

REL 2011 Introduction to Religion (Analysis and Interpretation)

Fall 2022

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

Room: Ziff Education Bldg 150

Instructor: Adam D. Gorelick

Office Hours: by appointment

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

E-mail: Students should regularly access the course online in canvas. The Inbox messaging system within canvas is the best way to contact the professor.

PLEASE NOTE: This syllabus is subject to minor changes. Students should e-mail the instructor with any questions about the assignments and schedule.

PLEASE NOTE: Academic freedom and responsibility are essential to the integrity of the University. The principles of academic freedom are integral to the conception of the University as a community of scholars engaged in the pursuit of truth and the communication of knowledge in an atmosphere of tolerance and freedom. The University serves the common good through teaching, research, scholarship/creative activities, and service. The fulfillment of these functions rests upon the preservation of the intellectual freedoms of teaching, expression, research, and debate. We affirm that academic freedom is a protected right in addition to a faculty member's constitutionally protected freedom of expression and is fundamental to the faculty member's responsibility to seek and to state truth as he or she sees it.

Students are encouraged to employ critical thinking and to rely on data and verifiable sources to interrogate all assigned readings and subject matter in this course as a way of determining whether they agree with their classmates and/or their instructor. No lesson is intended to espouse, promote, advance, inculcate, or compel a particular feeling, perception, viewpoint or belief.

Course Description

This course introduces methods of critical reflection on religion and some of their applications to fundamental topics such as knowledge, value, the sacred, the self, and human society. We will identify, examine, and respect particular examples from diverse religious traditions while also highlighting broad analytical themes helpful in defining religion generally. We will interpret these cross-cultural themes using methods from various academic disciplines.

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.

Texts

Livingston, James C. *Anatomy of the Sacred: An Introduction to Religion*.

6th ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2009.

ISBN-13: 978-0-13-600380-9

ISBN-10: 0-13-600380-X

Additional selected readings and other materials will be assigned through Canvas.

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 as turn-it-in assignments, which means that the instructor will be aware of plagiarism. Plagiarism can result in expulsion from the university and will have a negative effect on your entire 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 to turnitin.com.

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**

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Midterm Exam – The midterm exam will include questions about the material as well as a take-home essay response (1000-word minimum). See below for dates. **30% of final grade**

Formal 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 **30% of final grade**. The bibliography or works cited must include at least 4 scholarly sources plus information you gather in person either from an interview or a site-visit.

Calendar

Week 1 (8/22 to 8/28)

Class introductions, syllabus review, course plan, what is religion?

Reading: Livingston ch. 1

Week 2 (8/29 to 9/4)

Reading: Livingston ch. 2

Week 3 (9/5 to 9/11) **No Class on Labor Day, Monday 9/5**

No Class on Wednesday 9/7

Reading: Livingston ch. 3

Week 4 (9/12 to 9/18)

Reading: Livingston ch. 4

Week 5 (9/19 to 9/25) **No Class on Friday 9/23**

Reading: Livingston ch. 5

Week 6 (9/26 to 10/2) **No Class on Monday 9/26**

Reading: Livingston ch. 6

Week 7 (10/3 to 10/9) **No Class on Wednesday 10/5**

Reading: Livingston ch. 7

Week 8 (10/10 to 10/16) **Midterm Exam Questions 10/10 in class**

Reading: Livingston ch. 8

Week 9 (10/17 to 10/23) **Midterm Essay due 10/17, 11:59 p.m.**

Reading: Livingston ch. 9

Week 10 (10/24 to 10/30)

Reading: Livingston ch. 10

Week 11 (10/31 to 11/6) **Formal Research Proposal due Monday 11/7, 11:59 p.m.**

Reading: Livingston ch. 11

Week 12 (11/7 to 11/13)

Reading: Livingston ch. 12

Week 13 (11/14 to 11/20)

Reading: Livingston ch. 13

Week 14 (11/21 to 11/27) **No Class on Thanksgiving, Thursday 11/24**

Reading: Livingston ch. 14 **No Class on Turkey Sandwich Day, Friday 11/25**

Week 15 (11/28 to 12/4)

Reading: Livingston ch. 15

Week 16 (12/5 to 12/10) **Research Paper due 12/9, 11:59 p.m.**

Finals Week – No regular class meetings, **no** final exam