REL 2011-U04 (83378) Introduction to Religion: Analysis and Interpretation
Fall 2016

Days and Times: M, W, F, 11:00 a.m. to 11:50 a.m.
Room: DM 190

Instructor: Adam D. Gorelick
Office Hours: DM 233, by appointment
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PLEASE NOTE: This syllabus is subject to change. Students should e-mail the instructor with any questions about the assignments and schedule.

Course Description
This course introduces methods of critical reflection on religion and some of their applications to fundamental topics such as knowledge, value, the sacred, the individual, and human society. While we will examine specific examples and respect the particularity of diverse religious traditions, the course will also focus on broad analytical themes applicable to religion in general and interpret these themes using methods from various academic disciplines.

Course Outcomes
Students will be able to...
- Apply critical thinking skills to various topics in the field of religious studies.
- Explore the origins, nature, functions, and definitions of religion.
- Bracket out personal bias and attempt to understand the point of view of religious adherents.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the interrelatedness of local, global, international, and intercultural issues, trends, and systems—as pertaining to the development and practice of religions.
- Analyze topics in religious studies through multi-perspective analyses of local, global, international, and intercultural problems.
- Demonstrate willingness to think creatively about religious issues in the contemporary world and to engage in local, global, international, and intercultural problem solving.
- Conduct field research to better understand a religious community.
- Speak intelligently about the relationship between religion and other cultural phenomena such as art, literature, music, etc.
Texts

ISBN-10: 0130209805

Additional selected readings will be assigned.

**Gordon Rule Course**
This is a Gordon Rule course which means you must demonstrate “college level writing skills” throughout your assignments. You will not receive any credit as a Gordon rule course for a C- or lower upon completion of this course. Your written assignments must show good control of grammar, style, and structure. Your papers must have a clear thesis, supporting material, and a conclusion.

**Guidelines for Written Work**
All written work must consistently adhere to the MLA Formatting and Style Guide. Students are advised to carefully proofread all papers before submitting them. All students are encouraged to take advantage of the University resources for writing to be found in the Center for Excellence in Writing, a full-service writing center providing writing assistance and feedback to university students. For more information, go to [http://writingcenter.fiu.edu/](http://writingcenter.fiu.edu/).

All written work is submitted through [http://turnitin.com](http://turnitin.com). Plagiarism can result in expulsion from the university and will have a negative effect on your entire college career. All written work must include your name, Panther ID number, course number and the name of the professor on the title page. It must be double spaced, have 1-inch margins (top, bottom, left and right) and be typed in 12 point font, Times New Roman or Calibri.

**Religious Holidays**
Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students whose religious practices coincide with class requirements scheduling. Please make sure to notify your
instructor at the beginning of the semester of which dates you will be absent or any anticipated problems with completing course work.

Physical, Mental and Sensory Challenges
Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students who are so challenged. Should you require accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC), if you have not done so already. Please note that if you have a student who is registered with the DRC, you will receive notification about the student’s disability and a detailed description of accommodations the student will require.

Academic Conduct
Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and to honestly demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

Note: Plagiarism will not be tolerated, and written assignments are to be submitted to turnitin.com.

Grading Scale
94 - 100 A
90 - 93 A-
87 - 89 B+
84 - 86 B
80 - 83 B –
77 - 79 C+
74 - 76 C
60 - 73 D
0 - 59 F

Course Requirements
Attendance and Participation – 15% of final grade

Quizzes – Quizzes will be unannounced and will cover material from the readings and lectures. 15% of final grade

Midterm Essay Exam – The midterm exam will be a take-home essay exam. Students will answer two of three questions (in total, 1250-page minimum). See below for dates. 20% of final grade
Final Exam – The final exam will be multiple-choice. See below for date. **20% of final grade**

Site Visit Background Research Paper – Students will conduct field research by attending a religious service or ceremony outside of his/her own religious tradition. In preparation for this field study, students will research the religious tradition in question. Students will not only identify the tradition broadly but also specify any relevant sectarian affiliation. Using a minimum of 2 academic sources, students will prepare a short research paper (500-page minimum) presenting their findings and articulating their understanding of the tradition in question. **10% of final grade**

Site Visit Essay – As per above, students will conduct field research by attending a religious service or ceremony outside of his/her own religious tradition. Students will take notes on site and prepare a (1250-page minimum) paper applying Smart’s dimensions as an analytical tool. The final draft with field notes will be due on 11/20. Additional guidance will be provided on Blackboard. **20% of final grade**

Calendar

Week 1 (8/22 to 8/28)
   Class introductions, syllabus review, course plan
   **Reading:** Smart, Introduction

What is Religion?
Week 2 (8/29 to 9/4)
   **Reading:** Smart, Ch. 1

Week 3 (9/5 to 9/11) **[No Class Meeting on Labor Day, 9/5]**
   **Reading:** Smart, Ch. 2

The Experiential or Emotional Dimension
Week 4 (9/12 to 9/18)
   **Reading:** Smart, Ch.3
   The Experiential Dimension

Week 5 (9/19 to 9/25)
   **Reading:** Selections TBA

The Mythic and Narrative Dimension
Week 6 (9/26 to 10/2)
   **Midterm Take-Home Essay-Exam: available 9/26; due 10/3, 11:59 p.m.**
   **Reading:** Smart, Ch. 4
Week 7 (10/3 to 10/9)  
**No Class Meeting on Rosh Hashanah, 10/3**  
**Reading:** Selections TBA

The Doctrinal and Philosophical Dimension
Week 8 (10/10 to 10/16)  
**No Class Meeting on Yom Kippur, 10/12**  
**Site Visit Background Research Paper: Due 10/17, 11:59 p.m.**  
**Reading:** Smart, Ch. 5

The Ethical or Legal Dimension
Week 9 (10/17 to 10/23)  
**Reading:** Smart, Ch. 6

Week 10 (10/24 to 10/30)  
**Reading:** Selections TBA

The Ritual or Practical Dimension
Week 11 (10/31 to 11/6)  
**Reading:** Smart, Ch. 7

Week 12 (11/7 to 11/13)  
**No Class Meeting on Veterans Day, 11/11**  
**Reading:** Selections TBA

The Social or Institutional Dimension
Week 13 (11/14 to 11/20)  
**Reading:** Smart, Ch. 8  
**Site-Visit Essay with Field Notes: Due 11/20, 11:59 p.m.**

Week 14 (11/21 to 11/27)  
**No Class Meeting over Thanksgiving Break, 11/25**  
**TBA**

Conclusion
Week 15 (11/28 to 12/4)  
**Reading:** Smart, Ch. 9 and Postscript

Week 16 (12/7 to 12/12) Finals Week – **Final Exam: 12/7, 9:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.**