FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY  
Department of Religious Studies  
REL 3308, Section B51  
Studies in World Religions  
Spring 2018  
Tuesday/Thursday 12:30 p.m.-1:45 p.m.  
Academic One, Room 135  
Dr. Jayne A. Klein

Office Hours: Thursday, 2:00-3:00 p.m.  
Phone: (305) 919-5859  
Office: TBA  
e-mail: martinj@fiu.edu

Course Description

Ever since the beginning of humanity’s existence on Earth, religion has been a singularly powerful influence on the lives of a vast majority of its occupants, and it seems likely that it will remain so for as far into the future as our minds can project. While there are some who view religion as a singularly powerful means for promoting goodness and morality in the world, there are others who see it as the source of most of the hatred and violence in the world. Whatever one’s opinion, however, it is incumbent upon all of us today to develop a familiarity with several of the World’s major religions, so that we may be better able to understand our neighbors in what, today, is an enormously complex, interdependent, and global world.

This course will introduce students to some of the World’s major and most enduring religious traditions – both Eastern and Western – by exploring their basic beliefs, practices, rituals, associated narratives, and relevant figures.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, the successful student will be able to:

- Analyze the differences and similarities between the religions studied.
- Analyze the historical development of the religious traditions presented.
- Compare and contrast religious societies and cultures in their local, national, and global contexts.
- Recognize the different ways of being religious and of interpreting the sacred, or the holy.
- Appreciate the importance that the various religious traditions discussed throughout the semester hold for their practitioners.

Other required readings will be in the form of handouts, which the professor will distribute to you at various times during the semester; or they will be posted on Blackboard and/or on the Library Course Reserves.

**Attendance and Class Participation:**

Ten percent of your final grade depends on regular attendance and class participation. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Regular attendance and punctuality are expected of all. Only two unexcused absences will go without penalty. Any additional unexcused absence beyond that will cause a drop of one rung on the final grading scale, i.e., from an A to an A-, an A- to a B+, and so on. If you will be unable to attend a class, you are expected to inform the professor beforehand (whenever possible) via e-mail or telephone and explain your reason.

You are all expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned reading material, to present your ideas to the class, and to ask questions.

**ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT STATEMENT**

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 to 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.

Academic Misconduct includes: **Cheating** – The unauthorized use of books, notes, aids, electronic sources; or assistance from another person with respect to examinations, course assignments, field service reports, class recitations; or the unauthorized possession of examination papers or course materials, whether originally authorized or not. **Plagiarism** – The use and appropriation of another’s work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the student’s own. Any student who fails to give credit for ideas, expressions or materials taken from another source, including internet sources, is responsible for plagiarism.

Learn more about the academic integrity policies and procedures as well as student resources that can help you prepare for a successful semester.

*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.*
**Grade Point Distribution:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Attendance and Class Participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Exam #1 – Thursday, February 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Exam #2 – Midterm Examination – Thursday, March 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Exam #3 – Final Examination – exact date TBA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Research Paper – Tuesday, March 27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For this assignment, you are to select one religion (other than that of the religion you were raised in or are currently practicing). Once chosen, you are to research it, in terms of its practices and beliefs, and then attend at least one service/ceremony at its house of worship. You will then present your research in a paper of 5-7 pages in length. Further instructions will be distributed separately.

In addition, you will have an opportunity to earn extra credit by visiting the Holocaust Memorial in Miami Beach and writing a 3-page paper describing it and your impressions of the experience. For successful completion of this assignment, you will receive 15 points added to your lowest exam grade.

**Grading Scale:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94-99</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-93</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84-86</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83-80</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76-79</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-70</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69-64</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63-0</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Class and Reading/Assignment Schedule**

**Week beginning Tuesday, January 9 (Week #1)**

- Introduction to the course: course overview; review of course syllabus; defining religion; theories about the origin of religion.

  **Film:** [*Zeitgeist*](part one) – see Power Points on Library Course Reserves

  **Reading Assignment:** Hopfe & Woodward, Introduction/Overview; Chapter 1 (Basic Religions); and Chapter 3 (African Religions) – all this material has been posted, for your convenience, on the Library Course Reserves

**Week beginning Tuesday, January 16 (Week #2)**

- Basic Religions

- Introduction to African Religions
Film: Sorcerers of Zaire


Week beginning Tuesday, January 23 (Week #3)

African Religions (continued)

The Transatlantic Slave Trade and the Middle Passage

Reading Assignment: Power Points on Library Course Reserves (Papal Bulls and Transatlantic Slave Trade)

Week beginning Tuesday, January 30 (Week #4)

Film: The Middle Passage

Thursday, Feb. 1 – Exam #1 – this exam will cover all introductory material; the theories about the origins of religion; Basic religions; and African Religions (including films viewed)

Reading Assignment: Hopfe and Woodward, Chapter 4 (Hinduism)

Week beginning Tuesday, February 6 (Week #5)

Hinduism – lecture and discussion

Week beginning Tuesday, February 13 (Week #6)

Hinduism (lecture and discussion continued)

Film: Mystic India

Reading Assignment: Hopfe & Woodward, Chapter 6, Buddhism

Week beginning Tuesday, February 20 (Week #7)

Introduction to Buddhism and the Life of the Buddha

Film: Excerpts from film Little Buddha

Week beginning Tuesday, February 27 (Week #8)

Buddhism (continued)
**Film:** *Compassion in Exile: The Story of the 14th Dalai Lama*

*Thursday, March 1 – Midterm Exam (Exam #2)* (on Hinduism and Buddhism)

*Reading Assignment:* Hopfe and Woodward, Chapter 11 (Judaism)

**Week beginning Tuesday, March 6 (Week #9)**

Introduction to Judaism (lecture & discussion)

*Monday-Saturday, March 12-17 (Week #10) – SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES*

**Week beginning Tuesday, March 20 (Week #11)**

Judaism (continued)

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

*Reading Assignment:* Hopfe and Woodward, Chapter 13 (Islam)

**Week beginning Tuesday, March 27 (Week #12)**

Judaism (lecture & discussion continued)

**Film:** *The Mystery of the Jews*

Islam: Introduction to Islam and the Life of Muhammad

**Film:** *A History of God, Part 3*

**Week beginning Tuesday, April 3 (Week #13)**

Islam (continued)

**Film:** *Islamic Mysticism: The Sufi Way*

*Reading Assignment:* Hopfe and Woodward, Chapter 12 (Christianity)

**Week beginning Tuesday, April 10 (Week #14)**

Introduction to Christianity and the Life of Jesus

**Film:** *A History of God, Part 2*
Week beginning Tuesday, April 17 (Week #15)

Christianity (lecture and discussion)

Note: Thursday, April 19 is last day of class

Week #16 – Monday-Saturday, April 23-28 – Final exam week – no regular classes

*Final exam* (on Judaism, Islam, and Christianity) – date to be announced