



REL 2300

Religions of the World

Section: B53

Hybrid/Certified

Fall Term 2026

Course Meeting Information

In-Person Class Meeting Times	
Day:	Wednesday
Time:	12:00 AM - 1:15 PM
Location:	at BBC. Room Academic One 155

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

Professor Information

Valeria Schindler

Roles: Primary Instructor

Email: vschindl@fiu.edu

Phone: N/A

Office Hours: Wednesday 11:15am-12pm and any other weekdays 10am-5pm
via Zoom. Appointment is required

Office Location: TBD

Department or Academic Unit: Religious Studies/ SIPA

Course Prerequisites

Course prerequisites, if any, are listed below.

Course Description

Sociologist Emile Durkheim saw religion as a part of the human condition, and while the content of religion might be different from society to society over time, religion will, in some form or another, always be a part of social life. Therefore, you do not need to be a religious person in order to be in contact with religion. This course will provide you the tools to learn and understand different religious beliefs from around the world and how they interact with your academic field.

Maybe Jesus was a Buddhist monk. Where exactly did your yoga class come from? Why are Native Americans some of the best eco-advocates today? Is Judaism a religion, a culture, or a tribe? It might be good to wonder if religion is a force for good or evil to begin with. Can we still be spiritual without being religious? These are not just entertaining questions but are highly relevant to your personal and professional development in our globalized world. In this interdisciplinary course, we will explore these questions and many more that emerge as we investigate humanity, religion, and the cosmos.

THIS COURSE EXAMINES THE ORIGINS, TEACHINGS, AND PRACTICES OF SELECTED WORLD RELIGIONS, INCLUDING THE EASTERN AND WESTERN TRADITIONS.

Textbook and Course Materials

RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD-PERUSALL CODE

Required/Recommended: The textbook is Required

Authors: Lewis Hopfe, Mark Woodward, and Brett Hendrickson

Publisher: Pearson

Publication Date: 2014

Copyright Date: 2014

ISBN 10: 0-13-379400-8

ISBN 13: 978-013-379400-7

Notes: VERY IMPORTANT: You have to purchase the Perusall code. Do not purchase the physical or ebooks. You can purchase the code from the FIU library, which will send you a code (this takes time, so purchase it ASAP) or there is a link in a Module with instructions on how to purchase the code directly from Perusall and be able to access it right away.

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](#).

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

- 1. IDENTIFY THE ROLE THAT RELIGION PLAYS IN CULTURES AND SOCIETIES AROUND THE WORLD.
- 2. DESCRIBE THE BELIEF SYSTEMS AND WORLDVIEWS OF THE FAITH TRADITIONS STUDIED.

- 3. EXPLAIN THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL DIMENSIONS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIONS FROM ANCIENT TO CONTEMPORARY TIMES.
- 4. CRITICALLY ENGAGE THE ISSUE OF RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY AND DIALOGUE IN BOTH NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXTS.
- 5. EVALUATE THE ROLE OF RELIGION AS A TRANSFORMATIONAL FORCE FOR THE INDIVIDUAL AS WELL AS FOR SOCIETY AND AS A PLATFORM THAT CAN INCREASE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND GLOBAL AWARENESS.
- 1. STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO ANALYZE TOPICS IN THE FIELD OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES FROM MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES.
- GLOBAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
- 2. STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO ASSESS HOW GLOBAL ISSUES AND TRENDS ARE INTERRELATED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT AND PRACTICE OF RELIGIONS.
- 3. STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE WILLINGNESS TO ANALYZE AND DISCUSS RELIGIOUS ISSUES IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD.

Expectations of this Course

Hybrid Course Expectations

This is a hybrid course, which means half of the coursework takes place online and half during our in-person meetings. Expectations for your performance are the same as in a traditional course. In fact, hybrid courses often require **more self-motivation, self-discipline, and comfort with technology**, which can make them more demanding for some students.

Communication with Your Professor

- **Primary method:** Use the **Inbox** in Canvas. See the Canvas Conversations Help Desk for guidance on communicating with your instructor and peers.
- **Email:** You may also email me at vschindl@fiu.edu.
- **Response time:** I will reply to messages within **24 hours on weekdays**. Messages sent on weekends or holidays may take up to **48 hours**.

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. I will respond to all correspondences within 24 hours, unless the email is sent during the weekend or a holiday.

Policies & Resources



Attendance Policy



Mandatory Attendance

- In-person meetings are required.
- You are expected to engage in class discussions, participate in group projects, and complete in-class assignments.



Absences

- Missing more than **3 classes (unexcused)** will result in a **zero grade for**

attendance and participation.

Tardiness and Leaving Early

- Arriving more than **15 minutes late**, leaving early, or stepping out for extended periods may count as an absence.

Excused Absences

- Religious holidays
- Illness (with proper documentation)

Participation Includes

-  Preparing readings before class
 -  Contributing to discussions
 -  Being attentive during lectures and peer presentations
 -  Completing in-class activities
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Student Responsibilities

You are expected to:

-  Review the **"Getting Started"** page in the course modules
-  Take the practice quiz to ensure your computer is compatible with Canvas
-  Interact online with your instructor and peers
-  Review and follow the course calendar and weekly outlines
-  Log in to Canvas **3–5 times per week**
-  Submit assignments and discussion posts by the deadlines (**no late work accepted unless otherwise specified**)
-  Respond to emails within **1–2 days**
-  Read assignment feedback within **one day** of grades being posted and

make corrections if necessary

Instructor Responsibilities

I will:

-  Log in to the course at least **5 times per week**
 -  Respond to discussion posts within **2 days** of the deadline
 -  Respond to emails within **24 hours on weekdays** and **48 hours on weekends/holidays**
 -  Grade assignments within **2 days** of the due date (*essays: 7–10 days*)
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Late Assignment Policy

Essays

- Accepted with a **2-point deduction per late day**, up to a maximum of **16 points**.
- No essays will be accepted after **Week 14**.

Discussion Posts

- No late submissions are accepted.

Quizzes and Midterm Exam

- May be rescheduled if you provide a valid reason **at least 5 days in advance**.

Final Exam

- No make-up dates are provided.
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★ Extra Credit Opportunities

🔑 Extra credit usually involves attending a special lecture and submitting a written report.

📋 Options

- ★ **1 point:** One-page summary of the lecture
- ★ ★ ★ **Up to 3 points:** Two-page analysis linking the lecture to course content

👉 Reports must be well-written and use proper grammar and mechanics.

📈 Maximum Extra Credit

- A maximum of **6 extra credit points** can be earned during the semester.

📅 Where to Find Opportunities

- Extra credit activities and deadlines (**Week 14 cutoff**) are listed in the **Extra Credit Module** on Canvas.
- Additional opportunities may be announced in class or posted on Canvas.

🎁 Additional Opportunities

- Other extra credit opportunities may be offered throughout the semester, such as completing surveys.
- These opportunities will be announced in class and/or posted on Canvas.

Assignments & Assessments

📄 Assignments & Assessments

1. Research Paper

- **Objective:** Choose **two different religions** and research, compare, and contrast **one element** (topic A and topic B) that appears in both.
- **Sources:** Use **scholarly sources only**. Websites and Wikipedia are **not allowed**.
- **Support:** A **video tutorial** on performing library research is available in the **Student Resources Module**. Details on content and formatting are in the **Canvas Module**.
- **Topic Approval:** Your topic must be approved by the deadline indicated in Canvas. Failure to submit for approval may result in a **zero grade**.

Components of the Research Paper:

1. **Topic Submission & Approval**
 2. **Annotated Bibliography**
 3. **Draft on research on topic A**
 4. **Draft on research on topic B**
 5. **Final Essay:** 1200–2000 words
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2. Perusall Reflections

- **Platform:** Perusall, an interactive reading app integrated with Canvas.
 - **Functionality:** Highlight, take notes, ask questions, and comment on chapters.
 - **Requirements:**
 - Post **at least 6 comments** per reading assignment
 - **At least 4** must be original comments; the rest can be responses or additional original comments
 - **Deadline:** Reflections are due **Sunday** of the week assigned
 - **Notes:**
 - Posts may be discussed in class—write thoughtfully
 - Late submissions or make-ups are **not allowed**
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3. In-Class Activities

- Activities may include: PlayPosits, group discussions, and personal reflections
 - **Submission:** Must be submitted during class to receive credit
 - **Policy:** Absent students will not receive credit for this assignment unless absence is excused (see attendance policy)
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4. Exit Ticket

- A short activity or reflection completed at the end of the in-person class
 - Designed to summarize or reflect on the day's lesson
 - **Policy:** Absent students will not receive credit for this assignment unless absence is excused (see attendance policy)
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Quizzes & Exams

1. Quizzes

- **Number:** 10 quizzes, 10 questions each
 - **Policy:** Lowest quiz score **dropped** at the end of the semester
 - **Availability:** Canvas, open **Wednesday after class – due Sunday by end of day** (4–5 days)
 - **Time Limit:** 10 minutes per attempt
 - **Attempts:** Two attempts allowed; **highest score counts**
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2. Midterm & Final Exams

- **Midterm:** Covers the first half of the semester
 - 50 multiple-choice and true/false questions
 - 70 minutes to complete
 - Available **4 days** in Canvas (Wednesday–Sunday)

- **Final Exam:** Covers the second half of the semester
 - Multiple-choice and true/false questions
 - 70 minutes to complete
 - Available **4 days** around the university-scheduled final exam period (check Panthersoft for exact date)

Important Notes:

- **Practice Quiz:** Take a practice quiz on each computer you plan to use to ensure compatibility
- **Auto-Submit:** Assessments will auto-submit when:
 1. The timer runs out, or
 2. The closing date/time is reached

(Example: Quiz closes at 5:00 pm, but you start at 4:55 pm—you will have only 5 minutes to complete it)
- **Device Compatibility:** Mobile devices and tablets **cannot** be used for assessments
- **Support:** Contact the **FIU Canvas Help Team** for technical issues

Grading

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Points for Each	Total Points Available	Weight
Quizzes	10	100	900 (lowest score dropped)	15%
Midterm Exam	1	100	100	12.5%
Final Exam	1	100	100	12.5%
Total	59	735	3625	100

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Points for Each	Total Points Available	Weight
Final Research Paper	1	100	100	25%
Perusall Reflection	15	30	450	20%
Exit ticket	15	5	75	5%
In class Activities	15	100	1500	5%
Attendance and Participation	1	100	100	5%
Total	59	735	3625	100

Letter Grade Distribution Table

Letter	Range%	Letter	Range %	Letter	Range %
A	95 and 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

Schedule of Topics

This is a tentative outline of the course. Check all deadlines in the Canvas

Calendar

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.

UCC Category Description

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

Social science courses afford students an understanding of the basic social and behavioral science concepts and principles used in the analysis of behavior and past and present social, political, and economic issues.