Religious Studies Department  
REL 3308 Studies in World Religions  
Spring 2013  
Biscayne Bay Campus

Instructor: Valeria Schindler  
Email: vschindl@fiu.edu  
Office: TBA  
Phone: TBA  
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays  
8:30am to 9:45am and by Appointment  
Class Days and Hours: MWF 11am-11:50am  
Room #: ACI 264

Course Description:

This is an introductory course to world religions. Since it is an extensive subject, we will be focusing on some of the major religions of our world, examining them from its historical, sociological, anthropological, psychological, and ritualistic practices. We will also learn about religions that are no longer in practice, which will enable us to understand how other religions were influenced by them. We will analyze the differences and similarities between the religions learned in our course and associate their practices, beliefs, and applications to contemporary issues in our world.

We will use different techniques as a way of learning in this class, such as debates, lectures, personal assignments, videos, and group assignments. We will also have different guest speakers’ expert in diverse religions or religious related subjects.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- Define and discuss basic religious terminology.
- Learn and apply critical thinking skills in the context of religion.
- Appreciate the history, basic teachings, practices, and underlying beliefs and principles of some of the world religions, analyzing them in a critical way and understanding their similitudes and differences.
- Understand what the religious phenomena and religious experience are by utilizing different approaches and theories of religion in order to present a critical analysis.
• Become more aware and understanding of the diversity of religious beliefs in our society and its effects on contemporary and every-day events.
• Challenge his/her own misconceptions of what religion and its practices are and open his/her mind to new ideas.

**Required Textbooks:**

  ISBN-10: 0-205-15860-9

• *Note:* extra handouts are going to be provided by the instructor and posted online. **It is your responsibility to complete the readings.**
• There is no need to purchase MyReligonLab with your textbook; you can do so if you would like to have extra material.

**Assignments:**

• **Ten (10) ten-question quizzes- lowest score to be dropped**- on the reading material and class lectures including multiple choice and true or false questions. These quizzes will be taken on Blackboard

• **Midterm and Final Exams.**
  o **Midterm:** will cover the first half of the semester and will include multiple choice, true and false, and matching questions.
  o **Final:** will cover from second half of the semester and will include multiple choice, true and false, and matching questions.

• **One Group or individual work (students’ choice) to be presented in class.** Please select which one of the following options you would like to do

  o 1. Pick a piece of news that has to do with a religious related topic and analyze it. Make sure you research the tradition and you mention topics we look at in class. In this presentation I expect you to produce a deep analysis in which you include your personal opinion on the way the writer handles the information, if you believe that he/she was missing any information, if it was a bias article and what would you change in order to make it “less bias.” You might have to conduct further research on the topic.

  or
2. Choose two different religions and the same topic or concept in both religions, then compare and contrast both topics. For example, you can compare and contrast Catholic nuns and Jain nuns. Make sure to include as much information as possible, even consider conducting further research at the library or online. I do not consider WIKIPEDIA a source, so please do not use it for this paper.

- You will have to present your topic in a creative way (music, video, power point, acting, etc.)
- More details and guidelines (including a rubric on what you’ll be graded) to be provided in class.

Extra Credit opportunities are available and it usually involves attending a special lecture or event and writing a two-page review and analysis: at least one page should summarize the event and provide evidence of attendance, and at least one page must analyze the event in the context of a course theme or concept. The essay could be worth up to 3 extra credit points to be added to the final grade. A maximum of 4 extra credit points could be awarded. Please refer to the list provided on Blackboard for a list of events. Extra Credit reports are due on the week of March 15th, 2013.

Grading Criteria:

- (10) Quizzes: 30%
- Midterm: 20%
- Final: 20%
- Class presentation: 20%
- Attendance and Participation: 10%
- Total: 100%
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A’s are awarded to exceptional work in class and assignments
B’s are awarded for good to very good work.
C’s are awarded for average to above average work.
D’s are awarded for barely passing with below average work.
F’s are awarded for unacceptable work.

Course Policies:

- All written papers (if necessary) will have to be submitted through Turnitin in Blackboard. **Late assignments will be penalized with a downgrade.**
  Please inform me in advance if you have any questions.

- **Blackboard** will be used as an online assistance to the course. Additional material and readings will be posted there, as well as the power point presentations. It is your responsibility to check and make sure you are up to date with the information. Go to [www.ecampus.fiu.edu](http://www.ecampus.fiu.edu) and use the login to Moodle tab. To login you have to use your FIU email address, just the part before the “@”. If you are using Moodle for the first time, your password will be your date of birth in the following format day + first three letters of month with the first capitalized + year. For example, for January 1st 2010 it would be 01Jan2010. You then will be able to change your password. If you have used Moodle before, login with your password. The course is REL 3308 Section B-52. Please let me know if you have any problems.

- **Plagiarism**
  - It is the theft of intellectual property of others, including their ideas, concepts, and words. Plagiarism **will not be tolerated** in this course.
    Please visit [http://www.fiu.edu/~oabp/misconductweb/2codeofacainteg.htm](http://www.fiu.edu/~oabp/misconductweb/2codeofacainteg.htm) To clarify what constitutes plagiarism for this university. Offenders will receive an “F” on the paper, and could fail the entire course.
    Some examples of plagiarism are:
    - Papers acquired online or from other sources that were not produced by the student that have submitted them.
- Copying material and ideas from other sources without attribution.
- Using other student’s work.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY DOUBTS, PLEASE TALK TO ME FIRST.**

- **Late assignments, missed quizzes and tests.** Points are going to be deducted for both. If you miss a quiz, you will lose the points the quiz is worth. If you turn in a paper after its due date, 2 points are going to be deducted per late day. If you know in advanced you won’t be able to be at a quiz or if you have any issues with your assignments’ due date, **PLEASE TALK TO ME BEFORE IT HAPPENS** and I might be able to give you a make-up date. However, **NO MAKE-UP DATES FOR FINAL EXAM!!**

- **NO CELL PHONES OR COMPUTERS** in class please. If necessary, power point presentations will be available to you after each class through Blackboard.

- **Attendance and participation** are extremely important. If you chose to take this course in person you are expected to be in class. Remember, if you are not in class, you cannot participate. If you know you will be absent for any reason, please inform me **before** the class you will miss. More than four absents throughout the semester will result in downgrade. Tardiness will be penalized as well. Please refrain from coming to class if you will be more than 10 minutes late, it is very disruptive. Remember that being physically in class does not mean participation. I value your participation and your comments, so it is very important that you take an active role in class. If you have any problems, please consult with me in advanced. **MORE THAN 8 ABSENTS IN THE SEMESTER WILL RESULT IN A 0 GRADE FOR ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION AND YOU MAY FAIL THE ENTIRE COURSE**

**COMMUNICATION** is the key for a successful relationship.

**Behavioral Misconduct:** Any student who is subject to sexual harassment, stalking, or physical or verbal abuse should immediately speak to the instructor. The university has policies to protect students in these instances and the instructor will immediately refer the student to the appropriate program or resource. Remember, this is a course in which different ideas are welcomed, even if they do not agree with our own notions.
**Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities, as defined by law, have the right to receive needed accommodations if their disabilities make it difficult to perform academic tasks in the usual way or in the allotted time frame. However, in order to receive accommodation, students with disabilities must register with Disability Resource Center. This office will keep the student's written request, notify a faculty member who has a student with a disability enrolled in his/her class, and indicate what kinds of arrangements must be made.

**Religious Holidays:** By university policy, students must notify the instructor at least two weeks in advance that he/she wishes to observe a religious holyday. The student will be excused from class without penalty, but will still be responsible for the material studied in the class.


Remember, this course is designed for you and your benefit. Complete the readings, bring questions, participate, and make it fun. If you have questions or concerns you can always email me. I am good at replying the same day or the day after. You can come to my office during my office hours or schedule an appointment. **I AM HERE TO MAKE YOUR LEARNING EXPERIENCE PLEASANT AND TO HELP YOU IN AS MUCH AS I CAN.**

**Important Note:** This syllabus can be amended determined by the demands of the course.
REL 3308: Studies in World Religion
FALL 2013
Course Outline and Calendar

Week of August 26th: Introduction and approaches to religion

- 8/26: Introduction and course overview
- 8/28: Introduction to religion: Definitions, origin of religions, etc.
  - Due reading pages 2-9 of Religions of the World by Hopfe and Woodward.
- 8/30: Dimensions and Theories of religion – Marx, Freud, Durkheim, Webber, Eliade, and others.

Week September 2nd: Ancient Religions

- **9/2: LABOR DAY – NO CLASS**
- 9/4: Ancient Religions
- 9/6: Native American traditions
  - Due reading pages 28-43 of Religions of the World by Hopfe and Woodward.

Week of September 9th: Other Native Religious ways

- 9/9: The African experience
  - Due reading pages 48-59 of Religions of the World by Hopfe and Woodward.
- 9/11: Amerindian Experiences
- 9/13: Basic religions/ Indigenous sacred ways
  - Due reading pages 14-26 of Religions of the World by Hopfe and Woodward.

Week of September 16th: Eastern Religions

- 9/16: Hinduism
  - Due reading pages 72-85 of Religions of the World by Hopfe and Woodward.
- 9/18: Hinduism
- 9/20: Hinduism (contd.)
  - Due reading pages 92-100 of Religions of the World by Hopfe and Woodward.
Week of September 23rd: Eastern Religions (Contd.)

- 9/23: Jainism
  - Due reading pages 116-124 of *Religions of the World* by Hopfe and Woodward.
- 9/25: Buddhism
- 9/27: Research class @ Library

Week of September 30th: Eastern Religions

- 9/30: Buddhism (Contd.)
  - Due reading pages 128-138 of *Religions of the World* by Hopfe and Woodward.
- 10/2: Buddhism (Contd.)
  - Due reading pages 138-150 of *Religions of the World* by Hopfe and Woodward.
- 10/4: Sikhism
  - Due reading pages 156-165 of *Religions of the World* by Hopfe and Woodward.

Week of October 7th: Eastern Religions, and Midterm

- 10/7: Confucianism and Daoism
- 10/9: Confucianism and Daoism (Contd.)
  - Midterm review
- 10/11: MIDTERM

Week of October 14th: Judaism

- 10/14: Judaism
  - Due reading pages 242-256 of *Religions of the World* by Hopfe and Woodward.
- 10/16: Judaism
- 10/18: Judaism
  - Due reading pages 256-271 of *Religions of the World* by Hopfe and Woodward.
Week of October 21: Judaism and Christianity

- 10/21: Judaism
- 10/23: Christianity
  o Due reading pages 278-288 of *Religions of the World* by Hopfe and Woodward.
- 10/25: Christianity
  o Due reading pages 288-302 of *Religions of the World* by Hopfe and Woodward.

Week of October 28th: Christianity and Islam

- 10/28: Christianity
  o Due reading pages 302-312 AND 314-315 of *Religions of the World* by Hopfe and Woodward.
- 10/30: Islam
  o Due reading pages 328-339 of *Religions of the World* by Hopfe and Woodward.
- 11/1: Islam
  o Due reading pages 339-356 of *Religions of the World* by Hopfe and Woodward.

Week of November 4th: Islam and contemporary issues

- 11/4: Islam
  o Due reading pages 339-356 of *Religions of the World* by Hopfe and Woodward.
- 11/6: Islam
- 11/8: Radical Movements

Week of November 11th: New Religious Movements

- **11/11: VETERANS DAY – NO CLASS**
- 11/13: Violence and Religion
  o Due reading handouts on violence posted on Blackboard
- 11/15: Cults and Sects
Week of November 18th: Contemporary issues

- 11/18: Nature Spirituality
- 11/22: Voodoo

Week of November 25th: Other views

- 11/25: Religion and society
- 11/27: Gender and Religion
  o Due reading handouts women studies and religion provided by instructor
- **11/29: THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS**

Week of December 2nd: In class presentations/ final remarks

- 12/2: In class presentation
- 12/4: In class presentation
- 12/6: Final remarks, conclusions, and review for final exam

Week of December 9th: Final week of the semester. Please consult FIU's website for finals schedule

**Important Note:** This calendar can be amended determined by the demands of the course.