REL 3308 AROSTEGUI

REL 3308
Studies in World Religions

FALL 2016 Syllabus and Learning Guide

Instructor: Ivanessa Arostegui E-mail: iaros001@fiu.edu

When and where do we meet?
Class Discussions: T/TH 2-3:15 pm in CP 197
Office Hours: Mon/Wed 12 pm in DM 301B
Questions? Religious Studies Department: 305-348-2186

What will we be doing together?

The world is steeped in religion and this course is designed to help you probe into 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. Case studies will also highlight how these religions are interacting with ecology, politics, and women today. Class assignments, group discussions, exams, as well as a research paper are all geared to make you really think and analyze the ins and outs of world religions. In essence you will explore how religions were formed, sustained, and how they are continually evolving, especially in this increasingly globalized world and economy.

What could you walk away with upon completion of course?

- You will grasp how some of today’s world religions were initially formed
- You will obtain a basic understanding of the history corresponding to today’s world religions
- You will learn basic terminology and practices related to today’s world religions
- You will analyze the development and evolution of today’s world religions
- You will understand how an individual’s identity and outlook are shaped by religious influences
- You will be able to analyze topics in the field of religious studies from multiple perspectives
- You will be able to apply critical thinking to important topics in the field of religious studies
- You will be able to appreciate the need and willingness to think creatively about religious issues in the contemporary world, especially as related to ecology, politics, and women.
- You will be able to evaluate your own and others’ religious views as they relate to understanding other cultures and solving common problems
Required Texts (2)


2. **Secondary Anthology: SWR:** Arostegui, Ivaneesa: *Studies in World Religions* (Preliminary Edition) Cognella Publishing (I designed this for you and this class***)

Grade Components

**20% PARTICIPATION 40% EXAMS 40% WRITING**

- 20% Preparation/Group Participation/Attendance
- 5% Beginning Reflection (2 pg)
- 10% Research Paper Draft (3 pgs)
- 20% Mid-term Exam
- 20% Finish Research Paper Final Draft (7 pgs)
- 5% Ending Reflection (2 pg)
- 20% Final Exam (Non-cumulative)

Time Management/DUE DATES:

**SEPTEMBER**

9/1 – WRITE 2 PAGE REFLECTION

WEEK 5- READ ASSIGNED ARTICLE PREPARE 3X5 INDEX CARD

9/27 – WRITE 3 PAGE RESEARCH DRAFT

**OCTOBER**

WEEK 7- READ ASSIGNED ARTICLE PREPARE 3X5 INDEX CARD

10/11 AND 10/13- EXAM MIDTERM M/C AND ESSAY

WEEK 9- READ ASSIGNED ARTICLE PREPARE 3X5 INDEX CARD

**NOVEMBER**

WEEK 11- READ ASSIGNED ARTICLE PREPARE 3X5 INDEX CARD

WEEK 13- READ ASSIGNED ARTICLE PREPARE 3X5 INDEX CARD

11/28- FINISH WRITING 7 PAGE RESEARCH FINAL PAPER
Preparation, Participation, and Attendance Policy

- You are 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.
- **You will be responsible for reading and preparing a 3x5 index card for six articles that will be assigned from the anthology *Studies in World Religions* throughout the semester.** They will come to class with the 3x5 ready for group discussion on a central question assigned (on last page). Each group will share the conclusions of the group discussion with class. Anthology topics include but are not limited to: Sexual Pleasure, Human Rights, Pollution, Suicide, Homosexuality, Women Ordination etc.
- Instructions will be posted on Blackboard.
- All readings are to be done for the week they appear on the course calendar.

Beginning and Ending Reflections

- A short 2-page paper reflecting on how you perceive the interaction of religion with one of the following three topics: ecology, politics, OR women will be written twice. One will be written at the beginning of the semester and one will be submitted towards the end of the course. Final reflection based on anthology and group discussions.
- A handout with specific requirements will be posted on Blackboard

Research Draft and Final 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 pages long, and as a final draft 7 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 pages long and written in “college-level” writing standards.

**A handout with specific requirements AND sample research papers will be posted on Blackboard. I will give a short tutorial on how to use research databases during class.**

Keep electronic and paper copies of all written work. For your own protection, keep a copy of your turnitin.com electronic receipt, it is a confirmation of assignment submission. Keep it 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. The essay will target major concepts and ideas in the study of religion from the PowerPoint Lectures and Primary Text. Review posted on Blackboard.

Final Exam

The final will be a timed 50 question multiple choice exam and a timed mid-term essay. The essay will target major concepts and ideas in the study of religion from the PowerPoint Lectures and Primary Text. Review posted on Blackboard.

*No make-up final exams will be allowed unless scheduled in advanced.*

Turnitin

The reflections and research paper will be submitted through [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) by 11:59 pm on the due date specified on the course calendar.

**Turnitin Class ID: TBA**  
**Password: TBA**

**Grading Scale**

Each assignment will be graded on the following criteria

- 60% Content  
- 20% Grammar  
- 20% Style and Structure

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**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.

You are expected to understand the definition of plagiarism. See the University Code of Academic Integrity at [http://www.fiu.edu/~oabp/misconductweb/2codeofacainteg.htm](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 FIVE DAYS after its original due date with a 25% deduction from the late assignment. If you are experiencing any kind of emergency that prevents a timely submission I must be notified in advance for a possible extension.

Again, there will be no make-up final exams UNLESS previously scheduled.

Course Calendar

ALL POWERPOINTS TO BE POSTED ON BLACKBOARD***
All talks and documentaries are short clips

Week 1 and 2: Introduction to the Study of World Religions
- Readings: WRT Chapter 1 Pages 1-33
- Readings: SWR Introduction
- 2 page Beginning Reflection due on 9/1 through turnitin.com by 11:59 pm
- TED TALK: East V. West
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 3: Indigenous Religions
- Readings: WRT Chapter 2 Pages 36-73
- TED TALK: What the People of the Amazon Know that You Don’t
Topics: Origins, traditions, shamans, and indigenous religions today

Week 4: Hinduism
- Readings: WRT Chapter 6 Pages 302-344
- Documentary: “World’s Biggest Festival: Kumbh Mela”
Topics: The formative, classical, and post-classical eras in Hinduism, Hinduism and modernity

Week 5: Hinduism
- Readings: WRT Chapter 6 Pages 344-387
- SWR: First article week: Second Chapter Hinduism
Topics: Hindu festival practice, religious institutions of contemporary Hinduism, and post-modern trends inside Hinduism

Week 6: Buddhism
- Documentary: “The Buddha”
- Readings: WRT Chapter 7 Pages 389-430
- Draft of research paper due on 9/27 through turnitin.com by 11:59 pm
Topics: Formative and classical eras in Buddhism, Buddhist expansion

Week 7: Buddhism
- Readings: WRT Chapter 7 Pages 430-469
- SWR: Second article week: Third Chapter Buddhism
Topics: Buddhism and modernity, post-modern trends inside Buddhism
Week 8: Mid-term

- A 50 MC objective exam and short answer essay to be done in class on 10/11 and 10/13 respectively, buy BLUE BOOKS

Week 9: Jainism

- SWR: Third article week: Fourth Chapter Jainism

Week 10: Judaism

- Readings: WRT Chapter 3 Pages 75-114
- Documentary: “History of the Talmud”
  Topics: The formative and classical eras of Judaism

Week 11: Judaism

- Readings: WRT Chapter 3 Pages 114-145
- SWR: Fourth article week: Fifth Chapter Judaism
  Topics: Judaism and modernity, post-modern trends in Judaism

Week 12: Christianity

- Readings: WRT Chapter 4 147-179
- Documentary: Extreme Pilgrim: Ascetic Christianity
  Topics: The formative and classical eras of Christianity

Week 13: Christianity

- Readings: WRT Chapter 4 Pages 180-211
- SWR: Fifth article week: Sixth Chapter Christianity
  Topics: Christianity and modernity, post-modern trends in Christianity

Week 14: Islam

- Readings: WRT Chapter 5 Pages 213-259
- Final draft of research papers are due on 11/28 by 11:59 pm through turnitin.com
- Documentaries: Inside Mecca and Inside the Koran
  Topics: The life of the Prophet Muhammad, the formative and classical eras of Islam

Week 15: Islam

- Readings: WRT Chapter 5 Pages 259-298
- 2 page Ending Reflection due on 12/1 through turnitin.com by 11:59 pm
- SWR: Sixth article week: Seventh Chapter Islam
  Topics: Islam and modernity, post-modern trends and challenges to Islam

Final Exam

- Finals Week: 12/5-12/10: Check University Final Exam Schedule: Posted for 12/8
Each of you will be preparing and discussing 6 of the following questions in a group throughout this semester.

**Hinduism**

1. Debate: Can development and technology coexist with the sacred?
2. Discuss the role and influence of religion and social media on elections.
3. Debate: List the pros and cons of an arranged marriage.

**Buddhism**

1. Discuss the implications for ecological concerns based on the statement: “The trees can speak, the rocks can speak, the pebbles and the sand, the ants and insects, everything is able to speak.”
2. Debate: List the pros and cons of a political party made up entirely by monks.
3. Debate: List the pros of cons of fully ordaining women.

**Jainism**

1. Discuss the implications for ecological concerns based on the statement: “One who neglects or disregards the existence of earth, air, fire, water, and vegetation disregards his own existence, which is entwined with them.”
2. Debate: What constitutes suicide? Should Sallekhana be deemed suicide and therefore illegal in India?
3. Debate: How can sacred scriptures empower or disempower women?

**Judaism**

1. Debate: List the strengths and weakness of eco-theology.
2. Debate: Can a democracy exist without full secularism?
3. Debate: List the pros of cons of fully ordaining women.

**Christianity**

1. Debate: List the pros and cons of dominion theology.
2. Discuss the politicization of homosexuality.
3. Debate: What is the overlap of sexual education and religious teaching? List the pros and cons for abstinence-only programs.

**Islam**

1. Discuss Islam as a “green” religion.
2. Discuss suicide bombing within Israel. Knowing the Qur’an explicitly prohibits suicide how do we understand the disconnection between scripture and action?
3. Debate: How do women’s rights within the Muslim world overlap with culture?
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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 in a timely fashion.

Last Revised: 8/8/2016