

WORLD RELIGIONS: Introduction Vocabulary

1. **Religion:** "Religion is any specific system of belief about a deity or deities, often involving rituals, a code of ethics, a philosophy of life, and a worldview." (from ReligiousTolerance.org)
2. **Culture:** A culture is a way of life of a group of people--the behaviors, beliefs, values, and symbols that they accept, generally without thinking about them, and that are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next.
3. **Transcendent:** Literally, to "climb beyond." To be beyond or outside the range of normal human experience
4. **Sacred:** worthy of worship in a religious way; made or believed to be holy
5. **Profane:** Normal; not sacred
6. **Monotheism:** The belief in one God
7. **Polytheism:** The belief in many gods
8. **Henotheism:** The belief in a single god without denying the existence of other gods
9. **Atheism:** Literally, "no God." A position stating that there is no God or gods
10. **Agnostic:** Literally, "not know." A position stating that the existence of God can't be proven
11. **Deity:** any supernatural being worshipped as controlling some part of the world or some aspect of life or who is the a "force" in human form
12. **Divine/divinity:** Coming from, or having the nature of, a god
13. **Secular:** non-religious, as in "a secular story" or a "secular university"