RL 370 COMPARATIVE RELIGION: TRACING THE PATH OF THE SPANISH SOUL  
IES Abroad Salamanca

DESCRIPTION: The objective of this course is to undertake a historical and phenomenological study of religions and human religiosity, covering the Upper Paleolithic period to current Universalist religions and other contemporary religious movements. In this course we will focus on the development of religion in Europe and especially in Spain. For this analysis we will use the comparative method, applying it to the field of history and the phenomenology of religions.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 45 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: Spanish

PREREQUISITES: Intermediate level of Spanish

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:
- Lectures
- Documentaries
- Readings
- Individual and group tasks
- Student presentations on activities
- Most class materials will be available for students on the IES Abroad Salamanca Moodle platform.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:
- Final Exam: 25%
- Midterm: 20%
- Written papers: 15%
- Class participation: 10%
- Homework & activities: 15%
- Course-related excursions: 15%

Final
Students must answer successfully 3 essay questions.

Midterm
Students must answer successfully 2 essay questions.

Assignments
Text commentaries will consist of brief critical essays (3 pages maximum, every two weeks) on a required reading corresponding to one of the topics studied in class during those two weeks. Other assignments will consist of weekly supplementary readings for class discussion, group tasks, student presentations, Internet research, participation in Moodle thematic forums, etc.

Participation
The instructor will value students’ positive and participatory attitude in class.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:
By the end of the course students will be able to:
- Successfully apply the comparative method to the study and analysis of doctrines, rites and customs of the various universalist religious traditions
- Properly use interdisciplinarity in the scientific study of religion: history, anthropology, phenomenology, psychology, sociology and theology
• Identify and evaluate the specific characteristics of universalist religious traditions: Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam
• Correctly place each universalist religious tradition within its original cultural and anthropological context
• Critically assess the mutual influence between religion and culture, politics, society and economy in today’s different cultures
• Enhance and enrich the attitude of inter-religious tolerance from the attitudes of empathy, self-criticism, social justice and individual ethics
• Identify the peculiarities of the historical development of universalist religions in Europe and Spain
• Explain the consequences of coexistence of Judaism, Christianity and Islam in the Iberian Peninsula in the Middle Ages and today
• Demonstrate knowledge of the main aspects of the theology of religious pluralism and comparative theology, as well as their most important values for the creation of an inter-religious culture of peace

ATTENDANCE POLICY:
Attendance is mandatory for all IES Abroad classes, including course-related excursions. Any exams, tests, presentations, or other work missed due to student absences can only be rescheduled in cases of documented medical or family emergencies. If a student misses more than two classes, the final grade will be reduced by one-third of a letter grade (for example, A- to B+) for every additional unexcused absence.

Punctuality: Students who are late to class on a regular basis will also receive a reduction in their final grade.

CONTENT:

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<th>Session</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td>Session 1</td>
<td>Intro: Course presentation, introducing instructor and students. Presentation of course syllabus and objectives, including tasks and readings.</td>
<td>Jacques Waardenburg: <em>Significados religiosos</em> (pages 15-50).</td>
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<td>Session 4</td>
<td>Prehistory in Spain. Course-related trip. Guided tour to the archaeological site of Atapuerca (Burgos) and its museum.</td>
<td>As preparation for our trip and visit to the archaeological site of Atapuerca, students must read the guide by Rolf Quam <em>Los yacimientos de la sierra de Atapuerca</em>, and they must write a summary of the main findings in this excavation. After the visit, students must prepare a report: a 10-slide PowerPoint presentation including pictures taken by themselves during the visit and their comments on each picture.</td>
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<td>Session</td>
<td>Topic</td>
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<td>Session 12</td>
<td>Midterm Exam: Two Essay Questions</td>
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<td>Session 13</td>
<td>Judaism in Spain. Sephardic tradition.</td>
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<td>Esther Benbassa – Arón Rodríguez, <em>Historia de los judíos sefardíes: de Toledo a Salónica</em>, pages 114-146.</td>
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<td>Session 14</td>
<td>Islam in the Muslim empire Analysis of the defining characteristics of Islam in the Muslim empire period: fundamentals and artistic expression.</td>
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<td>Session 15</td>
<td>Islam in the Spanish Kingdom of Andalusia Study of a unique and peculiar case: Islam in the south and center of the Iberian Peninsula.</td>
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<td>Session 16</td>
<td>Christianity and the creation of Europe Presentation of the development and establishment of Christian religion in Europe since the times of Emperor Constantine.</td>
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<td>Session 17</td>
<td>Christianity, Judaism and Islam in the Iberian Peninsula Comparative study of the relationship among the three monotheistic religions in the Iberian Peninsula in the Muslim period.</td>
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<td>Write a three-page essay (text commentary) on a chapter from the book by Rosa Menocal, <em>La joya del mundo</em>, pages 63-86.</td>
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<td>Session 18</td>
<td>Importance of theology in the 17thcentury Salamanca for European Christianity and the rights of American Indians. Field Study. Visit to the Aula Magna in the Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca (Jesuit theologians) and the convent of San Esteban (Dominican theologians) in order to learn about the theological and legal contribution of these two important theological schools in Salamanca.</td>
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<td>Prepare a graphic report: a 10-slide PowerPoint presentation including pictures taken by students during the visit and their comments on each picture.</td>
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<td>Session 19</td>
<td>Hinduism and its establishment in Europe and Spain Analysis of the general history of Hinduism and its specific development in Europe</td>
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| Session 20 | Buddhism and its development in Europe and Spain  
Presentation of the general history of Buddhism and its development in Europe | Write a personal opinion (half page) of this reading.  
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| Session 21 | Phenomenology and Sociology of religious sects  
Analysis of the situation of sects in Europe and Spain, and classification of sects according to their social phenomenology. | Read pages 49 to 63 from the book by Juan Bosch, *Las sectas*. Prepare an outline of the main ideas. |
| Session 22 | New religious movements in Europe  
| Session 23 | New spiritualties in Spain  
| Session 24 | Final Review: Universalist religions in Europe and Spain |  |

**COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:**
- Atapuerca (Burgos) and its museum
- Aula Magna in the Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca (Jesuit theologians)
- The convent of San Esteban (Dominican theologians)

**REQUIRED READINGS:**
- José María Mardones, *Las nuevas formas de la religión*, Estella (Navarra) 2011.

**RECOMMENDED READINGS:**

- Karen Armstrong, *4000 años de búsqueda en el judaísmo, el cristianismo y el islam*, Barcelona 2006.
- Id. *Historia de las creencias y las ideas religiosas*, 3 vols., Barcelona 1999.