



## REL 4030 Methods in the Study of Religion

Section: RVC

Internet/Fully Online

Fall Term 2023

### Professor Information

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Erik Larson

**Contact:** [larsone@fiu.edu](mailto:larsone@fiu.edu)

**Office Hours:**

TBA

### Course Prerequisites

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Prerequisite: Admission to program or permission of the instructor.

### Course Description and Purpose

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This online section of Methods in the Study of Religion will introduce you to some of the major ways that religious traditions and practices may be studied. You will be introduced to each methodology through the assigned readings of the scholars studied and PowerPoint presentations by members of the Religious Studies faculty.

You will be tested on your knowledge of the course material through:

- 12 Time-restricted Quizzes

- A Midterm Exam (objective)
- A Final Exam (objective)
- Paper 1 – Critique Paper
- Paper 2 - Research Paper\*

\*The research paper will develop your ability to evaluate and apply a methodology of your choosing.

## **Course Goals**

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Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the major approaches to the study of religion.
- Be familiar with selections from the writings of the scholars studied.
- Have sufficient knowledge to write research papers critically evaluating the methodologies examined.
- Be able to compare and/or contrast approaches.
- Recognize the importance of methodology in the study of religion.
- Be prepared to apply the relevant approaches in your own studies.

## **Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives**

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Students will be able to:

- See Course Goals

## **Expectations of the Course**

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This is an online course, meaning that most of the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in an online course are the same as for a traditional

course; in fact, online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills that can make them more demanding for some students.

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 and peers;
- review and follow the course calendar;

## Assignments

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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.

### Quizzes (20% of Total Grade)

A time-restricted, online quiz will be given on each week's religious concept. You can take each quiz twice, 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 the second time; the computer randomly chooses the questions from a quiz database. You will have 15 minutes to complete 10 questions.

Quizzes will be available within the modules in which they are due.

Exams (30% Each of Total Grade)

Exam 1 and Exam 2 will each consist of multiple-choice, true/false, and matching questions. These two exams will be time-restricted and will be based on weekly lectures and readings.

Note: Exam 2 is not cumulative—it covers only material from the second half of the semester.

Paper 1 – Critique Paper (20% of Total Grade)

For the first essay, please follow the directions below:

- Choose one of the methodologies that you have covered in the first half of this course.
- Using the research databases available to you via [library.fiu.edu](http://library.fiu.edu), find a critique of the methodology that you have selected.
- After giving the article a thorough reading, compose an essay (4-5 pages) arguing in favor or against the critique. Is the author's critique valid? Why or why not?

Please make sure you include the article you selected in a works cited page at the end of your essay.

Formatting Guidelines

- 12 pt font, double-spaced, Arial or Times New Roman
- Margins- 1 inch on all sides
- Length – 9-12 pages excluding bibliography
- Writing Style - MLA or the Chicago Manual of Style
- You may use either footnotes or endnotes.

## Paper 2- RESEARCH PAPER (30% of Total Grade)

You will write a research paper using two of the approaches covered in the course that particularly interests you. The paper will identify a topic in the field of religious studies and then discuss how you could use the methodologies to study the relevant issues. Compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses of each method.

The paper topic must receive the approval of the professor before it is submitted.

### Formatting Guidelines

- 12 pt font, double-spaced, Arial or Times New Roman
- Margins- 1 inch on all sides
- Length – 9-12 pages excluding bibliography
- Writing Style - MLA or the Chicago Manual of Style
- You may use either footnotes or endnotes.

Papers will be submitted via Turnitin in Canvas. Please review the important information about assignments page for detailed instructions on how to submit your assignment and review grade mark comments.

## Grading

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Course Requirements	Number of Items	Weight
Weekly Quizzes	12	20%
Exam 1 (Objective)	1	15%
Exam 2 (Objective)	1	15%
Paper 1 - Critique Paper	1	20%
Paper 2 - Research Paper	1	30%
Total	16	100%

Letter Grade	From	To
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Letter Grade	From	To
A	100%	95%
A-	< 95%	90%
B+	< 90%	87%
B	< 87%	83%
B-	< 83%	80%
C+	< 80%	77%
C	< 77%	70%
D	< 70%	60%
F	< 60%	0%

## Textbook and Course Materials for Purchase

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If no materials listed, no items are needed.

**None Required**

**Required/Recommended:** N/A

**Authors:** N/A

**Publisher:** N/A

**Publication Date:** N/A

**Copyright Date:** N/A

**ISBN 10:** N/A

**ISBN 13:** N/A

### **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](http://bookpack.fiu.edu)

## Course Communication

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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.

## Canvas Schedule

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Due Date	Assignment Name	Assignment Type	Points
	<a href="#">Practice Quiz</a>	Quiz	0
	<a href="#">Open Forum</a>	Discussion	0
	<a href="#">Academic Honesty Policy</a>	Quiz	0
	<a href="#">Introduce Yourself</a>	Discussion	0

## Schedule

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Date	Course Content and Assignments
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Date	Course Content and Assignments
<p>Week 1</p> <p>August 21</p>	<p>PowerPoint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• History of Religions: Troeltsch and James by Professor Larson</li> </ul> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ernst Troeltsch, "Historical and Dogmatic Method in Theology"</li> <li>• Ernst Troeltsch, "The Place of Christianity among the World-Religions" Christian Thought: Its History and Application</li> <li>• William James, Excerpt from The Varieties of Religious Experience in Charles Taliaferro and Paul Griffiths Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology</li> <li>• William James, Postscript to The Varieties of Religious Experience.</li> </ul> <p>Take Quiz 1 - Available Monday-Sunday of this week (will remain open until end of 2nd week to accommodate late registration)</p>



Date	Course Content and Assignments
<p>Week 2</p> <p>August 28</p>	<p>PowerPoint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reductionist: Marx and Freud by Professors Gudorf and Stier</li> </ul> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Marx-Engels Reader, Robert C. Tucker, ed. (New York: Norton, 1972) 11-23, 107-109, 335-353.</li> </ul> <p>Take Quiz 2 - Available Monday-Sunday of this week</p>
<p>Week 3</p> <p>September 4</p>	<p>PowerPoint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Myth and Ritual: Jung, Otto, and Eliade by Professor Northup</li> </ul> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Otto: The Idea of the Holy, Translator's Preface (19 pp) + pp. 1-34</li> <li>• Eliade: The Sacred and the Profane, Introduction</li> <li>• Images and Symbols: Introduction</li> <li>• Myth and Reality, Excerpt</li> <li>• Jung Foundation article: "Myth and Psyche"</li> </ul> <p>Take Quiz 3 - Available Monday-Sunday of this week</p>

Date	Course Content and Assignments
<p>Week 4 September 11</p>	<p>PowerPoint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sociological: Durkheim and Weber by Professor Wuaku</li> </ul> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Society as Sacred : Emily Durkheim” and “A Source of Social Action : Max Weber” from Eight Theories of Religion 1-40</li> </ul> <p>Take Quiz 4 - Available Monday - Sunday of this week</p>
<p>Week 5 September 18</p>	<p>PowerPoint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anthropological: Geertz and Turner by Professor Seidel</li> </ul> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays (NY: Basic Books, Inc., 1973) Chapter 4: Religion as a Cultural System, pp. 87-125.</li> <li>• Mathieu Deflem, “Ritual, Anti-Structure, and Religion: A Discussion of Victor Turner’s Processual Symbolic Analysis.” Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 30 (1991) 1-25.</li> </ul> <p>Take Quiz 5 - Available Monday - Sunday of this week</p>

Date	Course Content and Assignments
<p>Week 6 September 25</p>	<p>PowerPoint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anthropological/Sociological: Douglas and Berger by Professors Stier and Alvarez</li> </ul> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purity and Danger - Mary Douglas</li> </ul> <p>Take Quiz 6 - Available Monday - Sunday of this week</p>
<p>Week 7 October 2</p>	<p>Take Exam 1 – Midterm (objective) Available from Monday, 12:00 am – Sunday, , 11:59 pm</p> <p>Paper 1 – Critique Paper - DUE Saturday</p>
<p>Week 8 October 11</p>	<p>PowerPoint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perennialist/Non-Perennialist: Huxley, Nasr and S. Katz by Professor Katz</li> </ul> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aldous Huxley, Introduction to the Bhagavad Gita</li> <li>• Steven Katz, “Language and Mysticism”</li> <li>• Aseem Shukla, “Exclusivists vs. Pluralists: very different paths to one Truth”</li> </ul> <p>Take Quiz 7 - Available Monday - Sunday of this week</p>

Date	Course Content and Assignments
<p>Week 9</p> <p>October 16</p>	<p>PowerPoint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structuralist/Post-Structuralist: Levi-Strauss by Professor Alvarez</li> </ul> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Levi Strauss, "History and Anthropology," from Structural Anthropology (Basic Books, 1963 [Anchor Books, 1967]), 1-28.</li> <li>• Levi Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth," from <i>ibid.</i>, 202-229.</li> <li>• Mary Douglas, "The Meaning of Myth," from <i>The Structural Study of Myth and Totemism</i> (Tavistock Publications, 1967), 49-69.</li> <li>• K. O. L. Burridge, "Levi-Strauss and Myth," <i>ibid.</i>, 91-115.</li> </ul> <p>Take Quiz 8 - Available Monday - Sunday of this week</p>

Date	Course Content and Assignments
<p>Week 10</p> <p>October 23</p>	<p>PowerPoint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structuralist/Post-Structuralist: Foucault by Professor Alvarez</li> </ul> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Michel Foucault, "Panopticism," from Discipline and Punish (Pantheon, 1977), 195-228.</li> <li>• Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power," from Power/Knowledge, 109-133.</li> <li>• Michel Foucault, "Two lectures," from Power/Knowledge, 78-108.</li> </ul> <p>Take Quiz 9 - Available Monday - Sunday of this week</p>

Date	Course Content and Assignments
Week 11 October 30	<p data-bbox="508 247 675 279">PowerPoint:</p> <ul data-bbox="548 331 1336 363" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="548 331 1336 363">• Feminist: Ruether and Mahmoud by Professor Gudorf</li></ul> <p data-bbox="589 447 675 478">Read:</p> <ul data-bbox="548 520 1352 856" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="548 520 1352 667">• Rosemary Radford Ruether, Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology (Boston: Beacon, 1983) 1-46, 93-138.</li><li data-bbox="548 709 1328 856">• Saba Mahmoud, Politics of Piety: Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005) 1-117.</li></ul> <p data-bbox="581 940 1279 1024">Take Quiz 10 - Available Monday - Sunday of this week</p>

Date	Course Content and Assignments
<p data-bbox="191 835 318 867">Week 12</p> <p data-bbox="191 915 363 947">November 6</p>	<p data-bbox="505 247 672 279">PowerPoint:</p> <ul data-bbox="548 333 1271 426" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="548 333 1271 426">• Liberation: Gutierrez, Boff and Phan by Professor Bidegain</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="591 506 672 537">Read:</p> <ul data-bbox="548 579 1325 1272" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="548 579 1325 842">• Gustavo Gutierrez, A theology of Liberation: history, politics, and salvation, Trans. By Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988; First Edition 1973- in Spanish 1971) Introduction, Chap 1 and 2.</li> <li data-bbox="548 879 1227 972">• Peter Phan, "Method in Liberation Theologies" Theological Studies, March 1, 2000</li> <li data-bbox="548 1010 1287 1272">• Clodovis Boff, "Epistemology and Method of the Theology of Liberation" in <i>Mysterium Liberationis</i> Fundamental Concepts of Liberation Theology, ed. Ignacio Ellacuria and Jon Sobrino (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1993) 57-84.</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="581 1413 1279 1505">Take Quiz 11 - Available Monday - Sunday of this week</p>

Date	Course Content and Assignments
<p>Week 13 November 13</p>	<p>PowerPoint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecological: Gottlieb by Professor Bauman</li> </ul> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whitney A. Bauman, Rick Bohannon, and Kevin J. O'Brien, eds., Grounding Religion: A Field Guide to Religion and Ecology (Routledge 2010), pp1-78.</li> </ul> <p>Take Quiz 12 - Available Monday - Sunday of this week</p>
<p>Week 14 November 20</p>	<p>Start writing your Paper 2- Research Paper (due next week)</p> <p>Happy Thanksgiving!</p>
<p>Week 15 November 27</p>	<p>**Research Paper due Saturday, 11:59pm</p> <p>Take Exam 2 (objective)</p> <p>Available Monday, 12:00pm to Saturday, 11:59pm</p>

## Policies

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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

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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

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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](https://accessibility.fiu.edu) for additional information about accessibility at FIU.

## Academic Integrity

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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.

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

## **Panthers Care & Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)**

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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

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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

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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](#)