Syllabus: REL 2011, Introduction to Religion
Department of Religious Studies
Florida International University
Miami, FL

Instructor: Patrick J. Villalonga, MA
When: Mon, Wed 1 PM - 1:50 PM
Where: Charles Perry (PC) 212
Office Hours: Mon, Wed 2 PM - 2:50 PM

Course Materials:

1. Textbook: Anatomy of the Sacred
2. Weekly access to a computer for at least one hour.
3. Having a laptop or tablet device might help for classroom activities.

Course Schedule:

A day-to-day schedule can be found in your Canvas dashboard. This schedule informs you of our in-class activities, the things you should be working on, and all of your due dates.

Course Assignments and Grading:

1. 15 Quizzes - 10 points each 150 points
2. 2 Research Presentations - 50 points each 100 points
3. 2 Essay Exams - 100 points each 200 points
4. 1 Final Research Paper - 100 points 100 points
5. Total Points Possible 550 points

   a. Please make sure you have secure electrical and internet connections when completing online work. I cannot reset quizzes for you to retake them.
   b. Assignments must be turned in by the due date. Late submissions will suffer a letter grade penalty every day it is late.
   c. Makeups must be accompanied by an official excusal.
   d. There are no curves.
Attendance and Participation:

You will not be graded on attendance, however, my experience shows me that there is a strong positive correlation between student success and attendance. Similarly, I will not grade you on participation, but participation is also a good measure of student success and it just makes our lectures and discussions more interesting. So please come to class prepared -- familiar with the content and with questions in mind.

Plagiarism Policy:

All quotations and ideas not of your own creation must be cited according to the Chicago Style Manual.

Course Goals:

1. You will be able to explain the basic history, development, and belief system of various religious traditions.
2. You will be able to recognize religious themes and concepts found in other cultures.
3. You will be able to identify the meaning behind religious concepts and symbols.
4. You will be able to critically engage the issue of religious diversity in national and international context (Global Engagement).
5. You will be able to analyze issues in the field of religions studies from multiple approaches (Global Perspective).
6. You will be able to evaluate the interrelationship between your own and others’ religious views as they relate to understanding other cultures and solving common problems (Global Awareness)

What will we be doing here?

We will use text readings, in-class participation and multimedia to explore basic concepts in the study of religion and how they relate with the dynamics of society. We will explore concepts such as deity, cosology and myth, ritual, scripture, ethics and salvation/liberation. The student will analyze religious phenomena as psychological, sociological and anthropological forces in human history. Each concept will be introduced through the textbook, class lectures, videos, Internet sources and discussions. Throughout the course, we will also be exposed to specific rituals, myths, doctrines, ethics and symbols from various different world religions and cultures. This is a hybrid course and it fulfills the Gordon Rule requirement.