

Religious Studies Department
REL 3308 Studies in World Religions -HYBRID
Fall 2019
Biscayne Bay Campus

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Office: TBD

Office Hours: Mondays

9:30am to 10:45am and by Appointment

Room #: Academic One 155

Class Days and Hours: W 11am-12:15pm

Why should we care about religion?

Sociologist Emile Durkheim saw religion as a part of the human condition, and while the content of religion might be different from society to society over time, religion will, in some form or another, always be a part of social life. Therefore, you do not need to be a religious person in order to be in contact with religion. This course will provide you the tools to learn and understand different religious beliefs from around the world and how they interact with your academic field.

Maybe Jesus was a Buddhist monk. Where exactly did your yoga class come from? Why are Native Americans some of the best eco-advocates today? Is Judaism a religion, a culture, or a tribe? It might be good to wonder if religion is a force for good or evil to begin with. Can we still be spiritual without being religious? These are not just entertaining questions but are highly relevant to your personal and professional development in our globalized world. In this interdisciplinary course, we will explore these questions and many more that emerge as we investigate humanity, religion, and the cosmos.

This is an introductory course to world religions and one of the many courses that complete the Global Learning requirement. Since it is an extensive subject, we will be focusing on some of the major religions of our world, examining them from its historical, sociological, anthropological, psychological, and ritualistic practices. Furthermore, we will also learn about religions that are no longer in practice and had influenced some of today's religions. We will analyze the differences and similarities between religions and associate their practices, beliefs, and applications to contemporary issues in our world.

What are the Objectives of the course?

- Demonstrate an understanding of themes, definitions, and symbols relating to religion.
- Compare and contrast the key underlying beliefs and principles of the major Eastern, Western, indigenous and shamanic religions.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the evolution and movement of religious beliefs from ancient to contemporary times.
- Evaluate religious truth claims as potential sources of knowledge.
- Demonstrate an increased empathetic awareness of religious diversity and differences.
- Appreciate the history, basic teachings, practices, and underlying beliefs and principles of some of the world religions, analyzing them in a critical way and understanding their similitudes and differences.

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

As a Global Learning course, students will meet the following objectives through text readings, assignments, and class discussions:

1. Students will be able to analyze topics in the field of religious studies from multiple perspectives.
2. Students will be able to assess how global issues and trends are interrelated with the development and practice of religions
3. Students will be able to demonstrate willingness to think creatively about religious issues in the contemporary world.

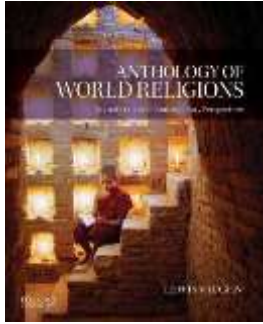
How does a hybrid course work?

In a hybrid course, 50% of the time dedicated to the course is in person, engaging in learning, clarifying concepts, debating, working in groups, and discussing and developing each of the concepts covered in the course. This course is taught in “reversed classroom” style, in which most of the work in class is done by students, and I will be there to clarify your questions and guide you in your work.

The other 50% of the time takes place outside the class, and it will be your responsibility to acquire all the knowledge required to the activities in class. This includes reading the textbook, writing papers, watching videos, reading articles, providing opinions on different topics, and posting weekly in a discussion board. My responsibility is to provide you with lots of material and activities for you to apply and put into practice the concepts learned in the readings, as well as

clarify all the questions that may arise from them. Your responsibility is to read the textbook and complete all assignments in a timely manner. This will enable us using the time in class to actively understand the concepts.

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



Anthology of World Religions: Sacred Texts and Contemporary Perspectives by Lewis Vaughn, Oxford University Press

ISBN-13: 978-0195332360

ISBN-10: 0195332369

- **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?

- **Ten 10-questions quizzes** –from which the lowest score will be dropped. The quizzes will be available for 24 hours in Canvas on Thursday (please consult the calendar for dates) and students will have 10 minutes to complete each quiz. You will have the chance to take each quiz twice if you want, and the average score will be kept as your final score.
- **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. The midterm will be available for 24 hours only
 - **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. The final will be available for 24 hours only on the determined by the university. You can consult Panthersoft later on in the semester for the day.
- **Research Paper:** Students will have to choose two different religions, and research, compare, and contrast one element that appears in both religions. A list of possible elements is listed in Canvas. You will have to use scholarly sources for this assignment, no websites or Wikipedia articles will be accepted. You will have to schedule a consultation with the professor in

order to get your topic approved and make sure you can find sources. Topic needs to be approved by 9/23, or points will be deducted you're your draft. You will be able to sign up in Canvas. Details and rubric are provided in Canvas

- **The essay has two components:**
 - **Bibliography and draft:** Should be 1000-1500 words and it is 30% of the final grade of the essay
 - **Final essay:** 1200-1800 words
- **Online activities.** Every week after covering a topic, you will have to submit one or two activities. Each activity will become available under the corresponding module and is due at midnight on Saturday, 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, and not well justified answers.
- **Group presentation:** This will be done at the beginning of each topic. The group will present on the religion being covered. Guidelines and Rubric are provided in Canvas. It should not be more than 15 minutes. Groups are required to collaborate online. I will monitor and grade your collaboration. Rubric is available in Canvas on the modules for the last two weeks of the semester.
- **Online Reflection:** Before covering each topic in class, you will have to read the textbook, post in the online discussion, and answer to someone else's post. There will be a prompt on the instructions of each the discussion on what you have to on. Take into consideration that I might bring some of your posts to be discussed in class. You will automatically lose 50 points if you don't respond to another student's post, and you will receive a zero grade if you do not post. Since these are intended to be online "discussions" (similar to conversations), late submissions or make ups will not be allowed under any circumstances. The online reflection is due on Sunday.
- **Attendance and participation:** Attendance to in person class is mandatory, and students are expected to engage in class discussion. Missing more than 2 classes (unexcused absences) in the semester will result in a zero grade for attendance and participation. Arriving late, leaving early, or stepping out of the class for long periods of time may incur an absence penalty. Participation includes reading for class, contributing to discussions, and being attentive to lectures and student presentations. Participation also includes introducing yourself in the online forum

Quizzes	10	100	900 (lowest score will be dropped)	15%
Midterm Exam	1	100	100	10%
Final Exam	1	100	100	10%
Draft and Bibliography	1	100	100	** This grade is 30% of the grade of your final essay. It will be reflected in your final essay's grade for final grade calculation**
Research Paper	1	100	100	15%
Online Activities	18	100	1800	15%
Group Presentation	1	100	100	10%
Online Reflection	14	100	1400	15%
Attendance and participation	1	100	100	10%
Total	48	N/A	4700	100%

Letter Grade	Range	Letter Grade	Range
A	95 and Above	C+	76-79
A-	90-94	C	70-75
B+	87-89	D	60-69
B	83-86	F	Below 60
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.
- **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 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 deadline 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.*

Course Calendar

	Due Online Topics, Learning Resources, and Tasks	Due In Person <i>All activities are to be done in class, the only thing to be done in advance is reading the chapter</i> Topics, Learning Resources, and Tasks
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self -introduction in Discussion board • Online Activity: Answer questions on syllabus • Online Reflection on Chapters 1 and 2 -8/31 • Read Chapters 1 and 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the course • Review of syllabus • Basic concepts and definitions • Kahoot- extra points in first quiz
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take quiz on Indigenous religions • Read Chapter on Hinduism • Online Activity #1: Read article on fact or opinion and take the quiz • Online Activity #2: Answer question in short essay format on indigenous religions readings • Online Reflection: on Hinduism • Schedule consultation appointment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor Day – No in person class
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Read chapter on Jainism</i> • <i>Quiz on Hinduism</i> • <i>Schedule consultation appointment for essay topic (Available dates and times listed in Canvas)</i> • Online activity: Watch video <i>Around the World in 80 Faiths, the Indian Sub-continent and answer the questions posted.</i> • Online Reflection <i>Jainism -</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Presentation on Hinduism • Review of main points • Class discussion on Dharma and Atman
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read chapter on Buddhism • <i>Take quiz on Jainism</i> • Online Activity: Watch movie on Untouchables and answer question 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recap on Hinduism • Group presentation on Jainism • In class activity: In groups discuss major similarities and differences between Hinduism

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Reflection on chapter on Buddhism 	and Jainism. Present conclusions
Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter on Sikhism • Quiz on Buddhism • Online activity #1: Answer questions on reading on Buddhism- • Online activity #2: Map out main points on Buddhism- Answering questions • Online Reflection on chapter on Sikhism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group presentation on Buddhism • Summary of main points <p>Kahoot for extra points in quiz</p>
Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read chapters on Daoism and Confucianism • Quiz on Sikhism- • Online Activity: Answer questions on Sikhism - • Online reflection on chapters on Daoism and Confucianism 8 - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Presentation on Sikhism • Watch video on Sikhism- Debate on nature of religion • Kahoot on Sikhism
Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midterm Exam • Read chapter on Zoroastrianism • Online Activity: Midterm review- • Online reflection on chapter on Zoroastrianism - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group presentation on Daoism • Group Presentation on Confucianism • In group: Discuss common elements in both traditions. Open up discussion
Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPRING BREAK
Week 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read chapter on Judaism • Quiz on Zoroastrianism- • Bibliography and draft due- • Online activity: Answer questions on readings on Zoroastrianism - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group presentation on Zoroastrianism • Summary of main points • Watch video on Zoroastrianism

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online reflection on chapter on Judaism - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open discussion: What elements of Zoroastrianism are found in other religions?
Week 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read chapter On Judaism (finish) and Christianity • Online activity: Answer questions on readings on Judaism - • Online reflection on chapter on Judaism - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group presentation on Judaism • Summary of main points: history, sacred scriptures, main beliefs, holidays • Submit questions for next week's kahoot. Each student will be given a card with a topic and they need to
Week 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read chapter on Christianity • Take quiz on Judaism - • Online Activity: Watch video on Jews and Buddhism and answer questions - • Online reflection: on chapter on Christianity- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish with Judaism • Group Presentation on Christianity • Summary of main points • compose a question on that topic. The questions will be used in next week's kahoot
Week 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read chapter on Islam • Quiz on Christianity - • Online Activity #1: Answer question on reading on Christianity - • Activity#2: Watch video and answer questions - • Online reflection on chapter Islam- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review main concepts on Christianity • Comparisson
Week 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read article posted on Religion and violence • Quiz on Islam - • Submit Research Paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group presentation on Islam • Summary of main points: Muhammad, 5 pillars, the scriptures, Sunnis, Shias, Sufism

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Activity: Answer questions on readings on Islam- • Online reflection on religion and violence- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kahoot
Week 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter on New Religious Movements • Online Activity: Answer questions on religion and violence and radical groups- • Online reflection on new religious movements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch video on radical Islam • Discussion on video content
Week 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz on Wicca and Baha'i - • Online Activity: Answer questions on readings on Wicca and Baha'i 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group presentation on Wicca • Group presentation on Baha'i • Open discussion on new religious movements. • Kahoot
Week 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take final exam. Date TBD by the university 	