

ADDITIONAL READING LIST

WORLD RELIGIONS

God is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions that Run the World and Why Their Differences Matter – Stephen Prothero

The best single book on world religions I've read. He covers the eight largest religions in wonderful chapters that are standalone and can be read at your discretion. Each chapter has excellent information, incisive commentary, and is all jargon free. The book I wish I'd written.

HINDUISM

Sita Sings the Blues

I'm cheating here. This isn't a book but a movie available on YouTube. This critically acclaimed animated feature covers perhaps the best loved Hindu story, the Ramayan. Three guides interrupt to give witty commentary on the story, sharing their own opinions, and offering loving critique. And of course, Sita sings Blues music. Lyrical and fun. (Though animated, it's directed at adults.)

The Hindu Traditions: A Concise Introduction – Mark Muesse

A very nice introduction to Hinduism. Delivers on the promise of being "concise" and easily readable but is nonetheless very rich.

JUDAISM

The Beginnings of Judaism – Great Course by Isaiah Gafni

Cheating again as this is not technically a book. You can watch this Great Course or listen to it (audio version is also available through Audible). A set of 24 thirty-minute lectures, complete with notes for each lecture. Very good summary and lots of insightful commentary. Lecturer clearly enjoys his subject.

Crucible of Faith: The Ancient Revolution that Made Our Modern Religious World – by Philip Jenkins

Covers the crucial last few centuries B.C.E. up until the first century or so where Judaism undergoes pivotal changes that will change it, create the fertile soil for Christianity, and

thus alter the future of religious history, especially in the West but increasingly elsewhere as well.

BUDDHISM

The Way of Zen – Alan Watts

A classic text that helped launch Western Buddhism. Philosophical and insightful.

Buddhism: Introducing the Buddhist Experience

A very good textbook introduction to Buddhism. Really aims to be comprehensive both geographically and through time, while emphasizing the Buddhist focus on experience.

Peace is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life – by Thich Nhat Hanh

Hanh is a kind of living saint, nominated by Martin Luther King for the Nobel Peace Prize, and an author of many books. This has been one of his most popular. He embodies peace in many ways but has also been active in politics including opposing the Vietnam war. That combination of engagement from a position of peace is surely what endeared him to King and to millions of others.

ISLAM

No God But God – by Reza Aslan

Probably the best introductory book on Islam. Academically credible but written for a popular audience. An easy, informative read.

We Have Always Been Here: A Queer Muslim Memoir – Samra Habib

Habib started a photographic blog that went viral. The book is a straightforward account of being a minority Muslim sect persecuted in Pakistan, immigrating to Canada, dealing with very conservative parents and a maturing sexual identity, and navigating being queer and Muslim. There are many journeys for merely one woman.

The Muslimah Who Fell to Earth: Personal Stories by Canadian Muslim Women – ed. Saima Hussain

A series of short, readable, first person accounts of being a Muslim woman in Canada. Just a wonderful range including women who wear niqabs or hijabs to those who wear no covering, some straight, some gay, some dealing with racism, some finding a home in the mosque to others who critique them as sexist. Wonderful display of how varied the term “Muslim woman” is.

FIRST NATIONS

The Truth About Stories – Thomas King

You can buy this book but if you can, find the audio (or video). This book was actually a series of five lectures (Canada's famed Massey lectures) and King is a former radio host and has the radio person's voice. The delivery is a wonderful exhibit of the power of orality.

Indian Horse – Richard Wagamese

Powerful novel of a boy, the abusive system of residential schools, and a love of hockey. A poignant, compelling book that lodged itself inside me.

Native American Religions: An Introduction – by Sam Gill

American academic of Native ancestry who tries to bridge the two worlds, bringing a Western lens to understanding and explaining Native traditions. More of an academic read but short and good.