

**Religious Studies Department**  
**REL 2011 Introduction to Religion -HYBRID**  
**Spring 2019**  
**Biscayne Bay Campus**

**Instructor:** Valeria Schindler

**Email:** vschindl@fiu.edu

**Office:** TBA

**Office Hours:** Mondays and Wednesdays  
8:30am to 9:45am and by Appointment

**In person Class:** MW 10am-10:50am

**Room #:** Academic One 130

---

**Why should we 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, and one of the many courses that complete the Global Learning requirement. Although no particular tradition will be favored, materials from several traditions will be chosen to exemplify thematic topics in the experience of the Sacred. We will also focus on the tenets of religions, dispelling common misconceptions and assumptions and looking into the emergence of new practices among the post-denominational generation.

**What are the Objectives of the course?**

**By the end of this course students will be able to:**

- Understand the complexity of the definitions of religion and secularization.
- Dissect the universal forms of religious experience and expression such as sacred symbols, rituals, myths, scriptures, ethics, and communities.
- Identify religious themes and patterns that shape our everyday life.
- Recognize the strength of utilizing different approaches, theories, and methodologies to better understand the study of religion.

- Evaluate the interrelationship between the student's own and other's religious views in order to avoid uninformed assumptions.
- Develop college-level academic writing and communication skills.
- Better understand how an individual's identity and outlook are shaped by religious influences.
- Reflect upon and enhance student's potential for moral agency and compassion.
- Acquire appreciation for the dynamic dialogue between insider and outsider perspectives.

### **What is important to learn as a global citizen? What about University Requirements for the Global Learning Objectives?**

1. **Global Awareness:** Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the interrelatedness of local, global, international, and intercultural issues, trends, and systems.

**Course Learning Outcome:** Students will demonstrate knowledge of the interrelated dynamics (social-cultural, political, economic, etc.) that shape the actions of multiple figures in diverse cultural contexts.

2. **Global Perspectives:** Students will be able to develop a multi-perspective analysis of local, global, international, and intercultural problems.

**Course Learning Outcome:** Students will be able to analyze the multiple causal forces that shape the perspectives of historical individuals/persons — economic, political, sociological, technological, cultural, etc.

3. **Global Engagement:** Students will be able to demonstrate a willingness to engage in local, global, international, and intercultural problem solving.

**Course Learning Outcome:** Students will demonstrate a willingness to engage in negotiation regarding actions of global import within the context of the class simulation.

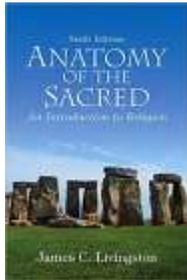
### **How does a hybrid course work?**

We will spend 50% of the time dedicated to the course in person, engaging in learning, clarifying concepts, debating, working in groups, and discussing and developing each of the concepts covered in the course.

The other 50% of the time takes place outside the class, whether it is writing papers, watching videos, reading articles, and providing opinions on different topics. My responsibility is to provide you with lots of material and activities for you to apply and put into practice the concepts learned in class and from the

readings. Your responsibility is to read the textbook and complete the assignments in a timely manner. This will enable us using the time in class to look at different examples and current events that correlate to the concepts we are learning in class.

### **What will help us answer the questions posed in our course?**



Anatomy of the Sacred: An Introduction to Religion 6th ed., by James C. Livingston [Prentice Hall] ISBN-10: 013600380X

- **Required Text:** *this is the mandatory book for the class, but feel free to read as many articles related to the class as you want and share them with the rest of the class.*

### **How will you and I evaluate your progress?**

- **Six 10-questions quizzes** –from which the lowest score will be dropped. The quizzes will be available for 24 hours on Canvas (please consult the calendar for dates) and students will have 10 minutes to complete each quiz. Quizzes will be on the reading material and class lectures. (15% of final grade)
- **Midterm and Final Exams.**
  - **Midterm:** will cover the first half of the semester and will include 50 multiple choice and true and false questions. Students will have 55 minutes to complete it. (15% of Final Grade)
  - **Final:** will cover from second half of the semester and will include multiple choice, and true and false questions. Students will have 55 minutes to complete it. (15% of final grade)
- **A 1000-1500 words opinion paper on globalization and religion.** Is globalization “contaminating” religion? Students will have to read the article on globalization posted on Canvas use the arguments that appeal them the most to build their opinion on the topic. Detailed information is provided on Canvas. (10% of final grade)
- **A 1500-2000-words essay. “Experiencing religion around me.”**

In this assignment students will be required to keep a journal for 5 days and then write a reflection paper stating how religion appears in their every-day life. Students need to submit both the journal and the reflection paper. Detailed information is provided on Canvas. (15% of final grade)

Your grade on both of the essays will consist of three parts: **Content and Argument** (40% of grade), **Organization, Structure, and Research** (30% of grade), and **Style and Grammar** (30% of grade).

- **Content and Argument** refers to how well you logically build your case and follow the FIRES model (Facts, Incidents, Reasoning/Rationale, Examples, and Statistics). FIRES makes for a more interesting paper in which you back up your points with specific examples and facts.
  - **Organization, Structure and Research** refers to solid introduction (with thesis statement), building of argument and points, and finishing with a sound conclusion.
  - **Style and Grammar** refers to how well you write: grammar, sentence structure, word usage, including use of interesting and varied words and phrasing.
- **Online activities:** Every week (unless indicated otherwise in the class calendar) you will have to submit an activity and earn points, a total of 100 for all activities. Each activity will become available under "Assignments or the corresponding module at the beginning of the day on Friday each week and is due at midnight on the Wednesday after, after which the link for the assignment will no longer be available. All the due dates are listed on the course's calendar Points will be deducted for poor grammar or typos. (15% of final grade).
  - **Attendance and participation:** Attendance to in person class is mandatory, and students are expected to engage in class discussion, after all, we are only meeting half of the time in person. Missing more than 4 classes in the semester will result on losing 80 points for the total of 100 for attendance and participation, the rest will be based on your online reflection participation. **Online reflection:** When covering each chapter of the book, you will have to submit a reflection via Canvas and a response to someone else's reflection. Make sure you read the instructions on the discussion board, because sometimes I will ask a question that needs to be answered in the discussion. Engagement in discussion boards on Canvas is important and will count towards your grade for attendance and participation. (15% of final grade)

Item	% of grade
<b>Quizzes</b>	15%
<b>Midterm</b>	15%
<b>Final</b>	15%
<b>Essay on Globalization</b>	10%
<b>Reflection Essay based on Journal</b>	15%
<b>Online Activities</b>	15%
<b>Attendance, Participation, and Online Reflection</b>	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Letter Grade	Range	Letter Grade	Range
<b>A</b>	93 and Above	<b>C+</b>	76-79
<b>A-</b>	90-92	<b>C</b>	70-75
<b>B+</b>	87-89	<b>D</b>	60-69
<b>B</b>	83-86	<b>F</b>	Below 60
<b>B-</b>	80-82		

**A's** are awarded to exceptional work in class and assignments

**B's** are awarded for good to very good work.

**C's** are awarded for average to above average work.

**D's** are awarded for barely passing with below average work.

**F's** are awarded for unacceptable work.

### **How will you succeed in this course?**

- **Attending and participating in class:** Be ready to be an active learner and participate in class discussions and activities. In order to maximize your learning experience, I ask you that you refrain from using your phone in class or using your computer for other things than taking notes. We will sometimes use the computer or phone for activities, so have them handy.
- **Complete the assigned reading before coming to class:** If you know the material, you will be able to actively participate.
- **Check Canvas at least 5 times a week.** There are many things to do there, such as submitting assignments and participate in discussions, so be active. I will be monitoring your participation. To log into Canvas go to [www.canvas.fiu.edu](http://www.canvas.fiu.edu) and use your Panthersoft credentials.
- **Submit essays on time.** There will be 2 points taken off your final grade for the essay per late day, up to 16 points total. If students don't submit the essay by

the latest for submission date marked on the calendar, the essay won't be graded and students will receive a zero grade.

- **Submit online activities on time:** Remember the link disappears at 11:59pm on its due date, which is always a Wednesday, so make sure you complete the activity before the deadline, otherwise you will not receive any points for it.
- **Take Quizzes and tests on time:** If you miss a quiz, you will lose the points the quiz is worth. And I understand things happen, so if you let me know in advanced you won't be able to take a quiz, I will re-schedule it for you. However, there will be no make-up dates for the final exam.
- **Extra Credit.** Sometimes some students may need an extra help, and it usually involves attending a special lecture and writing a summary and analysis. The essay could be worth up to 3 extra credit points to be added to the final grade. A maximum of 6 extra credit points could be awarded. Please refer to the list of events provided on Canvas.
- **Using FIU's resources to help you.** Click on the links below to access information
  - [Center for Excellence in Writing](#): To help you draft, revise, or polish any written work.
  - [Center for Academic Success](#): To help you with reading skills, study techniques, and grammar.
- **Be open minded and have fun!**

### **What are the school policies for this course?**

**This is a Gordon Rule** course and you must attain at least a C to receive any credit as 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.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the theft of intellectual property of others, including their ideas, concepts, and words. Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course. Please visit <http://www.fiu.edu/~oabp/misconductweb/2codeofacainteg.htm>

The expectation is that students will submit their own original work. Previously Submitted Coursework will not be admitted.

To clarify what constitutes plagiarism for this university. Offenders will receive an "F" on the paper.

Some examples of plagiarism are:

- Papers acquired online or from other sources that were not produced by the student that have submitted them.
- Copying material and ideas from other sources without attribution.
- Using other students' work.

**Behavioral Misconduct:** Any student who is subject to sexual harassment, stalking, or 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. Remember, this is a course in which different ideas are welcomed, even if they do not agree with our own notions.

**Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities, as defined by law, have the right to receive needed accommodations if their disabilities make it difficult to perform academic tasks in the usual way or in the allotted time frame. However, in order to receive accommodation, students with disabilities must register with Disability Resource Center. This office will keep the student's written request, notify a faculty member who has a student with a disability enrolled in his/her class, and indicate what kinds of arrangements must be made.

**Religious Holidays:** By university policy, students must notify the instructor at least two weeks in advance that he/she wishes to observe a religious holyday. The student will be excused from class without penalty, but will still be responsible for the material studied in the class.

For University's deadlines, please refer to <http://onestop.fiu.edu/academic-calendar/>

***Important Note:*** *This syllabus is a contract and can be amended determined by the demands of the course. It outlines everything you need to know for this course. Please make sure you have read it carefully.*

---

**REL 2011: Religion: analysis and interpretation**  
**SPRING 2019**  
**Course Outline and Calendar**

- **NOTE:** Readings must be completed *prior* to the class for which they are assigned.

Week 1	Welcome/Introduction  <b><u>Reading:</u></b> Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 1 “What is Religion?”  <b><u>Online activities:</u></b> Write 5 things you need to do in order to earn an “A” in this course – worth 9 points
Week 2	<b><u>Reading:</u></b> Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 2 “Ways of Studying Religion” and start with Chapter 3 “The Sacred and the Holy.”  <b>Quiz #1- Chapters 1 and 2</b>  <b><u>Online activity:</u></b> Read article “Opinion versus Information” and answer the questions – worth 7 points
Week 3	<b><u>Reading:</u></b> Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 3, “Symbol, Myth, and Doctrine”  <b><u>Online activity:</u></b> Post a religious myth and categorize it- Worth 9 points
Week 4	<b><u>Reading:</u></b> Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 4, “Symbol, Myth, and Doctrine”  <b>Quiz #2 – Chapters 3 and 4</b>  <b><u>Online Activity:</u></b> Post a ritual. Categorize it and if it is a rite of passage, mention the three stages. Worth 9 points
Week 5	<b><u>Reading:</u></b> Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 5, “Sacred Ritual”  <b>RESPONSE ON ARTICLE ON GLOBALIZATION DUE BY 11:59PM ON BLACKBOARD</b>  <b><u>Online Activity:</u></b> Read article on the religious Mullahs and answer questions. Worth 9 points

<p>Week 6</p>	<p><b><u>Reading:</u></b> Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 6, "Sacred Scripture"</p> <p><b>Quiz #3 – Chapters 5 and 6</b></p> <p><b>JOURNAL DUE BY 11:59PM ON BLACKBOARD</b></p> <p><b><u>Online Activity:</u></b> None this week, time to study for the Midterm exam</p>
<p>Week 7</p>	<p><b><u>Reading:</u></b> Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 7, "Society and the Sacred: The Social Formations and Transformations of Religion"</p> <p><b>MIDTERM – up to chapter 7</b></p> <p><b><u>Online activity due: - there are 2 activities this week:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Midterm Review. Pick 5 questions you got wrong in the midterm and explain what the correct answer is and why. Make sure your answers are well justified. Worth 10 points</li> <li>2. What's my grade so far? Look back at your grades and let me know what you think your grade is so far. Write 5 things you need to do in order to improve that grade. Worth 9 points</li> </ol>
<p>Week 8</p>	<p><b><u>Reading:</u></b> Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 8, Concept of the Divine</p> <p><b><u>Online activity:</u></b> Watch the movie "The history of God" and answer the questions. Worth 13 points.</p>
<p>Week 9</p>	<p><b><u>Reading:</u></b> Anatomy of the Sacred Chapter 9 "Origins of the Natural and Social Order"</p> <p><b>Quiz #4 – chapters 8 and 9</b></p> <p><b><u>Online activity :</u></b> None this week. Enjoy your Spring Break!</p>
<p><b>SPRING BREAK</b></p>	
<p>Week 10</p>	<p><b><u>Reading:</u></b> Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 10, "Views of the Human Problem"</p>

	<p><b>LAST DAY TO DROP COURSE WITH DR</b></p> <p><b>ESSAY BASED ON JOURNAL DUE ON BLACKBOARD BY 11:59PM</b></p> <p><b>Online activity:</b> Answer a personal question on the human problem. Worth 8 points.</p>
Week 11	<p><b>Reading:</b> Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 11, "Theodicy: Encountering Evil"</p> <p><b>Quiz #5: Chapters 10 and 11</b></p> <p><b>Online activity</b> Watch video on new religious movements and answer questions. Worth 10 points</p>
Week 12	<p><b>Reading:</b> Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 12, "Ethics: Foundations of Moral Action"</p> <p><b>Last day to submit ANY essays (but extra credit reports)</b></p> <p><b>Online activity:</b> Read article "Remember when Mother Teresa left Clinton in Stunned silence on abortion" and answer questions. Worth 8 points.</p>
Week 13	<p><b>Reading:</b> Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 13, "Soteriology: Ways and Goals of Salvation and Liberation"</p> <p><b>Quiz #6 – Chapters 12 and 13</b></p> <p><b>Last day to submit Extra Credit Reports – Please email them to me</b></p> <p><b>Online activity:</b> None this week. Prepare for Final exam.</p>
Week 14	<p><b>Reading:</b> Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 14 – Secularization and Religious Fundamentalism</p>
<p><b>Final week of the semester. Final exam when scheduled by FIU- Please consult FIU's website for finals schedule.</b></p>	

- **Important Note:** This calendar can be amended determined by the demands of the course.