

Religious Studies Department
REL 2011 Introduction to Religion
Fall 2017
Biscayne Bay Campus

Instructor: Valeria Schindler

Email: vschindl@fiu.edu

Office: TBA

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays
8:30am to 9:45am and by Appointment

Class Days and Hours: MW 10am-10:50am

Room #:

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to the study of religion. We shall examine the different expressions and practices of religion, focusing on religious experience in interdisciplinary contexts. 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. We will also be focusing on the common underlying tenets of different religions, dispelling common misconceptions and assumptions, and looking at the emergence of new practices among the post-denominational generation.

We will use different techniques as a way of learning in this class, such as debates, lectures, personal assignments, videos, and group assignments. This course is a Hybrid course, so we will use Blackboard to complement the lectures.

Objectives:

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- Better understand how an individual's identity and outlook are shaped by religious influences
- Apply critical thinking to important topics in the field of religious studies
- Appreciate the need and willingness to think creatively about religious issues in the contemporary world
- Write college-level, academic papers and communication with proper structure of content, format, etc.
- Challenge own misconceptions of what religion and its practices are and open his/her mind to new ideas.

Global Learning Objectives Targeted:

- Analyze topics in the field of religious studies from multiple perspectives
- Assess how global issues and trends are interrelated with the development and practice of religions
- Demonstrate willingness to think creatively about religious issues in the contemporary world

Required Textbook:

Anatomy of the Sacred: An Introduction to Religion 6th ed., by James C. Livingston [Prentice Hall] ISBN-10: 013600380X

- **Note:** *extra handouts may be provided by the instructor and posted online. It is your responsibility to complete the readings.*

Assignments:

- **Six (6) ten-question quizzes – lowest score to be dropped at the end of the semester**
 - On the reading material and class lectures including multiple choice and true or false questions. These quizzes will be taken on Blackboard. The quizzes will be available for 24 hours (please consult calendar for dates). Students will have 10 minutes to complete each quiz.
- **Midterm and Final Exams.**
 - **Midterm:** will cover the first half of the semester and will include 50 multiple choice and true and false questions. The link will be available for 2 hours only and students will have 55 minutes to complete it.
 - **Final:** will cover from second half of the semester and will include multiple choice, and true and false questions. The link will be available for 2 hours only and students will have 55 minutes to complete it.
- **A 1000-1500 words opinion paper** on an article on the globalization debate. In this assignment you will have to read an article on globalization (posted on Blackboard), pick one of the areas of concern on globalization, and write what is your opinion on the topic, providing examples that have to be related to religious studies.

- **A 1500-2000-words essay. “Experiencing religion around me.”**

In this assignment you will have to keep a personal journal for 5 days in which you will record all that happens to you and around you. Key things you should focus on: look at what you do and what people around you do, pay attention to your surroundings in general, pay attention at how you label things/people, pay attention to the news, TV shows, video games, and movies you watch, etc. You will then have to produce an essay analyzing how religion “pops up” in your every-day life. Remember to utilize the approaches and information learned in the course.

Your grade on these essays will consist of three parts: **Content and Argument** (40% of grade), **Organization, Structure, and Research** (30% of grade), and **Style and Grammar** (30% of grade).

- **Content and Argument** refers to how well you logically build your case and follow the FIRES model (Facts, Incidents, Reasoning/Rationale, Examples, and Statistics). FIRES makes for a more interesting paper in which you back up your points with specific examples and facts.
 - **Organization, Structure and Research** refers to solid introduction (with thesis statement), building of argument and points, and finishing with a sound conclusion.
 - **Style and Grammar** refers to how well you write: grammar, sentence structure, word usage, including use of interesting and varied words and phrasing.
- Remember that we count with resourceful departments at FIU to help you out with your written assignment. Please refer to <http://casgroup.fiu.edu/writingcenter> for more information and useful tips.
 - **Online activities:** Since this is a Hybrid course there is a portion of course work that students have to do on your own. Every week (unless indicated otherwise in the class calendar) you will have to submit an activity, which collectively are worth 15% of your final grade. It is indicated under each activity how many points you can earn by completing it. **Each activity will become available under “Assignment Dropbox” at the beginning of the day on Friday each week and is due at midnight on Wednesday, after which the link for the assignment will no longer be available.** The due dates are listed on the calendar available the first day of the semester and online. Make sure to submit complete answers and check your grammar to avoid point deductions.

- **Extra Credit** opportunities are available and usually involve attending a special lecture or event and writing a two to three-page review and analysis: at least one page should summarize the event and provide evidence of attendance, and at least one page must analyze the event in the context of a course theme or concept. There might be some other extra credit opportunities doing some other things for the course, so please come see me if you are interested. The essay could be worth up to 3 extra credit points to be added to the final grade. A maximum of 6 extra credit points could be awarded. Please refer to the list of events provided on Blackboard. **Extra Credit reports are due on the second to last week of the semester. I will not accept any reports submitted after that week.**

Grading Criteria:

- Quizzes: 20%
- Midterm: 15%
- Final: 15%
- Written Assignment: 15%
- Report on article 10%
- Online activities 15%
- Attendance and Participation: 10%
- **Total: 100%**

Letter Grade	Range	Letter Grade	Range
A	93 and Above	C+	76-79
A-	90-92	C	70-75
B+	87-89	D	60-69
B	83-86	F	Below 60
B-	80-82		

A's are awarded to exceptional work in class and assignments

B's are awarded for good to very good work.

C's are awarded for average work.

D's are awarded for below average work.

F's are awarded for unacceptable work.

Course Policies:

- Essays must be submitted through Turnitin in Blackboard
- **Blackboard** will be used as an online assistance to the course. Additional material and readings will be posted there. **It is your responsibility to check Blackboard before each class.** To log into Blackboard go to

www.fiu.blackboard.com and use the login to Blackboard tab. To login you have to use your FIU email address, just the part before the "@"." Your password is the same you use for your email account or to login to MyFIU. The course is REL 2011 Section B-5. Please let me know if you have any problems.

- **This is a Gordon Rule** course with a two paper written word requirement and you must attain at least a C (not a C- or less) to pass a Gordon Rule course. You will not receive any credit as a Gordon rule course for a C- or lower upon completion of this course. Under the Gordon Rule, FIU requires that student papers: 1) have a clear thesis or controlling idea; 2) have a thesis supported with adequate reasons and evidence; 3) be organized clearly and logically; 4) show sustained analysis and critical thought; 5) show knowledge of conventions of standard written English; and 6) show awareness of disciplinary conventions in regard to content, style, form, and delivery method.
 - Always send me emails at vschindl@fiu.edu if you have questions, doubts, do not understand what to do, etc.

- **Plagiarism**
 - It is the theft of intellectual property of others, including their ideas, concepts, and words. Plagiarism **will not be tolerated** in this course. Please visit <http://www.fiu.edu/~oabp/misconductweb/2codeofacainteg.htm> To clarify what constitutes plagiarism for this university. Offenders will receive an "F" on the paper, and could fail the entire course. Some examples of plagiarism are:
 - Papers acquired online or from other sources that were not produced by the student that have submitted them.
 - Copying material and ideas from other sources without attribution.
 - Using other student's work.

IF YOU HAVE ANY DOUBTS, PLEASE TALK TO ME FIRST.

- **Previously Submitted Coursework**

Students may not submit work from a previous semester or from another class for this assignment or any other assignment in this course. It will be flagged for plagiarism by Turnitin.

- **Late assignments, missed tests.** Points are going to be deducted for both. If you miss a quiz, you will lose the points the quiz is worth. If you turn in a paper after its due date, **2 points are going to be deducted per late day,**

up to 16 points total. If you know in advanced you won't be able to take a quiz or if you have any issues with your assignments' due date, **PLEASE TALK TO ME BEFORE IT HAPPENS** and I might be able to give you a make-up date. However, **NO MAKE-UP DATES FOR FINAL EXAM!!**

- **NO CELL PHONES OR COMPUTERS** in class please. Power point presentations will be available to you after each class through Blackboard. If you need to use your computer to take notes, please talk to me.
- **Attendance and participation** are extremely important. **ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY.** If you know you will be absent for any reason, please inform me **before** the class you will miss. Tardiness will be penalized as well. I value your participation and your comments, so is very important that you take an active role in class. If you have any problems, please consult with me in advanced. **MORE THAN 5 ABSENCES IN THE SEMESTER WILL RESULT IN A 0 GRADE FOR ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION**

COMMUNICATION is the key for a successful relationship.

Behavioral Misconduct: Any student who is subject to sexual harassment, stalking, or physical or verbal abuse should immediately speak to the instructor. The university has policies to protect students in these instances and the instructor will immediately refer the student to the appropriate program or resource. Remember, this is a course in which different ideas are welcomed, even if they do not agree with our own notions.

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities, as defined by law, have the right to receive needed accommodations if their disabilities make it difficult to perform academic tasks in the usual way or in the allotted time frame. However, in order to receive accommodation, students with disabilities must register with Disability Resource Center. This office will keep the student's written request, notify a faculty member who has a student with a disability enrolled in his/her class, and indicate what kinds of arrangements must be made.

Religious Holidays: By university policy, students must notify the instructor at least two weeks in advance that he/she wishes to observe a religious holyday. The student will be excused from class without penalty, but will still be responsible for the material studied in the class.

For University's deadlines, please refer to <http://onestop.fiu.edu/academic-calendar/fall/index.html>

Important Note: This syllabus is a contract and can be amended determined by the demands of the course. It outlines everything you need to know for this course. Please make sure you have read it carefully.

REL 2011: Religion: analysis and interpretation
FALL 201
Course Outline and Calendar

- **NOTE:** Readings must be completed *prior* to the class for which they are assigned.

Week 1	Welcome/Introduction <u>Reading:</u> Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 1 “What is Religion?” <u>Online activities</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Write 5 things you need to do in order to get an “A” in this course2. Read the article “The non-religious are the country’s largest religious bloc” and answer the questions posted online
Week 2	<u>Reading:</u> Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 2 “Ways of Studying Religion” and start with Chapter 3 “The Sacred and the Holy.” Quiz #1- Chapters 1 and 2 <u>Online activity</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read article “Distinguishing between fact and opinion” and follow activity posted online
Week 3	<u>Reading:</u> Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 4, “Symbol, Myth, and Doctrine” <u>Online activity due</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post a myth (written or YouTube video) and categorize it.

Week 4	<p><u>Reading:</u> Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 4, "Symbol, Myth, and Doctrine" - Quiz #2 – Chapters 3 and 4 5-DAY JOURNAL DUE BY 11:59PM ON BLACKBOARD</p>
Week 5	<p><u>Reading:</u> Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 5, "Sacred Ritual" <u>Online Activity due</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post a Ritual, categorize it. If rite of passage, tell what are the 3 different stages.
Week 6	<p><u>Reading:</u> Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 6, "Sacred Scripture" Quiz #3 – Chapters 5 and 6 REPORT ON ARTICLE DUE BY 11:59PM ON BLACKBOARD</p>
Week 7	<p><u>Reading:</u> Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 7, "Society and the Sacred: The Social Formations and Transformations of Religion" MIDTERM – up to chapter 7</p>
Week 8	<p><u>Reading:</u> Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 8, Concept of the Divine <u>Online activity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch movie "The history of God" and answer questions
Week 9	<p><u>Reading:</u> Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 8, Concept of the Divine <u>Online activity</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Midterm Review. Pick 5 questions you got wrong in the midterm and explain why 2. Write what do you think is your grade so far in the class and why. Write 3 things you think you should do to improve it.
Week 10	<p><u>Reading:</u> Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 9 "Origins of the Natural and Social Order"</p>

Quiz #4 – chapters 8 and 9	
Week 11	<p>Reading: Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 10, “Views of the Human Problem” and Chapter 11, “Theodicy: Encountering Evil”</p> <p>LAST DAY TO DROP COURSE WITH A DR GRADE Written Assignment due by 11:59pm through turnitin.</p> <p>Online activity</p>
Week 12	<p>Reading: Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 11, “Theodicy: Encountering Evil”</p> <p>VETERAN'S DAY- NO CLASS</p>
Week 13	<p>Reading: Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 12, “Ethics: Foundations of Moral Action” and Chapter 13, “Soteriology: Ways and Goals of Salvation and Liberation”</p> <p>: Quiz #5 – Chapters 10, 11, and 12 LAST DAY TO SUBMIT ANY WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS (BESIDES EXTRA CREDIT REPORTS)</p> <p>Online activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read article “Remember when Mother Teresa left Hillary Clinton in stunned silence on the issue of abortion” Answer the questions
Week 14	<p>Reading: Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 14: “Religious Fundamentalism and Secularization”</p> <p>THANKSGIVING- NO CLASS EXTRA CREDIT REPORTS DUE</p>
Week 15	<p>Group presentations</p> <p>Quiz #6 Chapters 13,14 AND 15</p>

Final Exams Week. Please consult FIU's website for finals schedule

- ***Important Note:*** *This calendar can be amended determined by the demands of the course.*