FIU | FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

REL 3308 Studies in World Religions

Section: RVD

Internet/Fully Online

Fall Term 2023

Professor Information

Erin Weston

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Office: DM 322B (MMC)

Office Hours:

By appointment

Course Description and Purpose

"Studies in World Religions" is a survey of the major religious traditions of the world. The course is designed to provide students with an understanding and appreciation of these traditions, and to enable students to think sensitively and critically about the religious world. This course will cover general concepts in: the Academic Study of Religion, Indigenous Religious Practices, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Alternative Paths, and Religion and the Modern World. In an effort to create a multifaceted understanding of the myriad ways in which the sacred is expressed, we will be viewing both orthodox and various popular forms of religious expression.

Course Goals

This course may satisfy either the Foundations or the Discipline-Specific Global Learning graduation requirements.

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.

2. **Global Perspective**: Students will be able to conduct a multi-perspective analysis of local, global, international, and intercultural problems.

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

Professional Skills and Competencies

- Gather, evaluate, and analyze information

- Develop fact-based conclusions

- Express ideas in a clear and comprehensive manner

- Utilize professional level writing skills in a variety of contexts

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Students will be able to identify the essential characteristics that distinguish the major religious traditions;

- Students will be able to describe the basic components of each major religious tradition, such as its myths, rituals, doctrines, ethics, and artistic expressions;

- Students will be able to describe religious conflicts and trends in the modern world;

- Students will be able to express ideas and opinions clearly in writing as well as orally.

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.

This course utilizes Instagram. [Access Instagram's privacy policy](#).

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 are 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.

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

AI-enhanced and AI-generated writing

You may use AI programs e.g. ChatGPT to help generate ideas and brainstorm. However, you should note that the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise problematic. Beware that use may also stifle your own independent thinking and creativity.

All work submitted in this course must be your own. Contributions from anyone or anything else- including AI sources, must be properly quoted and cited every time they are used. Failure to do so constitutes an academic integrity violation, and I will follow the institution's policy to the letter in those instances. An assignment that is found to have been plagiarized or to have used unauthorized tools and has an AI score over 25% will automatically receive a zero and you will not be given an opportunity to repeat the assignment for a passing grade. Depending on the severity of the case, academic misconduct may result in a failing grade in the course. ALL PLAGIARISM AND AI-BASED WRITING WILL BE REPORTED TO THE OFFICE OF STUDENT CONDUCT AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY.

Students are always able to resubmit written assignments up until the due date/time. If you are concerned that you have accidentally plagiarized or that there is AI in your paper,

you can submit early and discuss your paper with me. This can help you to avoid having to go through the full academic integrity process accidentally.

Copyright

The following conduct is prohibited by the Student Conduct and Honor Code. 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 online 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

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.

Textbook and Course Materials for Purchase

If no materials listed, no items are needed.

EXPERIENCING WORLD'S RELIGIONS-CODE

Required/Recommended: Required

Authors: Michael Molloy

Publisher: McGraw Hill

Publication Date: 2021

Copyright Date: 2021

ISBN 10: 9781260813746

ISBN 13: 9781260813746

Notes: You will need the code in order to access the book through Perusall, which we will use to annotate the text.

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

Other Course Materials and Open Educational Resources (OER)

Panther Book Pack & McGraw Hill Connect

What is Panther Book Pack?

Panther Book Pack is an affordable course materials program providing all undergraduate students with their required course materials by the first day of class at a fixed rate of $20 per credit hour. Students are estimated to save as much as $375 on course materials per semester with the Panther Book Pack program.

While you are automatically enrolled for the Panther Book Pack at the time that you register for classes, you may opt out if you do not wish to participate. We encourage you to compare pricing before you do. If you've done the research and still don't think that the Panther Book Pack is the right fit for you, you can opt out through the MyFIU portal from the day you receive your Panther Book Pack email until three days after the add/ drop date on the Academic Calendar (Links to an external site.) for that term. Please note: The Panther Book Pack program is designed to be an all-in or all-out solution by session for the lowest flat rate possible. Participation is by session for all courses, not by individual course, therefore participation in some courses but not others in each session is not possible.

Find more information regarding Panther Book PackLinks to an external site..

How does Panther Book Pack work with Connect?

Since students are automatically opted in to participate in Panther Book Pack, all students will receive codeless "temporary access" to Connect on day one of class through Canvas.

Watch instructions on how to register for Connect through CanvasLinks to an external site.. (Links to an external site.)

Students who remain opted in will have an active Connect license for the remainder of the semester. No further action is needed.

If students choose to opt out of Panther Book Pack, their Connect access will be revoked shortly after the add/drop period ends. At that time, the students will need to purchase a Connect access code as one will be required in order to regain access. If a student loses access to Connect, their work will be saved.

Who to contact for support?

Questions related to Panther Book Pack should be directed to Barnes & Noble by emailing bookpack@fiu.edu or calling 305-348-2961. Questions related to Connect should be directed to McGraw Hill Customer Support by calling 1-800-331-5094.

Important Note: To successfully view the online videos in this class, you will need a high-speed Internet connection. If you only have dial-up Internet, you will need to visit one of the FIU computer labs to download and watch the videos.

Expectations of the 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 as 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.

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 at least 5 times per week;

- respond to discussion boards, blogs, and journal postingsby the due date specified.

- respond to messages within 3 days;

- submit assignments by the corresponding deadline.

The instructor will:

- log in to the course 4 times week;

- respond to blog and journal postings within 1 week of the deadline;

- respond to messages within 3 days;

- grade assignments within 2 weeks of the assignment deadline.

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.

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.

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.

Messages is a private and secure text-based communication system which occurs within a course among its Course members. Users must log on to Canvas to send, receive, or read messages. The Messages tool is located on the Course Menu, on the left side of the course webpage. 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.

Visit our Writing Resources (Links to an external site.) webpage for more information on professional writing and technical communication skills.

Assignments

Introduce Yourself Video Blog

Blogs are an open communications tool for students to share their thoughts. Here you can post text, images, links and attachments, open for comments.

1. This course has 1 assignment utilizing the Video Blog tool. Within the lesson 1 you will find how to upload a video into the Introduce Yourself blog. Students will upload all course videos to the particular assignment blogs and by the due date noted in the Blogs portion of this syllabus.

2. Blogs can be found in the Blog portion of the Discussion or within the content area of the course.

Annotation Assignments

You will access the book chapters 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.

Weekly Blogs

Blogs are an open communications tool for students to share their thoughts. Here you can post text, images, links and attachments, open for comments.

There will be twelve blog topics. The topics will be posted in "Discussions" folder in the Course Content. Students must post well thought-out comments based on the required work throughout the semester. Participation is required and represents 13% of your final grade. Both the quantity and the quality of your posts will contribute to your grade. Please see the sample blogs and blog rubric to review the expected components. All students are required to participate in all of the topics (at least 200 words). Blogs must be posted during the period they are assigned and are due by 11:59 pm on the Monday after the end of the lesson. You can miss one blog without penalty.

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

Keep in mind that your discussion forum postings will likely be seen by other members of the course. Care should be taken when determining what to post.

Instagram Assignment

For this semester, students will be required to participate in an Instagram assignment. You must submit at least three pictures or Instagram videos throughout the semester and tag these pictures/videos to the FIU Religious Department's Instagram page @fiu_religion. Each picture/video must be accompanied by a short comment and the hashtag #Weston1238. The picture/video must demonstrate an interaction between any religion and everyday life. Students are encouraged to interact with the content posted by their classmates and others on the fiu_religion Instagram page.

In order to receive credit for this assignment you must:

- Post at least 1 picture/video by each Instagram assignment due date. There will be 3.

- Tag the FIU Religious Department's Instagram page @fiu_religion

- Accompany each picture/video with the hashtag #Weston1238

- Accompany each picture/video with a short comment (<140 characters) about the picture and your purpose for posting it.

- Post a screenshot to the class discussion board. This makes sure that everyone is able to see it, even if you have privacy settings on your account.

Feel free to Review wiki How's "How to Use Instagram webpage (Links to an external site.)."

In order to use Instagram you will need a mobile device such as a smartphone, ipad, or tablet. Instagram cannot be accessed on a desktop. Students who do not have access to a mobile device can upload pictures to the class discussion board. Students are expected to post responsibly, adhere to copyright laws, and post images that are deemed respectful in accordance with University guidelines. You do NOT have to use your personal account, you can make a throwaway account if that is preferred.

Assessments

Quizzes

A weekly time-restricted, online quiz will be given on each religious tradition. You can take each quiz two times, and the higher of the two attempts will be recorded. Even if you do well on the first attempt, it is advisable to use both attempts. You will not receive the same quiz every time; the computer randomly chooses the questions from a quiz database. The objective questions on the Exam 1 and Exam 2 will be taken directly from this database. Thus, the more times you take the quiz, the more questions you will receive and the better prepared you will be for the exams.

For the quizzes, you will have 20 minutes to complete 10 questions. Each quiz will be open from Monday of the assigned week to Monday of the following week, and you can take it on any of those days at any time.

Important Policy on Quiz Resets: Quiz resets will not be granted. You will receive two attempts to complete each quiz, if you are logged offline or you have a technical failure while attempting the quiz, then you still have the second attempt to complete the quiz. Resetting quizzes after they have passed will require a serious and verifiable reason (death in the family, hospitalization, serious accident, etc.).

If you know that you will be unable to take a quiz during a specific week, contact the instructor in advance, and the quiz may be opened so you may take it early. It is the responsibility of students to keep up with the readings and take the quizzes on time.

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. Assessments in this course are not compatible with mobile devices and should not be taken through a mobile phone or a tablet.

For more information, please review the important information about quizzes page.

Exams

The Midterm Exam and the Final Exam are both online and time-restricted examinations. They are located in the Assessments area of the course menu. Students have only one

attempt to complete both exams, unlike the course quizzes. Please make note of this important difference.

Midterm Exam will cover Introduction to Studying Religions, Indigenous Religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and Shinto.

Final Exam will cover Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Alternative Paths, and the Modern Search.

For more information, please review How to Take a Quiz or Exam.

Contemporary Applied Analysis Term Paper

There will be one essay assigned throughout the semester, which is aimed at assisting in the comprehension and synthesis of the concepts presented throughout the course. This assignment is specifically related to your Global Learning engagement outcome that you will demonstrate an ability to engage critically with diverse forms of religion in local, regional, national and international contexts.

For your research paper, you will choose a specific religious tradition that we have studied in class and apply it to a contemporary moral or philosophical issue. For example, a paper may explore the response of Theravada Buddhism to prostitution in Thailand. Another example may be to explore abortion through the lens of Japanese Shinto. Other possibilities include: Brahmanic Hindu perspectives on poverty, Evangelical Christian perspectives on in vitro fertilization (IVF), Native Hawaiian perspectives on genetically modified food. You may choose to use the religion that you researched for your WIKI, or you may choose another. You must do research on a specific religious group, i.e. Southern Baptists not "Christianity." You will need to provide a well-thought out argumentative essay where you support your analyses. You must utilize at least three academic sources.

This essay will be at least 1500-2000 words long (6 pages double-spaced) and will be worth 20% of your grade. 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.

Late Papers: Late papers are only accepted under extreme and verifiable conditions. Late papers can only be accepted on the Final Draft, because the First Draft Papers must be in the Peer Review pool on time to participate in the review process. Papers are deducted 1 letter grade per calendar day and are only accepted within the first 3 days late.

Students are responsible for reading their messages and all announcements posted by the instructor. The instructor also reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus by means of announcements or messages with ample time allowed for students to respond and adjust appropriately.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism, or attempting to pass off another's work as your own, falls into three different categories:

1. A written work that is entirely stolen from another source;

2. Using quotations from another source without properly citing them; and

3. Paraphrasing from another source without proper citations.

Students are expected to understand the definition of plagiarism. See the University Code of Academic Integrity (Links to an external site.) if you need further clarification. Offenders will receive a grade of F for the plagiarized assignment, and possibly the course.

Please also make sure to review the course policies on AI-generated and AI-enhanced writing. The work you submit must be written by you.

Important: You will need to do research; your textbook and required readings will not have enough information about the topic. You will need to consult a minimum of three outside sources and one must be a book reference. You will also need notes in your paper, and a Bibliography/Works Cited page in MLA style. As part of the research process, you will need to submit at least one relevant academic article and annotate it inside of Perusall.

Do not use Wikipedia as an internet source. You may use internet sources, but use only academic sources from the internet. (Academic sources list individual authors, name

their sources, and have institutional affiliations.) Points will be deducted for infractions of these rules.

If you have questions regarding how to cite or what to cite, ask me BEFORE you submit your essay. If you turn in your paper and you "accidentally" plagiarize parts of your essay, you will fail the assignment and possibly the course. Better safe than sorry! To reiterate, ask me before the due date if you are unsure about how to cite your sources.

**Students may not submit work from a previous semester or from another class for this assignment or any other assignment in this course. It will be flagged for plagiarism by Turnitin.

Be sure to read the Grademark comments (feedback) from your professor.

Grading

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Weight
Quizzes	12	12%
Introduce Yourself Video Blog	1	2%
Weekly Blog - (1 lowest grade dropped)	12	13%
Perusall Assignments	12	12%
Instagram Assignment discussion	3	6%
Paper Proposal	2	10%
First Draft Paper	1	5%
Peer Reviews	3	5%
Final Research Paper	1	5%
Midterm Exam	1	15%

Total	52	100%

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Weight
Final Exam	1	15%
Total	52	100%

Letter Distribution

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