100%

The submission for any and all assignments except the final exam terminates on the Friday before exam week. It is recommended that all remaining ungraded assignments except the final exam be graded during exam week. The registrar has a date set on the academic calendar by which final grades must be submitted for the course. Therefore, the discussion boards should not be allowed to languish ungraded until after exam week, at which point it may not be possible to grade all assignments with due care in time to calculate final grades before the deadline. **In the case of a petition by a student for an incomplete grade, the instructor should consult with Prof. Durdin.**

VIII. Summer Sessions

This section will address only those aspects of the summer sessions which differ from a full term. Any areas not specifically addressed herein should be assumed to follow the descriptions, policies, and guidelines delineated in the previous topical sections pertaining to the full term.

The summer session runs for six weeks, covering two units per week. It moves at twice the speed of the regular course, but is also an equivalent of three weeks shorter (i.e., equivalent to twelve instead of fifteen weeks). Therefore, it is necessary to cut material from the full course in order to fit it into the reduced span of the summer session. While it is theoretically up the instructor to decide which material to cut, a dev site (concerning which, see "Getting Started") is already set up for instructors to use for copying/importing to their current summer course

site. **Therefore, if the instructor is dissatisfied with the default cuts to the full course, they must first consult with Prof. Durdin to assess the viability of creating an alternative summer course structure with different material.** (The summer dev site retains the units on About Religion and the Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist Traditions. The units on Indigenous, Jain and Sikh, and East Asian Traditions along with New Religious Movements have been cut to accommodate the shorter summer session.)

All procedures for setting up the summer course are the same as the full course, with the exception that a different dev site is used for copying/importing (contact Prof. Durdin to obtain access). Other changes are as follows (any aspects not addressed below are the same as the full semester):

1. **Quizzes:** There are six quizzes rather than the ten of the full semester. They are still ten points each, totaling sixty points for the whole course.

2. **Discussion Boards:** Four are assigned per week rather than the three of the full semester. However, since the summer course moves twice as fast, six would normally be expected per week of the summer course. Nevertheless, six discussion boards per week is simply too much for the students to reasonably complete, and so two prompts have been cut for each unit. The point values for the discussion boards are raised to twenty points each, rather than the ten points of the full course, for a course total of 480 points. Late penalties must be adjusted to two points per day late.

3. **Exams:** The exams are similar to the full course versions, but the question banks have been adjusted to remove questions from the units which were cut to fit the course into a summer session. Likewise, point values and total number of questions have been adjusted. There are thirty multiple choice questions valued at two points each (the full course version has forty multiple choice questions at one point each) and five short answer questions valued at four points each (the full course version has five short answer questions valued at two points each), for a total of eighty points for each exam and 160 points between both exams for the course total.

4. **Essays:** Both essays are retained at 150 points each for a course total between the two of 300 points. **However, the 50 point mandatory draft of the second essay has been cut since there is insufficient time in the short summer session for students to**

revise their second essay. Instead of a required and graded draft assignment, the mandatory revision opportunity stipulated for all W courses is met by offering students the option of submitting an ungraded draft for which they will be provided feedback. The default late penalty for essays is more severe (may receive a maximum of half credit) since there is far less time turn in late material. The more severe penalty is not designed simply to punish the student, but to ensure that they are aware in advance of the extreme pace at which the course proceeds. A failure to submit assignments on time in the summer session will quickly result in the student falling so far behind that they cannot catch up. The late penalty may be adjusted at the discretion of the instructor.

The course total is still 1,000 points in order to facilitate the manual calculation/verification of final grades. **The distribution of points for the various assignments as detailed above may be adjusted at the discretion of the instructor, however first-time instructors must consult with Prof. Durdin before making such changes since that will necessitate modifying multiple assignments.** All other aspects of the summer course remain the same as the full semester, and the corresponding sections in the handbook should be consulted regarding any questions.

IX. Panama City Sections

It is typical that instructors will be assigned a small section (approximately 15-30 students) from the Panama City campus in addition to the regular/primary section from the main Tallahassee campus. (Note that the main campus section does not signify that the students are necessarily residents in or local to Tallahassee. It only signifies where the course is taught from and the testing center which is used by default.) While it may at first appear as if the Panama City section is a separate course, it is understood to be part of the one single REL1300 course and the additional section is merely a bureaucratic/administrative distinction. However, the Panama City section does have its own roster in myFSU which requires the input of first day attendance and grades separately from the main section. Both sections will appear under the instructor's courses in myFSU.

Furthermore, because the Panama City section and the main section are in principle distinct sections even though taught as a single course, the instructor will find two separate Canvas course shells propagated for the semester. Rather than establishing two separate course sites to be set up and maintained individually, the instructor must merge the two sections in Canvas by the procedure of "cross-listing." This procedure brings a "child" section (Panama City section) under a "parent" section (main campus). The procedure for cross-listing the Panama City section under the main campus section is as follows:

1. Determine which section number and corresponding Canvas course shell corresponds to the Panama City section and which corresponds to the main campus section (i.e., REL1300-000X) by comparison with the course information on the myFSU instructor page.
2. Enter the Panama City shell course.
3. Open the "Settings" menu on the sidebar.
4. Open the "Sections" tab and select the course section (i.e., 000X).
5. On the right side, select the "Cross-List this Section" button.
6. Using the "Search for Course" function, find the main campus course which is to serve as the primary course site. Alternatively, use the "Enter the Course's ID" function to find the parent course.
7. You will receive a notification if the cross-list function has been successfully completed. The primary course site will now list both the main campus and Panama City sections under the "Settings" menu and the "Sections" tab.