COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to the study of religions in its diverse manifestations. In other words, what is religion, how and why is it studied. We shall examine the different manifestations and practices of religion, focusing on religious experiences. Although no particular tradition will be treated at length, materials from several religions will be chosen to exemplify thematic topics in the experience of the Sacred. Our approach to the phenomenon of religion will be conceptual; some of the topics to be explored include theodicy, myth, sacred ritual, scripture, and ethics. In order to facilitate critical thinking and to stimulate active learning, this course will supplement lectures with small-group exercises, class discussions, the use of multimedia and fieldwork in an unfamiliar religious tradition. The successful completion of this course (grade of ‘C’ or better) fulfills one of the two Gordon Rule courses in the University Core Curriculum’s ‘Humanities with Writing’ section.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- This course will provide students with tools for analyzing and interpreting religious traditions in contemporary societies, and will provide critical thinking skills for dealing with multi-religions in a given context.
This course will also provide the students with the "raw materials" for the study of religion by introducing students to the beliefs, doctrines, rituals, symbols, (select) scriptures, and experiences (through group presentations and discussions).

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- Students will be able to analyze topics in the field of religious studies from multiple Perspectives.
- Students will be able to explain the history and development of the belief systems and practices of various religious communities.
- 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 religious traditions.

**TEXTBOOK**


**COMMUNICATING WITH THE INSTRUCTOR**

- **E-mail:** via blackboard & email
- **Contact:** During office hours
GRADING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Requirements</th>
<th>Weights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site Visit Essay (draft = 30 points and final essay = 70 points)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiz Average</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm (Exam 1) (Essay: Analysis on an article)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Essay (Exam 2) (objective part = 50 points and essay part = 50 points)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Presentation and Discussion</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class attendance/punctuality and participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<table>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>80 - 82</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67 - 69</td>
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<td>90 - 92</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 - 79</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>63 - 66</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 - 89</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>73 - 76</td>
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<td>60 - 62</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83 - 86</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70 - 72</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt; 59</td>
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</table>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The course will be assessed by means of the following elements:

[1] Site Visit Essay (first essay) 20% – The student must attend a religious service/ceremony not within his or her own religious tradition and write up a critical essay that describes and analyzes the experience at the site. Essay requirements: 6-7 pages double-spaced, 12- point font (such as Times or Garamond), minimum of three (3) academic sources cited in the essay body and referenced in a ‘Works Cited’ page. Additional information, including a suggested list
of potential religious sites to attend, can be found below. Both the Site Visit Essay and final Essay (see below) will be submitted via www.turnitin.com. Instructions, Class ID and Password will be provided in class.

[2] Second Essay (Final Essay) 20% – The student must research a topic of interest on at least two concepts discussed in class, compare and contrast these concepts within two different religious traditions. Students must include current reference sources to support analysis. An example: Using one of the approaches for studying religion, investigate a religious concept such as ‘ritual, myth or sacred sources’ in Theravada Buddhism and Protestant Christianity. The student is expected to produce an analytical essay that goes above and beyond what is covered in class and in our textbook. Our FIU Library contains a wealth of scholarly materials, in book and electronic form, which you are urged to consult and utilize. Essay requirements: 6-7 pages double-spaced, 12- point font (such as Times or Garamond), minimum of three (3) academic sources cited in the essay body and referenced in a ‘Works Cited’ page.

[3] Quizzes (20%) – Nearly every week’s class session will end with a short 10-question quiz. This ensures that students are doing the required readings. Absenteeism will negatively affect a student’s grades, as these quizzes may not be made up without prior consent and approval. This time restricted, in-class quizzes will be given on each topic discussed within the week except the first week. You will have one chance to take the quiz in class per week.

[4] Mid Term Exams (20%)- There will be a Midterm exam which is comprised of an analysis on Kwame Appiah’s “A Case for Contamination,”(4-5 pages double spaced). Details will be provided in class.

(5) Group Presentation and Discussions (10%)-There will be presentations on each week’s readings (starting the 1st week). This will consist of 3-4 students who will present their findings on assigned readings and lead discussions in class within in Fifteen minutes. Details will be provided in class. Evaluation will be based on Content, Style and Research and how actively the group is able to engage the class in discussion. This is 10% of the overall grade.

(6) Attendance (10%)- Regular class attendance and participation in class discussions in all sessions is an important requirement in this class. No opinion is wrong. Feel free to contribute your ideas. If you have to be absent for any special reason, give prior notice to instructor and with documentation. Absenting yourself for more than twice (two times) in class without documentation will affect your attendance evaluation.

***Failure to complete any of these exams will result in an F grade in the course. Make-ups will only be allowed with prior approval of the instructor and/or with appropriate documentation.
FORMAT FOR ESSAYS

Turnitin.com
The essays will be turned in to Turnitin.com. Information on this will be given in class. Keep electronic and paper copies of all written work. For your own protection, keep a copy of your turnitin.com electronic receipt (a confirmation of assignment submission) until you have received your final grade for the course.

You will need to do research Essays: Your textbook and required readings will not have enough information about the topic. You will need to consult a minimum of three outside sources and one must be a book reference. You will also need notes in your paper, and a Bibliography/Works Cited page. You may use any recognized style manual, but you must use it consistently. The papers should be at least 6 pages long, and no more than 7 pages. Do not use Wikipedia as an internet source. You may use internet sources, but use only academic sources from the internet. (Academic sources list individual authors, name their sources, and have institutional affiliations.) Points will be deducted for infractions of these rules.

When reading your essays, I will be looking at three different elements: Content (this includes Grammar), Style, and Research. You will receive a grade in each of these areas, and these grades will then be averaged together for your final essay grade.

Research: refers to the information in your paper. Is it correct? Is it detailed? Do you demonstrate basic knowledge of the religious tradition from which the concept is taken? Is this knowledge evident in your description? You must use at least three academic sources in your paper. One of them must be a book reference.

Style refers to how that information is presented. This includes the way the information is organized and language skills such as spelling, grammar, and proper sentence structure.

Argument: refers to the quality of your analysis, how well you support your argument. For more detailed instructions, please see the "Essay" page under Course Content.

COURSE POLICIES

Late Papers
Late papers will be downgraded one letter grade for each day late.

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 for the plagiarized assignment, and possibly the course.

Policies and Procedures

FIU's policies and procedures are important to the quality of your education.

Religious Sites

To help you get started here are the names and addresses of various religious sites in Miami and the surrounding area. Feel free to attend other sites not listed here, however.

Buddhism

Sokka Gakkai International (Nichiren Buddhist - Mahayana)
Miami Community Center
20000 SW 36th Street
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33332
954-349-5200

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

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

Amida Temple ("Pure Land" Buddhist – Mahayana)
c/o Kuang-Hsi Wu
12815 S.W. 119 Terrace
Miami, Florida 33186
305-385-2866

Kagyu Shedrup Chöling (Tibetan Buddhist)
1905 Monroe Street
Hollywood, Florida 33020
Hinduism
Shiva Vishnu Temple
5661 Dykes Rd.
(S.W. 160th Ave.)
Pembroke Pines (Davie), FL
954-689-0471
webmaster@shivavishnu.org
(I-75 North, Exit Sheridan, go west to Dykes Road, then go North for about a mile, temple on left)

The South Florida Hindu Temple
13010 Griffin Road
Davie, FL
954-438-3675
info@sfht.org

Islam
Good times to attend their prayer services are on Friday and Sunday, usually around 1:30 p.m.
Mosque of Miami (Suni)
7350 N.W. 3rd Street
Miami, Florida 33126
305-261-7622

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

Miami Gardens Mosque (Suni)
4305 N.W. 183rd Street
Miami, FL 33055

Islamic Jafferia Association Imambara (Shia)
10554 N.W. 132nd Street
Hialeah Gardens, FL 33016
(305) 557-6835
http://www.ijamiami.org

Judaism and Christianity
For Jewish and Christian services, below are just two, but you may of course consult the Yellow Pages for the church or synagogue nearest you.
Expectation of This Course

This course requires a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline skills that can make it quite demanding for some students.

Course Calendar (Provisional)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Text (Readings)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 Jan. 9th-13th 2012</td>
<td>Review and fully familiarize yourself with the course and a Religious site of your choice. Print and read the course syllabus and course calendar before class. Section I. The Study of Religion View Presentations: What Is Religion? Topic: Defining Religion. Why Are Humans</td>
<td>Chapter 1 p.3-14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Week 2 | Jan. 16th-20th 2012 | **View Presentations: How Is Religion Studied?**  
**Section 2 Topic:** Defining the Ways Religion Is Studied. Interpreting and Explaining Religion.  
**Quiz 2: How is Religion Studied?** | Chapter 2  
p.15-34 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Week 3 | 23rd-27th 2012 | **Section II. Universal Forms of Religious Experience and Expression**  
**View Presentation:** *The Sacred and the Holy.*  
**Quiz 3: The Sacred and the Holy**  
*Group 1 Presentation (Compare and contrast the concept of the sacred and holy in 2 religious traditions)* | Chapter 3  
p. 37-52 |
| Week 4 | Jan.30th - Feb.3rd 2012 | **View Presentation:** *Sacred Symbols*  
**Topic:** Symbolic Communication. Religious Symbols.  
**Quiz 4: Sacred Symbols**  
*Group Two Presentation: Compare and contrast the concept of the sacred symbols in 2 religious traditions.* | Chapter 4  
p. 53-73 |
| Week 5 | Feb. 6th-10th | **View Presentation:** *Sacred Myth, and Doctrine.* | Chapter 4  
p. 53-73 |
### 2012 Site Visit Essay #1 Draft

Copy due via Turnitin.com Feb. 10th 2012 by 11:59 pm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group Three Presentation:</strong> Compare and contrast the concept of the sacred myths and doctrines in 2 religious traditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take Quiz 5: Sacred Myth, and Doctrine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show Documentary on Sacred Doctrines/Myths</td>
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</table>

### Week 6 Feb. 13th-17th 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>View Presentation: Sacred Rituals.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quiz 6: Sacred Rituals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show documentary on Sacred rituals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussions on Site Visit 1st Draft</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Week 7 Feb. 20th-24th 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>View Presentation: Sacred Scripture.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong> The Pervasive Role of Sacred Scripture. Using the Term Scripture. Some Distinctive Features of Sacred Scripture. The Authority and Canonicity of Scripture. The Reception and Uses of Scripture. The Interpretation of Scripture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiz 7: Sacred Scripture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group Three Presentation:</strong> Compare and contrast the concept of the sacred scriptures in 2 religious traditions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Week 8 Feb. 27th-2nd March 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Midterm-Exam 1 (Essay). Due</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section III. Universal Components of a Religious Worldview</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| by 11: 59pm on March 2\(^{\text{nd}}\) 2012 via turnitin.com | Monotheism.  
*Society and the Sacred: The Social Formations and Transformations of Religion.*  
*Group Four Presentation: Compare and contrast the concept of the concept of the Divine in 2 religious traditions.*  
Quiz 8: Concept of the Divine |
| --- | --- |
| **Week 9**  
March 5\(^{\text{th}}\)-9\(^{\text{th}}\) 2012 | **View Presentation on the Topic:** The Reciprocal Relationship between Religion and Society. Types of Religious Communities. Voluntary Religious Communities. Protest and Change in Voluntary Religious Communities.  
The Sect. The Cult: New Religious Movements  
**Take Quiz 9: Society and the Sacred**  
*Group Five Presentation: Compare and contrast the concept of the society and sacred in 2 religious traditions.*  
| Chapter 7  
p. 124-149 |
| **Site Visit Essay - Final Copy due March 9\(^{\text{th}}\), 2012 via Turnitin.com.** |  |
| **Spring Break March 12\(^{\text{th}}\) 2012** | **View Presentation:** *Cosmogony: Origins of the Natural and Social Order.*  
**Topic:** The Practical Basis of Cosmogony. Emergence or Procreation from a Primal Substance or Being. The Sexual Union of a Primal Male and Female. Creation by Conflict and the Ordering of Chaos. Creation by a Divine Craftsman. Creation by Decree or from Nothing. The Rejection of Cosmogonic Speculations. Cosmogony Today.  
**Quiz 10: Cosmogony** |
|  |  |  | Chapter 9  
p. 183-210 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 11</th>
<th>March 19th - 23rd, 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abstracts on Final Essay</strong></td>
<td><strong>Due March 19th, 2012</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Group Six Presentation** *(Compare and contrast the concept of the Cosmogony in 2 religious traditions.)*

**View Presentation:** *Soteriology: Ways and Goals of Salvation and Liberation.*


**Quiz 11:** *Soteriology*

**Group Seven Presentation** *(Compare and contrast the concept of the Soteriology in 2 religious traditions.)*

**Presentation and Discussions on Abstracts of the Final Essay (March 23rd, 2012)**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 12</th>
<th>March 26th - 30th, 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**View Presentation:** *Anthropology: The Human Problem.*


**Quiz 12:** *Anthropology*

**Group Eight Presentation on Anthropology**

**Cont. Presentation and Discussions on Abstracts of the Final Essay (March 26th, 2012)**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 13</th>
<th>April 2nd - 6th, 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**View Presentation:** *Theodicy: Encountering Evil.*

**Topic:** The Persistent Demand for Theodicy.

Chapter 13 p. 287-338

Chapter 10 p. 211-234

Chapter 11 p. 235-258
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 14</th>
<th>April. 9th-13th 2012</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>View Presentation:</strong> Ethics: Patterns of Moral Action.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong> Virtues and Obligations. The Sources and Norms of Moral Authority.</td>
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<td><strong>Take Quiz 14: Ethics</strong></td>
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<th>Week 15</th>
<th>April. 16th-20th 2012</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section IV. The Sacred and the Secular in Modernity</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>View Presentation:</strong> The Sacred and the Secular in Modernity.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Quiz 15: The Sacred and Secular in Modernity</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 16</th>
<th>April. 23rd-27th 2012</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Course Conclusion:</strong> Take Final Exams 2 (objective and essay parts)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Essay #2 - Final Copy due April 27th 2012 by 11:59 pm via Turnitin.com</strong></td>
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**Quiz 13: Theodicy**

**Group Nine Presentation**

**Theodicy of "Mystical Participation." A Future, This-Worldly Theodicy. Other-Worldly Theodicy. Dualism. The Karma-Samsara Theodicy. Monotheistic Theodicies.**

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**Group Ten Presentation**

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**Course Conclusion:** Take Final Exams 2 (objective and essay parts)
| Final Objectives exams will be taken on April 27th 2012 (in class). |  |  |