Religious Studies Department
REL 3308 Studies in World Religions - HYBRID
Fall 2018
Biscayne Bay Campus

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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays
8:30am to 9:45am and by Appointment
Room #: Academic One 264
Class Days and Hours: MW 11am-11:50am

Why should we care about religion?

Maybe Jesus was a Buddhist monk. Where exactly did your yoga class come from? Why are Native Americans some of the best eco-advocates today? Is Judaism a religion, a culture, or a tribe? It might be good to wonder if religion is a force for good or evil to begin with. Can we still be spiritual without being religious? These are not just entertaining questions but are highly relevant to your personal and professional development in our globalized world. In this interdisciplinary course, we will explore these questions and many more that emerge as we investigate humanity, religion, and the cosmos.

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.

What are the Objectives of the course?

- Demonstrate an understanding of themes, definitions and symbols relating to religion.
- Compare and contrast the key underlying beliefs and principles of the major Eastern, Western, indigenous and shamanic religions.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the evolution and movement of religious beliefs from ancient to contemporary times.
- Evaluate religious truth claims as potential sources of knowledge.
• Demonstrate an increased empathetic awareness of religious diversity and differences.
• Define and discuss basic religious terminology.
• 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.
• Challenge his/her own misconceptions of what religion and its practices are and open his/her mind to new ideas.

What about University Requirements for the Global Learning Objectives?

1. **Global Awareness**: Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the interrelatedness of local, global, international, and intercultural issues, trends, and systems.
   
   **Course Learning Outcome**: Students will demonstrate knowledge of the interrelated dynamics (social-cultural, political, economic, etc.) that shape the actions of multiple figures in diverse cultural contexts.

2. **Global Perspectives**: Students will be able to develop a multi-perspective analysis of local, global, international, and intercultural problems.
   
   **Course Learning Outcome**: Students will be able to analyze the multiple causal forces that shape the perspectives of historical individuals/persons — economic, political, sociological, technological, cultural, etc.

3. **Global Engagement**: Students will be able to demonstrate a willingness to engage in local, global, international, and intercultural problem solving.
   
   **Course Learning Outcome**: Students will demonstrate a willingness to engage in negotiation regarding actions of global import within the context of the class simulation.

How does a hybrid course work?

We will spend 50% of the time dedicated to the course in person, engaging in learning, clarifying concepts, debating, working in groups, and discussing and developing each of the concepts covered in the course.

The other 50% of the time takes place outside the class, whether it is writing papers, watching videos, reading articles, and providing opinions on different topics. My responsibility is to provide you with lots of material and activities for you to apply and put into practice the concepts learned in class and from the readings. Your responsibility is to read the textbook and complete the assignments in a timely manner.
What will help us answer the questions posed in our course?

Required Text: This is the mandatory book for the class, but feel free to read as many articles related to the class as you want and share them with the rest of the class. It is not required to purchase MyReligionLab with your textbook.

How will you and I evaluate your progress?

- Ten (10) ten-question quizzes from which the lowest score will be dropped. The quizzes will be available for 24 hours on Canvas (please consult the calendar for dates) and students will have 10 minutes to complete each quiz. Quizzes will be on the reading material and class lectures. (15% of final grade)

- Midterm and Final Exams.
  - Midterm: will cover the first half of the semester and will include multiple choice and true and false. (15% of final grade)
  - Final: will cover from second half of the semester and will include multiple choice and true and false. (15% of final grade)

- Research Paper: The paper must have the following components: Proposal, Bibliography and Draft (30% of the grade for the paper), and final essay. The proposed topic needs to be approved by the professor, and the Bibliography and Draft as well as the final essay will be graded. For this project students will have to choose a topic, concept, ritual, myth, or custom practiced in two different religions and compare and contrast them. For example, you can compare and contrast the Inca’s myth of creation with one of the creation stories in the Bible. Or the role of a Buddhist monk and Christian Monk. You will have to use scholarly sources for this assignment, no websites or Wikipedia articles will be accepted. A research session at the library will be set up so each student learns how to conduct proper
research and use the resources we have at the university. (20% of final grade)

- **Online activities:** Every week (unless indicated otherwise in the class calendar) you will have to submit an activity and earn points, a total of 100 for all activities. Each activity will become available under “Assignment Dropbox” at the beginning of the day on Friday each week and is due at midnight on the Wednesday after, after which the link for the assignment will no longer be available. All the due dates are listed on the course’s calendar Points will be deducted for poor grammar or typos. (20% of final grade)

- **Attendance and participation:** Attendance to in person class is mandatory, and students are expected to engage in class discussion, after all, we are only meeting half of the time in person. Missing more than 4 classes in the semester will result on losing 80 points for the total of 100 for attendance and participation, the rest will be based on your online reflection participation. **Online reflection:** After finishing each chapter of the book, you will have to submit a reflection via Canvas and a response to someone else’s reflection. Engagement in discussion boards on Canvas is important and will count towards your grade for attendance and participation. (15% of final grade)

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<td>Quizzes</td>
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<td>Midterm</td>
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<td>Final</td>
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<td>Online Activities</td>
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<td>Attendance, Participation, and Online Reflection</td>
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<tr>
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<td>93 and Above</td>
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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 to above average work.
D’s are awarded for barely passing with below average work.
F’s are awarded for unacceptable work.

How will you succeed in this course?

• **Attending and participating in class**: Be ready to be an active learner and participate in class discussions and activities. In order to maximize your learning experience, I ask you that you refrain from using your phone in class or using your computer for other things than taking notes. We will sometimes use the computer or phone for activities, so have them handy.

• **Complete the assigned reading before coming to class**: If you know the material, you will be able to actively participate.

• **Check Canvas at least 5 times a week**. There are many things to do there, such as submitting assignments and participate in discussions, so be active. I will be monitoring your participation. To log into Canvas go to [www.canvas.fiu.edu](http://www.canvas.fiu.edu) and use your Panthersoft credentials.

• **Submit essays on time**. There will be 2 points taken off your final grade for the essay per late day, up to 16 points total. If students don’t submit the essay by the latest for submission date marked on the calendar, the essay won’t be graded and students will receive a zero grade.

• **Submit online activities on time**: Remember the link disappears at 11:59pm on its due date, which is always a Wednesday, so make sure you complete the activity before the deadline, otherwise you will not receive any points for it.

• **Take Quizzes and tests on time**: If you miss a quiz, you will lose the points the quiz is worth. And I understand things happen, so if you let me know in advanced you won’t be able to take a quiz, I will re-schedule it for you. However, there will be no make-up dates for the final exam.

• **Extra Credit**. Sometimes some students may need an extra help, and it usually involves attending a special lecture and writing a summary and analysis. 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 Canvas.
• **Using FIU's resources to help you.** Click on the links below to access information
  
  o **Center for Excellence in Writing:** To help you draft, revise, or polish any written work.
  
  o **Center for Academic Success:** To help you with reading skills, study techniques, and grammar.

• **Be open minded and have fun!**

**What are the school policies for this course?**

_This is a Gordon Rule_ course and you must attain at least a C to receive any credit as a Gordon rule 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:** Plagiarism 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](http://www.fiu.edu/~oabp/misconductweb/2codeofacainteg.htm)

The expectation is that students will submit their own original work. Previously Submitted Coursework will not be admitted.

To clarify what constitutes plagiarism for this university. Offenders will receive an “F” on the paper.

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 students' work.

**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/](http://onestop.fiu.edu/academic-calendar/)

**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.
Week 1 August 20th to 24th: Introduction and approaches to religion

- **Readings**: Pages 2-8 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 due 8/29:
    1. Answer the Questionnaire on the syllabus
    2. Watch video on Ancient Religions and answer questions

Week 2 August 27th to August 31st: Ancient Religions

- **Readings**: Chapter 3 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
  - 8/28: Quiz #1 – Basic concepts and definitions, Ancient Religions
- **Online activity due 9/5**:
  - Watch class on Amerindians and Native Americans and answer questions

Week 3 September 3rd to 7th: Other Native Religious ways

- **Readings**: Chapter 2 of *Religions of the World* by Hopfe and Woodward.
- **Content Covered**
  - Native American traditions/ Amerindian experiences
- 9/5 Labor Day - no class
- 9/6: Quiz #2 Indigenous Sacred ways, African Religions, Native American traditions, Amerindian
- **Online activity due 9/12**:
  - Watch video “Machu Pichu Road to Sky” and answer question

Week 4 September 10th-14th Eastern Religions

- **Readings**: Chapter 4 in Hinduism in the Textbook
- **Content Covered**
9/10: Research class at the library
9/12: Topic to be submitted by 11:59pm. Read feedback for approval
Online activity due 9/19:
  - Watch video around the world in 80 faiths, the Far East and answer questions

Week 5 September 17th-21st: Eastern Religions (Contd.)

- **Readings:** Chapter 4 of Textbook (finish) and Chapter 6 on Buddhism
- **Content Covered:** Hinduism/ Buddhism
- 9/19: No in person class. Watch class on Hinduism online and read chapter 6 and post a question, observation, etc. on the reading by the end of the day
- **Online activity due 9/26:**
  - Watch video around the world in 80 faiths, the Indian Subcontinent (up to Jainism) and answer questions

Week 6 September 24th-28th: Eastern Religions

- **Readings:** Chapter 6 on Buddhism
- **Content Covered:**
  - Buddhism
- 9/25: Quiz #3: Hinduism
- **Online activity due 10/3:**
  - Watch class on Daoism and answer questions

Week 7 October 1st to 5th: Eastern Religions

- **Readings:** Chapter 5 on Jainism
- **Content Covered:** Buddhism/ Jainism
- 10/2: Quiz #4 on Buddhism
- 10/4: Quiz #5 on Jainism
- **Online activity:** None. Study for the midterm

Week 8 October 8th-12th: Chinese Religions, and Midterm

- **Readings:** Pages 134-152 on the textbook
- **Content Covered:** Confucianism
- 10/10: Midterm Exam
- **Online activity due October 17th:**
  - Midterm review: Look for 5 questions you got wrong in the midterm exam and explain what the correct answer is and why
Week 9 October 15th-19th: Judaism

- **Readings:** Chapter 10 of textbook
- **Content Covered:** Judaism
- **10/18:** *Sources and outline due by 11:59pm on Canvas* (see guidelines posted under course content)
- **Online activity due 10/24:**
  - Write what you think is your grade so far and why. Write three things you can do to improve it.

Week 10 October 22nd-26th: Judaism

- **Readings:** Chapter 10 of Textbook
- **Content Covered:** Judaism
- **10/25:** *Quiz #6 on Judaism*
- **Online activity due 11/1:**
  - Watch presentation on Christianity online and answer questions

Week 11 October 29th to November 2nd: Christianity

- **Readings:** Chapter 11 of Textbook
- **Content Covered:** Christianity
- **10/30:** *Last day to drop course with DR grade*
- **Online activity due 11/7:**
  - Watch the video on Hajj and describe the rituals that are part of it and what they mean

Week 12 November 6th-10th: Christianity/Islam

- **Readings:** Chapter 12 of Textbook
- **Content Covered:** Christianity/ Islam
- **11/6:** *Quiz 7 on Christianity*
- **11/8:** *Written assignment due by 11:59pm through Canvas*
- **Online activity due 11/14:**
  - Watch video on radical Islam and answer questions

Week 13 November 12th-16th: Islam/ Wicca/ Baha’i

- **Readings:** Chapter 12 (finish) and chapter 13
- **Content Covered:** Islam
- **Online activity due 11/21:**
  - Watch class on Wicca and Baha’i on Canvas and answer questions
• 11/15: Quiz #8 on Islam

Week 14 November 19th-23rd: Contemporary issues

• **Readings:** Article posted online on violence and religion  
• **Content Covered:** violence and religion  
• **11/21:** Last day to submit any written assignment  
• **Online activity due:** none assigned. Happy Thanksgiving!!  
• **11/23:** Thanksgiving – University closed

Week 15 November 26th to November 30th: New religious movements

• **Readings:** none assigned  
• **Content Covered:** Cults and sects  
• **11/26:** Wicca and Baha’i  
• **11/27:** Quiz #10: Violence and religion, Cults and Sects  
• **Online activity due:** none assigned, study for final exam

December 3rd: 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.