

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
Department of Religious Studies
Studies in World Religions
REL 3308 – U12
Spring 2017

Instructor:	Dr. Steven M. Vose	Class Hours:	TR 11:15-12:30
Office:	DM 359-A	Classroom:	PC 331
Office Hours:	TR 12:30-1:45 (or by appointment)		
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Course Description:

What is a “World Religion”? What, for example, makes Christianity and Buddhism both “religions”? What makes what Christians and Buddhists *do* comparable? For that matter, what makes Christians in 4th-century Rome and 21st-century Miami both Christians? This course will survey the origins, doctrines, texts, and practices of six of the major religious traditions of the world today: Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. We will examine these traditions in multiple geographical and historical settings, emphasizing points of contact, communication, and change. Further, we will examine these religions not merely as abstract sets of beliefs, but as living traditions rooted in the lives of people who practice these faiths. As a Global Learning Foundations course that counts toward your Global Learning graduation requirement, students will discover the religious diversity of South Florida by visiting religious sites and interacting with members of another religious community. As a Gordon Writing Rule course, students will sharpen their writing skills by reflecting on how the traditions they encounter in the South Florida area bring global perspectives to the community.

Course Objectives:

1. To provide students with the “raw materials” for the comparative study of religion by introducing the practices, beliefs, doctrines, rituals, symbols, and scriptures of six major world religions.
2. To facilitate informed cross-cultural comparison and evaluation of ways of being religious by focused study of select world religions.
3. To challenge the student to enter sympathetically into the worldview of the religious traditions selected for study.
4. To provide the context for dialogue and discussion that will enable the student to live in an enormously complex, interdependent, and religiously plural world with patience, understanding, and appreciation for that which is different—and which may be irreconcilably different—from one’s own “worldview.”
5. To invite students to engage with the religious diversity of South Florida.
6. To sharpen critical writing and thinking skills on issues pertaining to religion.

Course Learning Outcomes:

In this course, students will learn:

1. The history of the foundations and major changes that shape six major world religions.

2. The basic terminology used in these religious traditions in their indigenous languages and in the academic study of religion.
3. How religious traditions help to shape individuals' ways of seeing the world.
4. How to communicate the experience of encountering other religious communities in writing.
5. To appreciate the need to use critical thinking skills to analyze religious traditions from various perspectives.

Course Global Learning Outcomes:

1. To understand the commonalities and unique challenges in world religions in the contemporary world, including ecology, politics, women, diaspora/migration, and globalization. (Global Awareness)
2. To engage members of other religious traditions in one's own community by conducting a site visit project. (Global Engagement)
3. To enter sympathetically into the worldviews of people of various traditions, and to see global issues from their perspectives. (Global Perspective)

Course Requirements and Grading:

1. **Attendance** (10% of final grade)
Students are expected to attend all class sessions, to participate in class discussions and activities, and to come to class having completed all assigned readings. One free absence will be granted. Subsequent absences will only be excused in case of emergency or school-sanctioned event *with appropriate documentation*. Tardiness is disruptive to the entire class; tardy students will receive only partial credit for attending. Repeated tardiness will result in the student being marked absent, at the instructor's discretion.
2. **Midterm Exam** (25% of final grade)
Covers the Dharma Religions (Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism). Multiple choice, vocabulary, and one essay. **Exam Date: Thursday, March 2.**
3. **Final Exam** (25% of final grade)
Covers the Abrahamic Religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam). Same format as the Midterm Exam. **Exam Date: Thursday, April 27, 9:45-11:45, PC 331.**
4. **Site Visit Project** (40% of final grade) – Global Learning & Gordon Rule Requirement.
All students must attend a religious service of a tradition **outside of their own** and prepare a report and analysis of their observations. Two writing assignments will help to prepare students to conduct field research. **Further instructions** for each part of the assignment and a list of religious organizations and details about the assignment can be found on the course Blackboard page under the "**Site Visit Project**" tab.
 - A. **Preliminary Exploratory Essay (500 words with 2 cited sources)**, must be submitted to the appropriate Turnitin folder on the course Blackboard page by **Friday, Feb. 3 at 11:59 PM** (25% of assignment grade; 10% of final grade).
 - B. **Research Plan and Annotated Bibliography (250-word Plan, plus 5 annotated sources)**, must be submitted to the appropriate Turnitin folder on the course Blackboard page by **Friday, Mar. 31 at 11:59 PM** (25% of assignment grade; 10% of final grade).**NOTE: You must complete this assignment and get approval from the instructor (by email) before conducting your site visit.**

- C. The **Final Report (1,800-2,000 words, with at least 5 cited sources)**, is due, posted to the appropriate Turnitin folder on the course Blackboard page by **Friday, April 21 at 11:59 PM**. (50% of assignment grade; 20% of final grade)

Policies and Guidelines:

1. This course may challenge some deeply held convictions. Students are asked to keep an open mind when confronting opinions, beliefs and practices that do not match with their own and to attempt to see the logic internal to each tradition of such beliefs and practices. All members of the class are expected to treat each other with respect and patience. The classroom is a space for learning; to that end, any view expressed is open to debate and all opinions must be supported with credible evidence. Students are encouraged to think about the potential impact of their words on others before speaking and to formulate their words appropriately.
2. If a student is prohibited by their religious tradition from attending the services of another religious tradition, a comparable alternate assignment to the Site Visit Report may be given in consultation with the instructor. The instructor must be notified by email as soon as possible and no later than Friday, Jan. 20 if this option will be necessary.
3. Late papers shall lose a letter grade per day (10%) and will not be accepted after five days beyond the due date. Papers must be submitted to the correct Turnitin dropbox (available via the course Blackboard page) for the assignment to be considered submitted and to receive a grade. Work will not be accepted by email.
4. Extensions shall only be granted if requested by email to the instructor *well in advance* of a deadline; requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. A conflict with an assignment due in another course is not a valid reason to request an extension. Students are encouraged to plan and budget their time accordingly.
5. No recording devices are allowed in class, per Florida law. To that end, phones must be put away for the duration of class. Any recording requests must be made through the Student Disability Resource Center.
6. All student work must conform to the University Code of Academic Integrity (see student handbook). Academic dishonesty—plagiarism, cheating, etc.—shall result in a failing grade for the assignment, exam or course, and may lead to formal or informal disciplinary measures with the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution, at the instructor's discretion.

Grading scale: (Note: The minimum passing grade for this course is a **73%**)

A 94-100 A- 90-93 B+ 88-89 B 83-87 B- 80-82
C+ 78-79 C **73-77** D 60-72 F 0-59

Textbook and Required Readings:

The following textbook is available for purchase or rental at the FIU bookstore:

Oxtoby, Willard, et al., eds. *A Concise Introduction to World Religions*, 3rd edition. Oxford University Press, 2015. ISBN: 9780199008551 (Students may purchase the 2nd edition)

Additional materials will be posted on the course Blackboard page under the “Readings” tab. They are marked with “(Bb)” in the Schedule of Readings, below.

Schedule of Readings and Class Meetings:**Introduction: The Comparative Study of Religion**

- Week 1 (Jan. 10, 12): Introduction to the Comparative Study of Religion
 Tuesday: Course Introduction, "What Is 'Religion' and What Are 'Religions'?"
 Thursday: The Comparative Study of Religion: Understanding vs. Explanation
 Reading: Vaughn, "The Beginning of Understanding," 17 pages (pp.) (Bb).

Part I: Dharma Religions

- Week 2 (Jan. 17, 19): Hinduism, Part I
 Tuesday: The Vedas: How to Keep the Universe in Order
 Reading: Oxtoby, Ch. 6, pp. 280-288;
 Vaughn, pp. 100-101 (Bb).
 Key Words: Vedas, *Rig Veda*, shruti, yajña, mantra, dharma, varna, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras
 Thursday: Society and Renunciation: Caste, Liberation and the Supreme Being
 Reading: Oxtoby, Ch. 6, pp. 288-291, 300-305, 334 (text box);
 Selections from the *Upanishads*: Olivelle, pp. 13-17, 46-7, 64-68, 123-24, 141-143 (Bb).
 Key Words: Upanishads, atman, brahman, samsara, karma, jnana, moksha, ashrama, sannyasa/sannyasin, tapas, "neti, neti", Vedanta, Yoga
- Week 3 (Jan. 24, 26): Hinduism, Part II
 Tuesday: Yoga; Devotion and the Hindu Gods
 Reading: Oxtoby, Ch. 6, pp. 291-299, 306-311, 312 (both text boxes);
 Vaughn, pp. 119-21, 122-23 (Bb).
 Key Words: Puranas, *Mahabharata*, *Bhagavad-Gita*, *Ramayana*, smrti, Vishnu, Shiva, Goddess, tantra, bhakti
 Thursday: Temple Worship, Colonialism, and Diaspora Hinduism
 Reading: Oxtoby, Ch. 6, pp. 311-324, 327-335;
 Vaughn, pp. 124-26 (Bb);
Bhagavad Gita, Ch. 9, vv. 20-34 (Bb).
 Key Words: puja, murti, prasada, linga
- Week 4 (Jan. 31, Feb. 2): Jainism, Part I
 Tuesday: The Conquest of Karma: The Life of Mahavira
 Reading: Oxtoby, Ch. 7, pp. 342-349;
 Vaughn, pp. 141-142, 146 (Bb).
 Key Words: Ahimsa, Jina, Tirthankara, chakravartin, kevala jnana, samyaktva, karma, moksha, jiva, ajiva
 Thursday: The Jain Sangha and Cosmos
 Reading: Oxtoby, Ch. 7, pp. 350-354;
 Vaughn, pp. 144-145, 147-148 (Bb).
 Key Words: Shramanas, Shvetambaras, Digambaras, Aparigraha, Anekantavada, Sangha, sallekhana/santhara, sadhu/sadhvi, shravaka/shravika

Preliminary Exploratory Essay Due Friday, Feb. 3 at 11:59 PM

- Week 5 (Feb. 7, 9): Jainism, Part II

- Tuesday: Jain Practices; Jainism and the Environment
 Reading: Oxtoby, pp. 352 (text box), 356-66;
 Vaughn, pp. 146-47 (Bb).
 Key Words: puja, samayika, pratikramana, mahavrata, anuvrata, Preksha, kayotsarga
- Thursday: Jains in the World
 Reading: Oxtoby, pp. 354-56, 366-71;
 Pravin Shah, "[My Visit to a Dairy Farm](#)" (Bb);
 The Jain Declaration on Nature (Bb).
 Key Words: punya, paap
- Week 6 (Feb. 14, 16): Buddhism, Part I
 Tuesday: The Buddha and His Nirvana
 Reading: Oxtoby, pp. 379-90;
 Vaughn, pp. 168-69, 171-73 (Bb).
 Key Words: Buddha, chakravartin, dharma/dhamma, karma/kamma, dukkha, anatman/anatta, nirvana/nibbana/parinirvana
- Thursday: The Dhamma and the Sangha; Emperor Ashoka
 Reading: Oxtoby, pp. 390-403, 424-26;
 Vaughn, pp. 169-71, 190-91 (Bb).
 Key Words: chakravartin, sangha, arhat, sutra/sutta, vinaya, bodhisattva, bhikshu/-ni, upasaka/upasika, dukkha, Theravada, dhyana/jhana, vipassana, stupa, pagoda, mudra
- Week 7 (Feb. 21, 23): Buddhism, Part II
 Tuesday: The Great Vehicle goes to China and Japan; The Lightning Path in Tibet
 Reading: Oxtoby, pp. 403-422;
 Vaughn, pp. 177-82, 186-87, 191-94, 197-98 (Bb).
 Key Words: Mahayana, Avalokitesvara, madhyamaka, shunyata, anitya/anicca, Zen/Chan, koan/gongan, zazen, Vajrayana, Dalai Lama, mandala
- Thursday: Buddhist Nationalism in Myanmar (Guest Lecturer: Grisel d'Elena)
 Reading: Oxtoby, pp. 426-30, 434-35.
- Week 8 (Feb. 28, Mar. 2): Midterm Exam
 Tuesday: Review for Exam
 Thursday: **Midterm Exam**

Part II: The Abrahamic Faiths

- Week 9 (Mar. 7, 9): Judaism, Part I
 Tuesday: The Covenants; Abraham; Moses; the Exodus; Israel
 Reading: Oxtoby, pp. 91-94, 98-103;
 Vaughn, pp. 338-47 (Bb).
 Key Words: Israel, Exodus, Covenant, Halakhah
- Thursday: Documentary Hypothesis and the Development of the Tanakh
 Reading: Oxtoby, pp. 94-97;

Vaughn, pp. 335-338 (Bb);
Enuma Elish (Bb).

Key Words: Tanakh, Torah

Week 10 (Mar. 14, 16): SPRING BREAK! NO CLASS! ENJOY!

Week 11 (Mar. 21, 23): Judaism, Part II

Tuesday: Exile, Return, Diaspora; The Second Temple; The Rabbinic Era
 Reading: Oxtoby, pp. 103-125;
 Vaughn, pp. 349-52, 363-65 (Bb).

Key Words: Diaspora, Ashkenazi, Sephardim, Maimonides, Talmud, Mishnah,
 Gemara, Shabbat, kashrut (kosher)

Thursday: Modern Judaism and the Holocaust (Shoah)
 Reading: Oxtoby, pp. 126-40;
 Vaughn, pp. 353-59, 370-76 (Bb).

Key Words: Reform, Conservative, Reconstruction, Orthodox, Hasidim, Zionism,
 Shoah, synagogue, minyan

Week 12 (Mar. 28, 30): Christianity, Part I

Tuesday: Jewish Messianism and Jesus of Nazareth; Paul and the Early Church
 Reading: Oxtoby, pp. 153-61 (review pp. 103, 108-09, 115-17);
 Vaughn, pp. 394-401, 404-05 (Bb).

Key Words: Messiah, Christ, crucifixion, resurrection, Gospel, synoptic, incarnation,
 Apostles, disciples, John the Baptist, Paul, epistles,

Thursday: Gnostics and Other Early Christians (Guest Lecturer: Janet McDaniel)
 Constantine; the Councils and Creeds

Reading: Benko, "The Libertine Gnostic Sect of the Phibionites According to
 Epiphanius," 3 pp. summary and 16 pp. article (Bb);
 Summaries of other Gnostic Gospels (Bb);
 Oxtoby, pp. 162-71;
 Vaughn, pp. 418-19 (Bb).

Key Words: Pope, orthodoxy, Gnostics, Phibionites, council, creed, ecumenical,
 Catholic/catholic, heresy, Trinity, schism, eucharist, transubstantiation

Research Plan and Annotated Bibliography Due Friday, March 31 at 11:59 PM

Week 13 (Apr. 4, 6): Christianity, Part II

Tuesday: Inquisitions; the Protestant Reformation; the Counter-Reformation
 Reading: Oxtoby, pp. 174-91 (review p. 120);
 Martin Luther, Theses on Indulgences from the *95 Theses* (Bb).

Key Words: excommunication, indulgences, purgatory, Martin Luther, *95 Theses*,
 Jean Calvin, predestination, Ulrich Zwingli, transubstantiation, mysticism

Thursday: Christianity in the U.S.: Puritans, Deists, Evangelicals and Catholics
 Reading: Oxtoby, pp. 191-207;
 Vaughn, pp. 402-03 (Bb).

Key Words: Pietism, Puritans, Quakers, Evangelicalism, Fundamentalism,
 Millenarianism, apocalypse, Pentecostalism, Vatican II, Ecumenism

Week 14 (Apr. 11, 13): Islam, Part I

- Tuesday: The Life of Muhammad; the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*; the Early *Ummah*; the Five Pillars of the Faith
- Reading: Oxtoby, pp. 219-24, 226-36;
Vaughn, pp. 463-67 (Bb).
- Key Words: Islam, Allah, ummah, hijrah, shahadah, salat, zakat, sawm, hajj, hadith, Ramadan
- Thursday: Islamic Faiths and Societies; Islamic Sacred Art and Architecture
- Reading: Oxtoby, pp. 225-26, 236-44, 253-62
- Key Words: sunnah, Sunni, caliph, caliphate, 'ulama', shari'ah, halal, haram, fiqh, ijihad, tafsir, fatwa, imam, mosque, qiblah, mihrab, minaret, calligraphy

Week 15 (Apr. 18, 20): Islam, Part II

- Tuesday: Shi'isms; Sufism;
- Reading: Oxtoby, pp. 244-53;
Vaughn, pp. 458-62 (Bb).
- Key Words: Shi'a, Twelver, Isma'ili (Sevener), imamah, Ayatollah, dhikr, Rumi, al-Ghazali, shaykh, tariqa, khanqah, Mevlevi ("Whirling Dervish")
- Thursday: The Challenges of Islam in the Colonial and Postcolonial Eras
- Reading: Oxtoby, pp. 262-75;
Vaughn, pp. 467-70 (Bb).
- Key Words: jihad, Islamism, Wahhabism, Salafism, jihadism, Taliban, al-Qaeda, ISIS, Arab Spring

Final Draft of Site Visit Report due on Friday, April 21 at 11:59 PM

Final Exam: Thursday, April 27, 9:45-11:45, PC 331