**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The focus of this course is the religious experience and the analytical tools available for a scholarly exploration of its diverse manifestations. We shall not focus attention on specific religious traditions. Rather, materials from several religious experiences will be chosen to exemplify the themes we will be exploring. Some of the topics to be explored include the nature of the religious experience, the various ways of studying religion, understandings of the sacred in the context of religious traditions, the concept of theodicy as a religious category, narratives genres such as myth, proverbs, parables and their place in the religious experience, scripture and its forms etc. 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 film and video lectures, and field research on 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.
- To 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).
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</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiz Average</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm (Exam 1)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Essay (Exam 2)</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>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>above 93</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 - 82</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67 - 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 - 92</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 - 79</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>63 - 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 - 89</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>73 - 76</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60 - 62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83 - 86</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70 - 72</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt; 59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

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, will be given in class. Both the Site Visit Essay and final Essay (see below) will be submitted in hard copy and 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 concepts discussed in class and compare and contrast this topic within two different religious traditions. Students must include current reference sources to support analysis. **An example:** investigate a religious concept such as ‘ritual, myth or sacred sources’ in Hinduism and 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 material, in book and electronic form, which you are urged to consult and utilize.

[3] Quizzes (20%) – Nearly every week’s class session will begin with a short 10-question quiz. This ensures that students are doing the required readings. Absenteeism will negatively affect student 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 the previous week except the first week. **You will have one chance to take the quiz in class per week.**

3
[4] Mid Term Exams (20%)- There will be a Midterm exams, which is comprised of an analysis on Kwame Appiah’s “A Case for Contamination,” and multiple choice questions.

(5) Group Presentation and Discussions- There will be presentations on each week’s readings (starting the 2nd week). This will consist of 5-7 students who will present their findings on assigned readings and lead discussions in class. The rest of the class will present their reading charts for the week. This is 10% of the overall grade.

***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 essay 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; 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 paper 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, 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](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 YOU MIGHT WANT TO VISIT

- **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
954-920-1346

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 (Sunni)
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.

Messianic Judaism
Beth T’filah Messianic Jewish Synagogue
Ramada Inn. 2nd Floor
1925 Harrison St.
Hollywood, FL 33020
http://www.bethtfilah.org/

Orthodox Christianity
Saint George Antiochian Orthodox Christian Cathedral
320 Palermo Ave.
Coral Gables, Florida 33134
http://stgeorgemia.org/

African Diasporan Religions
Halouba Temple/Botanica
Northeast 1 Ave. 54th Street
Miami, Florida 33137-2415
305-751-7485

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)

### Assignments & Readings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>May 13-19th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Introduction</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View: Power Point Presentation on: Defining Religion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading in preparation for this class: Chapter 1&amp;2 (Livingston)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion on Site Visit, Mid Term and Final Essays</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Quiz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>May 20-26</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Universal Components of Religious Views</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View: Power Point presentation on the Divine and Ultimate Reality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Read:</strong> Chapter 3 &amp; 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Take Quiz 1:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On chapter 1&amp;2 (Livingston)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>May 27-June 2nd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Soteriology: Ways and Goals of Salvation and Liberation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View: Power Point presentation on Soteriology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Read:</strong> Chapter 13 (Livingston)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Take Quiz 2:</strong> on Chapter 3 &amp; 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sacred Symbols, Rituals, Myth, and Doctrine</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View: Power presentation on Sacred Symbols, Myth, Doctrine and Sacred rituals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Read:</strong> Chapter 4, 5 &amp; 6 (Livingston)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guest Lecture</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quiz 3:</strong> on chapter 13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mid Term Exam due on JUNE 9, 11:49pm via Turnitin.com</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Analyze the article on ‘A Case for Contamination’ by Kwame Appiah).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Week 5  
| **June 10 to June 16th**  |
| **Theodicy: Encountering Evil**  
| **View:** Power point Presentation on Theodicy  
| **Read:** Chapter 10 &11 (Livingston)  
| **Take Quiz 4:** on chapters 4, 5 &6  |

| Week 6  
| **June 17th to June 21st**  |
| **Ethics: Foundation of Moral Action**  
| **View:** Power point presentation on Ethics  
| **Read:** Chapter 12 (Livingston)  
| **Quiz 5 (chapter 5)**  
| *****Site Visit Essay Due (21ST JUNE), via turnitin.com*****  |

| Week 7  
| **June 22nd to June 26th**  |
| **The Sacred and the Secular in Modernity**  
| (Secularization-New religious Revitalization Movements)  
| **View:**  
| Power Point on Society and Sacred  
| **Read:**  
| Chapter 14  
| **Quiz 6 (Chapter 12)**  
| *****Class Ends*****  
| *****Final Essay due (JUNE 26TH, 11:59pm) via turnitin.com*****  |