COURSE DESCRIPTION

This section of Religion: Analysis and Interpretation will use text readings, in-class participation and multimedia to explore basic concepts in the study of religion. This format’s scope includes the exploration of concepts such as deity, cosmology and myth, ritual, scripture, ethics and salvation/liberation. The student will analyze religious phenomena as psychological, sociological and anthropological forces in the history of humanity. Each concept will be introduced through the textbook, class lectures, student presentations, videos, Internet sources and discussions. Throughout the course the student will also be exposed to specific rituals, myths, doctrines, ethics and symbols from various different world religions and cultures. Students will be tested on this material in a midterm exam and a final exam. Two essays will develop the student’s critical thinking skills and writing abilities. For the first essay, the student will conduct field research by attending a religious service outside of his/her own tradition. For the second essay, the student will read and review an article on religion and globalization. This course fulfills the Gordon Rule requirement.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, the successful student will be able to:

• Explain the basic history, development, and belief system of various religious traditions.
• Recognize religious themes and concepts found in other cultures.
• Identify the meaning behind religious concepts and symbols.
• Critically engage the issue of religious diversity in national and international context (Global Engagement).
• Analyze issues in the field of religions studies from multiple approaches (Global Perspective).
• Evaluate the interrelationship between his/her own and others’ religious views as they relate to understanding other cultures and solving common problems (Global Awareness)

REQUIRED TEXT

Anatomy of the Sacred: An introduction to Religion
by James C. Livingston
ISBN 0-13-600380-x

* Other reading materials will be provided by the instructor.

EXPECTATIONS FOR THIS COURSE

Students should be prepared to participate in class by reading the assignments and by developing discussion or presentation material, as requested. Students are responsible for carefully reading the syllabus and calendar, meeting deadlines as posted, and submitting mature, thoughtful work. Some of this material may be new, personal or controversial, so please maintain an open-minded and considerate attitude, allowing others time to reflect and communicate.

COURSE COMMUNICATION

Communication in this course will take place in class, in Blackboard, and through FIU email. The best method to communicate with your instructor privately is through email. Appointments can be made on request. Please contact the instructor immediately if a serious situation arises which will impact student performance.

GORDON RULE REQUIREMENT
As this is a Gordon Rule course, students will be required to write a minimum of two major assignments. Each paper will be at least 1500-2000 words and will be submitted through Turnitin. All source material must be cited correctly using MLA Style and long quotes should be avoided. Please be aware that papers with an originality score of over 35% similarity will be subject to additional scrutiny and may incur additional penalties, up to and including receiving an F (0 points).

GLOBAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

As a Global Learning course, students will be meet the following objectives through text readings, assignments, and class discussions:

1. Students will be able to analyze topics in the field of religious studies from multiple perspectives.
2. Students will be able to assess how global issues and trends are interrelated with the development and practice of religions.
3. Students will be able to demonstrate willingness to think creatively about religious issues in the contemporary world.

DISCUSSION AND PRIVACY

Some of this material may be new, personal or controversial, so please maintain an open-minded and considerate attitude, allowing others time to reflect and communicate. Keep in mind that in-class and online discussions are public. Be cautious with your words and your sources. Respect others’ privacy and do not share class conversations with others outside of class. Recognize that fellow students may not wish to give personal opinions about some topics.

EXAMS - 15% each

There will be two exams: A midterm and a final. Exam 1 and Exam 2 are in-class and consist of both objective and essay portion.

The essay portion for both exams should each be approximately 500-750 words long. The essay topics for the exam will become available in Blackboard a week before the exam. There will be three options of which one will show up on your exam.

Objective: 25 questions - 2 points each (50 total)

Essay: 50 points

__________________

TOTAL: 100 points - Each Exam - 15% of your grade.

ESSAYS

Essays will be turned into Turnitin.com via Assignments in Blackboard. It is not necessary to create a separate Turnitin account. Keep electronic and paper copies of all written work. For your own
protection, keep a copy of your Turnitin.com electronic receipt until you have received your final grade for the course.

**Essay 1 (Site Visit)** - The student will do field research by attending a religious service or ceremony outside of his/her own religious tradition. This assignment is divided into two sections: the paper and one blog entry, which must also be posted on the blog- (this can be a audio, video, or written post).

* For this assignment the student has three options:

1. **Paper:** 1200-1500 words and cited correctly.

2. **video format of about 7-10 minutes.** The video must be well edited, feature interviewees, images and good quality audio. You will still have to write a script and include a bibliography. Examples of the video format will be provided.

3. **Audio format:** 7-10 minutes. Just like the video, It must be well edited, feature interviewees, natural sound, and good quality audio. You will still have to write the script and include a bibliography. Examples of the audio format will be provided.

* For more details about this assignment, see Assignments in Blackboard. The Site Visit is worth 20% of the final grade.

**Essay 2**

Make use of your creativity and propose your own topic. By the end of the semester you would have a variety of theories and topics from which to choose from. I recommend finding a topic that can merge both your major and religious studies. Every student must schedule an appointment with the instructor to get cleared before embarking on the research. The paper must be 5-7-long, double-spaced, 12-size font. Use five academic sources to support and elaborate on your theses.

**LATE PAPERS:** Late papers will not be accepted. If a student has an approved, documented excuse, late papers may be accepted with a penalty of 10 points per day for up to three days, after which papers will not be accepted for any reason.

**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 grade of F (0 points) for the plagiarized assignment, and possibly for the course. Please be aware: Previously submitted papers are not allowed, even if it is your own work and even if you are retaking this class. You may not “reuse” papers.
GROUP PRESENTATIONS 10%

In the beginning of the semester, students must sign up for a presentation group. If a student fails to sign up in the first two classes, the student will be assigned a group without her or his consent. The groups will be presenting on a different topic every week. Each student in the group is responsible for covering a specific topic related to the text readings.

The group presentation is divided into three parts:

1. **Topic:** Every student must present on a topic corresponding to the week’s readings using PowerPoint, Keynote, Prezi or similar. The content can come from the textbook or/and an outside source. (Note: The topics need to be confirmed by the instructor.)

2. **Current issues, events or people that impact the religion:** This information can be obtained from various sources, included the sites I recommend on the blog.
   
   2.1. THIS CURRENT EVENT MUST ALSO BE POSTED ON THE BLOG FOR DISCUSSION.

3. **Discussion Question:** At the end of the presentation students will propose a discussion question. Keep in mind that it is your responsibility to ignite class discussion. Be bold, creative and thoughtful when formulating your question. NOTE: The question does not necessarily have to be related to the current event.

   3.1. Due to the limited time of the class, the discussion questions MUST BE POSTED ON THE BLOG, AND STUDENTS MUST PARTICIPATE ONLINE. Every student is expected to post one comment and respond to one classmate’s comment ONCE A WEEK.

If a student cannot attend on the day of the presentation, they may be seriously penalized (up to receiving a 0 for the project) depending on their participation in project development. The group presentation is worth 50 points and is 10% of the final grade.

BLOG- What you didn't Learn in Class.- 10%

For this class we will be doing a social experiment. This blog will be a public space for us to connect with each other and the world. Every student will receive an invitation to become an author and actively participate.

The blog title is: **What you didn’t learn in Class**- precisely because it will be a space for us to elaborate on ideas and topics that perhaps don’t get mentioned in class either because of time or inconvenience.

The blog is divided into four sections: You will find your class (REL3308) in every submenu. Make sure that when you post on any of these pages you select your class on the category menu on the left of the page. This way your post will show on the right section. (This will be further explained in class).

1. **The Class Think Tank:** Groups post their current event and discussion questions every week. Every student must respond to a discussion question and to a classmate’s comment.
1.1. **Note:** Every student is encouraged to post on this space at any time as well. Find more info on the blog.

At the end of the course, your discussion thread will be graded based on the quantity and the quality of what you posts. In responding to others, it is important to be courteous and respectful. If you disagree with something that has been said, that is fine. But be sure to explain why and where appropriate, support your own view with evidence. Also, it is fine to ask questions that are related to our topic to extend the discussion. But please make sure the questions are relevant. Please remember that this is an academic forum.

2. **The Megan Project:** This page is named after a student who two semesters ago came up with a really cool project.

After learning about the universality of religion, Megan began to notice the ubiquitous presence of religion. She continued to find religious symbols in her community, university and travels. Megan realized that religion is not this isolated topic, relegated to churches, Sundays, prayers and gospel channels. This realization led her to this awesome idea of photographing all these symbols with her phone or camera, and put them together in a presentation with a short description of how she encountered these symbols and how are they “religious” from her perspective.

Megan began this project, which she tilted “Everyday Religion,” during the Fall 2014 in my World Religions class, and expanded it in the following semester while taking Analysis and Interpretation of Religion class.

Let’s continue to feed this brilliant idea by spotting and photographing religion everywhere we find it. You will be surprised to learn that pop culture is imbued with religion in many ways. Fashion, music, TV, art, and food are just some of the mediums though which religion is articulated. Take a picture or video and briefly explain how is religion present and relevant in your discovery.

On the description tell us where did your photograph take place, when did you take it and why do you think it is a religious symbol.

3. **Movie Reviews:** We will be using film to articulate theories and ideas. Share your reaction on the movies we watch in class. Elaborate on important themes and dialogues on your comments.

4. **Site Visit Project:** Every student should post at least one journal entry. This entry can be in a audio, video or written format. Your paper will also be posted on this section.

You can also find all this information on the blog: [https://relclass.wordpress.com/about/](https://relclass.wordpress.com/about/)

**Audio examples:**

**BBC radio:**

www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05nxhj6

**NPR radio:**

Video example:

https://youtu.be/JhLN7dtukig

EXTRA CREDIT

Creative writing: Develop a short story where you present characters that represent different religions. The story must include in its plot rituals, symbols, scriptures (sacred texts), festivals, teachings (i.e. the eight fold path, the pillars of Islam, etc.) among other aspects that we learned in class. (2-5 Pages).

Poetry: Include all the aforementioned topics. Make sure the poem has a rhyme and a regular meter. The piece must be at least four stanzas. Remember the Vedas and Zoroaster’s Gathas appear to be composed in poetic form.

Song: Include all the aforementioned topics. Make it at least 2-3 minutes long.

Visual Art (painting, drawing): Make sure you explain your interpretation in a paragraph.

Movie Review: Review a movie and write a five-paragraph reaction paper describing the role that religion plays in the story or event. Focus on religious symbols, rituals, myths or the ways in which religious beliefs or practices influence the plot or meaning of the movie. Do not tell the whole story of the movie, but just enough so that your points are clear. The movie selection must be approved by the instructor.

All extra credit reports are due no later than December 1. Be creative, respectful and take this opportunity not just for the extra points, but also to leave a strong positive message. Have fun!

Note: superb extra credit projects will be posted on the blog as well.

GRADING

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### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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### WEEKLY SCHEDULE

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<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introductions, syllabus review, class plan</td>
<td>Organize presentations</td>
<td>Ch- 2 Ways of Studying Religion</td>
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<td>Aug 24-28</td>
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<td>CH 1- What is Religion</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Ch-3 The sacred and the Holy</td>
<td>Cont. Ch- 3 Sacred Space and Time</td>
<td>Cont. Ch-3</td>
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<td>Aug 31-Sept 5</td>
<td>Sacred Power The Holy as Mysterium Tremendum 37-42</td>
<td>42- 50</td>
<td>Film: BlackRobe</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Labor Day - No class</td>
<td>Student Group 1. The Sacred and the Holy blog post - discussion</td>
<td>Ch.4 Sacred Symbol, Myth, and Doctrine Symbols, Metaphor, Parable, and Story 53-63</td>
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<td>Sept 7-11</td>
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<td>Ch-4 Cont. Religious Myth 63-68</td>
<td>Ch-4 Cont. Models and doctrines 68-70</td>
<td>Student Group 2. Sacred Symbol, Myth, and Doctrine blog post - discussion</td>
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<td>Sept 14-18</td>
<td>Site visit journal Entry (post on Blog)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Ch-5 Sacred Ritual Ritual Action and Types of Sacred Ritual 74-89</td>
<td>Ch 5- Cont. Ritual Sacrifice and Rituals as Sacraments 89-93</td>
<td>Student Group 3. Sacred Ritual. blog post - discussion</td>
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| 6    | Sept 28-  | **Ch-6 Sacred Scripture**  
                  Scripture, its roles and features  
                  site visit - Due  
                  Submitt on Turnitin 11:59 PM |
|      | Oct 2     | **Ch-6 Cont.**  
                  Authority and Canonicity  
                  Uses of scripture  
                  104-112 |
|      |           | **Ch-6 Cont.**  
                  Interpretation of Scripture  
                  Liberation Theology  
                  112-121 |
| 7    | Oct 5-9   | **Student Group 4.**  
                  Sacred Scripture  
                  blog post - discussion |
|      |           | **Ch-7 Society and The Sacred**  
                  The Social Formations and Transformations of Religion  
                  Religion and Society  
                  124-127 |
|      |           | **Ch-7 Cont.**  
                  Types of Religious Communities  
                  127-136 |
| 8    | Oct 12-16 | **Ch-7 Cont.**  
                  The Sect and The Cult.  
                  136-147 |
|      |           | **Student Group 5.**  
                  Society and The Sacred  
                  blog post - discussion |
|      |           | **MIDTERM EXAMS**  
                  Covers week 1-7 |
| 9    | Oct 19-23 | **Ch-8 Deity: Concepts of the Divine and Ultimate Reality**  
                  Polytheism and animism  
                  153-163 |
|      |           | **Ch-8 Cont**  
                  Dualism, Pantheism and Monism  
                  163-171 |
|      |           | **Ch-8 Cont**  
                  Monotheism and Panentheism  
                  171-180 |
| 10   | Oct 26-30 | **Student Group 6. Concepts of the Divine**  
                  blog post - discussion |
|      |           | **Ch-9 Cosmogony: Origins of the Natural and Social Order**  
                  Cosmogony  
                  Emergence from a Primal Substance  
                  Sexual Union  
                  183-186 |
|      |           | **Ch-9 Cont.**  
                  Creation by Conflict  
                  Craftsman Ex-nihilo  
                  186-198 |
| 11   | Nov 2-6   | **Ch-9 Cont**  
                  Rejection of Cosmogonic Speculation  
                  The Anthropic principle  
                  Creation Science  
                  Intelligent Design  
                  198-208 |
|      |           | **Student Group 7.**  
                  Cosmogony  
                  blog post - discussion |
|      |           | **Ch-10 Views of the Human Problem**  
                  overview  
                  211-212  
                  Buddhism and Confucianism  
                  223-232 |
| 12   | Nov 9-13  | **Ch-10 Cont**  
                  Stoicism  
                  Christianity  
                  212-223  
                  Recommended movie: Ghandi |
|      |           | **Student Group 8. Human Problem**  
                  blog post - discussion |
|      |           | **Ch-11 Theodicy: Encountering Evil**  
                  Demand for theodicy  
                  235-244  
                  Final Paper Due.  
                  Turnitin 11:59 PM |
RELIGIOUS SITES OF SOUTH FLORIDA

A REMINDER TO ALL STUDENTS THAT THE SITE VISIT AND REPORT MUST BE DONE FOR A RELIGIOUS TRADITION THAT IS NOT THE STUDENT'S OWN. I strongly recommend to start the fieldwork early, and that you attend at least 2-3 times to have a successful report.

ISLAMIC: the times to go are Fridays and Sundays at 1:30 p.m. Female students can bring a scarf with them if they don’t want to stand out, but it is not required.

Miami Gardens Mosque (Sunni) 4305 N.W. 183 street
Miami, Florida 33055

Mosque of Miami (Sunni) 7350 N.W. 3rd Street Miami, Florida 33126 305-261-7622

Masjid Al-Ansar (Sunni) 5245 N.W. 7th Avenue Miami, Florida 33127 305-757-8741

Islamic School of Miami Masjid al-Noor (Sunni) 11699 SW 147 Ave Miami, FL 33196
(305) 408-0400
Tasnim Uddin, Principal of School
Friday: 1:30 pm, Islam School on Sundays: 10am-12pm (behind the Exxon gas station)
Islamic Jafferia Association Imambara (Shia) 10554 N.W. 132nd Street
Hialeah Gardens, Florida 33016
(305) 557-6835

http://www.ijamiami.org/

Muhammad's Mosque #29 (Nation of Islam) 5660 N.W. 7th Ave.
Miami, Florida
305-756-9136

BAHAI

FIU Bahai Club 305-436-2490

Bahai Faith (South) 9300 S. Dixie Hwy. Miami, Florida 305-570-8886

Bahai Faith (North) 4365 Rock Island Rd. Ft. Lauderdale
(North of Commercial) 954-524-4084

BUDDHIST

(Nichiren Buddhist)
Sokka Gakkai International Miami Community Center 20000 S.W. 36th St.
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33332 954-349-5200

Avalokitesvara Buddhist Study Center (Buddhist) 7550 S.W. 82nd Court
Miami, Florida 33143
305-271-6361
267-8000

International Zen Institute of Florida (Buddhist) Dharma House
3860 Crawford Avenue
Miami, Florida 33133
305-448-8969

Wat Buddharangsi Temple (Thai, Buddhist) 15200 S.W., 240th Street
Homestead, Florida
305-245-2702

Amida Temple ("Pure Land" Buddhist) c/o Kuang-Hsi Wu
12815 S.W. 119 Terrace
Miami, Florida 33186
305-385-2866
International Dharma Center (Buddhist) P.O. Box 141728
Coral Gables, Florida
33114-1728

305-267-8000 (Ileana Davis)
Kagyu Shedrup Chöling (Tibetan Buddhist)

1905 Monroe Street
Hollywood, Florida 33020 954-920-1346

HINDU: Plan to attend Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m.

Shiva Vishnu Temple 5661 Dykes Rd. (S.W. 160th Ave)
Pembroke Pines (Davie)
954-689-0471 webmaster@shivavishnu.org

(I-75 north, exit at Sheridan, go west to Dykes Road, then go north for about a mile, temple on the left)

The South Florida Hindu Temple 13010 Griffin Road
Davie, Florida
954-438-3675

info@sfht.org

Hare Krishna Temple 3220 Virginia St. Coconut Grove, Florida 305-442-7218

SIKH: Plan to attend Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m.

Sikh Society of Florida 16000 Sterling Rd. Pembroke Pines, Florida 954-680-0221

(Same directions as to Shiva Hindu Temple, but closer to Sheridan on Dykes Road)

JAIN

Jain Center of South Florida
1960 N. Commerce Parkway #11 Weston, FL 33326
Here is Direction Link for Jain center. http://jaincentersfl.com/direction.html

JEWSIH AND CHRISTIAN

Synagogues: Friday evenings, near Sundown; and Saturday mornings, 8:00 a.m. only.
Christian churches: 11:00 a.m. morning service. Consult Yellow Pages for synagogue or church nearest where you live.

Students are encouraged to do detective work and find representatives of the other major world religions in Miami or the South Florida area: Taoism, Confucianism (Chinese), Shinto (Japanese), and Zoroastrianism (Persian/Iranian, and mostly in Bombay, India).