

REL. 3375 RELIGIONS OF THE CARIBBEAN [ON-LINE]

Spring 2015.

Instructor: Dr. Albert Wuaku

Phone: 305-348-0112

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

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The processes of globalization and transnational movements have privileged the United States as a concentration locus for diverse African peoples. The majority of these peoples are descendants of Africans carried to the Caribbean Islands as slaves almost five hundred years ago, and currently involved in secondary migrations to the USA. Consequently, a repertory of Afro-Caribbean Religio-cultural traditions, offshoots of African religions historically trans-located to the Caribbean, proliferates in some American locations such as South Florida, providing trans-migrants and original residents of these places with a diversity of options in meeting their cultural, spiritual, health and healing needs. Drawing on perspectives from history, socio-cultural anthropology, sociology, and religious studies, this interdisciplinary course will introduce students to three of these traditions. These are Haitian Vodou, Afro-Cuban Santeria and the Rastafarian tradition. The course will expose students to the African roots of these religions, their histories as religions of the oppressed during Caribbean colonialism and slavery, and factors accounting for their presence in the USA. Students will also be introduced to the phenomenology of these traditions, that is, the beliefs and practices of practitioners, and the crucial roles their discourses and praxis play in shaping trans-migrants from the Caribbean and new American converts to the exigencies of their lives in the USA. Some key topics to be discussed in this course include notions of God and spirits in Vodou and Santeria, the role of Vodou in Haiti and the Haitian Diaspora in the USA, Sacrifices and their meanings in Santeria, the notion of evil in Santeria and Vodou, and Botanicas in South Florida and their place in healing and health in Afro-Cuban Santeria and Haitian Vodou.

Course Objectives

The course will

- Familiarize students with the origins (both historical and philosophical) of Caribbean religious expressions.
- Enhance student appreciation of the plurality and diversity of Religious beliefs and practices of the Caribbean World
- Help students to understand the role of history, culture and politics in Caribbean religious life and also how religion in turn shapes these dimensions of life
- Help students to develop the ability to use intellectual tools from history, sociology anthropology, and religious studies to explain the dynamics of religion in Caribbean Societies
- Contribute to the dispelling of the myths surrounding Santeria

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the semester students will

- Gain an intellectual understanding of the role of religion in Caribbean Culture and history
- 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.
- Learn to appreciate religious experiences from the point of view of practitioners
- Be excited about Caribbean religions enough to want to pursue their study further

Policies

Please review the [policies page](#) as it contains essential information regarding guidelines relevant to all courses at FIU and additional information on the standards for acceptable netiquette important for online courses.

Technical Requirements & Skills

One of the greatest barriers to taking an online course is a lack of basic computer literacy. By computer literacy we mean being able to manage and organize computer files efficiently, and learning to use your computer's operating system and software quickly and easily. Keep in mind that this is not a computer literacy course; but students enrolled in online courses are expected to have moderate proficiency using a computer. Please go to the "[What's Required](#)" page to find out more information on this subject.

For detailed information about the technical requirements, please [click here](#).

Accessibility and Accommodation

For detailed information about the specific limitations with the technologies used in this course, please [click here](#).

For more information about Blackboard's Accessibility Commitment, [click here](#).

For additional assistance please contact our [Disability Resource Center](#).

Course Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

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 email at least every other day for the duration of this course.

All emails 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 3375),

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 Email: Below is an example of the format I expect from email inquiries.

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

From: Joe Doe doee@fiu .edu (Use FIU email address/account)

To: Albert Wuaku wuakua@fiu .edu

Subject: Textbook (Web Class 3375)

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.

Expectations of this Course

This is an online course, meaning that most of the course work will be conducted online.

Expectations for performance in an online course are the same as for a traditional course; in fact, online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills that can make them more demanding for some students.

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. **This course in particular is extremely demanding. You will not make good scores if you wait till the few hours before the deadlines to prepare for the quizzes and essay assignments.**

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 PowerPoint notes on some of the topics are posted. Also some required readings are posted in this portion of Blackboard. PowerPoints 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.

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.

Students are expected to:

- **Review the How to Get Started** folder located in the course content.
- **Review the Policies Page** as it is important to the quality of your education.
- **Introduce yourself to the class** during the first week by posting a self-introduction in the appropriate discussion forum under the How to Get Started folder.
- **Take the practice quiz** under the How to Get Started folder to ensure that your computer is compatible with Blackboard
- **Interact** online with instructor/s and peers and keep up with all assignments.
- **Review** and follow the course calendar

Course Details

Grading

Course Requirements	Weight
Essays and Multiple Choice Quizzes	70%
Discussion Assignments	30%
Total	100%

Letter Grade	Range	Letter Grade	Range	Letter Grade	Range
A	Above 93	B-	81-83	D+	67 - 70
A-	91 - 92	C+	77 - 80	D	64 - 66
B+	87 - 90	C	74 - 76	D-	61 - 63
B	84 - 86	C-	71 - 73	F	< 61

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 or more 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 3 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

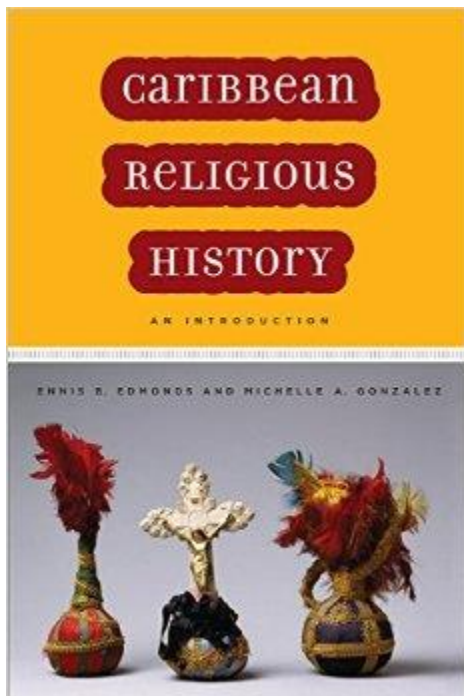
be on time, be easy to read, free of careless mistakes, and appropriately address the issue(s) or question(s) presented by the instructor. Also each student must address or respond to viewpoints of at least three others in the class.

The Final Grade will be determined by a tally of points scored throughout the semester. These points will be converted into percentages [**that is, Points scored by student/total number of points [200] x 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.**

Required Text



Ennis, B. Edmonds and Michelle A .Gonzalez[ed]

Caribbean Religious History: An Introduction
I have asked the bookstore to order copies.
Additional readings will be placed on Blackboard as needed.

Course Calendar

Date	TOPICS	ASSIGNMENTS
------	--------	-------------

Week 1 January 12 - 18	<p>Module 1: Class introductions and acquisition of textbooks: Exploration of some relevant theoretical concepts.</p> <p>Discussion will be based mainly on PowerPoint notes and the readings posted on Blackboard</p> <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Pierre Bourdieu's "Social Theory of Religion" in Chapter Two of Our Lady of Class Struggle: The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Haiti by Terry Rey.- Also read theories by Marx, Weber, Eliade, Geertz. All on Bb . <p>PowerPoint</p> <p>Lecture #1: Some Tools of Analysis</p>	<p>Discussion # 1: Due: Jan. 18th by 11:55 pm</p>
-------------------------------------	---	--

Week 2 January 19 – 25	<p>Module 2: The Tainos and the Caribs: The Indigenous People of the Caribbean and Their Religious Traditions</p> <p>Readings</p> <p>Chapter 2 of prescribed Text: Amerindians and Spanish Catholics in Contact[focus mostly on the nature of the Indigenous cultures and religions]</p> <p>History of Religions in the Caribbean – The indigenous Religions, by</p>	<p>Quiz 1: Due jan 25th by 11:55 pm</p>
-------------------------------------	--	--

Dale Bisnauth

PowerPoint

Lecture #2: The Indigenous Religions of the Caribbean

Movie: Hunters of the Caribbean Seas [in the library]

Discussion # 2:

Due feb 1 by 11:55 pm.

Quiz 2:

Due Feb 1 by 11:55 pm

Week 3 **Module 3: The Discovery and Colonization of the Caribbean, the Christian Presence, and the Beginning of the Enslavement of African People.**

Jan 26th-feb 1

Readings

.chapters 2, 3 and 4 of prescribed text book
- Christianity in the Caribbean, by Bisnauth [on Bb]

Power Points

Lecture 3A: Discovering the Caribbean & Lecture 3B: Christianity and Black Slavery

Module 4: Foundations of The African Derived Caribbean Religions

Week 4

Read

February 2 - - African Traditional Religion, a General introduction by Kofi Asare
February 8 Opoku (The general features of African Religions)
- Osun Seegesi: Chap 2 - The Orisa System: An Overview of Yoruba Cosmology
- The Fon of Dahomey by P. Mercier, on Dahomean Religion
- "Introduction" of Vodun in Coastal Benin: Unfinished Open Ended, Global, by Dana Rush

Essay Questions 1:

Due: Feb 8th by 11:55 pm

PowerPoint

Lecture 4A: Dahomean Religion & Lecture 4B: African Traditional Religions

Module 5: Vodou : The Term, Some Core Elements and Earlier History in Haiti

Week 5

Readings

February 9 – Chapter 5 of prescribed Text
15 - Vodou in Haiti Chap. 2 - The Social Framework of Vodou by Alfred **Quiz 3 :**
Matreux Due Feb 15th by 11:55
Vodou and Roman Catholicism in Haiti, by Desmangles, 131-181;[to pm
posted on Bb]

PowerPoint

Vodou Lecture 1: The Term, Some Core Elements, and a Brief History in Haiti

Week 6

Module 6: Vodou: The worldview and Ritual Culture

Essay Questions 2:
Due: Feb 22 by 11:55
pm

February
16th 22

Read

Chapter 5 of Prescribed text
- Desmangles, 131-169. [a good discussion on the nature of loas [lwas] and their saint correspondences] to be posted on Bb
- Vodou in Haiti • Chap. 3 - Gods and Spirits in Haitian Vodou & Chap. 4 - Ritual by Alfred Matreux

PowerPoint

Vodou: Lecture 2: Haitian Vodou: le Bon deu, the Iwa and the Human

Being

Week 7 **Module 7: The Haitian Revolution and Vodou**

feb 23rd –
march 1

Read
Desmangles, 28-47. To be posted on Bb
Patrick Bellegarde-Smith, [Haiti: The Breached Citadel]pages 35 to 45

PowerPoint
Vodou Lecture 3: The Haitian Revolution

Discussion #3:
Due: march 1 by 11:55 pm

Week 8 **Module 8: Afro-Cuban Religious Expressions- Afro-Cuban Santeria**

March 2 -
March 8

Read
- African Religions in Cuba by Ayorinde
- Santeria: Chap. 1 - What Is It? By De La Torre

PowerPoint
Santeria Lecture 1: What the Term Implies

Week 9— **Module 9: The Historical Background of Santeria and the Colonial** **Essay Question 3:**
march 9-15 **Context of Santeria Evolution in Cuba** Due: March 15th by
Read 11:55 pm
- Worldview, the Orichas and Santeria - Chap 2: The Cuban Colonial and
Republican Background of Santeria

PowerPoint
Santeria Lecture 2: The Historical Context of its Evolution

Week 10 **SPRING BREAK**

March 16 -
22

Week 11
March 23 - 29
Module 11: Santeria Religious Culture, Cosmology and Some Key Rituals
Read
- Santeria Chap. 4: The Rituals by De La Torre
Power Points
Santeria Lecture 3: Its Religious Culture and & Lecture 4: Its Cosmology

Essay Question 4:
Due: Mar. 29th by 11:55 pm

Week 12
March 30 – April 5
Module 11: Santeria's Religious Culture, Cosmology and Ritual

Discussion #4:
Due: April 5th

Week 13
April 6-12
Module 12: Santeria Religious Culture, Cosmology and Some Key Rituals - Illness, Health, Healing and Sacrifice in Santeria
Read
- Fragments of Bone: "Let the Power Flow: Ebo as a Healing Mechanism in the Lukumi Orisha Worship, by Roberto Nodal and Miguel Ramos
PowerPoint
Santeria Lecture 5: Concept of Health, Healing and Sacrifice

Essay Question 5:
Due: April 12th by 11:55 pm

Quiz 4
Due April 12th by 11:55 pm

Week 14 -

April 13 - 19 **Module 13: The Rastas: Origins, Religious Culture and Global Expansion**

Read-

Selected articles- Posted On Bb

PowerPoint

Lecture - The Religion, Afro-Caribbean, Origins and Teachings

Essay Questions 6:

Due: April 19th by
11:55pm

Quiz 5

Due: April 19th by
11:55pm

Discussion

Assignment #5:

Due: April 19th by
11:55pm

