**REL 3308 Studies in World Religions**  
**Spring 2019 Learning Guide**  
**Florida International University**

**Instructor:** Dr. Jayne A. Klein  
**Contact:** martinj@fiu.edu or Canvas Inbox

**When and Where do we meet?**

Class discussions: Tuesday/Thursday 12:30 – 1:45 p.m. in Glenn Hubert Library, Rm. 255  
Office Hours: TBA and by appointment

**Why Should I 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? Is God dead? God may be alive, but is God a woman? Might it 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 rather, they 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.

**How can this course help you advance in your career?**

You do not need to be personally religious, majoring in Religious Studies, or in a field within humanities to benefit from this course. Whatever your academic field is, this course will train you to make important connections between your career and the world of the sacred and the
profane. You will be able to explore the variety of religious expressions and frameworks that shape societies around the world, and the role religion plays in local and international affairs.

Religious literacy will greatly impact our ability to understand personal and social motivations behind financial decisions, political engagement, science and technological advancement, environmental and migration policies, family planning, diet and food production, gender relations, war and terrorist attacks, and more. Whether you notice or not, religion is a universal phenomenon that continues to transform and be transformed by our many, diverse societies.

Our approach is interdisciplinary, which means you will be critically reflecting from many fields of study, such as philosophy, psychology, cultural studies, history, economics, gender studies, among others. This enhances your ability to think critically, communicate effectively, respond sensitively, collaborate with others and creatively resolve conflict.

How will you succeed in this course?

COURSE BREAKDOWN/GRADING

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<tr>
<th>Course Requirements</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflection Papers</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Multiple Choice Quizzes</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>*Average will be calculated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm (Exam 1)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Final (Exam 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Presentations</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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Required Text

Anthology of World Religions: Sacred Texts and Contemporary Perspectives
ISBN-10: 0195332369
* Other reading materials will be provided by the instructor.

Goals

● Analyze and interpret the universal dimensions of the sacred.
● Discover the relevance and practice of religion in everyday life.
● Recognize the academic impact of religion as an interdisciplinary field.
● Identify the role of religion as a transformational force for the self and society.
● Develop a critical and open-minded approach to religion that questions assumptions.
● Explore religion as a platform that increases civic engagement and global awareness.

Objectives

1. Understanding the complexity of the definitions of religion and secularization.
2. Recognize the strength of utilizing different approaches, theories, and methodologies to better understand the universal forms of religious experience and expression such as sacred symbols, rituals, myths, scriptures, ethics, and communities.
3. Identify religious themes and patterns that shape our everyday life.
4. Analyze a wide range of religious beliefs and practices as an avenue for better understanding religion in our individual, cultural, economic, and political contexts.
5. Critically engage the issue of religious diversity and dialogue in national and international context.
6. Reflect upon and enhance student’s potential for moral agency and compassion.
Gordon Rule Requirement

As this is a Gordon Rule course, students will be required to write one Research/Term paper and three Reflection papers. The research paper will be at least 1500-2000 words and will be submitted through Turnitin. All source material must be cited correctly using MLA or APA style, and long quotes should be avoided. Please be aware that papers with an originality score of over 35% similarity will be subject to additional scrutiny and may incur additional penalties, up to and including receiving an F (0 points). The reflection papers will each be composed of 500-700 words.

Global Learning Objectives

As a Global Learning course, students will be meet the following objectives through text readings, assignments, and class discussions:
1. Students will be able to analyze topics in the field of religious studies from multiple perspectives.
2. Students will be able to assess how global issues and trends are interrelated with the development and practice of religions.
3. Students will be able to demonstrate willingness to think creatively about religious issues in the contemporary world.

Plagiarism

Do you know what plagiarism is? Avoid the pitfalls of plagiarism by asking me, a representative from the writing center or our library to explain. Many students end up plagiarizing material because they do not know what it entails. In short, 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 if you need further clarification. Offenders will receive a grade of F (0 points) for the plagiarized assignment, and possibly for the course. Please be aware: Previously submitted papers are not allowed, even if it is your own work and even if you are retaking this class. You may not “reuse” papers.

GRADING SCALE

This course fulfills the Gordon Rule requirement; a “C” or better must be earned to receive credit for this course.

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95 or above</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>83 - 86</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>70 - 76</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87 - 89</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 - 79</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>59 or less</td>
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*NOTE: The professor reserves the right to modify the course syllabus at any time. Students will receive verbal and/or written notification of any modifications, should they be made.

Class and Reading/Assignment Schedule

Week beginning Tuesday, August 27 (Week #1)

Introduction to the course: course overview; review of course syllabus; defining religion and theories on the origin of religion.

After reading the list of definitions/assessments of the term “religion” (see Canvas Announcements), choose two or three to discuss in class. Your discussion should include an explanation of WHY you find them of interest and how they are closest to – or furthest from – what you believe.
Assignment – Reflection #1: Watch the film, Zeitgeist, part one, “On Religion” (the first 41 minutes of film) – the link for it is: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GNXTEMpnb8

Write a 1-2 page reflection paper answering the following questions: (1) Which of the theories on the origin of religion does the film express the best? (2) How did watching the film make you feel? What is the film’s main theme? Do you agree or disagree with its point of view? Why?

Due date: Tuesday, September 3.

Reading Assignment: Anthology of World Religions, Chapters 1 & 2

Week beginning Tuesday, September 3 (Week #2)

Indigenous African Religions

Reading Assignment: Anthology of World Religions, Chapter 2; Power Points on Papal Bulls and the Transatlantic Slave Trade

Week beginning Tuesday, September 10 (Week #3)

The Transatlantic Slave Trade and the Middle Passage – lecture and discussion

Tuesday, September 10 – Group Presentation: Discuss what you have learned about the indigenous Native American religions and compare them to the African religions

Thursday, September 12 – Quiz #1

Reading Assignment: Anthology of World Religions, Chapter 3 (Hinduism)

Week beginning Tuesday, September 17 (Week #4)

Hinduism – lecture and discussion

Week beginning Tuesday, September 24 (Week #5)

Hinduism – continued

Week beginning Tuesday, October 1 (Week #6)

Hinduism (continued)

Assignment – Reflection #2 – Film: Mystic India – due date Thursday, October 3 – see Canvas Announcements for details
Thursday, October 3 – Quiz #2 (Hinduism)

**Reading Assignment:** Anthology, Chapter 4 (Jainism) and Chapter 5 (Buddhism)

Week beginning Tuesday, October 8 (Week #7)

**Tuesday, October 8 – Group presentation -- Jainism** (Chapter 4 in text)

Introduction to Buddhism and the Life of the Buddha

**Film:** Excerpts from film *Little Buddha*

Week beginning Tuesday, October 15 (Week #8)

Buddhism (continued)

**Film:** *Compassion in Exile: The Story of the 14th Dalai Lama*

**Reading Assignment:** Anthology, Chapters 7 (Confucianism) and 8 (Daoism)

Week beginning Tuesday, October 22 (Week #9)

Buddhism (continued)

**Tuesday, October 22 – Quiz #3** (Buddhism)

Introduction to Chinese Religions (Confucianism and Daoism)

**Thursday, October 24 – Group Presentation** – Confucianism

**Reading Assignment:** Chapter 11 (Judaism)

Week beginning Tuesday, October 29 (Week #10)

**Tuesday, October 29 – Midterm Exam**

Introduction to Judaism (lecture & discussion)

**Film:** *A History of God, Part I*

Week beginning Tuesday, November 5 (Week #11)

Judaism (lecture & discussion continued)

**Research Paper is due on Thursday, November 7**
Reflection #3 – Film: The Mystery of the Jews – due date Tuesday, November 12 – see Canvas Announcements for details

Reading Assignment: Anthology, Chapter 13 (Islam)

Week beginning Tuesday, November 12 (Week #12)

Judaism (continued)

Thursday, November 14 – Quiz #4 (Judaism)

Islam: Introduction to Islam and the Life of Muhammad

Film: A History of God, Part 3

Week beginning Tuesday, November 19 (Week #13)

Islam (continued)

Thursday, November 21 – Quiz #5 (Islam)

Reading Assignment: Anthology, Chapter 12 (Christianity)

Week beginning Tuesday, November 26 (Week #14)

Introduction to Christianity and the Life of Jesus

Film: A History of God, Part 2

Thursday, November 28 – Thanksgiving Day – University closed

Week beginning Tuesday, December 3 (Week #15)

Christianity (lecture and discussion)

Thursday, December 5 – Quiz #6 (Christianity)

Week #16 – Final exam week – no regular classes

Final exam – Tuesday, December 10 – 12:00-2:00 p.m.