REL 3308 Studies in World Religions

Summer A 2019 Syllabus and Learning Guide
Florida International University

Instructor: Ivanessa Arostegui
E-mail: iarosteg@fiu.edu or Canvas Inbox

When and where do we meet?
Class Discussions: Tue/Thu 10-1:20 pm in Glenn Hubert Library 170
Office Hours: TBA and by appointment
Questions? Religious Studies Department: 305-348-2186

What will we do together?

Look around you, the world is steeped in religion and this course is designed to help you uncover its complex nature. Without religious literacy you will not be able to see how religion has shaped your day-to-day life, your society, and ultimately our world.

Let’s ponder various questions throughout the semester together: What does religion mean to people? How are world religions and their sacred practices similar and how are they unique and different? Do religions evolve? What is religious extremism? How can we dispel common misconceptions about religion? Has atheism also become religious? To what extent does religion play a role in technology, science, medicine, and possibly even your own major?

We will explore the various histories, elements, and dimensions that make up today’s world religions. Class discussions, exams, as well as a research paper are all geared to make you really think and analyze the ins and outs of world religions. In essence you will explore how religions were formed, sustained, and how they are continually evolving, especially in this increasingly globalized world and economy.

Why is this relevant?

No matter whom you are or what major you have declared to study, everyone benefits from an enhanced global perspective. This perspective will allow you to think more clearly and critically, giving you the ability to communicate more effectively. This skill enables better collaboration that can ultimately achieve resolving conflict more peacefully and creatively.
What will you walk away with upon completing this global learning course?

- You will understand how an individual’s identity and outlook are shaped by religious influences, fostering appreciation and tolerance for religious and cultural diversity
- You will be able to compare and contrast key elements within Western, Eastern, and Indigenous beliefs and practices
- You will be able to explain the history, development, and evolution of the belief systems and practices of various religious communities
- You will be able to start applying critical thinking to important topics in the field of religious studies, like: art, ecology, politics, and women
- You will be able to appreciate the need and willingness to think creatively and critically about religious issues in a globalized context
- You will be able to evaluate your own and others’ religious views as they relate to a better understanding of yourself, others, and solving common problems
- You will be able to assess how global issues and trends are interrelated with the development and practice of religion

**Required Text**

Hopfe, L.M., and Woodward, M.R.  
*Religions of the World*  
Pearson Prentice Hall.

You may purchase the 11th, 12th, or 13th edition of the text

**Gordon Rule Course**

This is a Gordon Rule course which means you must demonstrate “college-level writing skills” throughout three different writing assignments. Your writing assignments must show good control over grammar, style, and structure. A clear thesis, supporting material, and conclusion must be evident. You will need a grade of a C or higher for successful completion of this course. **You should utilize the writing lab to improve your writing if needed.**
Grade Components

**20% PARTICIPATION 40% WRITING 40% TESTS**

Class: 20% Attendance/Participation/Discussion

Writing:
10% Reviewing a Scholarly Article
10% Research Paper (Draft)
20% Final Research Paper

Tests:
20% - Mid-term Exam/ MC and In-class Essay
20% - Final Exam/ MC and In-class Essay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Calendar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ 16ᵗʰ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewing a Scholarly Article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ 23ʳᵈ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ 28ᵗʰ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper Draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ 13ᵗʰ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ 14ᵗʰ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Attendance/Participation/Discussion/Readings**

You are allowed one absence but please keep in mind how your absences might impact your grade. Please notify me of religious observances. We will be using FIU Check-In this semester.

Engagement, discussion, and debate are required for this course.

Keeping up with the reading is foundational. You will be responsible for bringing a copy of your text to class. Please annotate all of your assigned readings. As an active reader you could highlight sections that either resonate with you or confuse you.

All readings are to be done for the week they appear on the course calendar below.
Reviewing a Scholarly Article

Some of you are still developing the skills to write a top-notch research paper. Great research rests on your ability to determine how credible a source can be. This assignment is created to help you develop the skill of finding a credible and strongly-argued scholarly article. This work will advance your ideas and analysis for your future research paper.

Specific requirements will be posted to Canvas.

Research Paper

You will write a 6-page paper during the semester.

The paper will be handed in twice:

- As a 3-page draft worth 10% of the final grade to be turned through turnitin.com via Canvas
- As a 6-page final paper worth 20% of the final grade to be turned in through turnitin.com via Canvas

For this paper you will be doing research within any world religion of your choosing and inside any topic of your choosing.

Specific requirements will be posted to Canvas.

Mid-term Exam

The mid-term will be a timed 50 question multiple-choice exam and a timed mid-term essay. The essay will target major concepts and ideas in the study of religion from the PowerPoint lectures, discussions, and text. Review will be posted on Canvas.

Final Exam

The final will be a timed 50 question multiple-choice exam and a timed mid-term essay. The essay will target major concepts and ideas in the study of religion from the PowerPoint lectures, discussions, and text. Review will be posted on Canvas.

No make-up final exams will be allowed unless previously scheduled in advance.

Turnitin

All writing assignments will all be submitted through turnitin via Canvas by 11:59 pm on the due dates specified on the course calendar.
Grading Scale

Each assignment will be graded on the following criteria:

- 50% Content
- 25% Grammar
- 25% Style and Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>87-89 B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>83-86 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>77-79 C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>70-76 C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>60-69 D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0-59 F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Disability Resources

Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss their specific situation as soon as possible. You are also encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center at 305-348-3532/ drc@fiu.edu. You should also visit the center to guarantee reasonable accommodations and receive proper documentation based on disability. I will work with the center to accommodate all types of needs. For more information please visit: https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/get-support/disability-resource-center/

Plagiarism

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. FIU has a strict policy on academic dishonesty and expects each student to submit work that is uniquely his or her own. All of this work must be done in accordance with established principles of academic integrity. Plagiarism, or attempting to pass off another’s work as your own, can fall into many different categories, including but not limited to:

1. A written work that is entirely stolen from another source
2. Using quotations from another source without properly citing them
3. Paraphrasing from another source without using proper citations

You are expected to understand the definition of plagiarism. Please review university resources to understand the different types of plagiarism at: http://integrity.fiu.edu/plagiarism.html. **Offenders will receive a 0 for the plagiarized assignment.**

Late Policy

For each late day I will deduct 10% off the total percentage for that assignment. The latest day an assignment will be accepted is THREE DAYS after its original due date with a 30% deduction from the late assignment. If you are experiencing any kind of emergency that prevents a timely submission I must be notified in advance for a possible extension.
Again, there will be no make-up final exams UNLESS previously scheduled.

**Course Calendar**
ALL POWERPOINTS AND CLIPS AND VIDEOS TO BE POSTED ON CANVAS***

**Week 1**

**Introduction to the Study of Religion**
- TED Talk: East v. West: The Myths that Mystify
- Readings: Chapter 1 / Pages 12-21
  Topics: The basics of religious experience and expression, capturing the heart and soul of religion

**Indigenous Religions**
- TED Talk: What the People of the Amazon Know that You Don’t
- Readings: Chapter 2 and 3 / Pages 22-52
  Topics: Traditions, shamans, Africana worldview, capturing the heart and soul of indigenous religions

**Week 2:**

**Hinduism**
- Film: India: The River
- Film: The Ramayana
- Readings: Chapter 4 / Pages 58-89
  Topics: The formative, classical, and post-classical eras in Hinduism, Hinduism and modernity, Hindu festival practice, religious institutions of contemporary Hinduism

**Reviewing a Scholarly Article: Canvas May 16th**

**Week 3:**

**Buddhism**
- Film: The Buddha
- Film: Walk with Me
- Readings: Chapter 6 / Pages 100-121
  Topics: The life of the Buddha, the formative and classical eras in Buddhism, Buddhism and modernity, general Buddhist ritual and practice

**Mid-term: In-class May 23rd**

**Week 4:**

**Judaism**
- Film: History of the Talmud
- Readings: Chapter 10 / Pages 178-201
  Topics: The formative and classical eras of Judaism, Judaism and modernity, general Jewish ritual and practice

**Research Paper Draft: Canvas May 28th**
Week 5:

Christianity
- Film: Ascetic Christianity
- Readings: Chapter 11 / Pages 202-237
  Topics: The life of Jesus Christ, the formative and classical eras of Christianity, Christianity and modernity, general Christian ritual and practice

Islam
- Film: Inside the Koran
- Film: Inside Mecca
- Readings: Chapter 12 / Pages 238-263
  Topics: The life of the Prophet Muhammad, the formative and classical eras of Islam, Islam and modernity, general Islamic ritual and practice

Week 6:

Final Exam: In-class June 13th

Research Paper Final Submission: Canvas June 14th

References

Academic Advising
https://exploratory.fiu.edu/

***This syllabus is subject to change as the course develops but any changes will be notified in a timely fashion.

Last Revised: 5/4/2019