

Course Structure for M.A. in Comparative Religion
Academic Session (2015-2016)



Department of Religious Studies
Central University of Kashmir

SYLLABUS

This will be a two year Masters Programme consisting of two semesters in each academic year which makes the whole programmes over all of four semesters. Each Semester comprises Core (C), Elective (E), Soft Skill (SS) and Social Orientation (SO) courses of different credits.

1ST SEMESTER

S.No.	Course Code	Course Title	Lectures	Tutorials	Credits
1.	MCR-C 101	Nature and Scope of Religion			4
2.	MCR-C 102	Hinduism (Part-1)			4
3.	MCR-C 103	Islam (part-1): Origin Sources of Islamic Thought and Civilisation			4
4.	MCR-E 104	A) Sikhism B) Arabic (Part-1) C) Sanskrit (Part-1) D) Pali (Part-1) E) Persian (Part-1)			3
5.	SEC	Soft Skill Course			2

2ND SEMESTER

1.	MCR-C 201	Hinduism (Part-2): Later Developments			4
2.	MCR-C 202	Buddhism			4
3.	MCR-C 203	Islam (part-2): Islamic thought and Civilisation Early Developments			4
4.	MCR-E 204	A) Jainism B) Arabic (Part 2 nd) C) Sanskrit (Part 2 nd) D) Pali (Part 2 nd) E) Persian (Part 2 nd)			3
5.		Social Orientation Course			2

3RD SEMESTER

1.	MCR-C 301	Christianity (Part-1)			4
2.	MCR-C 302	Research Methodology in Comparative Religion			4
3.	MCR-C 303	Islam (Part-3): Islamic Thought, Revivalist &			4

		Reformist Movements			
4.	MCR-E 304	A) Judaism B) Zoroastrianism C) Arabic (Part-3 rd) D) Sanskrit (Part-3 rd) E) Persian (Part-3 rd)			3

4TH SEMESTER

1.	MCR-C 401	Christianity (Part-2)			4
2.	MCR-C 402	Religion in the Pluralistic Societies			4
3.	MCR-C 403	Modern Challenges To Religions			4
4.	MCR-C 404	Dissertation			4

1ST SEMESTER

Course no. (MCR-C 101)

Nature and Scope of Religion

Unit 1st

1. Definitions and concept of Religion
2. The Evolution of a Religious phenomena and tradition
3. Historical development of Religion and Religious Institutions
4. Introduction to World Religions (Aryan/Indian and the Semetic)

Unit 2nd

1. The Nature of Religious Experience – Traditional and Modern Theories, Indian and Semetic Religions (with Special Reference to Rudolf Otto, William James, Vivekananda, Aurbindo Gosh and S. Radhakrishnan)
2. The Importance of Understanding the World Views (The World Religions And Ideologies)
3. The Sacred and the Profane
4. The Two Aspects of Religious Life: Individual and Collective

Unit 3rd

1. Reason, Intuition and Revelation
2. Scriptures and Symbols
3. Myth, Theophany, Theonomy
4. Ritual in Religion

Unit 4th

1. Modern Challenges to Religious Traditions (Materialism, Rationalism, Agnosticism, Atheism and so on)
2. The Inter-faith Dialogue
3. Unity in Diversity in Religious Traditions
4. Reconciliatory Approaches

1ST SEMESTER

Course no. (MCR-C 102)

Hinduism—1

Unit 1st

1. “Hinduism” Definition
2. Pre-Vedic Religions, origin and antiquity of the Vedas
3. Vedic Texts (*Shruti and Smriti*)
4. Vedic Religion and Rituals; an introduction to later Vedic Scriptures(Brahmins and Aranyakas)

Unit 2nd

1. The Emergence and Development of the Upanishads
2. Fundamental Concepts of Classical Hinduism: *Brahman-atman, Karma, Moksha*;
3. The ontology of *Upanishads* and their influence.
4. Epic Literature: *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*.

Unit 3rd

1. The *Bhagvadgita* (commentaries and teachings).
2. The early and late Puranas
3. Classical Hindu Society; The Dharma Shastras- corpus, classification and content.
4. Varna- Ashrama-Dharma (Caste and Life stage Law) , the Four Goals of life (*purusharthas*)
5. Hindu life – cycle rituals (*samaskaras*)

Unit 4th

1. Major Schools of Traditional Hindu Thought
2. Samkhya: Origin and Development
3. Vedanta: Its basic Texts and Early Developments
4. Nyaya

1ST SEMESTER

Course no. (MCR-C 103)

Islam—1

Unit 1st

1. Islamic system of beliefs, worships and values as derived from the Quran and Sunnah.
2. The Quran and Tafsir,
3. Nature of revelation, compilation and preservation of the Quran.
4. Quran; its structure, content and major themes,

Unit 2nd

1. Quran: its inimitability and uniqueness
2. Translations and major commentaries of the Quran.
3. Sunnah and Hadith: meaning and definitions.
4. The Sirah (Life) of the Prophet.

Unit 3rd

1. Transmission of Hadith and its methodology
2. Principles of authenticity and credibility,
3. Major compilations of Hadith
4. The place and role of Hadith to determine Islamic injunctions.

Unit 4th

1. Fiqh and Shariah: The Islamic law and jurisprudence.
2. Legislative dimensions of the Quran and Sunnah,
3. Constitutional, criminal, civil and family laws of Islam,
4. Major schools of Islamic law and their distinguishing features.

1ST SEMESTER

Course no. (MCR-E 104)

A) Sikhism

Unit 1st

1. Political, religious and cultural background of Sikhism.
2. Life and Teachings of Guru Nanak Sahib.
3. Historical development of Sikh Panth and Culture.
4. Contribution of Sikh Gurus from Guru Arjun Dev to Guru Tegh Bahadur to the growth of Sikh religious tradition.

Unit 2nd

1. Basic Concepts in Sikh religious philosophy: God, Man and the World.
2. The Concept of Guru – Guru Granth Sahib: its compilation, basic doctrines and place in Sikh religion –
3. The salient philosophical and theological teachings of Jap Ji Saheb.
4. The World and Humans: the human problems and their Solution.

Unit 3rd

1. Contribution of Guru Gobind Singh to Sikh religion and culture.
2. Dasam Granth – Creation of Khalsa.
3. The distinguishing features of Sikh religio-cultural tradition - Langar – Sangat - Pangat and Gurudwara.
4. Miri –Piri and Gurumatta – Institutions of Religious Authority.

Unit 4th

1. Challenges of Modernity to Sikh Community.
2. Sikh response to some modern concerns.
3. Gender equality- Sikhs in Diaspora.
4. Bindranwala and aftermath.

1ST SEMESTER

Course no. (MCR-E 104)

B) Arabic (Part-1)

1ST SEMESTER

Course no. (C.R-E 104)

C) Sanskrit (Part-1)

1ST SEMESTER

Course no. (C.R-E 104)

D) Pali (Part-1)

1ST SEMESTER

Course no. (C.R-E 104)

E) Persian (Part-1)

1ST SEMESTER

Course no. (C.R-105)

Soft Skill Course

2ND SEMESTER

Course no. (MCR-C 201)

Hinduism—II

Unit 1st

1. Medieval Sectarianism
2. External Influences
3. Bakhti Movements
4. Emergence of Devotional Sects

Unit 2nd

1. Reformist Movements in the 19th Century: Ram Mohan Roy and Brahmo Samaj
2. Arya Samaj
3. Rama Krishna Mission
4. Neo-Vedanta

Unit 3rd

1. Neo-Hindu Movements in the West (Hare Krishna Hare Rama Mission)
2. Hindu Mahasabha
3. Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)
4. Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Shiv Sena

Unit 4th

1. Twentieth Century Renaissance and Contemporary discourses on Hinduism
2. The rise of BJP and Sangh Pariwar

2ND SEMESTER

Course no. (MCR-C 202)

Buddhism

Unit 1st

1. Genesis of Early Buddhism: socio-historical roots, material milieu of the rise of early Buddhism; Buddhism as a protest movement.
2. The Early Biographies of Gotama (The Buddha) , Modern scholarship on the legend of the Buddha.
3. Fundamental Buddhist Thought: The Four Noble Truths—*Ariyasaccani*, *Dukkhavada*,
4. The Eight Fold Path (*Astamarga*) Dependent Origination (*Paticcasmuppada*) ; Philosophy of Non- Self (*Anatta /Anatman*).

Unit 2nd

1. *Nirvana and Karma*: Concept and Imagery of *Nirvana* ; *Karma / Kamma* and rebirth
2. Buddhist moral Ethics (*Ceila*) : Fundamental Buddhist Ethics; nature of early Buddhist Ethics ; transgression and retribution.
3. Formation of the Buddhist Order (*Sangha*): Stages in the development of the Sangha.
4. The Development and formation of monastic codes; Monastic Initiation; Features of Buddhist monasticism.

Unit 3rd

1. Sectarian Developments: Mahayana—Nature, Origion, Growth, Influences of Mahayana in early India; Emergence of *Stupa Cult* and Mahayana.
2. Tantric Buddhism: appearance and setting; Significant Features of Tantric Buddhism in India; Transgressive elements.
3. *Vajrayana* – Tibetan Buddhism: Origin and Influence; features and its various forms and practices.
4. Buddhist Scriptures.

Unit 4th

1. Spread of Buddhism in its various forms: South and Southeast Asia
2. Decline of Buddhism in India: external factors, internal weaknesses and contradictions.
3. Revival and Transformation of Buddhism: the case of Singhalese Theravada Buddhism; Emergence of Navayana in India.
4. Neo- Buddhist movement in the West.

2ND SEMESTER

Course no. (MCR-C 203)

Islam—II

Unit 1st

1. Muslim Philosophy: Beginning of Intellectual Discussion in Islam.
2. Impact and Influence of other Religions and Civilisations.
3. Contribution of early philosophers: Al-Kindi, Al-Farabi, Ibn-Sina, Ibn Arabi and Ikhwan al-Safa.
4. Muslim Response To Philosophy: Al- Ghazali, Ibn-Rushd, Ibn-Tayymiyah

Unit 2nd

1. Origin, Development and Significance of *Ilm al-Kalam*
2. Important Schools of *Ilm al-Kalam* or *Mutakalimoon*: Mu'tazilah; Ash'ariah; Matridiyah.
3. Doctrines and Concepts Discussed by *Mutakalimoon* and their relevance to other religions

Unit 3rd

1. Origin and Development of Tasawwuf.
2. Early Sufis and their main Doctrines
3. Sufis of Medieval Period and their main thrust
4. Emergence of Sufi *Silsilas* and their chief Characteristics.

Unit 4th

1. Important Sufi writings and their main emphasis.
2. Muslim Critics of Philosophy and Sufism.
3. Sufi approach to other Religions.
4. *Wahdah al-Wujud* and *Wahdah al-Shuhud*

2ND SEMESTER

Course no. (MCR-E 204)

A) Jainism

Unit 1st

1. Historical Development
2. Life of Mahavira
3. The lineage of elders after Mahavira: From Jambu to Bhadraku
4. Jain council and the Spread of Jainism: Origin and Development of Jain Sangha (Royal patronage and the geographic expansion)

Unit 2nd

1. Jain Scriptures, Literary Traditions.
2. Jain Canonical Literature (The Svetamdar and Digambar Tradition)
3. Narrative Literature: Jain Puranas, Story Traditions, Saravakcara literature on lay discipline(Himchandra's Yogasatra)
4. Jain Religious Practices ; Asceticism and devotion; Vratas and restraint, temple worship, pilgrimages and other rituals(avasyaka and pratikraman etc)

Unit 3rd

1. Jain Conception of Time: *avasarpini* and *utsarpini*
2. The theory of Karma and Bondage (*tatva gnan/ Jain* conception of universe and *gati*)
3. Problems of Humans and their solution
4. Jainism and other Religions

Unit 4th

1. Reform and Revivalism: the rise of Jain Sects (the main divisions within Jainism, viz, Mandimargis, Sthankavasis etc.)
2. Monastic organisation: hierarchy within the monastic orders, the religious specialists (*monks, bhattaraks* etc)
3. The differences between *Digambar* and *Svetambar* Traditions (the contrast between the individualism of *Digambar* tradition and the church-like discipline of the *Svetambar* tradition)
4. Caste among Jains
5. Contributions of Jainism
6. Modern Challenges to Jainism (the continuing reforms, e.g., the relaxation on travel among the Terapanthi and Sthanak vasi traditions)

2ND SEMESTER

Course no. (MCR-E 204)

B) Arabic (Part-2nd)

2ND SEMESTER

Course no. (MCR-E 204)

C) Sanskrit (Part-2nd)

2ND SEMESTER

Course no. (MCR-E 204)

D) Pali (Part-2nd)

2ND SEMESTER

Course no. (MCR-E 204)

E) Persian (Part-2nd)

2ND SEMESTER

Course no. (C.R-205)

Social Orientation Course

3RD SEMESTER

Course no. (MCR-C 301)

Christianity (Part-1)

Unit 1st

1. Origin and Development of Christianity
2. Scriptures: Old and New Testament
3. Jesus of Nazareth: Life and basic Teachings
4. Death and Resurrection of Jesus

Unit 2nd

1. Apostles and early Followers of Jesus
2. Trinity, Original Sin and Salvation
3. Role of Paul of Tarsus and Introduction of Greek Philosophy in Christianity
4. Church: Its Origin and Growth

Unit 3rd

1. Christian-Jew interaction
2. Rise of Canon, Doctrine and Practices
3. Christians under Roman Empire
4. Constantine and the Legalization of Christianity

Unit 4th

1. Development of Nicene Creed
2. Athanasian, Baptismal & Apostles' Creed
3. Early sects in Christianity with special reference to Arianism
4. Apocrypha and the Gospel of Barnabas

3RD SEMESTER

Course no. (MCR-C 302)

Research Methodology in Comparative Religion

Unit 1st

1. Various Approaches to the Study of Religions
2. Indian Approach: Theory of Unity of Religions
3. Gandhian Theory: All Religions are True
4. Western Approaches to Religion: Anthropological and Sociological Theories

Unit 2nd

1. Man-Centric Approaches to Religions
2. Society-Centric Approaches: Durkheim, Max Muller and Max Weber
3. Spiritual and Psychological Phenomenon: Jung and Freud
4. Religious Experiences of William James and Luminous of Otto

Unit 3rd

1. Atheistic Approaches to Religion
2. Marx and Feuerbach
3. August Comte, Nietzsche and Bertrand Russell
4. Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens

Unit 4th

1. Modern Oriental responses to Study of Religions
2. Dayanand Saraswati and Swami Vivekananda: Unity of Religions or Unity of Religion
3. Isma'il Raji al-Faruqi, Husain Nasr and Ali Shariati
4. Evolutionary theory of Religion

3RD SEMESTER

Course no. (MCR-C 303)

Islam (Part-3): Islamic Thought, Revivalist & Reformist Movements

Unit 1st

1. Muhammad ibn Abd al- Wahhab: Thought and his Movement
2. Muhammad Ali Sanusi: Life and his Movement
3. Shah Wali Allah al-Dihlawi: Reconciliatory Approach
4. Sayyid Ahmad Beralwi and his Movement.

Unit 2nd

1. Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani: Thought and Impact
2. Shaikh Muhammad Abduh: Reformation
3. Rashid Rida and his thought
4. Shaikh Hasan al-Banna: Thought and Impact

Unit 3rd

1. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan: Educational Contribution and Rational Trends in Religious Thought
2. Shibli Naumani: Introduction of Scholastic trend
3. Sir Muhammad Iqbal: His concept of Movement and *Ijtihad*
4. Abul Kalam Azad: Concept of Wahdat-e Din and Pluralism

Unit 4th

1. Salafi Movement and its impact on Muslim World
2. Deoband Movement: Background and Contribution
3. Tablighi Movement: Impact and Achievements
4. Jama'at-i-Islami : Thought & Impact

3RD SEMESTER

Course no. (MCR-E 304)

A) Judaism

Unit 1st

1. God, Torah, and Israel: Hebrew beginning
2. Origin & Growth of Scriptures
3. Prophets: Abraham, Moses, Saul, David and Solomon
4. Mosaic Covenant

Unit 2nd

1. Jewish Diaspora
2. Growth of the Rabbinic Tradition and Talmud
3. Judaism's interaction with Islam
4. Kabbalah

Unit 3rd

1. Religious Reforms in Judaism
2. Rise of Zionism
3. The Jewish Holocaust
4. Dead Sea Scrolls

Unit 4th

1. Creation of Israel
2. Arab Israel Conflict
3. Impact of Zionism on Culture
4. Jews in West

3RD SEMESTER

Course no. (MCR-E 304)

B) Zoroastrianism

Unit 1st

1. Beginnings of the academics study of Zoroastrianism.
2. Pre-Zoroastrian and the Vedic religion.
3. Zoroastrian religion: monotheistic, dualistic, or polytheistic.
4. Avesta: exploring its nature and character.

Unit 2nd

1. Zoroaster: biographical sketch and mission.
2. Ahura Mazda & Angra Mainyu: opposition and adversary.
3. The Two States & Three Times, Death & life after.
4. Worship of Ahura Mazda & associated practices.

Unit 3rd

1. Zoroastrianism during the earliest phase: the unrecorded centuries.
2. Zoroastrianism under the Achaemenians.
3. Zoroastrianism under the Seleucids.
4. Zoroastrianism under the Sasanians.
5. Zurvanism: rise of a heretical philosophy.

Unit 4th

1. Advent and spread of the Parsi community in India.
2. Parsis & the Christian missionaries: challenge and response.
3. Parsis' religious and social reforms in the 19th and 20th centuries.
4. Zoroastrianism's influence on the religions of the Middle East

3RD SEMESTER

Course no. (MCR-E 304)

C) Arabic (Part-3rd)

3RD SEMESTER

Course no. (MCR-E 304)

D) Sanskrit (Part-3rd)

3RD SEMESTER

Course no. (MCR-E 304)

E) Persian (Part-3rd)

4TH SEMESTER

Course no. (MCR-C 401)

Christianity (Part-2)

Unit 1st

1. Early interaction between Islam and Christianity
2. Church-State relations
3. Augustine: the Defender of Christian faith
4. Role of Missionaries

Unit 2nd

1. Crusades and Religious Reforms
2. Martin Luther and Catholic Controversy
3. Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants
4. Impact of modern philosophy and French Revolution on Christianity

Unit 3rd

1. Modern Movements in Christianity
2. Modern Catholic Church and Later Developments
3. Christians in Indian Sub-continent
4. Medieval Muslim Responses to Christianity

Unit 4th

1. Christians Missions in India During Medieval Period
2. Advent of Christians in South India and the establishment of first Church
3. Modern Responses to Christian Missionaries
4. Christians and Inter-religious Dialogue

4TH SEMESTER

Course no. (MCR-C 402)

Religion in the Pluralistic Societies

Unit 1st

1. Emergence of Multi-faith Societies
2. Religious Identities in Secular India
3. Globalization and Religion
4. Neo-Religious Diaspora

Unit 2nd

1. Advent of Multiculturalism
2. Media Explosion, Stereotyping and Religion
3. Global Cooperation Trends and Religion
4. Dialogue Initiatives among various Religions

Unit 3rd

1. Pluralistic Tendencies in Medieval Times
2. Abbasid Courts and inter-Religious Debates
3. Dabistan-e Madhahib and Dīn-e Ilāhī
4. Al-Bīrūnī, Dara Shako and Sarmad

Unit 4th

1. Muslims in Europe
2. Islam in Central Asia
3. Muslims in China, and Burma
4. A Study of *Dār al-Harb*, *Dār al-Mu'āhidah* and *Dār al-Kufr* in Indian Muslim Context

4TH SEMESTER

Course no. (MCR-C 403)

Modern Challenges to Religions

Unit 1st

1. Religion and Modernization
2. Religion, Science and Scientism
3. Logical Positivism and Religion
4. Value Neutrality of Science

Unit 2nd

1. Peace, Violence and Religion
2. Inter-religious Conflicts
3. Intra-religious Conflicts
4. Clash of Civilizations

Unit 3rd

5. Feminism
6. Religious Feminism
7. Violence against Women and Religion
8. Gender Equity Initiatives

Unit 4th

5. Religious Extremism
6. Role of Religion in Conflict Situations
7. Faith-based Reconciliation Movement
8. Dialogue among Abrahamic Faiths and *Samwad* among Religions

4TH SEMESTER

Course no. (MCR-C 404)

Dissertation