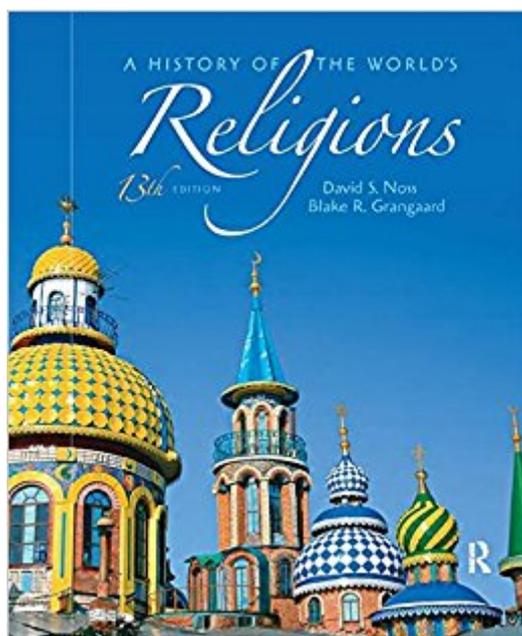


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# A History Of The World's Religions



## Synopsis

A History of the World's Religions bridges the interval between the founding of religions and their present state, and gives students an accurate look at the religions of the world by including descriptive and interpretive details from the original source materials. Refined by over forty years of dialogue and correspondence with religious experts and practitioners around the world, A History of the World's Religions is widely regarded as the hallmark of scholarship, fairness, and accuracy in its field. It is also the most thorough yet manageable history of world religion available in a single volume, treating many subjects largely neglected in other texts.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

David S. Noss taught in the Religion and Philosophy Department of Heidelberg College from 1950 until his retirement in 1989, although he continued teaching students and advising faculty until his passing in 2010. Blake Grangaard earned his B.A. from St. Olaf College, M.Div. from Luther Theological Seminary and Ph.D. from Union Theological Seminary in Virginia. He was a church pastor for almost 10 years before turning to academia.

Preface ["Get the Noss book,"](#) a teacher told me years ago. It was good advice then, and I hope it will continue to be good advice. Now in its thirteenth edition, A History of the World's Religions has a history of its own. John Noss spent more than a decade researching and writing the first edition, published in 1949 as *Man's Religions*. His much younger brother, David, played a small part, typing one of the chapters. That was not the end of David's association with the

book. When John died, in 1980, the seventh edition was in preparation. David had already consulted on previous editions, and the seventh included his name on the title page. Through subsequent editions he reworked prose, emended and added material, and broadened the scope of the book to give special attention to the role of religion in social conflicts and international tension. By the tenth edition the publisher convinced him the book had become "his," so his name alone would be on the title page. I was relieved when David told me his first intention upon taking on this book was "not to mess it up." I feel the same way. So it is appropriate to be mindful of the book's purpose, i.e., to be a one-volume history of religion, directed to teachers and students. As David expressed it in the most recent editions: My elder brother, John B. Noss, spent ten years preparing the first (1949) edition of this book. At that time he found that most publications in the field tended to focus on the biographies of the founders and then jumped to comparing and evaluating their contemporary practices. His preface to the first edition spoke of two special needs to be met: the first was to include descriptive and interpretative details from the original source materials and second to bridge the interval between the founding of religions and their present state. *Italics mine.* Those who have used successive editions will recognize an increasing attentiveness to those needs. Primary source materials are not spliced in as undigested chunks but carefully introduced with interpretative introductions. As color-highlighted quotations, primary sources gain even more of the prominence they deserve. Key quotations are highlighted in color-framed brackets. Illustrations now play a larger part: in addition to samples of classic art and architecture, new photographs furnish more samples from pop art, depictions of ceremonial regalia, explanations of ritual practices, and scenes of believer engagement toward social betterment. Extended teaching captions go beyond perfunctory identifications of the subject.

**WHAT'S NEW TO THIS EDITION**

- \* The current edition has been emended to aid comprehension.
- \* New terms replace obsolete expressions.
- \* Information is updated to reflect current scholarship.
- \* A clearer hierarchy of headings and subheadings helps the reader follow the flow of the narrative.
- \* Interruptions to the flow of the historical narrative now appear in shaded sidebars.
- \* The Bardo Thodol, the much-heard-of Tibetan Book of the Dead, receives attention.
- \* A new full-color design enhances the reading experience
- \* MyReligionLab provides additional activities for both students and instructors

**SUPPORT FOR INSTRUCTOR'S AND STUDENTS**

- \* MyReligionLab.(020518068X) MyReligionLab logo goes here is an interactive and instructive multimedia site designed to help students and instructors save time and improve results. It offers access to a wealth of resources geared to meet the individual teaching and learning needs of every instructor and student. Combining an ebook, video, audio,

multimedia simulations, research support and assessment, MyReligionLab engages students and gives them the tools they need to enhance their performance in the course. Please see your Pearson sales representative or visit [www.myreligionlab.com](http://www.myreligionlab.com) for more information. \*

Instructor's Manual with Tests. (0205178790) For each chapter in the text, this valuable resource provides a detailed outline, list of objectives, discussion questions, and suggested readings and videos. In addition, test questions in multiple-choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, and short answer formats are available for each chapter; the answers are page-referenced to the text. For easy access, this manual is available within the instructor section of MyReligionLab for A History of the World's Religions, or at [www.pearsonhighered.com/irc](http://www.pearsonhighered.com/irc). \* MyTest. (0205178812) This computerized software allows instructors to create their own personalized exams, edit any or all of the existing test questions, and add new questions. Other special features of the program include random generation of test questions, creation of alternate versions of the same test, scrambling question sequence, and test preview before printing. For easy access, this software is available at [www.pearsonhighered.com/irc](http://www.pearsonhighered.com/irc). \* PowerPoint Presentation Slides. (0205178820) These PowerPoint slides combine text and graphics for each chapter to help instructors convey philosophical principles in a clear and engaging way. For easy access, they are available within the instructor section of MyReligionLab for A History of the World's Religions, or at [www.pearsonhighered.com/irc](http://www.pearsonhighered.com/irc).

Thank you to the following manuscript reviewers who made good suggestions for improving the book: Jeffrey Robbins ~ Lebanon Valley College; Pasquale Simonelli ~ Monmouth University; Jeanne Kusina ~ University of Toledo; Timothy Fobbs ~ Tidewater Community College; Hong Qu ~ Iowa State University; Patrick Nnoromele ~ Eastern Kentucky University. I encourage other readers to contact me with suggestions or corrections. Thank you also to Nicole Conforti and her associates at Pearson Education for their help and consultations. And, of course, I am ever grateful to John B. Noss and David S. Noss for passing to me such a splendid text. Blake R. Grangaard [bgrangaa@heidelberg.edu](mailto:bgrangaa@heidelberg.edu) Acknowledgments Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, third edition, edited by James B. Pritchard. Copyright ~ 1950, 1955, 1969, renewed 1978 by Princeton University Press. Reprinted by permission of Princeton University Press. The Way and Its Power, edited and translated by Arthur Waley. Copyright ~ 1934 by George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., London. Reprinted with permission from The Arthur Waley Estate, Richmond, Surrey, UK. The Analects of Confucius, edited and translated by Arthur Waley. Copyright ~ 1938 by George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., London. Reprinted with permission from The Arthur Waley Estate, Richmond, Surrey, UK. Six lines of verse from The Way of Life, by Witter Bynner. Copyright 1944 by Witter Bynner. Copyright renewed 1972 by Dorothy

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I was required to take a class on religion as a prerequisite for a nursing program I applied to. I ended up choosing a different program, but am still happy that I took the course on world religion. The course, and this book especially, opened my eyes about many of the world's religions. It made me a more open-minded person, and taught me a lot about religion and culture. The lessons I learned from this book and class are priceless. I truly think the world would be a better place if everyone read this book and developed a bigger level of understanding about different faith backgrounds.

I imagine when you write a history book on religion it must be very hard to write an unbiased opinion and stick to the facts. I personally was not impressed with the author's writing and so I am a little shocked to see it is in its 12th edition already. I bought the book based on it having so many updates and new editions and simply the title gave me what I needed as I was searching for some specific historical answers. The book provided what I needed so I rated it OK.

So disappointing. I was excited to study religion, but the book is so hard to read. It looks like someone took random paragraphs from a bigger book and just pasted everything together. Sometimes paragraphs are not even connected, or the next sentence may jump to a completely different topic. I have an assignment to paraphrase Hinduism and I'm sitting here trying to pick and

choose sentences and put them in a paragraph that expresses a coherent and meaningful thought. I wish my teacher had chosen a different book...

Very detailed.. So detailed that it will over load your brain. It helped me out a lot but I would recommend just sticking with the Islam, Judaism, Christianity, and the other major religions that the exam covers. I read the whole book and compared it to the exam, the majority of those indigenous religions that are outline and detailed in the book wont pop up on the exam. So, don't waste your time if you are using this book as study guide for the exam.

Thorough, descriptive, and easy to understand, this book carefully explores the different religions without engaging in a lot of bias.

The text is rich and detailed while remaining an overview of major world religions. Purchased the older edition for college.

Book was amazing with lots of info. Needed it for school and got an A in this class because of this book.

Good reading

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