

# REL 3308 Syllabus

**Instructor:** Humberto Perez Jr.

**Class Time:** Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 2:00pm – 2:50 pm

**Office Hours:** Monday and Wednesday 11:00am – 1:00pm DM301

**Class Location:** GL132

**Email:** huperez@fiu.edu

## MATERIALS

- Required: Hopfe, Woodward, and Hendrickson. *Religions of the World 13<sup>th</sup> Edition*
- Required: Kraemer, Christine Hoff. *Seeking the Mystery: An Introduction to Pagan Theologies*
- Access to reliable internet connection, a computer, and printer.

## WELCOME!

“Studies in World Religions” is a survey of the major religious traditions of the world. The course is designed to provide students with an understanding and appreciation of these traditions, and to enable students to think sensitively and critically about the religions of the world. This course will cover general concepts in the Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, the Dharma religions of Jainism, Buddhism, and Hinduism, the Pagan religions of Wicca, Druidry, and Asatru, and the Afro-Cuban religion of Santeria.

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. Students will discover the religious diversity of South Florida by visiting religious sites and interacting with members of other religious communities.

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

- Identify the essential characteristics that distinguish the major religious traditions
- Describe the basic components of each major religious tradition, such as its myths, rituals, doctrines, ethics, and artistic expressions
- Describe religious conflicts and trends in the modern world
- Express ideas and opinions clearly in writing as well as orally
- Critically engage the issue of religious diversity in national and international contexts (Global Engagement)
- Analyze issues in the field of religious studies from multiple approaches (Global Perspective)
- Evaluate the interrelationship between his/her own and others' religious views as they relate to understanding other cultures and solving common problems (Global Awareness)

## GRADING

**All major writing assignments must be completed in order to pass. All work must be the authors own original work for this class.** Your grade will be determined in the following way:

Grade Breakdown	
Site Visit Essay	25%
Quizzes	10%
Mid Term and Final Exam	20%
Didactic Literature Essay	25%
Religion in Everyday Life	10%
Class Participation and Attendance	10%

**Total**

100%

---

## **CANVAS**

This class will be web-assisted through Canvas: <https://fiu.Canvas.com/>. On Canvas, you will have access to unit plans and assignment sheets, as well as discussion boards and forums. Please use the email address provided at the beginning of this syllabus to contact me, rather than using the Canvas function. I will occasionally send out announcements through Canvas of any changes. Additionally, it is through Canvas where you will submit final drafts of all major writing assignments.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance is absolutely required and will be taken for every meeting; class should only be missed in the case of emergencies and sickness. Each class is built on the next, so missed classes will throw you behind quickly. In addition, excessive absences hurt your participation grade.

You are responsible for any material missed as a result of absence or tardiness. I suggest using Canvas to contact fellow classmates to find out what you missed.

## **Tardiness**

Three tardies equal one absence. While the occasional traffic delay may cause you to arrive to class late, regular tardiness is disrespectful to both your instructor and your fellow students and will affect your final grade.

## **PARTICIPATION**

You are part of a learning community. We all depend on one another for the best classroom experience. Credit for participation will be earned by taking part in in-

class discussions, and group work, and individual or classroom exercises. Students will also be asked to lead classroom discussion on weekly reading once during the semester. Students will sign up for discussion lead date on Canvas. Failure to lead class discussion on assigned date will result in a 'o' grade for participation.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

**All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date.** Most homework will be turned in through Canvas. Late homework assignments are not accepted.

## **REVISIONS**

At the end of the semester, you are allowed to revise one of your submitted essays. In order to qualify, you must have turned in the original essay by the due date and have received feedback on that initial Final Draft. If the revision shows a significant improvement, you will get a higher grade which will replace the original grade. Your revision must be accompanied with a cover letter that describes the changes you made, explains why you made them and why you think those changes improved your essay.

## **LATE ESSAY ASSIGNMENTS**

All major writing assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date. The letter grade will be reduced 1/2 grade for every day a final draft is late. In addition, you will not be able to revise this essay at the end of the semester for a higher grade. For example, if you turn in a "B" paper a day late, it will be reduced to a "B-," and cannot be revised for a potentially higher grade. **FAILURE TO TURN IN ANY ONE OF THE TWO MAJOR WRITING PROJECTS WILL RESULT IN FAILING THE COURSE.**

## **PLAGIARISM**

Please review FIU's web page about plagiarism (representing another's work, ideas, expressions, or materials as your own), <http://www2.fiu.edu/~oabp/misconductweb/5beaconlettertoallstudents.htm>, and here <http://www2.fiu.edu/~oabp/misconductweb/1acmisconductproc.htm> to make yourself aware of the disciplinary sanctions resulting from academic misconduct. Print and sign the last page of the course syllabus and return to me by the third week of class.

## **FORMAT**

Unless specified otherwise, all assignments, including homework, must be formatted to MLA standards. All drafts and essays must be typed, doubled-spaced, Times New Roman 12pt. font. Anything turned in improperly formatted will be reduced by 1/2 letter grade.

## **Smart Phones**

Smart phones are a fact of life. Rather than attempt to fight a losing battle against smart phone use in class, there will be assignments throughout the semester that will require the use of smart phones or other internet enabled devices to complete. During class discussions or instructor lectures I ask that you keep your smart phone use to a minimum in order to maintain an active learning environment.

## **Turnitin**

Most work turned in to Canvas will be Turnitin assignments. You will receive feedback and comments through this service. Additionally, TurnItIn will check your

work for instances of plagiarism, and your work will remain in their database (they use it to check other students' papers for plagiarism). In this class, TurnItIn can be used primarily as a learning tool to help you understand how to properly site sources and use quotations. Only access TurnItIn through Canvas.

## **Getting help**

Your instructor is your best resource! Please come to me with any problems or questions, because I want to help you succeed in my class. However, you may find that the class time we have isn't always enough to ask me questions and get individual feedback on your work. Don't forget that I am available for you outside of our regular class time, too. My office hours and phone number are listed on the top of this syllabus.

Beyond me, students may benefit from other resources FIU offers. Here are some frequent obstacles students face, and what programs and services FIU provides to assist.

**I'm having trouble with a writing assignment. I can't get started, organize my ideas, develop this beyond the first two pages, etc.**

Center for Excellence in Writing (more casually called the Writing Center). <http://writingcenter.fiu.edu>

During any stage of the writing process, the writing consultants at the writing center are available to help you set clear goals, bring focus to your ideas, and encourage creative and critical thinking. I may, at any point in the semester, recommend you visit the writing center. However, I do actively encourage all students to take advantage of this great resource. Even the most confident writers can benefit from

the help our writing center provides. The CEW can be found on the first floor of the Library (GL120).

**I'm having trouble reading these academic articles. I am finding it difficult to study effectively. My high school study strategies aren't working in college.**

University Learning Center. <http://undergrad.fiu.edu/cas/learning/index.html>

The Learning Center is also found in GL120, and also has peer tutors available to help you. The Learning Center is the place to go if you want assistance focused on reading or study skills.

**I'm really stressed out and it's affecting my classwork or my life. I'm having personal problems that are interfering with school.**

Counseling Services. <http://counselingservices.fiu.edu>

If you find your academic performance (or just your daily life) is hindered because of anxiety, stress, depression, relationship issues, or other personal struggles, FIU offers Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) to help you. CAPS consists of licensed psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, and trainees with expertise in dealing with student concerns and development. Registered students are eligible to utilize these services and participate in the programs.

**I have a diagnosed disability and need accommodations in order to do my best.**

Disability Resource Center. <http://drc.fiu.edu>

Any student with a diagnosed disability has access to special accommodations through the DRC. You must register with the DRC in order to receive such accommodations.

## **MORE CONTACTS**

If you have concerns/questions about this class that you are unable to resolve with me, you should contact the Associate Directors of the Writing Program, Robert Saba at MMC or Cindy Chinelly at BBC.

### Grading Scale:

A	B+	B-	C	F
93-100	87-89	80-82	70-76	0-59
A-	B	C+	D	
90-92	83-86	77-79	60-69	

### Definition of grading

criteria: <http://casgroup.fiu.edu/english/pages.php?id=469>

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>A</b>	An <b>A</b> paper is extraordinary work that more than fulfills the requirements of the assignment. This essay tackles the topic in an innovative way, with a clear sense of audience and purpose, an insightful thesis, and an appropriate and effective organization. The structure is carefully planned; each section of the essay develops the thesis with logical arguments and specific, conclusive evidence which has been interpreted and clearly related to the writer's point. The style is energetic and precise:

the sentence structure is varied and the words are carefully chosen. How the writer says things is as excellent as what the writer says. There is evidence of careful editing since the essay contains few grammatical and/or mechanical errors and, if necessary, is correctly documented using MLA format.

---

**B** A **B** paper is clearly above-average and more than meets the requirements of the assignment. Like the “A” paper, it has a clear thesis and organizational strategy; and each paragraph provides unified, coherent, and developed support for its thesis and subordinate assertions. If necessary, it properly documents sources. While the essay takes some “risks,” attempts complex strategies of development, and pays attention to audience, it falls short of the “A” essay in one or more of the following ways: the thesis may not be as interesting or insightful; there may be weaknesses in organizational strategy or its execution; the support may not be uniformly conclusive and convincing; and the style may not be as energetic or the diction as thoughtful. The essay shows strong evidence of editing since there are relatively few grammatical and/or mechanical errors.

---

**THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.**

## SYLLABUS AGREEMENT FORM

I, \_\_\_\_\_, (print name)  
have read the syllabus (either in paper or online) and understand the classroom  
policies, expectations, and rules as stated in the syllabus. By signing this form I agree  
to comply with the policies listed

Student signature \_\_\_\_\_

Panther ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## PLAGIARISM POLICY

### **Introduction**

This Code of Academic Integrity was adopted by the Student Government Association on November 28, 2001 and reflects the values articulated in the Student Code of Standards. 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 Florida International University.

### **Pledge**

As a student of this university:

- I will be honest in my academic endeavors.
- I will not represent someone else's work as my own.
- I will not cheat, nor will I aid in another's cheating.

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.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Panther ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_