NOVA COLLEGE-WIDE COURSE CONTENT SUMMARY
REL 231 – RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD I (3 CR.)

Course Description
Studies religions of the world with attention to origin, history, and doctrine. Part I of II. Lecture 3 hours per week.

General Course Purpose
To introduce the student to the origins, teachings, organization, and practices of Eastern religious traditions (Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Daoism and Confucianism, Shinto) with an emphasis of their role in motivating, shaping and inspiring their adherents through myths, rituals, symbols, ethical codes and religious experiences, and to examine the varied issues, problems and concerns of the religions studied.

Course Prerequisites/Corequisites
None

Course Objectives
At the completion of the course, the student will be able to examine the history, belief and the practice of Eastern religious traditions. Specifically, the student will be able to:

- Identify and define relevant terminology such as asceticism, dharma, karma, samsara, moksha, nirvana, yoga, ahimsa, guru, bodhisattva, lama, Dao, wu wei, kami, khalsa, filial piety, ren/jen, etc.
- Explain the role great religious founders have filled in human history
- Summarize the origins, teachings, organization and practices of the religions studied
- Interpret some of the sacred writings and mythic imagery of Indian and East Asian religions
- Compare and contrast recurring themes in the religions studied such as: mysticism, loving devotion, reincarnation, ultimate liberation
- Discuss the historical connections among the religions studied
- Analyze the complex relations between religion and society/culture in various historical and contemporary contexts
- Respectfully discuss previously unfamiliar religious events/communities or his/her participation in them

Major Topics to be Included
Critical attention will be given to the following topics:

- Hinduism: Vedic and Brahmanic origins, and popular Hindu beliefs and practice
- Other Indian religions: Jainism and Sikhism
- Buddhism: Origins and teachings, development and variations (including Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana)
- Daoism: The Way of the universe
- Confucianism: The high ethical religion of China
- Shinto: The indigenous religion of Japan
- May also include: Indigenous religions, New Religious Movements and religion in the twenty-first century