WORLD RELIGIONS
Quotes on Religion

“A friendly study of the world’s religions is a sacred duty.” – Mahatma Gandhi

"I contend that we are both atheists. I just believe in one fewer god than you do. When you understand why you dismiss all the other possible gods, you will understand why I dismiss yours." -Stephen Roberts (1995 Internet sensation)

“Doubts are the ants in the pants of faith. They keep it awake and moving.” – Frederick Buechner (20th century Presbyterian minister)
**Hinduism**

- **When:** 6500 BC
- **Where:** India
- **What:** Monotheistic & Polytheistic
- **Book:** Vedas - poems and hymns
  - Upanishades - questions on life and death
- **Holy Place:** Ganges river
- **Missionary Religion?** - No
- **Important Figures:** Brahman
  - Bhrama - creator
  - Shiva - destroyer
  - Vishnu - sustainer

**Major Beliefs:**

- **Dharma** - moral behavior
- **Karma** - sum of good and bad deeds, which determines the outcome of your *atman* (soul) in the next life
- **Samsara** - the cycle of life, death, and rebirth
- **Moksha** - the release from Samsara
- **Varna** - caste system
  - Brahmanas - priests
  - Kshatriyas - kings and warriors
  - Vaishays - merchants and farmers
  - Shudras - laborers and servants
  - Untouchables
The Dalit
Untouchables
do all the lower-order work
subordinate to all

Feet
Kshudras
Servants, subordinate to Vaishyas, Kshatriyas and Brahmins

Thighs
Vaishyas
Business community

Arms
Kshatriyas
Warriors, Kings

Mouth
Brahmins
Priests, Academics

Diagram showing the social hierarchy in India, with the Dalit at the bottom, subordinate to all other groups.
Buddhism

- When: 600 BC
- Where: China
- What: Neither
- Holy Book: None
- Place of Worship: Buddha statues
- Missionary Religion?: Yes...for a while
- Important Figures:
  Siddartha --> Buddha
  ("the enlightened one")
- Purpose: Achieve "nirvana" - end samsara

The 8-fold Path
1. right opinion
2. right purpose
3. right speech
4. right action
5. right way to earn a living
6. right effort
7. right mindfulness
8. right concentration

Major Beliefs:
The 4 Noble Truths
1. Life is pain and suffering
2. This suffering is caused by a desire for material possessions
3. Suffering ends when you renounce worldly cravings
4. Follow the 8-fold path in order to end suffering
HINTOISM

When: 10 BC
Where: Japan
What: Polytheistic
Book: Kojiki - “records of ancient matters’
        Nihongi - “chronicle of Japan”
Worship: Shrines (more than 140,000)
Holy Places: Mt. Fuji (for some sects)
Missionary Religion?: No - all are welcome in the Shinto faith, and can be regarded as Kami even if they do not profess a belief in Shinto

Important Figures:
    Kami - natural spirits
    Emperor - regarded as a direct descendant of the Sun-god
Major Beliefs of Shintoism:

- **Patriotism** - loyalty to homeland
- **No idolatry** - no statues of gods/spirits
- **Spiritual protection** - ancestors protect the country and watch over family
- **Spiritual & physical worlds are intertwined**
- Emphasize fitting into the physical world, rather than preparing for the next world
- **Nothing is too small** or insignificant to ignore or revere
- **No religious commandments** to govern behavior - people have a moral responsibility to do right, and feel a shared guilt for sin
Judaism

- When: 1900 BC
- Where: Middle East
- What: Monotheistic
- Book: Torah - Old Testament
  Talmud - Oral Teachings
- Place of Worship: Synagogues
- Holy Places: Jerusalem
- Missionary Religion?: Yes
- Important Figures: G_d (Yahweh), Abraham, Moses, NOT Jesus
Major Beliefs:

- 10 Sayings
  - #1 & 2 - belief in a single, all-powerful God that brought them out of Egypt
  - #4 - Sanctity of the Sabbath (Shabat - sundown on Friday to Saturday)
  - #6-10 - responsibility to respect your fellow man
- Belief that the messiah has not yet come to Earth
  - Belief that Jesus was not the Son of God, merely a prophet
Denominations of Judaism

- Reconstructionist
- Humanistic
- Reform
- Orthodox
- Hasidic
- Conservative
- Messianic
Christianity

When: 30 AD
Where: Middle East
What: Monotheistic
Book: Bible: Hebrew Bible + New Testament
Place of Worship: Churches
Holy Places: Jerusalem, Bethlehem
Missionary Religion?: Yes
Important Figures: God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit
Major Beliefs:

- **10 commandments** [http://www.bibleplus.org/tencommandments.htm]
  - #1 - belief in a single, all-powerful God
  - #4 - sanctity of the 7th day (Sunday)
  - #6-10 - responsibility to respect your fellow man
- Salvation attained through belief in the Son of God
Islam

- When: 600 AD (Always)
- Where: Middle East
- What: Monotheistic
- Book: Koran or Qur'an
- Place of Worship: Mosques
- Holy Places: Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem
- Missionary Religion?: Yes
- Important Figures: Allah, Mohammed & Abraham

Commonality between “People of the Book”: Jews, Christians and Muslims
- All received the same word of God, but Christians and Jews confused the message
- All will be rewarded on the Last Day because of belief in the one true God

Major Beliefs: 5 pillars of Islam
1. Kalima - statement of faith - there is but one god, Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet
2. Salat - 5 daily prayers in the direction of Mecca
3. Zakat - giving alms to the poor
4. Sawm - abstaining from food and drink while the sun is up during holy days
5. Hajj - pilgrimage to Mecca once in a lifetime
Islam
  └── Sunni
      ├── Ahmadiyya
      │    └── Schools of law (Madhahab)
      │         └── Hanafi
      │                 └── Hanbali
      │                           └── Maliki
      │                                └── Shafi'i
      ├── Deoband movement
      │    └── Bareli
  └── Shi'a
      ├── Ismailism
      │    └── Ja'fri
      │          └── Zaidiyah
      │                        ├── Twelver
      │                            │    └── Alawi
      │                            │        └── Alevi
      │                            └── 'Alawite
      │                                └── Usuli
      │                                      └── Akbari
      │                                           └── Shaykhi
      ├── Sufi
      │    └── Orders (Tariqah)
      │         └── Bohras
      │                 └── Dawoodi Bohras
      │                        └── Jafri Bohras
      │                                        └── Sufaimani Bohras
      │                                            └── Alaul Bohras
      │                                                └── Hebatlahs Bohras
      │                                                        └── Alba'i Malak Bohras
      │                                                                └── Progressive Dawoodi Bohras
      ├── Sect extint* Druze are not always considered Muslim
      │    └── Universal Sufism

* Sect extinct*