



REL 2011

Introduction to Religion

Section: U06

In Person

Fall Term 2025

Course Meeting Information

Examples:

Classes are scheduled from 8:00 AM and 10:00 AM, Tuesdays, and Thursdays In GL 100A.

or

Class meeting times	
Day:	T/TH
Time:	11:00 AM - 12:15 PM
Location:	CP197

Professor Information

Daniel Alvarez

Roles: Primary Instructor

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Office Hours: TBA

Office Location: SIPA 501

Website: RELIGION.FIU.EDU

Department or Academic Unit: RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Course Prerequisites

Course prerequisites, if any, are listed below.

Course Description and Purpose

This course introduces students to the nature and variety of religious phenomena, belief, and practice. It shows the ways religion is studied, a cross-cultural study of the variety of history forms of religious belief and practice, such as deity conceptions at the divine myth, ritual scripture, rites of passage, views of the human problem evil, and the ways and goals of an examination of the challenges faced by religion today.

Why should I care about 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.

This course is interested in examining the different expressions, practices and interpretations of religion from an interdisciplinary perspective. 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.

How can this course help you advance in your career?

You do not need to be personally religious, majoring in religious studies, or in a field within humanities to benefit from this course. Whatever your academic field is, this course will train you to make important connections between your career and the world of the sacred and the profane. You will be able to understand the complexity of the definitions of religion and secularization, and the role religion plays in local and international affairs.

Religious illiteracy can greatly impact our ability to understand personal and social motivations behind financial decisions, political engagement, science and technological advancement, environmental and migration policies, family planning, diet and food production, gender relations, war and terrorist attacks, and more. Whether you notice or not, religion is a universal phenomenon that continues to transform and be transformed by our societies.

Our approach is interdisciplinary, which means you will be critically reflecting from many fields of study such as philosophy, psychology, cultural studies, history, economics, gender studies, among others. This enhances your ability to think critically, communicate effectively, respond sensitively, collaborate with others and creatively resolve conflict.

Textbook and Course Materials

INTRODUCTION TO RELIGION

Required/Recommended: REQUIRED

Authors: JAMES C. LIVINGSTON

Publisher: PEARSON PRENTICE-HALL, 4TH EDITION

Publication Date: 2008

Copyright Date: 2008

ISBN 10: 10013600380

ISBN 13: 978013600380

Panther Book Pack

The Panther Book Pack rental program 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.

Make sure to review the pricing for all materials across your classes this semester and compare the cost 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. The deadline to opt back into the Panther Book Pack is also 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 undergraduate credit hour for which you are registered and the course materials will be reserved in your name. For more details and to learn how to access your course materials, visit onestop.fiu.edu/bookpack.

Other Course Materials and Open Educational Resources (OER)

ADDITIONAL READINGS AND OTHER LEARNING RESOURCES (AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIAL) WILL BE AVAILABLE ON CANVAS, AS WELL AS SITE VISIT REPORT FORMAT AND SELECT DIRECTORY OF RELIGIOUS SITES IN SOUTH FLORIDA.

Course Goals

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Explain the basic history, development, and belief systems of various religious traditions.
1. Recognize religious themes and concepts found in other cultures.
2. Identify the meaning behind religious concepts and symbols.

3. Evaluate their own religious views in regards to other cultures and paradigms of religious thought.
4. Apply critical thinking to various topics in the field of religious studies.
5. Demonstrate creative thinking about religious issues in the contemporary world.
6. Conduct field research about a particular religious community.
7. Analyze topics in the field of religious studies from multiple perspectives.
8. Assess how global issues and trends are interrelated with the development and practice of religions.

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

Student learning outcomes allow faculty to assess the level of proficiency in content knowledge and skills that their students acquire in a course.

If the objective meets a special designation, you will see the code after the objective:

University Core Curriculum: UCC

Gordon Rule Writing: GRW

Global Learning: GL

Civic Literacy: CL

- SEE COURSE GOALS

Course Communication

STUDENTS SHOULD REACH THE INSTRUCTOR THROUGH CANVAS. IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY YOU CAN ALSO WRITE TO ME AT ALVAREZD@FIU.EDU.

Policies & Resources

Before starting this course, please review the Policies & Resources Page in Canvas which includes comprehensive information on various University and Course Level Policies such as:

- University Policies
- Accessibility and Accommodations
- Online Etiquette
- Technical Requirements and Skills
- Computer & Digital Literacy Skills
- Course Technology Accessibility Statements and Privacy Policies
- Academic Integrity
- Copyright Statement
- Core Principles of This Course
- Nondiscrimination Statement
- Panthers Care & Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
- Fair Use Policy

Grading

Late submissions will not be accepted, except in cases of genuine and documented emergencies.

Avoid leaving assignment/quiz submissions for the last minute before a deadline. “Heavy user traffic” during this timeframe may cause delays and/or errors, which can lead to students missing crucial deadlines.

The instructor 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.

GRADE CRITERIA FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT

A-A- = Outstanding/Exceptional in terms of content (grasp of concepts, depth of analysis and comprehension) and expression (grammar, diction, syntax, style, organization/structure) B+-B = Above average to Very Good

B+-B= Good to above average

C+ = Above average

C= Average, achieving minimum standards

F= Failed

A	94-100	C	65-72
A-	90-93	D	64-60
B+	87-89	F	59-0
B	82-86		
B-	78-81		
C+	73-77		

Assignments

SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Students will have one week to submit assignments to TURNITIN.COM (ON CANVAS). Due dates will be posted on the weeks assignments are due. Papers submitted any time within one week after the first week dates will (that is, the second week) be deducted 10 points; any time during the week after that (the third week) 20 points. No paper will be accepted after the third week (see dates below).

This late papers policy does not apply to the final exam. Final exams will be submitted during the announced submission period and will not be accepted after that.

GET THE RECEIPT: Students should print the Turnitin.com receipt that verifies the date and the hour you they submitted their work. Receipts are essential to settle disputes as to when and whether a paper was submitted (and avoid possible late submission point deductions).

All written work will be submitted through TURNITIN.COM (midterm, final, and site visit).

All written work must be typed, double-spaced, and in a "normal" (12 pt) size font (written work submitted in large font will not be acceptable); and any quotations should follow the manual of style or the standard style recommended by FIU.

This course may also fulfill the Critical Inquiry requirement of the FIU core curriculum if the student earns a grade of "C" or higher. A "C-" or lower grade will not satisfy the Critical Inquiry requirement.

Grades will be posted 10 days after the last due date of the week papers are submitted. Please do not ask for your grade before the ten days are up.

Quotations from internet sources (Wikipedia, Encarta, and the like) will not be accepted. All source quotations must be from the assigned textbooks.

All written assignments will be automatically checked for plagiarism. See section titled Course Policies to learn more about what plagiarism is and how to properly cite your work.

****Students May Not Submit Work From A Previous Semester Or From Another Class For This Assignment Or Any Other Assignment In This Course.**

Assignment Details and Instructions:

- Format: MLA Format Required

For this Site Visit, students will perform field research by attending a religious service outside of their own religious tradition. The goal is to immerse each student in an unfamiliar religious context (example: Christians should perform field research on a non-Christian religion, like Buddhism, Hinduism, etc.)

At the top of your paper, please include the name of the religious site visited, the date visited, the names of any individuals you may have interviewed, and the particular sect or denomination of the religion that practices at the site.

[If you visited a Muslim mosque, was it Sunni or Shi'ite? If you visited a Jewish synagogue, was it Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform? If you visited a Buddhist temple, was it Theravada or a Mahayana sect?] You may want to ask this when you call to find out if your visit is acceptable.

Assessments

As a Gordon Rule course, written assignments are required of all students in order to fulfill the State-mandated standards for this course. The Gordon Rule requirement will be met by:

1. Two (2) Short Essays Mid-Term Exam, 500-700 words (Essay format) (20%)
2. Two (2) Short Essay Final Exam, 500-700 words (Essay format) (20%)
3. Four (4) Group Discussions based on the Readings (20%)
4. Globalization Essay 3-4 pages (5%)

5. One (1) Site Visit Report, 4-5 pages, based on visits to places of worship of select world religions represented in the South Florida area. The Site Visit must be written in essay form (20%).
6. Cumulative Objective Exam, 50 questions multiple choice/true or false (15%). You will get two (2) attempts for the exam. It will be posted Monday-Thursday during finals week.

Core Principles of this Course

This course is designed to serve all students by fostering collaboration and encouraging an appreciation for multiple perspectives and ideas. We recognize and value the lived experiences that each student brings to the classroom and are committed to ongoing education that supports open participation.

In alignment with Florida International University's endorsement of the Florida Board of Governors' Statement of Free Expression, this course supports full and open discourse. Civil and respectful discussion is fundamental to critical thinking, both within the classroom and in broader university events. Students are expected to engage in discussions with curiosity, respect, and a willingness to consider differing viewpoints.

Nondiscrimination Statement

The **Office of Civil Rights Compliance and Accessibility (CRCA)** is responsible for ensuring that FIU maintains a workplace and learning environment free from discrimination, where current and prospective faculty, staff, and students are treated equitably. If any student, employee, or applicant has a sincere and reasonable belief that they have been discriminated against or harassed based on age, color, disability, gender, marital status, ethnic or national origin, race, religion, retaliation, sex, or any other protected category, they can report their concerns to the CRCA team through report.fiu.edu.

UCC Category Description

This course satisfies the University Core Curriculum **Humanities, Group 2** requirement.

According to this category:

Humanities courses afford students the ability to think critically through the mastering of subjects concerned with human culture, especially literature, history, art, music, and philosophy.