REL. 3100 - Introduction to Religion and Culture [spring 2011]

Spring 2011

Instructor: Dr. Albert Wuaku  
Phone: 305-348-0112

Office Hours: By appointment  
E-mail: Please use the Blackboard course email.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores religion from a sociological and anthropological perspective. Students will examine the ways in which sociologists and anthropologists try to explain the phenomenon of religion [that is, religious beliefs, religious behavior, and religious institutions]. The course exposes students to a range of sociological and anthropological theories that explore the origins of religion as a social and cultural phenomenon, and the interplay between religious belief, ritual, and religious institutions and their social and cultural contexts. Note that this is not a course in theology! We will not focus much attention on the content of beliefs and practices of specific religious traditions. Our interest is in the social and cultural dimensions of the phenomenon of religion.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Four objectives underlie the course:

- To introduce students to socio-cultural concepts relevant to the understanding of religion as a dimension of societal life.
- To examine the dynamics of the relationship between religion and other aspects of society such as politics and the economy.
- To develop critical thinking skills by analyzing and evaluating theoretical perspectives on religious belief and action.
- To encourage students to apply socio-anthropological concepts in the understanding of their personal religious lives and past and contemporary religious issues in their societies.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
GENERAL INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor:</th>
<th>Dr. Albert Wuaku</th>
<th>Phone: (305) 348 - 0112</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office Hours:</td>
<td>By appointment</td>
<td>E-mail: Please use Blackboard Course Mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>48 hour response time (Excluding weekends)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the semester students will

- Gain an intellectual understanding of the interconnection between religion and society in western and non-western cultures
- Improve on their writing skills through the writing of essays
- Develop the culture of participating in intellectual conversations through the interchanges discussion questions require of them.
- Be excited about the dynamics of religion in societal life enough to want to pursue studies in this area further

COURSE PREREQUISITES

For information about prerequisites, [click here](#).

This online section does not require an on-campus meeting and/or exam.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE INSTRUCTOR

E-MAIL

All students are expected to use their FIU e-mail address/account for course correspondence. Like Blackboard, you are expected to check your FIU e-mail at least every other day for the duration of this course.

All e-mails sent to the instructor should reflect a professional manner and adhere to the following format:

Subject Line/Heading: Place your question/comment in the subject heading. Also identify this class (Web Class 3100),

Text: The text of the message should begin with Dear Dr. Wuaku. The message should follow and end with the student’s full name.

Example E-mail: Below is an example of the format I expect from e-mail inquiries.
From: Joe Doe doee@fiu.edu (Use FIU email address/account)

To: Albert Wuaku wuakua@fiu.edu

Subject: Textbook (Web Class 3100)

Dear Dr. Wuaku,

I have a question about the textbook. Do we have to buy it from the bookstore or can we order it online? I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Joe Doe.

Please remember you can also call me on 305-348-0112 if you need to speak with me.

**TEXTBOOK**

*Religion in Society: A Sociology of Religion (8th Ed)*
Ronald L. Johnstone
Prentice Hall (2007)

ISBN-10: 0131884077

[Click here](#) to buy your textbook online at the FIU Bookstore

**COURSE PREREQUISITES**

There are no prerequisites for this course.

For more information about prerequisites, [click here](#).

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ASSIGNMENTS

ESSAYS AND QUIZZES: There will be a multiple choice quiz or essay assignment after each topic or combination of topics. Each assignment will be worth a total of 25 points. Each essay assignment will consist of 1, 2, 3 or 4 essay questions out of which a student will be required to answer a specified number of questions. If the chosen question has sub-divisions [e.g questions 1 a, 1 b, etc] the student must address all questions in the subdivisions to be awarded full points for the question. The essay questions will be based on the lectures, class discussions, and assigned readings. The purpose of these essays is to test the student's knowledge of the vocabulary, issues, theoretical perspectives and ability to apply the ideas covered to the understanding of lived religious experience. A student has only 2 attempts at answering the multiple choice questions. The highest score will be recorded.

DISCUSSION BOARD ASSIGNMENTS: Throughout the semester the instructor will post messages to the discussion board that require a response or activity from each student. Each post will be graded. Each discussion is worth 25 points. To receive all possible points, a posting must be on time, be easy to read, free of careless mistakes, and appropriately address the issue(s) or question(s) presented by the instructor. Also
each student must address or respond to viewpoints of at least three others in the class.

The Final Grade will be determined by a tally of points scored throughout the semester. These points will be converted into percentages [that is, \( \text{Points scored by student/total number of points [200]} \times 100 \)]. Please keep printed copies of all assignments and graded material. If you cannot produce your class material in a grade dispute, the grade recorded in the instructor's grade book will take precedent.

Students are required and responsible for all assigned text readings and material from Blackboard. Students are expected to check the Announcement and Assignment sections of Blackboard for this class at least every other day. Students who take this course are expected to have the skills necessary to complete all assignments. Essay Assignments must not be sent as attachments to the professor. They must be posted in the Assignment drop box. I will not grade them if you send them to me as attachments. If you have computer technology questions during the semester, you should contact the FIU Computer Help Desk.

Note: I reserve the right to alter this syllabus if and whenever necessary.

### GRADING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Requirements</th>
<th>Weights</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essays and Multiple Choice Quizzes</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Assignments</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>above 93</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>81 - 83</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67 – 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>91 – 92</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 - 80</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>64 – 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 – 90</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>74 - 76</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>61 – 63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84 – 86</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>71 - 73</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt; 61</td>
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### STUDENT HOMEPAGE

Every student should create his/her own student homepage using the course's Discussion Forum, which can be found on course's left navigation menu. For help on how to use the HTML Creator to develop a Student Homepage, [click here](#).
**EXPECTATION OF THIS COURSE**

This is a fully online course, meaning that all course work (100%) will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in fully online courses are the same as for traditional courses; in fact, fully online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills that can make them more demanding for some students.

Fully online courses are not independent study courses. You will be expected to interact online with the professor and your fellow students; to do assignments; to meet deadlines; and in many classes, to work in virtual groups. In some fully online courses, you may be required to come to campus to take midterms and exams, but in most like this one, you will take your tests online. In the course content portion of blackboard power-point notes on some of the topics are posted. Also some required readings are posted in this portion of blackboard. Power points are not substitutes for readings. Both complement each other. Students need to be familiar with the material in both sources if they expect to do well in this course.

Tips for Success in your online course, [click here](#).

Online Etiquette, [click here](#).

**Academic and Classroom Misconduct**

Students are expected to conduct themselves appropriately at all times. Behavior defined by the instructor as disruptive will not be tolerated. For a Web class, the above statement includes flaming, which is writing or sending inappropriate messages to the web areas of this course. All interaction with your instructor and your fellow students is expected to be appropriate. If any activity becomes disruptive, the instructor reserves the right to take appropriate action.

In addition, if a student turns in an assignment where the authorship is questionable (plagiarism), the instructor reserves the right to discuss this situation with the student, and if she/he is not satisfied that the assignment is the work of that student, a grade of "0" will be assigned.

**COURSE CALENDAR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Topic/Chapter</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 Jan</td>
<td>Class introductions and acquisition of textbooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Jan. 17 - 23</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter 1 &amp; 2 Introduction to Sociology of Religion &amp; The sources of Religion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read Chapter 1 and 2. Read the corresponding Lecture summaries/supplements (located in the Course Content section of Blackboard).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple-Choice Quiz [1] [Answer all questions]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Due 11:55 jan 23rd</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Jan. 24-30</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NO ASSIGNMENT.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>START READING Chapters 3 &amp; 4 [RELIGION AS A GROUP PHENOMENON &amp; BECOMING RELIGIOUS]</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Jan. 31-feb 6</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>QUIZ [2] BASED ON CHAPTERS 3 &amp; 4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiz : Due Date 11:55 feb 6th</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Feb. 7 – 13</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NO ASSIGNMENTS</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 6</th>
<th>Feb 14-20</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DISCUSSION BOARD ASSIGNMENT BASED ON CHAPTER 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read Chapter 3. Religion as a group Phenomenon and read the corresponding Lecture summaries/supplements (located in the Course Document section of Blackboard).</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANSWER THE FOLLOWING DISCUSSION GROUP QUESTIONS</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS</td>
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1. John Bawa is your next door neighbor. Recently he founded a new religious group. So far his group has only five members. He has consulted you as the only sociologist of religion in Miami to advise him on what to do to ensure the survival of his group. How would you advice John Bawa? What changes would you advise John Bawa to watch out for, as his group expands in membership?. Hint- remember our discussion on functional prerequisites and changes that take place in a growing religious community. |

2. Would sociologists/and anthropologists of Religion be right in
characterizing Jesus Christ as a charismatic personality or leader?. Drawing on our discussions on charismatic leadership offer a detailed explanation for your answer.

Due Date 11 : 55 pm Feb 20\textsuperscript{th}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 7</th>
<th>Feb. 21-27</th>
<th>NO ASSIGNMENTS, START READING CHAPTER 5</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 8</th>
<th>Feb. 21 – 27</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT BASED ON Chapter 5</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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<td>Answer 2 questions ONLY</td>
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Question 1
Write short notes on,
a. 4 characteristics of a sect
b. The theological explanation for the origin of sects
c. The deprivation theory of sect origins

Question 2
a. Mention and describe 3 types of deprivation identified by Glock
b. Mention and describe 3 differences between a sect and the Church.

Question 3.
a) What is a cult?
b) How are Cults different from Sects

Quiz DATE DUE 11: 55 pm Feb. 27\textsuperscript{th}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 9</th>
<th>Feb. 28 – march 6</th>
<th>DISCUSSION BOARD- ASSIGNMENT BASED ON CHAPTER 5</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A disgruntled faction in your church has decided to break away from the group</td>
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</table>
eventually to create its own group. Members of the group said they were not very happy about the way the new pastor interpreted certain doctrines of the church. Drawing on insights from the notion of deprivation as discussed in the text, how would you as a socio-anthropological analyst of religion explain the possible underlying causes of the break away?

Date Due March 6th 11:55 pm

<table>
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<th>Week 10 Mar. 7 – 13</th>
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ASSIGNMENT BASED ON Chapters 6&9

ESSAY ASSIGNMENTS BASED ON CHAPTERS SIX & NINE

Answer only 3 of the following five questions. Illustrate your answers with examples if possible

1. Which is more likely to influence the other: Religion or economics? Why? What specific aspects of religious commitment/religion might influence a person's economic conduct or circumstances?

2. A) What does Karl Max mean by religion being an opiate to oppressed people? According to Karl Max in what ways can religion be an opiate to oppressed people?
   B) What kinds of evidence can you use to support this view of religion? [Mention about five examples]
   C) Do you agree with Karl Max’s view that for there to be equality, societies must rid themselves of religion?

3. Drawing on your experience, knowledge of history, readings and or observations about life in the USA mention and explain 5 ways in which religion serves or has served as a resource to minorities or oppressed people in coping with oppression and in their struggles for change.

4. How, according to Max Weber did religious beliefs influence the formation of capitalism as an economic system? What criticisms were leveled against Weber?

5. Explain 4 of the following into details.
   A. The spirit of capitalism
   B. The protestant Ethic
   C. Inter religious conflict
   D. Intra- religious conflict
   E. Theodicies of disprivilege
   F. Theodicies of good fortune
   G. The concept of vocation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 11</th>
<th>Mar. 14 - 20</th>
<th>SPRING-BREAK NO CLASSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>Mar. 21-27</td>
<td>NO ASSIGNMENT-read chapter 11[no power-point notes]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Week 13  | March 28- April 3 | Chapter 11  
Multiple-Choice Quiz BASED ON Chapter 11- RELIGION AND WOMEN 
Due date 11:55pm April 3 |
| Week 14/15 | Apr. 4 – 24th | ESSAY ASSIGNMENT BASED ON Chapter 8 only  
ESSAY QUESTION  
What is Religious Fundamentalism?  
Drawing on the discussion on Islamic, Christian, and Jewish fundamentalism in your text for illustrations describe how modern developments or changes generate conditions that breed or fuel religious fundamentalist tendencies. 
Due 11:55pm April 24th |