SPRING 2014 – REL 3308 U07 – Studies in World Religions
Monday-Wednesday-Friday – 2:00-2:50 PM – PG5-134

Instructor: Ellen Randolph
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Supervising Instructor: Dr. Erik Larson
Email: larsone@fiu.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This comparative religions course examines the world’s major religions, both ancient and contemporary, from historical, psychological, sociological, anthropological and archeological perspectives. We will explore the various myths, rituals, symbols, scriptures, festivals and spiritual leaders of indigenous and tribal communities, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and New Religious Movements (including New Age).

COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

- Understand the key underlying beliefs and principles of the major world religions.
- Appreciate the early bases and origins of religion among Indigenous Peoples and Shamanic cultures.
- Discern the major similarities and differences between Eastern and Western religions, including cultural and historical contexts, as well as local, national and/or international contexts.
- Be aware of the broad movements and developments in religious belief and practices from ancient to contemporary times.
- 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

Lewis M. Hopfe and Mark R. Woodward

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EXPECTATIONS FOR THIS COURSE

This class meets three times a week: Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 2:00 to 2:50 pm. Since the class is only fifty minutes long, students are expected to arrive promptly and stay for the full duration of the class. 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.

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.

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**

The Midterm Exam (Exam 1) and Final Exam (Exam 2) are in-class, time-restricted examinations. Each exam has 50 multiple-choice questions based on the text readings. Each exam is worth 100 points (two points per question) and 20% of the final grade. Students will need a green Scantron and a pencil for each exam. There will be an exam study guide available to the students a week before each exam. NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to give pop quizzes, if the students do not seem sufficiently prepared for class discussion.

**ESSAYS**

Essay 1 (Site Visit) and Essay 2 (Appiah Analysis) 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. The Site Visit should be 1200-1500 words and cited correctly. For more details about this assignment, see Assignments in Blackboard. The Site Visit is worth 100 points.

**Essay 2 (Appiah Analysis)** - The student will analyze the article ‘The Case for Contamination’ by Kwame Anthony Appiah. The Appiah Analysis includes a discussion on Blackboard Discussion Group and a written essay. The essay should be 1200-1500 words and cited correctly. For more details about this assignment, see Assignments in Blackboard. The Appiah Analysis is worth 100 points.
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](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 PRESENTATION

Students will give a group presentation on a topic related to the text readings, using PowerPoint, Prezi or similar. Guidelines will be given in class but the group will present current issues, events or people that impact the religion in that week’s readings. Students are responsible for signing up for presentation groups. If a student cannot attend of 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.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance and Participation together are worth 50 points. Students are expected to attend every class, arrive promptly and stay for the duration of the class. However, students are given three “free” absences in order to accommodate transportation issues, illness, family responsibilities, work scheduling, and unavoidable absences. Students are strongly encouraged to save their “free” absences for unavoidable events since any other absences will incur a penalty of 5 points each. Students with ten or more absences (after the three “free” absences) will receive 0 points for attendance. Please inform the instructor immediately if a situation develops which will impact your performance or attendance. Participation includes reading for class, contributing to discussions and being attentive to lectures and student presentations. Please refrain from texting and emailing in class. Arriving late, leaving early or stepping out of the class for long periods of time may incur an absence penalty. Students will be expected to sign in on the class roster which will serve as documentation of their attendance.
EXTRA CREDIT

Review a movie in which two religions merge or conflict with each other and write a five-paragraph reaction paper describing the role that religion plays in the story or event. Focus on 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 can be based on a real situation but should not be a documentary or a movie specifically about a religion or a religious figure. If in doubt about your selection, ask the instructor for approval. The extra credit paper is worth up to an extra 15 points. All extra credit reports are due no later than April 18.

GRADING

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## CALENDAR

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<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
<th>CLASS PLAN &amp; DUE DATES</th>
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| 1    | None              | Jan. 6: Welcome and overview of class  
Jan. 8: Introductory lecture  
Jan 10: Religions of the World treasure hunt |
| 2    | Chapter 1         | Jan. 13: Readings lecture  
Jan. 15: Video clips and discussion  
Jan. 17: South American and Australian indigenous religions |
| 3    | Chapter 2         | Jan. 20: Holiday  
Jan. 22: Readings lecture  
Jan. 24: Video clips and discussion  
*** GO TO YOUR SITE VISIT EARLY *** |
| 4    | Chapter 3         | Jan. 27: Readings lecture  
Jan. 29: Video clips and discussion  
Jan. 31: Group Presentation on issues in Caribbean Religions |
| 5    | Chapter 4         | Feb. 3: Readings lecture  
Feb. 5: Video clips and discussion  
Feb. 7: Group Presentation on issues in Hinduism |
| 6    | Chapter 5 & 7     | Feb. 10: Readings lecture  
Feb. 12: Video clips and discussion  
Feb. 14: Group Presentation on issues in Jainism or Sikhism |
| 7    | Chapter 6         | Feb. 17: Readings lecture  
Feb. 19: Video clips and discussion  
Feb. 21: Group Presentation on issues in Buddhism |
| 8    | Chapter 8         | Feb. 24: Site Visit essay due  
Feb. 24: Readings lecture  
Feb. 26: Video clips and discussion  
Feb. 28: Group Presentation on issues in Chinese Religions |
| 9    | Chapter 9         | Mar. 3: Readings lecture  
Mar. 5: Group Presentation on issues in Shinto  
Mar. 7: Midterm exam (in-class) |
| 10   | none              | Spring Break Week: March 9-16 |
| 11   | Chapter 10        | Mar. 17: Readings lecture  
Mar. 19: Video clips and discussion  
Mar. 21: Group Presentation on issues in Zoroastrianism |
| 12   | Chapter 11        | Mar. 24: Readings lecture  
Mar. 26: Video clips and discussion  
Mar. 28: Group Presentation on issues in Judaism |
|   | Chapter 12 | Mar. 31: Readings lecture  
|   |           | Apr. 2: Video clips and discussion  
|   |           | Apr. 4: Group Presentation on issues in Christianity  
|   | Chapter 13 | Apr. 7: Appiah Essay due  
|   |           | Apr. 7: Readings lecture  
|   |           | Apr. 9: Video clips and discussion  
|   |           | Apr. 11: Group Presentation on issues in Islam  
|   | None      | Apr. 14: Lecture on New Religious Movements  
|   |           | Apr. 16: Video clips and discussion  
|   |           | Apr. 18: Group Presentation on issues in Neo-Paganism  
|   |           | Apr. 18: Extra credit papers due  
|   | None      | Apr. 23: Final exam 12:00-2:00 PG5-134 |