



REL 2011 Introduction to Religion

Section: B53

Hybrid/Certified

Fall Term 2023

Course Meeting Information

In-Person Class Meeting Times	
Day:	Wednesday
Time:	10:00 AM - 11:15 AM
Location:	Academic One 228

Professor Information

Valeria Schindler

Contact: Vschindl@fiu.edu

Office: Academic One 351

Office Hours:

Wednesday 11:15am to 12pm and any other week day via Zoom by appointment

Additional Notes:

I am available to meet with you on Wednesday when we meet for our in person part of the course. I am also available via Zoom on any other day of the week. Make sure to

send me an email to schedule an appointment

Valeria Schindler

Contact: vschindl@fiu.edu

Office Hours:

Wednesdays 11:15am to 12pm

Course Description and Purpose

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.

Why do bad things happen to good people? Is religion irrelevant in our fast-paced technological world? Does the sacred look the same across traditions? How can the study of religion help us understand current events? Is religion a creative or destructive force? How does the study of religion relate to your major? These are just some of the questions that we will explore throughout the semester.

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 for 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.

Course Goals

This course is interested in examining the different expressions, practices, and interpretations of religion from an interdisciplinary perspective, and one of the many courses that complete the Global Learning requirement. Although no particular tradition will be favored, materials from several traditions will be chosen to exemplify thematic topics in the experience of the Sacred. We will also focus on the tenets of religions, dispelling common misconceptions and assumptions and looking into the emergence of new practices among the post-denominational generation.

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

1. **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.

2. **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.

3. **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.

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Understand the complexity of the definitions of religion and secularization.
- Dissect the universal forms of religious experience and expression such as sacred symbols, rituals, myths, scriptures, ethics, and communities.
- Identify religious themes and patterns that shape our everyday life.
- Recognize the strength of utilizing different approaches, theories, and methodologies to better understand the study of religion.
- Evaluate the interrelationship between the student's own and other's religious views in order to avoid uninformed assumptions.
- Develop college-level academic writing and communication skills.
- Identify key thinkers such as Marx, Jung, and Weber and their interdisciplinary theories about the patterns and paradoxes of sacred experiences across traditions.

Expectations of the Course

This is a hybrid course, which means a lot of the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in a hybrid course are the same as for a traditional course. In fact, hybrid courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills which can make these courses more demanding for some students.

Course Communication- how to contact your professor

- Communication in this course will take place via the Inbox. [Check out the Canvas Conversations Help Desk](#) to learn how to communicate with your instructor and peers using Announcements, Discussions, and the Inbox. You can also email me at vschindl@fiu.edu. I will reply to your email within 24 hours, unless you sent an email on a holiday or weekend.

Attendance Policy: Attendance to in-person meetings is mandatory, and students are expected to engage in class discussion. Missing more than 3 classes (unexcused absences) in the semester will result in a zero grade for attendance and participation. Arriving late or leaving early, or stepping out of the class for long periods of time may incur an absence penalty. Excused absences are those related to religious holidays or illness (for the last one you need to show proper documentation). Participation includes reading for class, contributing to discussions, being attentive to lectures and student presentations, and completing an exit ticket activity by the end of the day in which we meet. Participation also includes introducing yourself in the online forum

Students are expected to:

- review the getting started page located in the course modules;
- introduce yourself to the class during the first week by posting a self-introduction in the appropriate discussion;
- take the practice quiz to ensure that your computer is compatible with the learning management system, Canvas;
- interact online with instructor and peers;
- review and follow the course calendar and weekly outlines;
- log in to the course 3-5 times per week;
- respond to discussions by the due date specified. No late work will be accepted;
- respond to emails within 1-2 days;
- submit assignments by the corresponding deadline;

The instructor will:

- log in to the course at least 5-times a week;
- respond to discussion postings within 2 days of the deadline;
- respond to emails within 24 hours during the week, within 48 hours during the weekend;
- grade assignments within 2 days of the assignment deadline. In the case of essays, within 7 to 10 days

Late Assignment policy

- Late assignments are accepted for online activities with a 20 point penalty per late day.
- Late essays are accepted with a 2 point penalty per late day, up to 16 points. No essays will be accepted beyond Week 13 of the semester
- No late submissions of online discussions are accepted
- Quizzes and the midterm exam can be re-scheduled if a reason is provided at least 5 days prior to the scheduled day.
- No Make up dates are provided 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. You will have to write a one-page summary of the lecture for one extra credit point. If you want, you can write a two-page analysis linking the lecture to the content of the class for up to two more points. Reports need to be well written with good grammar. A maximum of 6 extra credit points could be awarded. Please refer to the list of events provided in the course resources module. Extra credit reports need to be sent via email by the second to last week of the semester.

Assignments

- **A 1000-1500 words opinion paper on globalization and religion**

- Is globalization good for religion or not? Students will have to read the article posted in Canvas and use the arguments that appeal them the most to build their opinion on the topic. Detailed information is provided in the modules section in Canvas . Note that this essay has two parts. An introduction with a clear thesis and the way you are going to prove it will be submitted first for a peer review.

- **A 1000-1500-words essay. “Experiencing religion around me.”**

- In this assignment students will be required to keep a journal for 5 days and then write a reflection paper stating how religion appears in their every-day life. Students need to submit the journal first, for which I will provide feedback, and then the reflection paper. Detailed information is provided in the modules section in Canvas

- **Online activities**

- Every week after covering a topic, you will have to submit one or two activities. Each activity is available under the corresponding module and is due at midnight on Sunday. All the due dates are listed on the course’s calendar. I do accept late submissions for the activities, with a 20-point deduction per late day. Points will also be deducted for poor grammar or typos, and not well justified answers.

- **Online Reflection (Discussion)**

- Before covering each topic in class, you will have to read the textbook, post in the online Reflection, and answer to someone else’s post. There will be a prompt on the week’s reflection that you will have to address, and then you will have to comment on at least one of your peers’ posts. Your first submission should be done by Friday night, and you will have time until Sunday (due date of the discussion) to submit your comment. Keep in mind that your postings will likely be seen by other members of the course and I

might bring some of your posts to be discussed in class. Care should be taken when determining what to post. You will automatically lose 40 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.

- **Group Work: Create your own religion.**

- Throughout the semester, you will be applying the knowledge gained by creating a religion. This will be done in groups in class, but collaboration in Canvas outside the classroom will be required. Your group will be set up in Canvas and you will have access to different tools to collaborate. You will be required to post your progress online and I will monitor it weekly providing you with feedback. Each group will present their religion at the end of the semester in class. Rubric is available in Canvas on the modules for the last two weeks of the semester. Information on the group work and instructions on how to join a group can be found in the Class Resources Module.

- **Exit Ticket**

- Each student will have a chance to fill out an exit ticket at the end of the in-person class, which is going to be something related to what happened during the meeting. Sometimes it could be an activity performed at the end of the class

Assessments

- **Six 10-questions quizzes**—from which the lowest score will be dropped at the end of the semester.
 - The quizzes will be available for five (5) days in Canvas, opening on Wednesday after class and closing at the end of the day on Sunday. Students

have 10 minutes to complete each quiz. You will have the chance to take each quiz twice if you want, and the highest 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 one hour and ten minutes to complete it. The midterm will be available for five (5) days in Canvas, opening on Thursday and closing at the end of the day on Sunday.
- **Final:** will cover from second half of the semester and will include multiple choice, and true and false questions. Students will have one hour and ten minutes to complete it. The final will be available for four days around the date set by the university. You can consult Panthersoft later on in the semester for the day.
 - *In order to mitigate any issues with your computer and online assessments, it is very important that you take the "Practice Quiz" from each computer you will be using to take your graded quizzes and exams. It is your responsibility to make sure your computer meets the minimum hardware requirements.*
 - *All assessments will auto-submit when (1) the timer runs out OR (2) the closing date/time is reached, whichever happens first. For example, if a quiz has a closing time of 5:00 pm but the student begins the exam at 4:55 pm, the student will only have 5 minutes to complete the quiz.*
 - Assessments in this course are not compatible with mobile devices and should not be taken through a mobile phone or a tablet. If you need further assistance please contact FIU Canvas Help Team.

Grading

Insert notes about grading here. You may want to use something similar to the table below. Edit or remove the table as needed for your course.

Example:

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Points for Each	Total Points Available	Weight
Quizzes	6	100	500 (lowest will be dropped)	15%
Midterm Exam	1	100	100	10%
Final Exam	1	100	100	10%
Opinion Paper on Globalization and Religion	1	100	100	10%
Essay: Experiencing Religion Around Me	1	100	100	15%
Online Activities	11	100	1100	10%
Group Work: Create your own religion	1	100	100	10%
Online Reflection (Discussions)	13	30	390	10%
Attendance and Participation	1	100	100	5%
Exit Ticket	15	5	75	5%
Total	62	930	2895	100%

Letter Grade Distribution Table

Letter	Range %	Letter	Range %	Letter	Range %
A	95 and Above	B	83-86	C	70-76
A-	90-94	B-	80-82	F	60-69
B+	87-89	C+	77-79	F	59 or less

Textbook and Course Materials for Purchase

If no materials listed, no items are needed.

ANATOMY OF THE SACRED:INTRO. TO RELIGION

Required/Recommended: This Textbook is Required

Authors: James C. Livingston

Publisher: Pearson

Publication Date: 2009

Copyright Date: 2009

ISBN 10: 0-13-600380-X

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

Notes: Make sure you have the textbook by the beginning of the semester, as you will be required to read it the entire semester. We will be using the 6th. edition

Panther Book Pack Undergraduate Rental Program

FIU has implemented the Panther Book Pack rental program, which provides your required print and digital course materials at a flat rate of \$20 per undergraduate credit hour. When you registered for your classes this session, you were notified via email of the required course materials that are included in the Panther Book Pack. The Panther Book Pack program applies to all undergraduate credit hours per academic session. I recommend that you review the pricing for all materials across your classes this session

compared to the Panther Book Pack flat rate. If the Panther Book Pack is not your best option, you may opt out up to three days after the add/drop deadline. You may opt back into the Panther Book Pack up to three days after the add/drop deadline. If you do not opt out of the Panther Book Pack rental program, you will be charged \$20 per credit hour and the course materials will be reserved for you for the undergraduate courses for which you are registered. For more details, visit bookpack.fiu.edu

Course Communication

Communication in this course will take place via the Canvas Inbox. Check out the [Canvas Conversations Tutorial](#) or [Canvas Guide](#) to learn how to communicate with your instructor and peers using Announcements, Discussions, and the Inbox. I will respond to all correspondences within 24 hours, unless you send me a message on the weekend.

You can also send me an email at vschindl@fiu.edu

Zoom Video Conference

Zoom is a video conference tool that you can use to interact with your professor and fellow students by sharing screens, chatting, broadcasting live video/audio, and taking part in other interactive online activities. We will be utilizing this tool to conduct Office hours when needed

Zoom meetings can be accessed via the Zoom link in the course navigation menu. Once you click on the Zoom link, it will route you to join the meeting for the respective class session. You will also be able to view upcoming meetings, previous meetings that you have already joined, and meeting recordings. Before joining an actual class session:

- Reference the [Zoom Student Tutorials](#) to learn about the tool, how to access your meeting room, and share your screen.
- Access the [Zoom Test Meeting Room](#) to test out the software before joining an actual session.

If you encounter any technical difficulties, please contact the [FIU Canvas Help Team](#). Please ensure you contact support immediately upon the issue occurring.

Policies

Please review the [FIU's Policies webpage](#). The policies webpage contains essential information regarding guidelines relevant to all courses at FIU, as well as additional information about acceptable netiquette for online courses. For additional information, please visit [FIU's Policy and Procedure Library](#).

As a member of the FIU community, you are expected to be knowledgeable about the behavioral expectations set forth in the [FIU Student Conduct and Honor Code](#).

Technical Requirements and Skills

One of the greatest barriers to student success is a lack of basic computer literacy. By computer literacy, we mean being able to manage and organize computer files efficiently and learning to use your computer's operating system and software quickly and easily. Keep in mind that this is not a computer literacy course, but students enrolled in online courses are expected to have moderate proficiency in using a computer. Please go to the [What's Required webpage](#) to find out more information on this subject

Privacy Policy Statements for Partners and Vendors

- [Canvas](#)
- [Microsoft](#)
- [Adobe](#)
- [YouTube](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [ProctorU](#)
- [HonorLock](#)

- [Turnitin](#)
- [OpenStax](#)
- [Zoom](#)
- [Respondus LockDown Browser](#)

Please visit our [Technical Requirements webpage](#) for additional information.

Accessibility and Accommodation

The Disability Resource Center collaborates with students, faculty, staff, and community members to create diverse learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive, and sustainable. The DRC provides FIU students with disabilities the necessary support to successfully complete their education and participate in activities available to all students. If you have a diagnosed disability and plan to utilize academic accommodations, please contact the Center at 305-348-3532 or visit them at the Graham Center GC 190.

For additional assistance please contact [FIU's Disability Resource Center](#).

Web Accessibility Statements for Partners and Vendors

- [Canvas](#)
- [Microsoft](#)
- [Adobe](#)
- [YouTube](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [ProctorU](#)
- [HonorLock](#)
- [Turnitin](#)
- [OpenStax](#)

- [Zoom](#)
- [Respondus LockDown Browser](#)

Please visit accessibility.fiu.edu for additional information about accessibility at FIU.

Academic Integrity

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 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 Conduct and Honor Code.

Academic Misconduct includes:

Cheating

- The unauthorized use of any materials, information, study aids or assistance from another person on any academic assignment or exercise, unless explicitly authorized by the course Instructor;
- Assisting another student in the unauthorized use of any materials, information, study aids, unless explicitly authorized by the Instructor; and
- Having a substitute complete any academic assignment or completing an academic assignment for someone else, either paid or unpaid;

Plagiarism

- The deliberate use and appropriation of another's work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the Student's own.

- Assisting another student in the deliberate use and appropriation of another's work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the student's own.

Artificial Intelligence - AI

- Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all writing assignments should be prepared by the student. Developing strong competencies in this area will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, AI-generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism.

Ethics still matter and plagiarism is a serious offense.

Learn more about the [academic integrity policies and procedures](#) as well as [student resources](#) that can help you prepare for a successful semester.

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Panthers Care & Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

If you are looking for help for yourself or a fellow classmate, Panthers Care encourages you to express any concerns you may come across as it relates to any personal behavior concerns or worries you have, for the classmate's well-being or yours; you are encouraged to share your concerns with [FIU's Panthers Care website](#).

[Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) offers free and confidential help for anxiety, depression, stress, and other concerns that life brings. Professional counselors are available for same-day appointments. Don't wait to call (305) 348-2277 to set up a time to talk or visit the online self-help portal.

Inclusivity

This course will serve to embrace the diversity and inclusivity found within Florida International University. We appreciate and respect diversity, equality, equity, cooperativeness, community, and sustainability within our online courses. We are committed to the ongoing education of our students and their participation within the course regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, geographical location, religion, and disability. We strive in encouraging collaboration by preparing our students to value the differences in others. At the core of our intentions is the encouragement of acceptance and appreciation of differences within our student population and community.

Copyright

The following conduct is prohibited by the Student Conduct and Honor Code. A lack of familiarity with University policy is not a defense to a violation of this Code. Unless specifically noted, the intent is not a required element to establish a policy violation. The following conduct violation or any attempt to violate the Code will be used in charging all Students or Student Organizations;

Section 5 | Conduct Violations - g. Computer Misuse

- vii. Unauthorized distribution or downloading of copyrighted materials, including but not limited to, unauthorized peer-to-peer file sharing. This is a violation whether the user is using their own personal computer or the University's information technology system for unauthorized distributions.

Copyright Statement: The materials and content in this course are provided solely for student use during the course. Course materials may not be shared outside of the course or with any third party without the explicit permission of the instructor or content publisher. Visit FIU [Library's Copyright Lib Guide](#) to learn more about copyright law and restrictions.

Additional Resources:

- [Student Conduct and Honor Code](#)
- [Digital Millennium Copyright Act Policy](#)
- [FIU - Copyright Guidance for Students](#)

- [FIU Library's Copyright Lib Guide](#)