



REL 2011

Introduction to Religion

Section: U20

Hybrid/Certified

Fall Term 2026

Course Meeting Information

Class Meeting Times	
Day:	M
Time:	12:00 PM - 1:15 PM
Location:	DM 194

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

Dr A Fernandez

Roles: Primary Instructor

Email: afernand148@fiu.edu

Phone: (305) 348 - 2186

Office Hours: BY APPOINTMENT

Office Location: SIPA I 5TH FLOOR

Department or Academic Unit: DEPT. OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Course Prerequisites

Course prerequisites, if any, are listed below.

Course Description

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.

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 it 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 on many fields of study, such as anthropology, philosophy, psychology, cultural studies, history, economics, and gender studies, among others. This enhances your ability to think critically, communicate effectively, respond sensitively, collaborate with others, and creatively resolve conflict.

CLASS CONDUCT

I conduct this class in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Your active participation is mandatory in class discussions. Each of us may have strongly differing opinions on the various topics of class discussions. The conflict of ideas is encouraged and welcome. The orderly questioning of the ideas of others, including mine, is similarly welcome. However, I will exercise my responsibility to manage the discussions so that ideas and scholarly arguments can proceed in an orderly fashion. You should expect that if your conduct during class discussions seriously disrupts the atmosphere of mutual respect I expect in this class, you will not be permitted to participate further.

TRANSPARENCY STATEMENT

The content covered in this course has no intended bearing on an individual's own faith or religious beliefs. Our class is a safe space for generative and thought-provoking discussion, always carried out with the highest levels of respect from all participants. All ideas of belief are welcome as are all points of view, keeping in mind that everybody has the right to think, believe, and practice – or not – in whatever capacity is meaningful to them.

This is an academic environment; please come with a curious, respectful, engaging, and open mind and be ready to embrace the knowledge shared herein in a scholarly, diverse, inclusive, and objective manner.

This course, its content, its delivery, and its interpretation[s] are not meant in any way, shape, or form to coerce, convince, or convert any of the individuals enrolled in this class.

Our mission here is NOT to question the validity of the religious traditions we will discuss, but instead, we will ask HOW they exist, for whom, and why.

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

Advantages of this course: You do not need to be personally religious, majoring in religious studies, or in a field within the humanities to benefit from this course. Whatever your academic field is, this course will:

Foster tolerance of, and appreciation for differences in human culture and diverse religious expressions.

Expand ability to apply different methodologies to the study of religion.

Create an atmosphere of self-exploration and self-understanding.

Nurture creative and critical thinking in the study of religion.

Identify the relevance of studying religion to contemporary life, human thought, and professional development.

Expectations of this Course

TEACHING METHODOLOGIES

Our approach for this course is interdisciplinary, which means you will learn how to critically draw from theories reflecting diverse fields of study to include, but are not limited to, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, psychology, cultural studies, history, economics, gender studies, and ecology.

- This course is taught in a seminar-style as opposed to a lecture format. This means that as a collective – professor/students – we help guide one another to understand the ideas reflected in the assigned material through a group discussion format.

HYBRID MODALITY DISCLAIMER

Welcome to hybrid modality, a new and exciting way to learn! Hybrid learning takes the best of both worlds by combining face-to-face learning with online learning. Within a hybrid course design, parts of the curriculum are taught online via Canvas, while other activities are taught in a classroom setting. In other words, 50% of the course is dedicated to in-person, face-to-face facilitation where the professor and students engage in learning by discussing and developing concepts in a seminar-style arrangement, and the other 50% of the time takes place outside of the classroom doing the assigned work in the Canvas portal as you would with a regular course except that a hybrid class only meets once a week.

Course Activities

The course is designed to engage you in a process of pre-class activities (online), in-class activities (face-to-face), and post-class activities (online).

- All students are assigned the same pre-class and post-class activities to work on online.

In-Class Activities (Face-to-Face)

Students are expected to attend every face-to-face class and remain in class for the duration of the session. The face-to-face class is not a lecture but a seminar style that provides time for demonstrations, applications, discussion, polls, and problem-solving. Our class sessions are intended to elaborate on and supplement the pre-class readings, not merely to regurgitate this material. Occasionally, we will have review sessions or project discussions. Some topics will be covered in much greater detail in class than that offered by the readings. You may use class time to ask relevant questions.

Pre- and Post-Class Activities (Online)

You will do your best and get the most from this course if you prepare well and read the assigned materials before class. You are responsible for working independently online to complete all assigned activities and discussions in Canvas by the due dates (as applicable). Pay close attention to the order of activities and read all materials in the order specified in the schedule.

NOTE: Students should not consider the online work schedule as being “off,” but rather switch to a different style of self-learning, reviewing, practicing, and checking in on discussions during the week. Try to manage your schedule and time on the computer at home to work on online activities and assessments for submission by the due dates.

Attendance – Class Participation – Facilitation: Each student is an essential part of the overall learning experience of this course. Timely attendance in weekly sessions is mandatory and graded on a point scale, thus absences will greatly affect your overall grade. It is important to notify the professor of absences before scheduled class meetings unless there is an emergency. The following is FIU's policy on attendance:

- At the discretion of the professor, excusable absences include personal illness, military obligations, jury duty, religious holidays, death of an immediate relative, disability accommodations as approved by FIU's Disability Resource Center (DRC), serious family emergencies, and/or participation in official university activities, i.e., athletic events, artistic performances, and other required curricular activities.
 1. NOTE: Sustainable and verifiable documentation must be submitted either via email or upon the immediate return to class.
 - NOTE: the professor WILL validate documentation. Falsifying documentation can lead to serious academic disciplinary action.

Students are expected to:

- log in to the course at least six (6) times per week; respond to discussions by the due date specified.
- No late work will be accepted; respond to emails within X days; submit assignments by the corresponding deadline

The instructor will:

- log in to the course at least six (6) times a week;
- respond to emails within 48 hours;
- grade assignments within three (3) business days of the assignment deadline.

Grading

GRADING GRID

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LETTER GRADE	RANGE	LETTER GRADE	RANGE	LETTER GRADE	RANGE
A	95-100	B-	80-83	F	< 60
A-	90-94	C+	77-79		
B+	86-89	C	70-76		
B	83-85	D	60-69		

A, A-: awarded for excellent to exceptional work, free of technical and stylistic errors, showing an impressive academic level. B+, B, B-: awarded for good to very good work, with some occasional errors, but nonetheless clearly indicating a good grasp of the material and assigned task. C+, C: awarded for average to above average work, meeting minimal standards, and exposing gaps in student performance and/or fulfillment of the assignment. D: awarded for barely passing to below average work, usually seriously deficient in fulfilling the assignment. F: awarded for unacceptable work.

Proctored Exams

Please note that the information contained in this section applies only if your course requires a proctored exam.

Through a careful examination of this syllabus, it is the student's responsibility to determine whether this online course requires proctored exams. Please visit our [Student Proctored Exam Instructions](#) webpage for important information concerning proctored exams, proctoring centers, and important forms.

Textbook and Course Materials

No Textbook Required for purchaseN/A

Required/Recommended: No Textbook Required for purchase

Authors: No Textbook Required for purchase

Publisher: No Textbook Required for purchase

Publication Date: No Textbook Required for purchase

Copyright Date: No Textbook Required for purchase

ISBN 10: No Textbook Required for purchase

ISBN 13: No Textbook Required for purchase

Chapters/Pages: N/A

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

Communication in this course will take place exclusively via the Canvas Inbox. When required, students are expected to respond immediately to all emails. The professor will respond to all correspondences within 48 business hours. FIU's official hours of operation are **Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.** – emails are only responded to within that time frame.

Schedule of Topics

MONDAY 10 AM - 11:15 AM

Policies & Resources

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

Discussion Forums: Our weekly seminars are guided by the layout and design of the discussion forums as detailed in the corresponding Canvas cells.

Quizzes: Weekly quizzes are open-book and designed to challenge your knowledge of all the assigned materials. Each quiz is composed of **20 – 25 questions** made up of **True/False** and **Fill-In**, timed at a **60-minute/1-hour** interval.

Research Proposal: A research proposal is a structured, formal document that explains **what** you plan to research (your research topic), **why** it's worth exploring (your justification), and **how** you plan to investigate it

(your methodology). The layout and design for this assignment are detailed in the corresponding Canvas cell.

Final Synthesis Essay: The final project for this course asks the student to write a synthesis essay reflecting on one (1) of the religious traditions and one (1) element of religious analysis covered in this course. The layout and design for this assignment are detailed in the corresponding Canvas cell.

***Students are highly encouraged to make use of FIU's Center for Excellence in Writing at:** <https://writingcenter.fiu.edu/index.html>

Late Assignments??? What are those?!

Every assignment portal in CANVAS, except for the timed quizzes, is open and available for perusal from 8 am on the first day of the semester, allowing you to work well in advance. Given that, late assignments **WILL NOT** be accepted, including the final project.

- **Avoid leaving assignment submissions** for the last minute before a deadline. **Heavy user traffic** during the 11:59 p.m. time frame causes delays and/or errors, which lead to students missing crucial deadlines.

GRADING CRITERIA

COURSE REQUIREMENTS	NUMBER OF ITEMS	POINTS PER ITEM	TOTAL WEIGHT
Attendance/participation/facilitation	6	20	20%
Discussion Forums	6	15	20%
Quizzes	7	100	20%
Research Proposal	1	20	20%
Synthesis Essay	1	25	20%
TOTAL	N/A	N/A	100%

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A-	90-94	C+	77-79		
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C+, C: awarded for average to above average work, meeting minimal standards and exposing gaps in student performance and/or fulfillment of the assignment.

D: awarded for barely passing, to below average work, usually seriously deficient in fulfilling the assignment.

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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, 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.