

Studies in World Religions

Course Syllabus – FALL 2015 GC 283A

REL: 3308 Sec. U –06 MWF 1-1:50 pm
 Religious Studies Dept.: 305 348 2186
 Office: DM 301B

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 Office Hours: TBA

Course Objectives

This course is designed to delve into religion and understand its complex nature. We will explore the various histories, elements, and dimensions that make up today's world religions. Essentially, we will try to engage in an earnest study of religion.

We will discuss world religions in their formative years as well as understanding their subsequent history and development. Class assignments, discussions, as well as a research paper are all geared to make the student really think and analyze the ins and outs of world religions. In essence the student will explore how religions were formed, sustained, and how they are continually evolving, especially in this increasingly globalized world and economy.

Learning Outcomes

- Students will grasp how today's world religions were initially formed
- Students will obtain a basic understanding of the history corresponding to today's world religions
- Students will learn basic terminology and practices related to today's world religions
- Students will analyze the development and evolution of today's world religions
- Students will understand how an individual's identity and outlook are shaped by religious influences
- Students will be able to analyze topics in the field of religious studies from multiple perspectives
- Students will be able to apply critical thinking to important topics in the field of religious studies
- Students will be able to appreciate the need and willingness to think creatively about religious issues in the contemporary world
- Students will be able to evaluate their own and others' religious views as they relate to understanding other cultures and solving common problems

Required Texts

Esposito, John L., Darrell J. Fasching, and Todd Lewis: World Religions Today (3RD or 4th edition) Oxford University Press

ISBN-10: 0195365631

ISBN-13: 978-0195365634

Grade Components

10% Participation/Attendance

10% Research Paper Draft (3-4pgs)

25% Mid-term Exam

20% Research Paper Final Draft (7-8 pgs)

10% Class Presentation

25% Final Exam

Participation and Attendance Policy

- These elements are key and essential components for satisfactory completion of this course. The course is highly interactive and requires heavy student engagement and a class presentation.
- Each student is allowed two absences but keep in mind your own responsibilities and how it might affect your grade. Any religious observances should be discussed with me ahead of time.

Reading Policy

All readings are to be done for the week they appear on the course calendar.

Research Paper

A research paper will be written based on one of the world religions covered in the course. It will be submitted twice. Once as a draft, 3-4 pages long, and as a final draft 7-8 pages long. The research will be limited to contemporary issues that a religion might be facing. All work will be consistent with MLA citation guidelines and submitted through turnitin.com. The final product will be 7-8 pages long and written in “college-level” writing standards.

A handout with specific requirements will be handed out in class.

Keep electronic and paper copies of all written work. For your own protection, keep a copy of your turnitin.com electronic receipt (confirmation of assignment submission) until you have received your final grade for the course.

Mid-term Exam

The mid-term will be a timed 50 question multiple choice exam and a timed mid-term essay targeting major concepts and ideas in the study of religion.

Class Presentation

A class presentation will be done based on the research obtained for the paper and the student will discuss and present their findings to the class. **A handout with specific requirements will be handed out in class.**

Final Exam

The final will be given during finals week during the scheduled exam date. There will be a timed 50 multiple choice question exam and a timed final essay targeting major concepts and ideas in the study of religion.

No make-up final exams will be allowed.

Turnitin and Grading Scale

The research paper will be submitted through www.turnitin.com by **11:59 pm on the due date specified on the course calendar.**

Turnitin Class ID: TBA

Password: TBA

Each assignment will be graded on the following criteria

50% Content

25% Grammar

25% Style and Structure

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|--------|----|-------|----|-------|----|-------|----|------|---|
| 93-100 | A | 87-89 | B+ | 77-79 | C+ | 67-69 | D+ | 0-59 | F |
| 90-92 | A- | 83-86 | B | 73-76 | C | 63-66 | D | | |
| | | 80-82 | B- | 70-72 | C- | 60-62 | D- | | |

Plagiarism

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism, or attempting to pass off another's work as your own, falls into three different categories:

1. A written work that is entirely stolen from another source;
2. Using quotations from another source without properly citing them; and
3. Paraphrasing from another source without proper citations.

Students are expected to understand the definition of plagiarism. See the University Code of Academic Integrity at <http://www.fiu.edu/~oabp/misconductweb/2codeofacainteg.htm> if you need further clarification. Offenders will receive a 0 for the plagiarized assignment

Late Policy

For each late day I will deduct 5% off the total percentage for that assignment. The latest day an assignment will be accepted is FOUR DAYS after its original due date with a 20% deduction from the late assignment

Again, there will be no make-up final exams

Course Calendar

Week 1: Introduction to World Religions Today

- Readings: Chapter 1 Pages 1-33

Topics: The “great transition”, the basics of religious experience and expression, the basics of the academic study of religion, the great religious stories of the world, globalization and modernization inside a religious context

Week 2: Indigenous Religions

- Readings: Chapter 2 Pages 36-73

Topics: Origins, traditions, shamans, and indigenous religions today

Week 3: Hinduism

- Readings: Chapter 6 Pages 302-344
- Topics: The formative, classical, and post-classical eras in Hinduism, Hinduism and modernity

Week 4: Hinduism

- Readings: Chapter 6 Pages 344-387
- Topics: Hindu festival practice, religious institutions of contemporary Hinduism, and post-modern trends inside Hinduism

Week 5: Buddhism

- Film: "The Buddha"
 - Readings: Chapter 7 Pages 389-430
- Topics: Formative and classical eras in Buddhism, Buddhist expansion

Week 6: Buddhism

- Readings: Chapter 7 Pages 430-469
- Topics: Buddhism and modernity, post-modern trends inside Buddhism

Week 7: Judaism

- Readings: Chapter 3 Pages 75-114
- Topics: The formative and classical eras of Judaism
- Film: "History of the Talmud"
 - **Draft of research paper due on 10/9 by turnitin.com by 11:59 pm**

Week 8: Mid-term Week

- **A 50 MC objective exam and short answer essay to be done in class on 10/14 AND 10/16, buy BLUE BOOKS**

Week 9: Judaism

- Readings: Chapter 3 Pages 114-145
- Topics: Judaism and modernity, post-modern trends in Judaism

Week 10: Christianity

- Readings: Chapter 4 147-179
- Topics: The formative and classical eras of Christianity

Week 11: Christianity

- Readings: Chapter 4 Pages 180-211
- Topics: Christianity and modernity, post-modern trends in Christianity

Week 12: Islam

- Readings: Chapter 5 Pages 213-259
- Topics: The life of the Prophet Muhammad, the formative and classical eras of Islam

Week 13: Islam

- Readings: Chapter 5 Pages 259-298
- Topics: Islam and modernity, post-modern trends and challenges to Islam
- **Final draft of research papers are due on 11/20 by 11:59 pm through turnitin.com**

Week 14: East Asian Religions (Confucianism, Taoism, and Shinto)

- Readings: Chapter 8 Pages 471-559

Topics: East Asian religions in their pre-modern, early modern, and post-modern eras

Week 15: Student Presentations

- **This week is dedicated to class presentations**

Final Exam

- **Finals Week: 12/7-12: Check University Final Exam Schedule**

References

Academic Advising

<http://undergrad.fiu.edu/advising/cv.html>

*****This syllabus is subject to change as the course develops but any changes will be notified to students in a timely fashion.**

Last Revised: 4/18/2015