Course Syllabus

REL 3076: New Religious Movements

Instructor Information Table



Erin Weston

Instructor Information

Email: eweston@fiu.eduPhone: 305-348-1329

• Office: DM 322B, MMC

Office Hours: Zoom By appointment

• Turn Around: 24-48 hours

Course Time Zone | Eastern Standard Time (EST). Course due dates are according to this time zone.

General Information

Course Description and Purpose

Since the 1960s, there has been a vast increase in New Religious Movements around the world. We will investigate the beliefs, practices, and symbolism of several New Religious Movements. Additionally, we will look at how these groups formed in order to better understand their relationships with more traditional mainstream religions and society at large. We will also look at how these groups attract followers, and some of the accusations posed against these groups and their leaders. More generally, students will ponder the relationship between human rights, religious freedom and the role of government.

Course Objectives

Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Students will be able to:

 Express a general understanding of the scholarly categories of: religion, church, sect, cult, denomination, and New Religious Movement.

- Explain key theories about how and why New Religious Movements develop, and how they generate and maintain a following.
- Compare and analyze these New Religious Movements in relation to their more mainstream counterparts by exploring their beliefs, practices, and symbols.
- Articulate one's own beliefs about the role of New Religious Movements in the larger religious world, and how other aspects of society, including governments, ought to respond to these groups.

Global Learning Objectives

- **Global Awareness:** Students will be able to situate New Religious Movements within interrelated contemporary and historical contexts.
- Global Perspective: Students will be able to develop an analysis of a core religious concept
 (e.g., the nature of God, reincarnation, karma, justice, etc.) via the perspective of multiple New
 Religious Movements.
- Global Engagement: Students will demonstrate a willingness to engage in an ongoing dialogue about current global concerns in order to address problems arising from the interaction between global concerns and local religious beliefs and practices as manifested in New Religious Movements

This is a Global Learning Discipline-Specific course that counts towards your Global Learning graduation requirement.

Important Information

Policies

Course Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Proctored Exam Policy

There are not proctored exams for this course.

Disclaimer

The ideas and materials presented in this course do not necessarily represent the ideas and beliefs of the professor, nor those of the university at large. The beliefs systems found within these various new religious groups, cults, and sects will range from curious and benign to racist, homophobic, misogynist, incendiary and downright dangerous. One goal of the course is to provide the students with a wide range of examples to explore in order to better understand the true diversity found within the realm of the religious. In addition to the scholarly articles in your textbooks, I have provided a variety of source materials. Some of these materials, e.g., videos and websites, are "official" sources from the groups, while other sources may be produced by members. Conversely, I have also added some materials that were clearly created by the various groups' detractors to allow for additional perspectives. There are also non-academic materials, for which I cannot attest to their veracity, but I felt that they add important elements at least in regards to the popular beliefs about the groups.

It is also important to note that I, nor the university, do not endorse or deny the validity or right to exist of any particular group, no matter how personally offended I may be by their beliefs and practices. While religion can be personal, this is an academic course taken for college credit and thus students are expected to examine the topics rigorously. Religion shall not be exempt from the scrutiny placed on any and all academic subjects.

This means that class participants can expect academic freedom to express their views. Students are not being graded on their opinions, beliefs, or values. I sincerely encourage (and expect!) that students will contribute to the discussion honestly. Feel free to free to critique and analyze the various groups' ideas and practices, as well as your texts and other materials. Given that this is an academic setting, it is important to do our best to refrain from polemical attacks by avoiding disrespectful or derisive commentary, and articulating our criticism into well-substantiated arguments.

As the student, it is your job to THINK and decide what you believe in regards to these and any other materials. As the professor, it is my job to present you with a wide variety of theoretical constructs and source materials, and to help you understand these materials as you go through the learning process and expand your vision of reality.

Academic Freedom

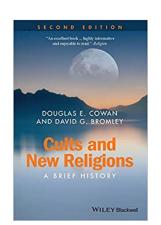
Academic freedom and responsibility are essential to the integrity of the University. The principles of academic freedom are integral to the conception of the University as a community of scholars engaged in the pursuit of truth and the communication of knowledge in an atmosphere of tolerance

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/she sees it.

Academic freedom does not only relate to scholarship and pedagogy. Students also have the academic freedom with the university setting. 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.

Textbook and Course Materials

Textbook Table



Cults and New Religions: A Brief History - Required

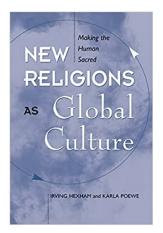
Douglas E. Cowan and David G. Bromley

Blackwell Publishing: MA (2008)

ISBN 10: 1405161280

ISBN 13: 978-1405161282

You may purchase your textbook online at the <u>FIU Bookstore</u> (http://fiu.bncollege.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/BNCBHomePage? storeId=21551&catalogId=10001).



New Religions as Global Cultures: Making the Human Sacred - Required (on Perusall)

Irving Hexham and Karla Poewe

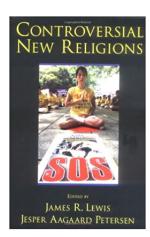
Westview Press, Boulder: CO. (1997)

ISBN 10: 0813325080

ISBN 13: 9780813325088

You may purchase your textbook online at the <u>FIU Bookstore</u> ⇒ (http://fiu.bncollege.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/BNCBHomePage?

storeId=21551&catalogId=10001)



Controversial New Religions - Required

James R. Lewis (Editor) & Jesper Aagaard Petersen (Editor)

Oxford University Press, Oxford: UK (2005)

ISBN 10:0195156838

ISBN 13:9780195156836

You may purchase your textbook online at the FIU Bookstore

 $(\underline{http://fiu.bncollege.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/BNCBHomePage?}$

storeId=21551&catalogId=10001)

Expectations of this Course

This is an online course, which means most (if not all) of the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in an online course are the same for a traditional course. In fact, online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills which can make these courses more demanding for some students.

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Students are expected to:

- Review the how to get started information located in the course content
- Introduce yourself to the class during the first week by posting a self introduction in the appropriate discussion forum
- Take the practice quiz to ensure that your computer is compatible with Canvas
- Interact online with instructor/s and peers
- Review and follow the course calendar

The instructor will:

- log in to the course daily:
- respond to emails within 24 hours;
- grade assignments within 2 weeks of the assignment deadline.

Course Detail

Course Communication

Conversations Tutorial (https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Video-Guide/Inbox-Overview-All-Users/ta-p/383696) or Canvas Guide (https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10574-4212710325) to learn how to communicate with your instructor and peers using Announcements, Discussions, and the Inbox.

The message feature is a private, internal communication system. Users must log on to Canvas system to send/receive/read messages. It is recommended that students check their messages routinely to ensure up-to-date communication.

This is the best method to communicate with your instructor privately. The instructor will also use the Announcement feature of Canvas for class announcements.

Assignments

Discussion / Blog Forums

There will be six blog topics. All students are required to participate in at least five topics (at least 250 words), so you will have one "free" topic that you can skip without a penalty. Students must post well thought-out comments based on the required work throughout the semester. Participation is required and represents 15% of your final grade. Both the quantity and the quality of your posts will contribute to your grade. Discussions must be posted during the period they are assigned and are due by 11:59 pm on the Monday which ends that particular lesson.

Once you have composed your original posting, take some time to carefully review other postings. Pick two that are most interesting to you and provide meaningful, detailed, and constructive feedback.

Keep in mind that forum blog posts are viewed by the whole class, and care should be taken when determining what to post.

Annotation Assignments

You will access the book chapters of *New Religions as Global Cultures: Making the Human Sacred* through Perusall, a tool for collaborative annotations. You are required to contribute at least 4 high-

quality annotations for every chapter and are encouraged to interact with your peers by commenting on their annotations.

Journaling

There will be weekly journal reflections, which will only be seen by the student and the professor. These reflections will only be graded that they were completed, but not for content. This will provide an opportunity for students to interact privately with the professor in regards to the course content. Journals may be a short paragraph, but must be turned in on time to receive credit. Altogether, the journal entries will be worth 8% of your overall grade.

One-Minute Papers

There will be two one-minute papers during the semester. They are worth 1.5% each and will be due before your exams.

Quizzes

There will ten short online quizzes throughout the semester which will help you to prepare for the exams. Quizzes will be based on the materials presented in the PowerPoints, Readings and Videos. Each quiz will cover one section and will consist of multiple choice, fill in the blank, and true and false questions. There will be 10 questions on each quiz and once you open the quiz you will have 15 minutes to complete and submit it. You will have two attempts at each quiz and the highest grade will be used. All of the quizzes will be averaged together for a final grade which is worth 15% of your final grade. A quiz will be available from Monday 12:00 am till Monday 11:59 pm of the following week. The due date on quizzes is extended when the Monday falls on a holiday observed by the University.

Please note that the inclusion of relevant websites is only for student interest and will not be featured in the guizzes.

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 http://online.fiu.edu/future_whats_required.html).

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 Online Support Services.

Exams

There will be two non-cumulative exams based on the readings and materials covered throughout the course. Each exam which will be comprised of 50 multiple choice, true and false, fill in the blank, and short essay questions, and each question will be worth 2 points. Each exam will be worth 15% of your final grade and can only be attempted one time. Once you open an exam, you will have 60 minutes to complete and submit it.

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 https://distance.fiu.edu/students/requirements/).

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 Online Support Services.

Paper & Presentation

There will be one paper analyzing a New Religious Movement (NRM) with an accompanying presentation. The paper will be at least 1500 words double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 font. This is a formal academic essay and students must cite their sources. MLA is the preferred citation style in Religious Studies.

Submission: Students must submit their essays to Turnitin. Review the detailed <u>Turnitin Instructions</u> on how to submit your assignments (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/pages/how-to-submit-a-turnitin-assignment) and how to review the Grademark comments (feedback).

Each person will create a presentation for the class, which will either be a PowerPoint or a video presentation. These presentations will be shared with the class through the discussion. Students are expected to review their classmates' presentations and the final quiz will be based on the presentations. This presentation will be worth 12% of your overall grade.

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 an introduction and syllabus review at the beginning of the semester.

Zoom Meetings will be held on the following dates/time:

Use this link to access the Zoom Test Meeting Room. This meeting room is available to test out the software before joining an actual session.

Reference the provided links to access Zoom student tutorials to learn about the tool, how to access your meeting room, and share your screen.

- <u>Download Zoom</u> ⇒ (https://zoom.us/support/download).
- Login to Zoom through Desktop Application
 — (https://fiu.service-now.com/sp?
 id=kb_article&sys_id=4483f98adbdc37484968fbf9af9619a5)
- Enable and Test Audio & Webcam → (https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362283-How-Do-I-Join-or-Test-My-Computer-Audio-).
- <u>Schedule a meeting</u> ⇒ (https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362413-How-Do-I-Schedule-Meetings-) or <u>Join a Zoom meeting</u>. ⇒ (https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362193-How-Do-I-Join-A-Meeting-)
- Invite others to join meeting.

 (https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362183)
- <u>Chat (Professors) Students look at attendees section for instructions</u>

 (https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/205761999-Webinar-Chat).
- <u>Share My Screen</u> <u>□→ (https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362153-How-Do-I-Share-My-Screen-)</u>.
- Record a Local Zoom meeting.

 (https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362473-How-do-l-record-a-meeting-)
- Host Control in Meetings.

 (https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362603-Who-Is-The-Host-Of-The-Meeting-)
- <u>Getting Started with iOS.</u> ⇒ (https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362993-Getting-Started-with-iOS)

Grading

Course Grades Distribution Table

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Points for Each	Weight
Exam 1	1	100	15%
Exam 2	1	100	15%
Quizzes	10	100	10%
Discussion/Blog	8	10	11%
Perusall Annotations	9	10	10%
Journal	6	1	6%
One-Minute Papers	2	10	3%
Paper	1	100	15%
Presentation	1	100	15%
Total	30	N/A	100%

Letter Grade Distribution Table

Letter	Range%	Letter	Range%	Letter	Range%

Α	95 or above	В	83 - 86	С	70 - 76
A-	90 - 94	B-	80 - 82	D	60 - 69
B+	87 - 89	C+	77 - 79	F	59 or less

Course Calendar

Access your <u>Weekly Schedule</u> (<u>https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/pages/course-content-weekly-schedule</u>) for course topics and assignments covered each week.

Course Time Zone | Eastern Standard Time (EST). Course due dates are according to this time zone

Course Summary:

Date	Details Du
Mon Aug 28, 2023	Introduce Yourself Video (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304372)
Sun Sep 3, 2023	Annotation Assignment Chapter 1 due by 11:59p (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2370800)
Tue Sep 5, 2023	Quiz 01 - Requires Respondus LockDown Browser
	Reflection Journal 1 due by 11:59p (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304377)
Sun Sep 10, 2023	Annotation Assignment Chapter 2 due by 11:59p

(https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2370830)
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Mon Sep 11, 2023	FN Blog Discussion #1- Lesson 2 due by 11:59pm (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304371)
	Quiz 02 - Requires Respondus LockDown Browser due by 11:59pm (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304357)
Sun Sep 17, 2023	Annotation Assignment Chapter 3 due by 11:59pm (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2370832)
Mon Sep 18, 2023	Blog Discussion #2 - Lesson due by 11:59pm (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304370)
	Quiz 03 - Requires Respondus LockDown Browser
	Reflection Journal 2 (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304378) due by 11:59pm
Sun Sep 24, 2023	Annotation Assignment Chapter 4 due by 11:59pm (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2371103)
Mon Sep 25, 2023	FN Blog Discussion #3- Lesson 4 due by 11:59pm (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304369)
	Quiz 04 - Requires Respondus LockDown Browser due by 11:59pm (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304352)
Sun Oct 8, 2023	Annotation Assignment Chapter 5 due by 11:59pm (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2371165)

Blog Discussion #4 - Lesson due by 11:59pm <u>5</u> (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304368) Pre-Midterm One-Minute due by 11:59pm **Paper** (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304376) Tue Oct 10, 2023 Quiz 05 - Requires Respondus LockDown Browser due by 11:59pm (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304351) Reflection Journal 3 (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304379) Midterm (Exam 1) - Requires Mon Oct 16, 2023 Respondus LockDown Browser due by 11:59pm (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304358) Annotation Assignment Sun Oct 29, 2023 **Chapter 6** due by 11:59pm (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2372018) Blog Discussion #5 - Lesson due by 11:59pm (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304367) Quiz 06 - Requires Mon Oct 30, 2023 Respondus LockDown Browser due by 11:59pm (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304353) Reflection Journal 4 due by 11:59pm (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304380) Annotation Assignment **Chapter 7** Sun Nov 5, 2023 due by 11:59pm (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2372212) **■ Blog Discussion #6 - Lesson**

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due by 11:59pm

(https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304366) Mon Nov 6, 2023 Quiz 07 - Requires Respondus LockDown Browser due by 11:59pm (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304359) Annotation Assignment Sun Nov 19, 2023 **Chapter 9** due by 11:59pm (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2372240) Blog Discussion #7 - Lesson due by 11:59pm (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304365) New Religious Movements due by 11:59pm **Analysis Paper** (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304374) Quiz 08 - Requires Mon Nov 20, 2023 Respondus LockDown Browser due by 11:59pm (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304355) Reflection Journal 5 due by 11:59pm (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304381) First Draft - New Religious **Movement Analysis Paper** due by 11:59pm (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2423183) Annotation Assignment Sun Dec 3, 2023 **Chapter 8** due by 11:59pm (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2372263) NRM Documentary Review **Blogs - Replacement Blog** due by 11:59pm (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304363)

Pre-Final One-Minute Paper

(https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304375)

Mon Dec 4, 2023 **Quiz 09 - Requires** Respondus LockDown Browser due by 11:59pm (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304354) **Student Presentations & Responses** due by 11:59pm (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304364) Extra Credit 1 due by 11:59pm (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304373) Final (Exam 2) - Requires Respondus LockDown Browser due by 11:59pm (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304360) Sat Dec 9, 2023 **Quiz 10 - Presentations** due by 11:59pm (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304362) Reflection Journal 6

Making the most of learning
with Perusall
(https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2382159)

(https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/178142/assignments/2304382)