



## REL 2300

### Religions of the World

Section: U13

In Person

Fall Term 2026

### Course Meeting Information

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| Class Meeting Times |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Day:                |  |
| Time:               |  |
| Location:           |  |

### Professor Information

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Eric Isaac

**Roles:** Primary Instructor

**Email:** [eisaac@fiu.edu](mailto:eisaac@fiu.edu)

**Phone:** By Request

**Office Hours:** By Request

**Office Location:** By Request

**Department or Academic Unit:** Religious Studies

## Course Prerequisites

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Course prerequisites, if any, are listed below.

## Course Description

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What is this course about? This course will cover living religious traditions of the world: Native American Religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shinto, Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Their major teachings will be discussed in detail and set in their proper historical and cultural contexts. Similarities and differences between the religions will be considered, as well as each religion's unique contribution to world civilization. In addition, some representative texts from each will be read and discussed.

Why Should I Care about Religion?

Why do I struggle to lead a meaningful life? How do I determine what makes life worth it in the face of suffering and evil? Is religion irrelevant in our fast-paced technological world? Does the sacred look the same across traditions? Is religion a creative or destructive force? 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 religion will be favored, materials from several religions 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. Religion greatly influences one's epistemology, or the way they deal with what is true or false, as well as the way they look at the world. If we fail to understand religion & secularization, we may fail to understand people.

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.

## UCC Category Description

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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.

## Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

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1. To provide the student with the "raw materials" for the study of religion by immersing the student in the beliefs, doctrines, rituals, symbols, and (select)

scriptures of some of the major world religions.

2. To facilitate the informed cross-cultural comparison and evaluation of ways of being religious by focused study of select world religions.
3. To widen, enhance and enrich the intellectual and spiritual horizons of the student by exposure to the spiritual beauty, vitality, coherence, plausibility and richness of many approaches to the transcendent or ultimate reality.
4. To encourage the student to enter sympathetically into the worldview of the religious traditions selected for study.
5. To provide the context for dialogue and discussion that will enable the student to live in an enormously complex, interdependent, and religiously plural world with patience, understanding, and appreciation for that which is different, and in some cases irreconcilably different, from his or her own "worldview."

## **Expectations of the Course**

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### Statement on Plagiarism

You are expected to understand the definition of plagiarism. See the University Code of Academic Integrity if you need further clarification. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism, or attempting to pass off another's work as your own, falls into three different categories:

1. A written work that is entirely or partially stolen from another source;
2. Using quotations from another source without properly citing them; and
3. Paraphrasing from another source without proper citations.

Students are expected to understand the definition of plagiarism. See the University Code of Academic Integrity at <http://www.fiu.edu/~oabp/misconductweb/2codeofacainteg.htm> if you need further clarification. Offenders will receive a grade of F (0 points) for the plagiarized assignment, and possibly for the course. Please be aware: Previously submitted papers are not allowed, even if it is your own work and even if you are retaking this class. You may not “reuse” papers.

### Late Assignment Policy

I do accept late assignments, however, if you turn in late work the highest grade you can get for that assignment is an 75%. This even includes first drafts that are ‘replaced’ by final draft grades. No, you cannot turn in all of your assignments at the end of this course I will not accept assignments more than 10 days after the due date.

No assignments will be accepted after the last in person class day with the exception of the final exam. No exceptions.

## Assignments & Assessments

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Examinations (20%)

In-Class Group Discussions (25%)

Attendance (15%)

60% of total course weight

First Draft Essay 1 (10%)

Final Draft Essay 1 (10%)

First Draft Essay 2 (10%)

Final Draft Essay 2 (10%)

40% of total course weight

## Grading

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| Course                                | Items | Scale            | Percentage     |
|---------------------------------------|-------|------------------|----------------|
| Landmarks                             |       | In points        | of Final Grade |
| In Class Discussion                   | 7     | 250<br>(35.71x7) | 25             |
| Attendance                            | 1     | 150              | 15             |
| Essay I (First Draft)                 | 1     | 100              | 10             |
| Essay I (Final Draft after revision)  | 1     | 100              | 10             |
| Essay II (First Draft)                | 1     | 100              | 10             |
| Essay II (Final Draft after revision) | 1     | 100              | 10             |
| Midterm                               | 1     | 100              | 10             |
| Final                                 | 1     | 100              | 10             |
| Total                                 | 14    | 1000             | 100%           |

## Textbook and Course Materials

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### Religions of the World

**Required/Recommended:** Required

**Authors:** Lewis M Hopfe

**Publisher:** Prentice Hall

**Publication Date:** 2015

**Copyright Date:** 2015

**ISBN 10:** 0133793826

**ISBN 13:** 978-0133793826

**Chapters/Pages:** ALL

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## 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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Will follow book.

## Nondiscrimination Statement

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The **Office of Civil Rights** (OCR) 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 OCR team through [report.fiu.edu](https://report.fiu.edu).