

# Religion

## Religion

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Religion is a range of social-cultural systems, including designated behaviors and practices, morals, beliefs, worldviews, texts, sanctified places, prophecies, ethics, or organizations, that generally relate humanity to supernatural, transcendental, and spiritual elements—although there is no scholarly consensus over what precisely constitutes a religion. It is an essentially contested concept. Different religions may or may not contain various elements ranging from the divine, sacredness, faith, and a supernatural being or beings.

The origin of religious belief is an open question, with possible explanations including awareness of individual death, a sense of community, and dreams. Religions have sacred histories, narratives, and mythologies, preserved in oral traditions, sacred texts, symbols...

## Criticism of religion

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Criticism of religion involves criticism of the validity, concept, or ideas of religion. Historical records of criticism of religion go back to at least 5th century BCE in ancient Greece, in Athens specifically, with Diagoras "the Atheist" of Melos. In ancient Rome, an early known example is Lucretius' *De rerum natura* from the 1st century BCE.

Every exclusive religion on Earth (as well as every exclusive world view) that promotes exclusive truth-claims necessarily denigrates the truth-claims of other religions. Thus, some criticisms of religion become criticisms of one or more aspects of a specific religious tradition. Critics of religion in general may view religion as one or more of: outdated, harmful to the individual, harmful to society, an impediment to the progress of science or humanity...

## Folk religion

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Folk religion, traditional religion, or vernacular religion comprises, according to religious studies and folkloristics, various forms and expressions of religion that are distinct from the doctrines and practices of organized religion. The precise definition of folk religion varies among scholars. Sometimes also termed popular belief, it consists of ethnic or regional religious customs under the umbrella of a religion; but outside doctrine and practices.

The term "folk religion" is generally held to encompass two related but separate subjects. The first is the religious dimension of folk culture (folklore), or the folk-cultural dimensions of religion. The second refers to the study of religious syncretism between two cultures with different stages of formal expression, such as the melange...

## Ethnic religion

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In religious studies, an ethnic religion or ethnoreligion is a religion or belief associated with notions of heredity and a particular ethnicity. Ethnic religions are often distinguished from universal religions, such as Christianity or Islam, which are not limited in ethnic, national or racial scope.

#### Evolutionary origin of religion

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The evolutionary origin of religion and religious behavior is a field of study related to evolutionary psychology, the origin of language and mythology, and cross-cultural comparison of the anthropology of religion. Some subjects of interest include Neolithic religion, evidence for spirituality or cultic behavior in the Upper Paleolithic, and similarities in great ape behavior.

#### Psychology of religion

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Psychology of religion consists of the application of psychological methods and interpretive frameworks to the diverse contents of religious traditions as well as to both religious and irreligious individuals. The various methods and frameworks can be summarized according to the classic distinction between the natural-scientific and human-scientific approaches. The first cluster amounts to objective, quantitative, and preferably experimental procedures for testing hypotheses about causal connections among the objects of one's study. In contrast, the human-scientific approach accesses the human world of experience using qualitative, phenomenological, and interpretive methods. This approach aims to discern meaningful, rather than causal, connections among the phenomena one seeks to understand...

#### Anthropology of religion

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Anthropology of religion is the study of religion in relation to other social institutions, and the comparison of religious beliefs and practices across cultures. The anthropology of religion, as a field, overlaps with but is distinct from the field of Religious Studies. The history of anthropology of religion is a history of striving to understand how other people view and navigate the world. This history involves deciding what religion is, what it does, and how it functions. Today, one of the main concerns of anthropologists of religion is defining religion, which is a theoretical undertaking in and of itself. Scholars such as Edward Tylor, Emile Durkheim, E.E. Evans Pritchard, Mary Douglas, Victor Turner, Clifford Geertz, and Talal Asad have all grappled with defining and characterizing...

#### Comparative religion

*Abrahamic religions and Iranian religions), Indian religions, East Asian religions, African religions, American religions, Oceanic religions, and classical*

Comparative religion is the branch of the study of religions with the systematic comparison of the doctrines and practices, themes and impacts (including migration) of the world's religions. In general the comparative study of religion yields a deeper understanding of the fundamental philosophical concerns of religion such as ethics, metaphysics and the nature and forms of salvation. It also considers and compares the origins and

similarities shared between the various religions of the world. Studying such material facilitates a broadened and more sophisticated understanding of human beliefs and practices regarding the sacred, numinous, spiritual and divine.

In the field of comparative religion, a common geographical classification of the main world religions distinguishes groups such as Middle...

## Philosophy of religion

*Philosophy of religion is "the philosophical examination of the central themes and concepts involved in religious traditions";. Philosophical discussions*

Philosophy of religion is "the philosophical examination of the central themes and concepts involved in religious traditions". Philosophical discussions on such topics date from ancient times, and appear in the earliest known texts concerning philosophy. The field involves many other branches of philosophy, including metaphysics, epistemology, logic, ethics, aesthetics, philosophy of language, and philosophy of science.

The philosophy of religion differs from religious philosophy in that it seeks to discuss questions regarding the nature of religion as a whole, rather than examining the problems brought forth by a particular belief-system. The philosophy of religion differs from theology in that it aims to examine religious concepts from an objective philosophical perspective rather than from...

## State religion

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A state religion (also called official religion) is a religion or creed officially endorsed by a sovereign state. A state with an official religion (also known as a confessional state), while not a secular state, is not necessarily a theocracy. State religions are subject to advantageous treatment by official or government-sanctioned establishments of them, ranging from incentivising citizens to recognise and practice them through government endorsement to having public spending on the maintenance of church property and clergy be unrestricted, but the state does not need to be under the legislative control of the clergy as it would be in a theocracy.

Official religions have been known throughout human history in almost all types of cultures, reaching into the Ancient Near East and prehistory...

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