



## REL 2011

### Introduction to Religion

Section: RVD

Internet/Fully Online

Fall Term 2026

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

### UCC Category Description

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

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.

### Professor Information

Mita Cut

**Roles:** Primary Instructor

**Email:** [Canvas Inbox](#)

**Phone:** Dept Phone: 305 348 2186

**Office Hours:** By Appointment

**Office Location:** Deuxieme Maison, Room DM 302 11200 SW 8th Street Miami  
FL 33199

**Department or Academic Unit:** Department of Religious Studies

Additional Notes

Email: [mcut@fiu.edu](mailto:mcut@fiu.edu)

## Course Prerequisites

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Course prerequisites, if any, are listed below.

## Course Description

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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.

## **Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives**

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- 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

## Expectations of this Course

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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.

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 and an appropriate photo
- 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
- Log in to the course 4 times per week
- Respond to discussion board postings within 2 business days
- Respond to emails/messages within 2 business days
- Submit assignments by the corresponding deadline
- Check official FIU email and Canvas Messages daily

The instructor will:

- Log in to the course 3 times per week
- Respond to emails/messages within 2 business days (excluding holidays and weekends)
- Grade assignments within 7 business days of the assignment deadline

Assignments from the text and other resources are listed for each class session. Students are expected to pace their learning according to the posted course assignments. It is expected that interactive learning and teaching will enrich the

learning experience of all students, and that each student will work in partnership with the professor to create a positive learning experience for all. Student engagement is a necessary condition for an effective learning experience and includes contributions to debate and discussion (if any), positive interactive learning with others, and an enthusiastic attitude towards inquiry. Everyone is expected to be a positive contributor to the class learning community, and students are expected to share the responsibility of teaching each other.

## Grading

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### Grading

#### Late Work

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.

#### Extra Credit

No extra credit will be offered or accepted in this course.

|                   |    |     |      |
|-------------------|----|-----|------|
| Discussion Forums | 3  | 15  | 10%  |
| Quizzes           | 12 | 10  | 10%  |
| Exams             | 2  | 100 | 40%  |
| Research Papers   | 2  | 100 | 40%  |
| Total             | 19 | N/A | 100% |

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

This syllabus is subject to change; you are responsible for regularly monitoring Canvas Announcements, Conversations/Inbox and your FIU student email to be aware of any noted changes

## Textbook and Course Materials

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### Anatomy of the Sacred

**Required/Recommended:** Requires

**Authors:** James C. Livingston

**Publisher:** Prentice Hall

**Publication Date:** 2008

**Copyright Date:** 2008

**ISBN 10:** 013600380X

**ISBN 13:** 9780136003809

**Chapters/Pages:** 15 Chapters

### Panther Book Pack

Get all required course materials for \$22 per undergrad credit hour through Panther Book Pack. You'll be charged automatically unless you opt out within 3 days after the add/drop deadline.

For more details, to compare costs, and to learn how to access your course materials, visit the [Panther Book Pack information page on FIU OneStop](#).

## 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.

## Schedule of Topics

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### Weekly Schedule

This syllabus is subject to change; you are responsible for regularly monitoring Canvas Announcements, Conversations/Inbox and your FIU student email to be aware of any noted changes.

DateModule TopicsTasks

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| <p>Week 1</p> <p>(This week's work will remain open until the end of the 2nd week for students who register during ADD/DROP week.)</p> | <p>Module 0   Getting Started</p> <p>&amp;</p> <p>Module 1   The Study of Religion</p> | <p>Instructional Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Module 0   Getting Started</li><li>• Course Syllabus</li><li>• Textbook: Ch. 1 - "What is Religion?"</li><li>• Textbook: Ch. 2 - "Ways of Studying Religion"</li><li>• Lecture: Dr. Northup - "What Is Religion? How Is It Studied?"</li></ul> <p>Assignments (Due Sunday, 11:59 PM):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion - Introduce Yourself</li><li>• Practice Quiz</li><li>• Academic Honesty Policy Quiz</li><li>• Quiz 1 - Ways of Studying Religion</li></ul> |
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| Week 2 | Module 2<br>The Sacred<br>and the Holy         | <p>Instructional Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Textbook: Ch. 3 - "The Sacred and the Holy"</li><li>• Lecture: Dr. Huchingson - "The Sacred and the Holy"</li></ul> <p>Assignments (Due Sunday, 11:59 PM):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quiz 2 - The Sacred and the Holy</li></ul>                                                                           |
| Week 3 | Module 3<br>Symbols,<br>Myth, and<br>Doctrines | <p>Instructional Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Textbook: Ch. 4 - "Sacred Symbol, Myth, and Doctrine"</li><li>• Lecture: Dr. Northup - "Sacred Symbol, Myth, and Doctrine"</li></ul> <p>Assignments (Due Sunday, 11:59 PM):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quiz 3 - Sacred Symbol, Myth, and Doctrine</li><li>• Discussion 1 - The Study of Religion</li></ul> |

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| Week 4 | Module 4<br>Sacred Ritual    | <p>Instructional Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Textbook: Ch. 5 - "Sacred Ritual"</li><li>• Lecture: Dr. Northup - "Sacred Ritual"</li></ul> <p>Assignments (Due Sunday, 11:59 PM):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quiz 4 - Sacred Ritual</li></ul>                                                          |
| Week 5 | Module 5<br>Sacred Scripture | <p>Instructional Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Textbook: Ch. 6 - "Sacred Scripture"</li><li>• Lecture: Dr. Larson - "Sacred Scripture"</li></ul> <p>Assignments (Due Sunday, 11:59 PM):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quiz 5 - Sacred Scripture</li><li>• Discussion 2 - The Sacred and the Holy</li></ul> |

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| Week 6 | Module 6<br><br>Society and the Sacred                     | <p>Instructional Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Textbook: Ch. 7 - "Society and the Sacred: The Social Formations and Transformations of Religion"</li> <li>• Lecture: Dr. Wuaku - "Society and the Sacred: The Social Formations and Transformations of Religion"</li> </ul> <p>Assignments (Due Sunday, 11:59 PM):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz 6 - Society and the Sacred</li> </ul> <p>**Have you visited a religious site yet?<br/>Site Visit Essay is due soon!**</p> |
| Week 7 | Midterm Exam<br><br>(Covers all material from Modules 1-6) | <p>Instructional Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review: All material from Modules 1-6</li> </ul> <p>Assignments (Due Sunday, 11:59 PM):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Midterm Exam</li> </ul> <p>**Have you visited a religious site yet?<br/>Site Visit Essay is due soon!**</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                |

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| Week 8 | Module 7<br>Deity     | <p>Instructional Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Textbook: Ch. 8 - "Deity: Concepts of the Divine and Ultimate Reality"</li><li>• Lecture: Dr. Huchingson - "Deity: Concepts of the Divine and Ultimate Reality"</li></ul> <p>Assignments (Due Sunday, 11:59 PM):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quiz 7 - Deity</li><li>• Research Paper 1   Site Visit Essay</li></ul> |
| Week 9 | Module 8<br>Cosmogony | <p>Instructional Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Textbook: Ch. 9 - "Cosmogony: Origins of the Natural and Social Order"</li><li>• Lecture: Rabbi Shulkes - "Cosmogony: Origins of the Natural and Social Order"</li></ul> <p>Assignments (Due Sunday, 11:59 PM):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quiz 8 - Cosmogony</li></ul>                                            |

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| Week 10 | Module 9<br>The Human Problem | <p>Instructional Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Textbook: Ch. 10 - "Views of the Human Problem"</li><li>• Lecture: Dr. Wuaku - "Anthropology: The Human Problem"</li></ul> <p>Assignments (Due Sunday, 11:59 PM):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quiz 9 - The Human Problem</li><li>• Discussion 3 - Society and the Sacred</li></ul> |
| Week 11 | Module 10<br>Theodicy         | <p>Instructional Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Textbook: Ch. 11 - "Theodicy: Encountering Evil"</li><li>• Lecture: Dr. Gudorf - "Theodicy: Encountering Evil"</li></ul> <p>Assignments (Due Sunday, 11:59 PM):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quiz 10 - Theodicy</li></ul> <p><b>**Reminder: Research Paper 2 is due soon!**</b></p> |

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| Week 12 | Module 11<br><br>Ethics      | <p>Instructional Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Textbook: Ch. 12 - "Ethics: Patterns of Moral Action"</li><li>• Lecture: Dr. Gudorf - "Ethics: Patterns of Moral Action"</li></ul> <p>Assignments (Due Sunday, 11:59 PM):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quiz 11 - Ethics</li><li>• Research Paper 2   Appiah Analysis, Part 1 - Discussion</li></ul>                                                                      |
| Week 13 | Module 12<br><br>Soteriology | <p>Instructional Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Textbook: Ch. 13 - "Soteriology: Ways and Goals of Salvation and Liberation"</li><li>• Lecture: Dr. Huchingson - "Soteriology: Ways and Goals of Salvation and Liberation"</li></ul> <p>Assignments (Due Sunday, 11:59 PM):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quiz 12 - Soteriology and Fundamentalism</li><li>• Research Paper 2   Appiah Analysis, Part 2 - Essay</li></ul> |

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| Week 14 |                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Week 15 | Module 13<br>The Sacred and the Secular in Modernity | <p>Instructional Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Textbook: Ch. 14 - "Secularization - New Religious Revitalization Movements - Contemporary Religious Fundamentalism"</li><li>• Textbook: Ch. 15 - "Contemporary Challenges to Traditional Religion: The Status and the Roles of Women - Relations Between Religion and the State"</li><li>• Lecture: Dr. Bidegain - "The Sacred and the Secular in Modernity"</li></ul> <p>Assignments (Due Sunday, 11:59 PM):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Global Learning Quiz</li><li>• Discussion 4 - The Sacred and the Secular in Modernity</li><li>• SPOTS (Course Evaluation)</li></ul> |

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| Week 16 | Final Exam<br><br>(Covers materials from Modules 7-13) | Instructional Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review: All material from Modules 7-13 (for Final Exam)</li></ul> Assignments (Due Saturday, 11:59 PM): <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Final Exam</li></ul> |
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## Policies & Resources

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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](#).

## Assignments & Assessments

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### Assignments

All work must be submitted through Canvas. Canvas does not allow instructors to submit on behalf of students. Please do not email your assignments to your instructor.

If you encounter errors or issues submitting an assignment, click on "Help" inside Canvas Course (located on the left-hand panel inside the course) and select Chat with Canvas Support (student). A live chat with Canvas support can fix the issue

immediately.

## **Assessments**

### **Discussion Forums**(10% of final grade)

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.

#### **Discussion Forum Expectations:**

- There will be three (3) discussions in this course. These discussions are meant to stimulate critical thinking about how religions manifest in our globalized world.

Discussion topics will become available Monday, 12:00 PM to Sunday, 11:59 PM of each week that a discussion topic is posted. See the course calendar for the weeks that have discussion topics posted.

To receive full credit for the discussion assignments, students must post a minimum of 3 discussion threads per discussion topic:

- One post in response to the main discussion topic
- Two responses to other students' posts
- Please refer to the rubric for details on what criteria your discussion assignments will be evaluated on. Canvas Tutorial: How do I view the rubric for my graded discussion?

Keep in mind that this is an academic forum; all students in the course will see the discussion posts. When criticizing or agreeing with another student's position on a given topic, please make sure to include supporting facts and specific examples to strengthen your arguments. Contribute links to articles, news stories, and/or other media whenever possible.

### **Quizzes (10% of final grade)**

A time-restricted, multiple-choice quiz will be given on each week's religious concept. The questions in the quizzes will draw from the weekly course content, including audio lectures and assigned readings.

There is also a Global Learning Quiz at the end of the semester which does count toward the final grade in this course. However, it is necessary to answer all questions on this quiz in order to meet FIU's Global Learning Graduation Requirement.

Quiz Availability: Open from Monday, 12:00 AM to Sunday, 11:59 PM (see Course Calendar for specific dates.)

Quiz Duration: Students will have 20 minutes to answer 10 multiple-choice questions.

Quiz Attempts: Quizzes may be attempted twice. The highest of the two attempts will count towards the student's final grade. It is not mandatory to take each quiz twice.

Quiz Resets: Please limit quiz reset requests to instances when technical issues compromised both quiz attempts. The second attempt is meant to be a "backup" attempt for situations where the first attempt was not completed successfully. Reopening quizzes after the due date has passed will require verifiable documentation.

Quiz Grading: Quizzes will be graded automatically. Students will be able to see their scores immediately after submitting the quiz.

Quiz Answers: The correct answers for quizzes will not be released to students. Students will be able to see submitted answers only. Students should refer to their course materials for the correct answers.

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 encounter any technical difficulties, please contact the FIU Canvas Help Team. Please ensure you contact support immediately upon the issue occurring.

## Exams (40% of final grade)

The essay prompts for Written Exam 1 and Written Exam 2 will become available in the Assessment area during the exam availability time (check the weekly calendar)

- The essay prompts for Written Exam 1 and Written Exam 2 will become available in the Assessment area during the exam availability time (check the weekly calendar).
- All assignments can be submitted via Canvas in the Assignments content area.
- The written exams should each be approximately 500-750 words long.
- 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.
- Exams will be graded manually. Students will be able to see their scores within 7 business days of the assignment deadline.

## Nondiscrimination Statement

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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, 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](https://report.fiu.edu).