

REL 3308-U04

(14920) Studies in World Religions

Spring 2020

Days and Times: M, W, F, 11:00 a.m. to 11:50 a.m.

Room: ZEB 120

Instructor: Adam D. Gorelick

Office Hours: M, W, 10:00 a.m. to 10:50 a.m.; by appointment

P: 305-348-4100 | F: 305-348-2118 | agorelic@fiu.edu



Course Description

This course examines the origins, teachings, and practices of selected world religions. The specific religions selected for examination may vary from semester to semester.

Course Outcomes

Students will be able to...

- Apply critical thinking skills to various topics in the field of religious studies.
- Explore the origins, nature, functions, and definitions of religion.
- Bracket out personal bias and attempt to understand the point of view of religious adherents.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the interrelatedness of local, global, international, and intercultural issues, trends, and systems—as pertaining to the development and practice of religions.
- Analyze topics in religious studies through multi-perspective analyses of local, global, international, and intercultural problems.
- Demonstrate willingness to think creatively about religious issues in the contemporary world and to engage in local, global, international, and intercultural problem solving.
- Conduct field research to better understand a religious community.
- Speak intelligently about the relationship between religion and other cultural phenomena such as art, literature, music, etc.

Global Learning Objectives

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.

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.

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

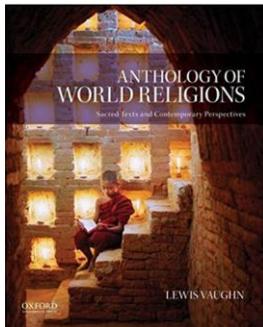
Course Learning Outcome: Students will demonstrate a willingness to engage in negotiation regarding actions of global import within the context of the class simulation.

Texts

Vaughn, Lewis. *Anthology of World Religions: Sacred Texts and Contemporary Perspectives*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. Print.

ISBN 13: 978-0195332360

ISBN-10: 0195332369



Additional selected readings will be assigned.

Gordon Rule Course

This is a Gordon Rule course which means you must demonstrate “college level writing skills” throughout your assignments. You will not receive any credit as a Gordon rule course for a C- or lower upon completion of this course. Your written assignments must show good control of grammar, style, and structure. Your papers must have a clear thesis, supporting material, and a conclusion.

Guidelines for Written Work

All written work must consistently adhere to the MLA Formatting and Style Guide. Students are advised to carefully proofread all papers before submitting them. All students are encouraged to take advantage of the University resources for writing to be found in the Center for Excellence in Writing, a full-service writing center providing writing assistance and feedback to university students. For more information, go to <http://writingcenter.fiu.edu/>.

All written work is submitted through Canvas, FIU’s Learning Management System. Plagiarism can result in expulsion from the university and will have a negative effect on your entire college career. All written work must include your name, Panther ID number, course number and the name of the professor on the title page. It must be double spaced, have 1-inch margins (top, bottom, left and right) and be typed in 12 point font, Times New Roman or Calibri.

Religious Holidays

Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students whose religious practices coincide with class requirements scheduling. Please make sure to notify your

instructor at the beginning of the semester of which dates you will be absent or any anticipated problems with completing course work.

Physical, Mental and Sensory Challenges

Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students who are so challenged. Should you require accommodations, contact the [Disability Resource Center](#) (DRC), if you have not done so already.” Please note that if you have a student who is registered with the DRC, you will receive notification about the student’s disability and a detailed description of accommodations the student will require.

Academic Conduct

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 to 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 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.

Note: Plagiarism will not be tolerated, and written assignments are to be submitted using turnitin.com technology.

Grading Scale

94 - 100 A
90 - 93 A-
87 - 89 B+
84 - 86 B
80 - 83 B –
77 - 79 C+
74 - 76 C
60 - 73 D
0 - 59 F

Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation – **15% of final grade**

Quizzes – Quizzes will be unannounced and will cover material from the readings and lectures. **15% of final grade**

Midterm Essay Exam – The midterm exam will be a take-home essay exam. Students will answer two of three questions (in total, 1000-word minimum). See below for dates. **20% of final grade**

Final Exam – The final exam will mostly cover key terms and ideas from the text and lectures. See below for date. **20% of final grade**

Research Proposal – Students will conduct a research paper on a topic of their choosing, subject to approval from the instructor. The instructor encourages students to be creative in selecting a specific topic that will appeal to them individually. A formal proposal is required and will count as **10% of final grade**. The proposal must include the following components:

1. An **overarching one-sentence research question** concerning either a specific aspect of a religion or some specific thematic approach to religion.
2. **Three supporting** research questions, **each** of which to be followed by **one sentence of elaboration** explaining why you are asking that question (i.e., how it will help you support the main overarching question from number 1 above.
3. A **preliminary annotated bibliography** with at least **3 academic sources**. An annotated bibliography requires a brief paragraph after each source listed. Use MLA guidelines to list each works-cited entry. Each supporting paragraph will (a) **summarize the content** of the source, (b) **critique its value**, and (c) **consider its usefulness** for the project at hand. Instructor will provide examples of annotated bibliographies.

Research Paper - The final draft of the research paper (1250-word minimum) will count as an additional **20% of final grade**. The bibliography or works cited must include at least 4 scholarly sources.

Calendar

Introduction: Syllabus and Overview

Week 1 (1/6 to 1/12)

The Beginning of Understanding

Week 2 (1/13 to 1/19)

Reading: Vaughn through ch. 1

Indigenous Religions: North America and Africa

Week 3 (1/20 to 1/26) [No Class Meeting MLK Day, 1/20]

Reading: Vaughn through ch. 2

Hinduism

Week 4 (1/27 to 2/2)

Reading: Vaughn through ch. 3

Jainism

Week 5 (2/3 to 2/9)

Reading: Vaughn through ch. 4

Buddhism

Week 6 (2/10 to 2/16)

Reading: Vaughn through ch. 5

Sikhism

Week 7 (2/17 to 2/23)

Reading: Vaughn through ch. 6

Midterm Take-Home Essay-Exam: available 2/14; due 2/21, 11:59 p.m.

Spring Break [No Class This Week: SPRING BREAK]

Week 8 (2/24 to 3/1)

Confucianism

Week 9 (3/2 to 3/8)

Reading: Vaughn through ch. 7

Daoism; Shinto

Week 10 (3/9 to 3/15)

Reading: Vaughn through ch. 8 and 9

Research Proposal: Due 3/16, 11:59 p.m.

Zoroastrianism

Week 11 (3/16 to 3/22)

Reading: Vaughn through ch. 10

Judaism

Week 12 (3/23 to 3/29)

Reading: Vaughn through ch. 11

Christianity

Week 13 (3/30 to 4/5)

Reading: Vaughn through ch. 12

Islam

Week 14 (4/6 to 4/12)

Reading: Vaughn through ch. 13

Research Paper Rough Draft: Due 4/8 in class - Print 2 hard copies and bring to class for peer-review workshop

New Religious Movements

Week 15 (4/13 to 4/19)

Reading: Vaughn through ch. 14

Research Paper: Due 4/18, 11:59 p.m.

Final Exam Week

Week 16 (4/20 to 4/25) Finals Week – **Final Exam: time and location TBA**

***This syllabus is subject to change. Please confirm with instructor that you have the latest version.**