REL 2011 Introduction to Religion U07
Spring 2020 Syllabus

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

“He who knows one [religion], knows none”

— Max Müller

“After the terrors of Verdun, after the traumas of the Holocaust, Hiroshima, and the gulags, to
speak of God is an insult unless we speak in a new way...God must die so that God might be
reborn. Anatheistically. How this might happen is a matter of interpretation. A question of belief
or disbelief—or some middle space between”

— Richard Kearney

When and Where do we meet?
Class discussions:  M, W, F 10-10:50 AM, Viertes Haus 131
Office Hours:  M, W, F After 2-4 PM. By appointment | DM 301
  • Email or talk to me after class to set up a meeting or a chat.
Coaching sessions:  By appointment | MWF —Flexible hours after 2 PM
  • Note: You must meet with me at least once during the semester.

Why Should I Care about Religion?
Why do bad things happen to good people? Is religion irrelevant in our fast-paced technological
world? Does the sacred look the same across traditions? How can the study of religion help us
understand current events? Is religion a creative or destructive force? How does the study of
religion relate to your major? These are just some of the questions that we will explore
throughout the semester.
This course is interested in examining the different expressions, practices, and interpretations of religion from an interdisciplinary perspective. Although no particular tradition will be favored, materials from several traditions will be chosen to exemplify thematic topics in the Sacred experience. We will also focus on the tenets of religions, dispelling common misconceptions and assumptions, and looking into new practices among the post-denominational generation.

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<tr>
<th>Course Requirements</th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
<th>Points for Each</th>
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<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>120</td>
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<td>Group Presentation</td>
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<td>50</td>
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<td>Attendance and participation</td>
<td>42-8</td>
<td>2-10</td>
<td>170</td>
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<td>Short papers</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<td>77-79</td>
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How will you succeed in this course?

Ask/Participate:

Learning is a complex process, but what is certain is that those who do the teaching or share their ideas with others are the ones who do the learning. Prepare and be ready to be involved in in-class and online discussions. There will be various majors being represented in the class, which will make conversations more dynamic and enriching.

Reach out:
This may be a course that is very different from other classes, with complex interdisciplinary theories and fieldwork assignments. To maximize your learning experience, I have set aside coaching sessions to help you address challenges with content and/or writing, presenting, or any other project. I will meet with you or respond to your email within 24 hours (except for the weekends). You should let me know what projects' ideas are challenging so that we may work together to help you learn.

Take risks:
Religion is commonly considered a taboo topic, but our classroom is a safe space for honest and controversial debate and conversation. You will be rewarded for going out on a limb and proposing your critical views as long as you support your arguments in a transparent manner.

Have fun: whatever we enjoy we remember.

Required Text


* Other reading materials will be provided by the instructor.

Web Resources

• Pew Research, Religion and Public Life Project
  Research and extensive U.S. religious landscape survey data.
  http://religions.pewforum.org/reports

• Religious Congregations & Membership Study
  Data files on hundreds of religion surveys and provides the ability to map U.S. congregation data for individual cities, states, and zip codes. http://www.thearda.com/rcms2010/

• Gallup Poll Topics and Trends
  Provides survey data and reports on a number of religion trends in the United States.
  http://www.gallup.com/poll/1690/Religion.aspx

• Hartford Institute for Religion Research
  Comprehensive list of online religion data resources.
  http://hirr.hartsem.edu/sociology/research_datasets.html
• **The Tanenbaum Center**
Resources including etiquette guides for addressing religious leaders and entering houses of worship.
http://www.tanenbaum.org

• **University of Southern California Center for Religion and Civic Culture**
Research / publications on religious trends in the U.S.
http://crcc.usc.edu

**Recommended texts:**
- *God Is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions That Run the World and Why Their Differences Matter* by Stephen Prothero
- *The Great Transformation* by Karen Armstrong
- *Anatheism: God after God* by Richard Kearney

**Ask me for other recommended material:** I can help you explore the intersection between religion and your field/s of interest such as politics, art, business, environmentalism, gender studies, etc.

**How will your progress be evaluated?**

**Examinations (30%)**
There will be a midterm and a final exam. Each test will consist of 50 multiple choice/ true and false/ matching questions to be completed in class. See the dates in the schedule below.

- Midterm – Modules 1-6
- Final – Modules 7-12

**Quizzes – Online (5%)**
There will be 12 quizzes online to help you study the material and prepare you for the midterm and final exams. Each module will have an available online quiz with 15 questions. The questions for the midterm and final exams will be drawn from the quizzes. Quizzes will open Tuesdays and close on Sundays.

- You will have two chances to take each quiz
• You will complete 15 questions in 45 min
• The quiz with the lowest grade will be dropped

Assignments (45%)

There are three written projects: Two short papers and a final paper. Essays will be turned into Turnitin.com via Assignments in Canvas. It is not necessary to create a separate Turnitin account. Keep electronic and paper copies of all written work. For your protection, keep a copy of your Turnitin.com electronic receipt until you have received your final grade for the course.

• **Short Paper #1 – Religions and Social Justice Movements (12.5%)**
• **Short Paper #2 – Debating with the New Atheism Movement (12.5%)**
• **Paper #3- Final Report (20%)**: Be creative and propose your topic. By the end of the semester, you will be equipped with a variety of theories and topics from which to choose. I recommend finding a topic that is related to your major. See the prompts and detailed instructions in Canvas.

  **Part A: (10 points)** Choose your topic from the list provided on Canvas.
  • Thesis statement.
  • Paper outline.
  • Tentative bibliography.

  **Part B: (90 points):** Submit final report

**Technicalities**

• 1200-1500 words, double-spaced.
• 12-size font and cited correctly- Use MLA style.
• Use Turnitin to submit through Canvas.
• **Five academic sources** a minimum of five academic sources (see instructor or librarian/writing center if not sure about what an academic source is).
  o Find relevant sources at the end of each chapter in our Livingston textbook.
  o Use our FIU library.
  o Don’t use Wikipedia.
• Late papers may be accepted. Check with the instructor as soon as you foresee a problem.
• **Resources:**
  - **Writing Center**
    - https://writingcenter.fiu.edu
  - **FIU Library**
    - https://library.fiu.edu
  - Ask me about coaching sessions.

**Attendance/ Participation (10%)**
You are expected to be present in class and engage in the weekly in-person and online sessions. This includes attendance and posting weekly questions on the reading/media material.

- Your phone is required for in-class online poll participation.
- If you do not have a smartphone, you may submit your attendance on paper.

**Discussion Questions**
Students must post a question about the readings on the Canvas discussion board. Your question must be posted by Thursday at 6 pm. Questions must be well-written and open-ended.

Example from previous students:

1. In the book it talks about how some sacred books such as the Holy Bible, can suffer from interpretations and translations. It talks about the Bible that was originally in Greek and then had to be interpreted and translated to different versions, and these versions may carry inconsistencies when compared to the real Hebraic version. Therefore, my question is: **How do we know if a sacred book is the very accurate (in other words, how do we know if the version we have is faithful to the original version), how do we know that? Is there any step or measurements we can take?** (Victor)

2. In chapter one, the book explains reasons as to why humans tend to be religious as well as reasons for why we should study it. I agree that learning about these things is key to being well informed and allows one to have a stance on the topic but, **how do we apply these concepts to someone who "is not religious?"** For me, I was raised Catholic but never really had an interest in learning or practicing the religion so over time my family stopped asking me to attend church with them, etc. The technical side of religion is interesting, but the belief part is hard to grasp when everything seems so far-fetched and radical at times?
Group Presentation (10%)

Students will sign up for a group during the first week of classes. If you don't sign up, you will be assigned one. Groups will organize and put together a lecture based on the week's theme using visual aids such as PowerPoint, Prezi, or similar technology. Students will present once with their respective groups during the semester. The list with group members and their emails will be posted on Canvas. Confirm your topic with the instruction before your presentation date

- Presentations are worth 50 points
- Length of presentation 3-5 minutes per student
- Each student should present their topic and current event
- One Kahoot activity per group. Formulate five questions

1) **Topic and case study (3-4 min):** Each student must choose a case study/example that applies the theory studied during that week of class. Every student has three to five minutes to present their case.

   **Example:** If you present the chapter on “The Sacred and the Holy,” you must choose the theory proposed by Mircea Eliade or Rudolf Otto.
   - Suppose you choose Eliade’s theory on sacred space or time, first, you define the theory, second, you identify an example of what could be considered a sacred place or time. You could explore the sacrality of places like Mecca, Jerusalem, or the White House.

2) **Current event (1 min):** Find a recent event related to your topic. This information can be obtained from various sources included in the sites I recommend on the blog.

   - The current event doesn’t necessarily have to be related to your specific topic. Just make sure to explain how the recent event is related to your chapter.

3) **Group Quiz:** Prepare a Kahoot with five questions to quiz your peers on the material presented.

Extra Credit

Blog: What you didn’t learn in Religion Class

This is our class blog. This blog is a public space for us to connect with each other and the world. Every student will receive an invitation to become an author and actively participate.
Blog Editors

Editors will receive up to 10 points toward the objective examination with the lowest grade.

Your contribution as an editor:

1. Post one story per week. This can be any day of the week. You will post this under the “Thinktank” section of “REL 2011.”
   a. You will receive an invitation from WordPress. Make sure to accept it and follow the steps to create your account. Use your name and last name as your username to receive credit for your participation.
   b. Find a story (print, audio, video) that is relevant to the course. The current event can be related to arts, politics, economics, food, fashion, music, literature, etc.
   c. In one paragraph of about 200-250 words, explain in your words how this event is “religious” or connected to religious studies. Use the theories and vocabulary of the class/readings to elaborate on this connection.

• If you are still unsure about how to access the blog and post, see me.

More extra credit opportunities will be available throughout the semester.

Class Schedule (Subject to Change)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments – See Canvas</th>
<th>Due: See Canvas</th>
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</table>
| 1    | August 24-30 | **Introduction: What is religion?**  
M 8/24  
- Why Study Religion?  
W 8/26:  
- Ch 1 Livingston  
- Current Event TBA  
F 8/28  
- Ch 1 Prothero  
- Pew Studies:  
- Religious landscape in America.  
- How religious is your state? |  
• Sign up for group presentations  
• Quiz #1  
• Discussion question #1 |
| 2    | August 31- September 6 | **Ways of Studying Religion**  
M 8/31  
- Ch 2 Livingston  
W 9/2:  
- Prothero, “The Fall (How we Forgot)?”  
F 9/4  
- TBA – See Canvas  
- Current Event TBA |  
• Quiz #2 |
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<td>September 7-13</td>
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<td>No Class- Labor Day</td>
<td>Ch 3 Livingston</td>
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<td>F 9/11</td>
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<td>Myth, and</td>
<td>W 9/16:</td>
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<td>Joseph Campbell on “The Power of Myth”</td>
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<td>Doctrine</td>
<td>F 9/18</td>
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<td>Part 1- Paper #1 Religion and Social Justice (Choose your topic) (Sunday 6 PM)</td>
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<td>Prothero “Eden (What we Once Knew)”</td>
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<td>E. Clark and H. Richardson “Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the Woman’s Bible, Selections of the Woman’s Bible” (Canvas)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>October 12-18</td>
<td>Deity: Concepts of the Divine</td>
<td>M 10/12</td>
<td>Ch 8 Livingston</td>
<td>TBA – See Canvas</td>
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<td>F 10/16</td>
<td>Reuther, “Sexism and God-Language” In Weaving the Visions (Canvas)</td>
<td>“Selections from the inclusive language lectionary” in Weaving the Visions (Canvas)</td>
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<td>Cosmogony: Origins of the Natural and Social Order</td>
<td>M 10/19</td>
<td>Ch 9 Livingston</td>
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<td>Tribble, “Eve and Adam: Genesis 2-3 Reread” In Womanspirit Rising, (Canvas)</td>
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<td>The Human Problem</td>
<td>M 10/26</td>
<td>Ch 10 Livingston</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>The Problem of Evil</td>
<td>M 11/2</td>
<td>Ch 11 Livingston</td>
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<td>Group The Human Problem (Friday)</td>
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<td>F 11/6</td>
<td>Watch “God on Trial” on Canvas</td>
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<td>Discussion Question #6</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>November 9-15</td>
<td>The Problem of Evil</td>
<td>M 11/9</td>
<td>Read excerpts from the Book of Job (Canvas).</td>
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### Goals of the course
- 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.
- Investigate the potential 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 of the course
1. Understanding the complexity of the definitions of religion and secularization.
2. Dissect 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 a better understanding of religion in our individual, cultural, economic, and political contexts.

5. Recognize the strength of utilizing different approaches, theories, and methodologies to better understand the study of religion.

6. Evaluate the interrelationship between the student’s own and other’s religious views to avoid uninformed assumptions.

7. Inspire students to formulate their own religious beliefs or philosophies of life.

8. Develop college-level academic writing and communication skills.

9. Understand and discuss the major contemporary theoretical approaches to religious truth claims and meaning-making practices.

10. Foster creativity and self-confidence in a communal setting.

11. Better understand how an individual’s identity and outlook are shaped by religious influences.

12. Critically engage the issue of religious diversity and dialogue in national and international contexts.

13. 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 a minimum of two major assignments. Each paper will be at least 1500-2000 words and will be submitted through Turnitin. All source material must be cited correctly using MLA 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).

**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.

DIRECTORY OF HOUSES OF WORSHIP IN MIAMI

RELIGIOUS SITES OF SOUTH FLORIDA
http://pluralism.org/profiles/

A reminder to all students – the site visit report must be done in a religious tradition that is not the student’s own. I strongly recommend starting your interview and fieldwork early, and that you attend at least 2 times to have a successful report.

ISLAMIC: the times to go are Fridays and Sundays at 1:30 p.m. Female students can bring a scarf with them if they don’t want to stand out, but it is not required.

- Miami Gardens Mosque (Suni) 4305 N.W. 183 street Miami, Florida 33055
- 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
- Islamic School of Miami Masjid al-Noor Sunni) 11699 SW 147 Ave Miami, FL 33196 (305) 408-0400
- Tasnim Uddin, Principal of School
  Friday: 1:30 pm, Islam School on Sundays: 10am-12pm (behind the Exxon gas station)
- Islamic Jafferia Association Imambara (Shia) 10554 N.W. 132nd Street Hialeah Gardens, Florida 33016
  (305) 557-6835 http://www.ijamiami.org/
- Muhammad's Mosque # 29 (Nation of Islam) 5660 N.W. 7th Ave. Miami, Florida
  305-756-9136

BAHAI
• FIU Bahai Club 305-436-2490
• Bahai Faith (South) 9300 S. Dixie Hwy. Miami, Florida 305-570-8886
• Bahai Faith (North) 4365 Rock Island Rd. Ft. Lauderdale (North of Commercial) 954-524-4084

BUDDHIST

• (Nichiren Buddhist) Sokka Gakkai International Miami Community Center 20000 S.W. 36th St. Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33332 954-349-5200
• Avalokitesvara Buddhist Study Center (Buddhist) 7550 S.W. 82nd Court Miami, Florida 33143 305-271-6361 /267-8000
• International Zen Institute of Florida (Buddhist) Dharma House 3860 Crawford Avenue Miami, Florida 33133, 305-448-8969
• Wat Buddhharangsi Temple (Thai, Buddhist) 15200 S.W., 240th Street Homestead, Florida 305-245-2702
• Amida Temple ("Pure Land" Buddhist) c/o Kuang-Hsi Wu 12815 S.W. 119 Terrace Miami, Florida 33186 305-385-2866
• International Dharma Center (Buddhist) P.O. Box 141728 Coral Gables, Florida 33114-1728
• 305-267-8000 (Ileana Davis) Kagyu Shedrup Chöling (Tibetan Buddhist)
• 1905 Monroe Street Hollywood, Florida 33020 954-920-1346

Indian Religions: Plan to attend Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m.

Hinduism

• Shiva Vishnu Temple 5661 Dykes Rd. (S.W. 160th Ave) Pembroke Pines (Davie) 954-689-0471 webmaster@shivavishnu.org
• (I-75 north, exit at Sheridan, go west to Dykes Road, then go north for about a mile, temple on the left)
• The South Florida Hindu Temple 13010 Griffin Road Davie, Florida 954-438-3675 /info@sfht.org
• Hare Krishna Temple 3220 Virginia St. Coconut Grove, Florida 305-442-7218 SIKH: Plan to attend Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m.

Sikh

Society of Florida 16000 Sterling Rd. Pembroke Pines, Florida 954-680-0221 (Same directions as to Shiva Hindu Temple, but closer to Sheridan on Dykes Road) JAIN

Jain
Center of South Florida
1960 N. Commerce Parkway #11 Weston, FL 33326
Here is Direction Link for Jain center. http://jaincentersfl.com/direction.html

JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN

**Synagogues:** Friday evenings, near Sundown; and Saturday mornings, 8:00 a.m. only.  **Christian churches:** 11:00 a.m. morning service. Consult Yellow Pages for synagogue or church nearest where you live.

Students are encouraged to do detective work and find representatives of the other major world religions in Miami or the South Florida area: Taoism, Confucianism (Chinese), Shinto (Japanese), and Zoroastrianism (Persian/Iranian, and mostly in Bombay, India).