

World Religions

Religious Terms

Religion: Belief in a transcendent reality that is the source of everything material and alive in the universe.

Science: System of knowledge obtained and tested through the scientific method, concerned with the physical world and its phenomena.

Scientism: The belief that science is the only way of understanding reality.

Mythopoeic worldview: a viewpoint that explains the world through gods, the supernatural, etc.

Scientific worldview: a viewpoint that explains the physical world through observation, experimentation, and reason.

Myth: a traditional story that explains part of the worldview of a people or explains a practice, belief, or natural phenomenon.

Theology: the study of religious faith, practice, and experience.

Ethics: the study of what is good and bad, right and wrong.

Metaphysics: the study of the nature of reality and being.

Polytheism: belief in more than one god.

Monotheism: belief in one god.

Secular: relating to the world; not specifically religious.

Temporal: relating to time and earthly life; lay or secular rather than religious.

Spiritual: relating to the sacred or religious; ecclesiastical rather than lay or temporal.

Orthodox: conforming to official church teachings or religious beliefs.

Heresy: a religious opinion or practice that is contrary to official church teaching.

Ecclesiastical: relating to a church, especially as an established institution.

Laity: the people of a religious faith, as distinguished from the clergy (**Lay:** of or relating to the laity).

Clergy: a group ordained to perform sacred and official functions in a particular religion.

Doctrine: a principle or the principals of official belief in a particular religion.

Dogma: a doctrine or doctrines concerning faith formally stated by a church.

Sacrament: a religious ritual, especially a Christian rite (such as baptism) that is held to be a means of divine grace or to be a sign or symbol of a spiritual reality.

Sacred: worthy of religious veneration; entitled to reverence and respect

Profane: to treat something sacred with abuse or irreverence; to debase by vulgar use.