

Religious Studies Department
REL 3308 Studies in World Religions
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

Room #:

Class Days and Hours: MW 11am-11:50am

Course Description:

This is an introductory course to world religions. Since it is an extensive subject, we will be focusing on some of the major religions of our world, examining them from its historical, sociological, anthropological, psychological, and ritualistic practices. Furthermore, we will also learn about religions that are no longer in practice and had influenced some of today's religions. We will analyze the differences and similarities between religions and associate their practices, beliefs, and applications to contemporary issues in our world.

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, a portion is in person and another portion online on Blackboard.

Course Objectives:

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

- Define and discuss basic religious terminology.
- Learn and apply critical thinking skills in the context of religion.
- Appreciate the history, basic teachings, practices, and underlying beliefs and principles of some of the world religions, analyzing them in a critical way and understanding their similitudes and differences.
- Understand what the religious phenomena and religious experience are by utilizing different approaches and theories of religion in order to present a critical analysis.

- Become more aware and understanding of the diversity of religious beliefs in our society and its effects on contemporary and every-day events.
- Challenge his/her 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 Textbooks:

- Hopfe, Lewis and Woodward Mark, *Religions of the World*, twelfth edition. New Jersey, Pearson Education, 2011.
ISBN-10: 0-205-15860-9
ISBN-13: 978-0-205-15860-7
- **Note:** It is not required to purchase MyReligionLab with your textbook.

Assignments:

- **Ten (10) ten-question quizzes- lowest score to be dropped-** on the reading material and class lectures, including multiple choice and true or false questions. These quizzes will be taken on Blackboard
- **Midterm and Final Exams.**
 - **Midterm:** will cover the first half of the semester and will include multiple choice, true and false, and matching questions.
 - **Final:** will cover from second half of the semester and will include multiple choice, true and false, and matching questions.
- **Semester Project:** The project must have the following components: Proposal, Bibliography and Draft, and an essay.
- For this project students will have to choose a topic, concept, ritual, myth, or custom practice in two different religions and compare and contrast them. For example, you can compare and contrast the Inca's myth of creation with the creation myth of the Bible. You will have to use scholarly sources for this assignment. A research session at the library will be set up so each student will learn how to use the resources we have at the university. I do not consider WIKIPIDIA a source nor internet websites.

- **Proposal:** A paragraph describing what you will be comparing and contrasting and why.
 - **Bibliography and Draft (30% of the grade):** Minimum 5 sources, please use either MLA or Chicago style to present them. You will also have to present a draft of your findings (1000-1500 words, without counting Bibliography)
 - **Essay:** You will have to produce an essay of 1500-2000 words presenting all the information researched as well as your personal analysis denoting the differences and similitudes you found on your research. The essay could be in MLA or Chicago Style. Make sure the essay is well structured and written.
 - **Please consult the course calendar for due dates**
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- **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.** All 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.
 - **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:

- (10) Quizzes: 15%
- Midterm: 20%
- Final: 20%

- Research Paper: 20%
- 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:

- All written papers (if necessary) will have to 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 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 3308 Section B-52. 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.

- **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. If necessary, 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 holiday. 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 can be amended determined by the demands of the course.*

REL 3308: Studies in World Religion
FALL 2017
Course Outline and Calendar

Week 1: Introduction and approaches to religion

- **Readings:** Pages 2-9 of Religions of the World by Hopfe and Woodward.
- **Content Covered:**
 - Introduction and course overview
 - Introduction to religion: Definitions, origin of religions, etc.
- **Online activity**
 1. Write 5 things you need to do in order to get an “A” in this course
 2. Watch video on Ancient Religions and answer question

Week 2: Ancient Religions

- **Readings:** Chapter 1 of Religions of the World by Hopfe and Woodward and pages 48 to 59.
- **Content covered:**
 - Ancient Religions
 - Basic religions/ Indigenous sacred ways
 - African Religions
- **Online activity**
 - Read article “Potential contributions of African Religions and answer questions
 - **Quiz #1 – Introduction to religion, Ancient Religions**

Week 3 Other Native Religious ways

- **Readings:** Chapter 2 of Religions of the World by Hopfe and Woodward.
- **Content Covered**
 - Native American traditions/ Amerindian experiences
- **Online activity:**
 - Watch video “Machu Pichu Road to Sky” and answer question
 - **Quiz #2 Indigenous Sacred ways, African Religions, Native American traditions, Amerindian**

Week 4 Eastern Religions

- **Readings:** Chapter 4 of Textbook
- **Content Covered:**

- Hinduism
- **Online activity**
 - Read article on Caste System in Modern India and answer questions
 - Quiz #3 on Hinduism

Week 5 Eastern Religions (Contd.)

- **Readings:** Pages 128-150 of *Religions of the World* by Hopfe and Woodward.
- **Content Covered:** Buddhism
- **Online activity**
 - Watch video "More American Jews converting to Buddhism" and answer questions
- **Topic to be analyzed due – Please submit it on Blackboard by 11:59pm**
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Week 6: Eastern Religions

- **Readings:** pages 116-124 of *Religions of the World* by Hopfe and Woodward and pages 156 to 165
- **Content Covered:**
 - Jainism and Sikhism
- **Online activity due:** none this week Make sure you watch assigned presentation on Sikhism
- **Research class at library. We meet directly there**
- **Quiz #4 on Buddhism**

Week 7 Eastern Religions, and Midterm

- **Readings:** None assigned this week
- **Content Covered:** Daoism and Confucianism
- **Online activity due:** none assigned this week
- **Quiz #5 –Jainism, Sikhism, Daoism, Confucianism**
- **MIDTERM**

Week 8: Judaism

- **Readings:** Chapter 11 of textbook
- **Content Covered:** Judaism
- **Online activity:**
 - Midterm review: Look for 5 questions you got wrong in the midterm exam and explain what is the correct answer and why

Week 9 Judaism

- **Readings:** Chapter 11 of textbook
- **Content Covered:** Christianity
- **Online activity**
Write what you think is your grade so far and why. Write three things you can do to improve it.
- **Sources and outline due by 11:59pm on Blackboard (see guidelines posted under course content)**
- **Quiz #6 on Judaism**

Week 10: Christianity

- **Readings:** Chapter 12 of Textbook
- **Content Covered:** Islam
- **Online activity :** None this week – watch assigned presentation online

Week 11 Christianity/ Islam

- **Readings:** Chapter 13 of Textbook
- **Content Covered:** Islam
- **Online activity**
 - Watch the video on Hajj and describe the rituals that are part of it and what they mean
- **Last day to drop course with DR grade**
- **Quiz 7 on Christianity**

Week 12 Islam

- **Readings:** Chapter 13 of Textbook
- **Content Covered:** Islam
- **Online activity due:** none assigned
- **VETERANS' DAY – UNIVERSITY CLOSED**

Week 13 Contemporary issues/ new religious movements

- **Readings:** None assigned
- **Content Covered:** Cults and Sects, Gender and Religion, Radical Islam
- **Written assignment due by 11:59pm through Blackboard**
- **Online activity**
 - Watch video on radical Islam and answer questions

- **Quiz #8 on Islam**

Week 14 Contemporary issues/ New religious movements

- **Readings:** *Article posted online on violence and religion*
- **Content Covered:** violence and religion, sustainability, and nature spirituality
- **Online activity due:** none assigned
- **Quiz #9: Radical Islam, Cults and Sects, Gender and Religion**
- **Last day to submit any written assignments.**
- **Thanksgiving – University closed**

Week 15 New religious movements

- **Readings:** *none assigned*
- **Content Covered:** Wicca and Baha'i
- **Online activity due:** none assigned
- **Quiz #10: Violence and Religion, Nature spirituality, Wicca, Baha'i**
- **Last day to submit any extra credit reports**

Final week of the semester. Please consult FIU's website for finals

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