

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

REL 2011: Introduction to Religion; Section UHE

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|-----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Instructor: | Thomas Norris | Phone: | (305) 348-2186 |
| Class Times: | Thursdays, 8:00-9:15 AM | Hybrid/Remote Zoom Classroom | |
| Semester: Fall | August 23-December 4, 2021 | Office Hours: | By Appointment |
| Classroom: | DM 193 | Email: | Only use Canvas course email |

All of Creation is with the Living.

All of Creation can Feel the Tender Kiss.

All of Creation is Learning.

All of Creation Learns of Beauty.

We are Evolving Beings.

In a sacred manner

I live.

To the heavens

I gazed.

My horses

Are many.

Lakota Song

Course Description and Purpose

This hybrid **Gordon Rule course** introduces students to the academic study of religion and explores several of the major Eastern and Western religious traditions, both ancient and contemporary, to discover beliefs, patterns, themes, methods, practices, rituals, and symbols that shed light on the overall meaning of religion within the context of human existence. This interdisciplinary exploration delves into the various dimensions of the nature of the sacred and religion, while considering historical, psychological, sociological, anthropological, archeological, philosophical, socio-economic, and theological perspectives.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to do the following:

1. Analyze how religion has influenced every culture throughout history, including their own
2. Discover how religion has played a role in the student's own life
3. Determine how religion affects global affairs as well as local affairs
4. Recognize how religions develop and evolve, both ancient and modern
5. Identify basic, underlying principles present in all religions
6. Embrace a more empathetic awareness of the religious diversity in our world
7. Compare and contrast the major religious traditions, both ancient and modern
8. Apply the course knowledge to an ethnographic field site visit to a religious site and worship service unfamiliar to the student
9. Correlate economic, sociological, anthropological, archeological, psychological, scientific, historical and theological principles in studying religions
10. Develop a personal learning process and plan required for his/her success in this religious studies course

Important Information

Before starting this course, please review the following pages:

- Policies
- Technical Requirements and Skills
- Accessibility and Accommodation
- Academic Misconduct Statement
- [Academic Integrity Resources](#)

Course Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Proctored Exam Policy

All quizzes and exams are online, so there are no proctored exams for this course.

Textbook and Course Materials

Anatomy of the Sacred (Required)

James C. Livingston

Pearson, 6th edition, 2009

ISBN-13: 978-0-13-600380-9

You may purchase your textbook online at the [FIU Bookstore](#).

The First Muslim: The Story of Muhammad (Required)

Lesley Hazleton

Riverhead Books, 1st edition, 2014

ISBN-13: 978-1594632303

You may purchase your textbook online at the [FIU Bookstore](#).

MLA Handbook (Recommended)

The Modern Language Association of America

MLA, 8th edition, 2016

ISBN-13: 978-1603292627

Expectations of this Course

This is a hybrid course, which means part of the course work will be conducted online and part in the classroom. Expectations for performance in a hybrid online course are the same for a traditional course. In fact, hybrid online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills which can make these courses more demanding for some students.

- Course Communication - how to contact your professor
 - Communication in this course will take place via the Inbox. Check out the [Canvas Conversations Tutorial](#) to learn how to communicate with your instructor and peers using Announcements, Discussions, and the Inbox.
- Respect, Courtesy, and Communication

- It is the student's responsibility to be attentive, respectful, keep up with the work, and hand in assignments on time.
- **Cell phones** must be turned off during class. There will be no texting or leaving the Zoom class to take a telephone call.
- There is no surfing or **social media** on computers in the Zoom class! Computers are only used for taking notes!
- If a student is having any difficulties with the assignments, readings, papers, tests, punctuality, attendance, or medical issues, they should speak to the professor before it becomes a problem. **Good communication** will always lead to a **successful resolution of the issue**.
- **Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism**
 - Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the *Student Handbook*.
 - **Plagiarism** is the theft of someone else's intellectual property: their ideas, theories, concepts, opinions, or words. It consists of the **unattributed** (no reference citation) quotation of the exact words of a published text, or the **unattributed** borrowing of original ideas by paraphrase from a published text. On written papers for which the student employs information gathered from books, articles or oral sources, each direct quotation, as well as ideas and facts that are not generally known to the public at large, must be attributed to its author by means of the appropriate MLA citation procedure. Only widely known facts, or thoughts and observations original to the student do not require citations.
 - You may not submit a paper that you have submitted for another class or one that you submitted previously for this course. **All work is required to be fresh, original and new.**
 - Student papers with extensive quotations from sources mechanically inserted (cut and paste) into the paper for the sake of padding or bulk will not be accepted.
 - Less is better than more when it comes to quotations. You should only quote if it is essential to your point or the quote is exceptionally powerful and succinct. In college, you must learn to paraphrase. That means putting the author's words and ideas into your own words. Since it still is the author's idea, opinion, comment or theory simply restated in your own words, it still needs to be cited.
 - Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will cause the guilty student to be reported to the Office of Academic Affairs and possibly fail the class. Whenever a student is unsure as to what constitutes plagiarism, they are encouraged to consult their professor.
- Behavioral Misconduct

- Any student who is subject to sexual harassment, stalking, 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.

Attendance (5%)

Regular **in-person class attendance is required** to pass this course. Students are to arrive on time, have their camera and microphone on, and stay until the class period is over. If you need to leave early, discuss with me before class. Repeated tardiness is counted as an absence for that day.

Attendance counts for **5% of your final grade** and it is calculated by the percentage of times present and absent. However, if you miss more than three classes, a greater percentage is deducted.

The 5% Attendance grade is for regular attendance, but missing too many of the classes in the course is not acceptable and leads to failure. Much of the in-class portion of the course is based on lecture, discussion, and participation, and not just taking quizzes or turning in papers.

Religious Holidays

By university policy, students must notify the instructor at least two weeks in advance that he/she wishes to observe a religious holy day. The student will be excused from class without penalty. The student is still responsible for the material and will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up any work missed after discussion with the instructor.

Discussion Forums (10%)

You will be required to participate in the following three (3) online discussions:

- Essay: *"The Case for Contamination"* by Kwame Anthony Appiah
- Film: *Gandhi* (1982)
- Book: *The First Muslim - The Story of Muhammad*, by Lesley Hazleton

A minimum of three substantive, thoughtful comments (at least 50 words/5 lines each) is required for each forum. Doing the minimum earns you a C (75%); anything more brings a higher grade, as long as the comments are substantive and thoughtful.

Keep in mind that your discussion forum postings will likely be seen by other members of the course. Care should be taken when determining what to post.

Quizzes

In order to mitigate any issues with your computer and online assessments, it is very important that you take the Practice Quiz from each computer you will be using to take your graded

quizzes and exams. For quiz duration, grading criteria and feedback response time, please review the important information about quizzes page.

Quizzes in this course are not compatible with mobile devices and should not be taken through a mobile phone or a tablet. If you need further assistance, please contact FIU Online Support Services.

Students will take fourteen online chapter quizzes and one Writing Rules Quiz: Multiple Choice, Matching, Fill-in-the-blank and True/False. Quizzes will be based upon both lecture and textbook material (about a 50-50 ratio), so passing will require regular attendance, taking good notes, and reading the textbook. It is not recommended that you take the quizzes as an open book test as they are time limited and you will not have time to look up material and answer all the questions.

Writing Rules Quiz (2%)

This quiz will test your understanding of good essay and writing skills. The quiz consists of 15 questions with 45 minutes to complete. You will be allowed two (2) attempts. Your score and submitted answers will be available immediately after each submission. Correct answers will be made available in *My Grades* after each quiz deadline.

Gandhi Quiz (2%)

This quiz will test your understanding of the movie *Gandhi*.

Chapter Quizzes (35%)

You will take fourteen (14) online quizzes based on assigned textbook chapters. Each quiz consists of 20 questions with 30 minutes to complete. Your score will be available immediately after submission. Correct answers will be made available in *My Grades* after each quiz deadline.

It is not recommended that you take the quizzes or exams as an open book test as they are time limited and you will not have time to look up material and answer all the questions.

Assignments

For assignment availability, detailed instructions, grading criteria and feedback response time, please review the important information about assignments page.

This is a **Gordon Rule course** with a three-paper requirement, and you must attain at least a "C" to pass 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.

Please review each assignment's general requirements below, along with the assignment **grading rubrics** online in the *Assignment Dropbox* section of the course.

General Guidelines

- We use The **MLA Handbook** for writing papers in this course. You must know how to perform parenthetical referencing to provide appropriate citations for your sources.
- Read **Dr. Norris' Excellent Tips for Writing Papers in Canvas** to guide you in writing your essays. All written assignments are formal essays and should follow college essay format.
- All essay assignments will be turned in through **Turnitin** in Canvas **Turnitin Assignments** on the day they are due. There is a grade penalty of one grade decrease per day for late papers.
- **You may write more than the minimum word requirement, but not less without penalty.** In fact, most of your papers will need more than the minimum to adequately cover the topic and make your points.
- While there is a wealth of sound **research information** at your disposal on the Internet, there is a greater deal of dubious material, so please be discerning. Acceptable authorship includes individual, recognized experts, educational institutions (e.g. Institute of Reformation History, Stanford University), publicly supported national or international institutes (e.g. World Health Organization), and other well-known institutions with solid reputations (e.g. World Council of Churches).
- Please take advantage of the (free) FIU Writing Center that will provide you with someone to go over your papers for grammatical, format, and content issues before you hand it in. Visit our [Writing Resources](#) webpage for guidance and assistance with writing assignments.

Weekly Research/Opinion Questions (5%)

You will be presented with a weekly question or topic to research out of class. You must submit your responses online **before the next scheduled Remote Zoom meeting**. Students are expected to actively participate in class by making relevant comments and asking and answering questions.

Opinion Essay on "*The Case for Contamination*" (10%)

This individual essay assignment follows the online discussion of Anthony Appiah's "A Case for Contamination" essay.

Think, Pair, Share: Use the online discussion to deepen your understanding of the article, to answer anything you did not understand about Appiah's argument, to analyze the article, and to

challenge each other—so you can write a better, more comprehensive essay. Make it a true back and forth discussion.

After the Team Discussion period, write your individual **750-word** opinion essay addressing the following points about Appiah’s essay:

1. What is Appiah’s overall thesis? State clearly.
2. What does Appiah mean by “contamination”?
3. What role does religion play in Appiah’s essay?
4. What are Appiah’s major themes?
5. What are the major contrasting viewpoints Appiah discusses. Define, describe, explain, compare and contrast them: Cultural Preservation, Cosmopolitanism, and Neofundamentalism.
6. In the essay provide and explain at least three examples Appiah gives to make his argument.
7. Provide and explain at least three personal examples you can think of that could also be used to support Appiah’s argument or your own counterargument.
8. Explain how you agree or disagree with Appiah.
9. Assume your audience has not read the article, so make sure you explain things clearly and fully. Your paper will not be accepted if you do not participate in the discussion with a minimum of three substantive, thoughtful comments (at least 50 words/5 lines each).

The paper should reflect some of your discussion points. If you use outside sources, you must cite according to MLA format and add a Works Cited page.

Religious Site Visit and Essay (15%)

You will need to visit a worship service or ceremony (temple, mosque, church, cathedral, or worship facility) outside of your own religious background or current religious practice. *Note:* Remember that if your religious background or current practice is Christian, you cannot do this Field Visit Essay on any other Christian Churches (Roman Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Pentecostal, etc.). If you do, the paper will not be accepted. Then, write about your experience in a **1,000-word** essay: what you observed, what you learned, how you felt (personal reflection), and anyone you interviewed. As an ethnographic exercise, detail is essential.

Your essay must address the following points.

- Conduct an interview with a priest, minister, rabbi, imam, monk, lay leader or church official **with all questions and responses integrated into the body of the paper**. Provide an appendix at the end of the paper listing the questions you asked.
- Describe the service, building structure, art and cultic objects, clothing, rituals, ancillary practices (such as serving special foods), “the feel of the place,” demographics of the participants, and anything else relating to the religion and the service. Specify the religion and the branch or sect you attended for the site visit
- Demonstrate that you have done some research ahead of time (citations and a Works Cited page) so that you have some basic knowledge of what you are going to experience.

When you use outside sources, you must cite according to MLA format and add a Works Cited page. You must provide a minimum of three scholarly, professional research sources (books and professional journals) for this research.

- Identify and reflect upon your own religious background or current practice in the introduction.
- Respect the church, temple, or mosque. If you visit in-person **do not take notes during prayer service or meditations**. Do your research ahead of time and in interviews. Sit quietly and participate appropriately during the worship service, following the other worshippers in what to do. **Do not make any critical disparaging comments to anyone while in their sacred space or anyone you interview.**

References

You must provide a minimum of three (3) scholarly, professional references (books, journal articles, interviews, feature news articles, documentaries, etc.). If they come from the Internet, they must be full e-books and online academic articles--not abstracts or course summaries.

Please **Do not use** any of the following sources as one of your references:

- *Anatomy of the Sacred* textbook or other textbooks. We want you to use academic, scholarly sources and textbooks are too general.
- Wikipedia, Theopedia, encyclopedias, atlases, dictionaries, History.com, or other generic Internet websites.
- Original sources, such as the Bible, the Torah or the Quran. In scholarly research we are interested in what expert academics have to say about these original sources. You should cite the original source, but it is not included as one of the two references required by the assignment.

Research Paper (15%)

For this assignment, you will be required to choose one of the four topics listed below and write a **1,500-word** research paper on the chosen topic. Please consult the **MLA Handbook** and **Dr. Norris' Tips for Excellent Papers in Canvas** for everything you need to write a solid research paper.

Choose ONE of the Following Topics

- *Matriarchy Versus Patriarchy—The Treatment of Women within Religion throughout History*: Do not focus on just one religion or just one individual within a religion. Instead, compare ancient versus modern religions, or compare across several modern religions, but show the similarities and differences in the treatment of women (beliefs, practices, symbols, rituals, patterns and themes).
- *Indigenous Versus Colonial—The Differences between the God of the Native Americans and the God of the White European Settlers*: Do not just provide a listing of similarities and differences, but compare and contrast by exploring underlying themes, beliefs, rituals, symbols, and practices.

- *Moral Versus Immoral—The Moral Teachings of Religion*: Compare and contrast the moral teachings of various religions (ancient, indigenous, and/or modern), particularly regarding their history, cross-cultural connections, similarities and differences. Make sure that you include a scholarly discussion of the difference between morals and ethics.
- *The Historical and Modern Reasons for Hostility between the Religions of the People of the Book*: Explore why the Abrahamic Religions have been at war in one way or another throughout their history. Discuss and review ancient and modern reasons. Is this hostility primarily based upon religion or does it have socio-economic and socio-political roots as well?

References

You must provide a minimum of five (5) references (books, journal articles, interviews, feature news articles, documentaries, etc.) and if they come from the Internet they must be full e-books and online academic articles. The Internet source must be a scholarly, professional expert source.

Please **DO NOT USE** any of the following sources as one of your references:

- *Anatomy of the Sacred* textbook or other textbooks. We want you to use academic, scholarly sources and textbooks are too general.
- Wikipedia, Theopedia, encyclopedias, atlases, dictionaries, History.com, or other generic Internet websites.
- Original sources, such as the Bible, the Torah or the Quran. In scholarly research we are interested in what expert academics have to say about these original sources. You should cite the original source, but it is not included as one of the five references required by the assignment.

Extra Credit Opportunities (2%)

You may write **ONE** Extra Credit Essay from the following choices:

- *500-Word Film Review Essay on The Peaceful Warrior* with Nick Nolte, OR *The Da Vinci Code* with Tom Hanks, OR *Joshua* with F. Murray Abraham and Tony Goldwyn. Explain and discuss the religious themes of the movie, the spiritual and religious traditions, how the story affected you, and what it means today.
- *500-Word Movie Review Essay* on the documentary *Jesus Camp*. Analyze the movie, especially what you liked/disliked about the religious training depicted and the larger issue of the separation of religion and state.

Grading

Who Receives an "A" Grade?

This student:

1. Provides consistent, excellent, high quality work on all assignments and exams

2. Actively participates in class and Discussion Boards on a regular basis with knowledgeable, insightful and relevant comments and answers to questions
3. Exhibits superior college level writing skills and has mastered the elements of an opinion essay and a research essay.
4. Knows how to conduct and demonstrate solid research to support their paper's arguments
5. Demonstrates superior observational skills and reporting during the Site Visit
6. Submits all assignments on time
7. Demonstrates near perfect attendance and punctuality
8. Is highly motivated to learn and improve academic skills

Who Receives a "C" Grade?

This student:

1. Provides consistent, average quality work on all assignments
2. Participates in class and Discussion Boards on a regular basis with relevant comments and answers to questions.
3. Exhibits average college level writing skills and has mastered the elements of an opinion essay and a research essay.
4. Knows how to conduct and demonstrate basic research to support their paper's arguments.
5. Demonstrates adequate, average observational skills and reporting during the Site Visit.
6. Submits all or most assignments on time
7. Demonstrates good attendance and punctuality
8. Shows average motivation to learn and improve academic skills

Who Receives an "F" Grade?

This student:

1. Provides extremely poor quality work on most or all assignments that does not meet even minimal academic standards
2. Does not participate in class and Discussion Boards at even a minimal level and is unable to provide knowledgeable, insightful and relevant comments and answers to questions
3. Does not exhibit college level writing skills and has not mastered the elements of an opinion essay and a research essay.
4. Does not demonstrate college level observational skills and reporting during the Site Visit
5. Does not know how to or fails to conduct and demonstrate research skills to support their paper's arguments
6. Does not turn in assignments on time or fails to turn in assignments
7. May demonstrate extremely poor attendance and punctuality
8. Has not shown the motivation to learn and improve their academic skills

Grading

Grading Schema

| Letter | Range% | Letter | Range% | Letter | Range% |
|--------|-------------|--------|---------|--------|------------|
| A | 95 or above | B | 83 - 86 | C | 70 - 76 |
| A- | 90 - 94 | B- | 80 - 82 | D | 60 - 69 |
| B+ | 87 - 89 | C+ | 77 - 79 | F | 59 or less |

Assignment Weights

| Course Requirements | Number of Items | Points for Each | Total Points Available |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Appiah Essay (11%) | 1 | 100 | |
| Religious Site Visit and Essay (15%) | 1 | 100 | |
| Research Paper (15%) | 1 | 100 | |
| Participation/Team Discussion Forums (10%) | 3 | 100 | |
| Weekly Research Questions (5%) | 16 | 100 | |
| Chapter Quizzes (2.5% each, 35% total) | 14 | 100 | |
| Writing Rules Quiz (2%) | 1 | 100 | |
| Gandhi Quiz (2%) | 1 | 100 | |
| In-Person Attendance (5%) | 15 | 100 | |
| Extra Credit Essay (2%) | 1 | 100 | |
| Extra Credit for Voting | 1 | 100 | |
| Total | (103%) | | 1200 |

Writing and Research Policies

- This is a Gordon Rule course with a three-paper written word requirement and you must attain at least a C to pass a Gordon Rule course. Under the Gordon Rule, FIU requires that student papers:
 - Have a clear thesis or controlling idea.
 - Have a thesis supported with adequate reasons and evidence.
 - Be organized clearly and logically
 - Show sustained analysis and critical thought.
 - Show knowledge of conventions of standard written English.
 - Show awareness of disciplinary conventions in regard to content, style, form, and delivery method.

Each type of paper (opinion, research, and site visit) will be graded according to the following criteria.

- **OPINION ESSAY**

- **Knowledge of Subject Matter (25%)**
 - Understanding: How well do you understand the subject?
 - Clarity: How well did you explain, present, and discuss the topic? Will the reader understand what you are talking about?
 - Accuracy: How accurate are you with the facts and issues?
- **Strength of Argument (30%)**
 - Strong Thesis Statement: Is your Thesis Statement clear and to-the-point, and does it tell your audience exactly what the paper is about?
 - Rationale: Did you build your case logically and step-by-step?
 - Details/Examples: Did you give adequate details and provide useful examples to make and fill out your points?
 - Coverage: Did you cover the topic adequately enough to make the essential points?
 - Connections and Transitions: Did you provide good transitions from topic to topic and paragraph to paragraph.
- **Strength of Organization and Structure (25%)**
 - Outline: Did you outline the paper so it is organized and logical in its presentation?
 - Title: Did you provide a clear and interesting title?
 - Introduction: Did you provide a clear and interesting introductory paragraph that adequately introduces the essay? Is your Thesis Statement in the introduction?
 - Paragraphing: Do you understand how to paragraph and provide good transitions between paragraphs, that is, one paragraph should naturally lead into another.
 - Focus: Does your paper stay focused and on track?
 - Conclusion: Do you provide a clear summary and concluding paragraph that pulls the paper together and provides a logical conclusion to the subject?
- **Strength of Grammar and Writing Style (20%)**
 - Diction: Do you demonstrate good word choice, that is, use of the correct word?
 - Grammar: Do you demonstrate a good knowledge of the fundamentals of grammar?
 - Sentence Structure: Do you write solid sentences that are clear, concise and focused—not wordy, fragments, run on or overly complicated?
 - Interesting Style: Do you write in a way that interests the reader—variety of words, challenging ideas, vibrant language?
 - Glittering Generalities: Are your sentences too general and vague, or are they backed up with specific facts, examples and details?
- **RESEARCH PAPER**
- **Knowledge of Subject Matter (20%)**
- **Strength of Argument (25%)**
- **Strength of Organization and Structure (20%)**
- **Strength of Grammar and Writing Style (15%)**
- **Strength of Research (20%)**
 - Strength of Sources: Did you provide the required reference sources? Remember that dictionaries, encyclopedias, and Wikipedia are not acceptable sources, nor are direct sources such as the Bible, the Quran, the Torah, and so on.
 - MLA: Did you follow MLA format?

- Citation: Did you properly cite all the information sources in the body of the paper. Remember that anything that does not come from your own brain needs to be cited, that is, anyone else's words, ideas, theories, concepts, comments, and so on that you quote, paraphrase, summarize.
- Works Cited: Did you provide a separate and properly formatted Works Cited page?
- **FIELD SITE VISIT/RESEARCH PAPER**
- **Knowledge of Subject Matter (25%)**
- **Strength of Organization and Structure (15%)**
- **Strength of Grammar and Writing Style (15%)**
- **Strength of Research (15%)**
 - Strength of Sources: Did you provide the required reference sources? Remember that dictionaries, encyclopedias, and Wikipedia are not acceptable sources, nor are direct sources such as the Bible, the Quran, the Torah, and so on.
 - MLA: Did you follow MLA format?
 - Citation: Did you properly cite all the information sources in the body of the paper. Remember that anything that does not come from your own brain needs to be cited, that is, anyone else's words, ideas, theories, concepts, comments, and so on that you quote, paraphrase, summarize.
 - Works Cited: Did you provide a separate and properly formatted Works Cited page?
- **Strength of Reflection (15%)**
 - Personal Background information: Did you discuss your own religious background and your reaction to the religious service you attended for your Site Visit?
 - Reflection: Do you provide personal information and insights that reflect an inner process of evaluation and how the subject applies to your life?
 - Personal Examples: When appropriate, do you mix in personal examples as you make your points throughout the paper?
- **Strength of Interview (15%)**
 - Interviewee: Was the person you interviewed a good subject for the paper?
 - Questions: Did you ask well thought out, clear questions that adequately covered the topic?