



## **REL 3375**

### **Religions of the Caribbean**

Section: RVC

Internet/Fully Online

Fall Term 2026

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

### **Course Prerequisites**

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Course prerequisites, if any, are listed below.

### **Course Description**

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#### **Course Description and Purpose**

The processes of globalization and transnational movements have privileged the United States as a concentration locus for diverse Africana peoples. Many of these peoples are descendants of Africans carried to the Caribbean Islands as slaves almost five hundred years ago, and are currently involved in secondary migrations to the USA. Consequently, a repertory of Afro-Caribbean Religio-cultural traditions, offshoots of African religions historically trans-located to the Caribbean, proliferates in some American locations such as South Florida, providing trans-migrants and original residents of these places with a diversity of options in meeting their cultural, spiritual, health and healing needs. Drawing on perspectives from history, socio-cultural anthropology, sociology, and religious studies, this interdisciplinary course will introduce students

to three of these traditions. These are Haitian Vodou, Afro-Cuban Santeria and the Rastafarian tradition. The course will first involve an introductory exploration of the religions native to the Caribbean Islands and the histories of the Christian forms planted in the region by colonists before the treating the African derived religions of the Caribbean, their histories as religions of the oppressed during Caribbean colonialism and slavery, and factors accounting for their presence in the USA.

Students will also be introduced to the phenomenology of these traditions, that is, the beliefs and practices of practitioners, and the crucial roles their discourses and praxis play in shaping trans-migrants from the Caribbean and new American converts to the exigencies of their lives in the USA. Some key topics be discussed in this course include notions of God and spirits in Vodou and Santeria, the role of Vodou in Haiti and the Haitian Diaspora in the USA, Sacrifices and their meanings in Santeria, the notion of evil in Santeria and Vodou, and Botanicas in South Florida and their place in healing and health in Afro-Cuban Santeria and Haitian Vodou.

## Textbook and Course Materials

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### Caribbean Religious History

**Required/Recommended:** Required

**Authors:** Ennis B. Edmonds and Michelle A. Gonzalez

**Publisher:** NYU Press,

**Publication Date:** 2010

**Copyright Date:** 2010

**ISBN 10:** ISBN-10: 0814722350

**ISBN 13:** ISBN-13: 978-0814722350

**Chapters/Pages:** The entire book

### 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

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Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

- familiarize students with the origins (both historical and philosophical) of Caribbean religious expressions;
- enhance student appreciation of the plurality and diversity of Religious beliefs and practices of the Caribbean World;
- help students to understand the role of history, culture and politics in Caribbean religious life and also how religion in turn shapes these dimensions of life;
- help students to develop the ability to use intellectual tools from history, sociology anthropology, and religious studies to explain the dynamics of religion in Caribbean Societies; and
- contribute to the dispelling of the myths surrounding Vodou, Santeria. and Rastafari traditions.

## 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 as 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 getting started** page located in the course modules;
- **introduce yourself to the class** during the first week by posting a self-introduction in the appropriate discussion;
- **take the practice quiz** to ensure that your computer is compatible with the learning management system, Canvas;
- **interact** online with instructor and peers;
- **review** and follow the course calendar and weekly outlines;

- **log in** to the course **X 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 **X times** per week;
- respond to **emails** within **24 hours**;
- grade assignments and/or provide feedback within **X days** of the assignment deadline.

## **Assignments & Assessments**

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### **Discussion Forums**

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:**

- Provide clear guidance on the expectations and requirements
- Available dates (unlimited or for a specific time)
- Criteria for evaluating the originality and quality of students' comments and grade credit expected  
(Rubric is highly encouraged)
- The expected turn-around time for feedback or grades.

### **Assignments**

- Provide clear guidance on the expectations and requirements
- Provide due dates and late assignment policies
- Define if it is an individual or group assignment (groups: Let the students know how the groups will be formed)
- Specify and describe how to submit assignments
- State the criteria for evaluation (Rubric or list of criteria)
- The expected turn-around time for feedback or grades

## Quizzes

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. Assessments in this course are not compatible with mobile devices and should not be taken through a mobile phone or a tablet.

- List all assessments (i.e. graded or practice)
- Provide the dates and times when assessments will become available (i.e. From Monday 10:00 am – Tuesday 11:59 pm)
- Provide assessment duration (i.e. 30 minutes, 1 hour)
- Provide details for results
- When will students be able to see the results (i.e. Immediately after the exam, after the availability period has ended, or not at all)
- What will they be able to see the results (i.e. Total score only, all of the questions and answers, etc.)
- The expected turn-around time for feedback or grades

## Grading

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## Sample Tables

**Course Grades Distribution Table**

| <b>Course Requirements</b> | <b>Number of Items</b> | <b>Points for Each</b> | <b>Total Points Available</b> | <b>Weight</b> |
|----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Sample Grade Item          | 4                      | 50                     | 200                           | 25%           |
| Sample Grade Item          | 2                      | 200                    | 400                           | 25%           |
| Sample Grade Item          | 1                      | 100                    | 100                           | 25%           |
| Sample Grade Item          | 3                      | 100                    | 300                           | 25%           |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>10</b>              | <b>—</b>               | <b>1,000</b>                  | <b>100%</b>   |

**Letter Grade Distribution Table**

| <b>Letter Grade</b> | <b>Sample Range %</b> |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| A                   | __ to 100             |
| A-                  | __ to __              |
| B+                  | __ to __              |
| B                   | __ to __              |
| B-                  | __ to __              |
| C+                  | __ to __              |
| C                   | __ to __              |
| D                   | __ to __              |
| F                   | 0 to __               |

## Proctored Exams

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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.

## Schedule of Topics

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The indigenous Religions of the Caribbean,

The History of Christianity in the Caribbean

Indigenous African Religions

Vodou in Haiti, Afrocuban Religions, Rastarafi in Jamaica

## Course Communication

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Communication in this course will take place via **the Canvas Inbox**. Check out the [Canvas Guide](#) to learn how to communicate with your instructor and peers using the Canvas Inbox.

I will respond to all correspondence within **X days**.

## Policies & Resources

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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
- Nondiscrimination Statement
- Panthers Care & Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
- Fair Use Policy

## Zoom Video Conference

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Zoom is a video conference tool that you can use to interact with your professor and fellow students by sharing screens, chatting, broadcasting live video/audio, and taking part in other interactive online activities.

Zoom meetings can be accessed via the Zoom link in the course navigation menu. Once you click on the Zoom link, it will route you to join the meeting for the respective class session. You will also be able to view upcoming meetings, previous meetings that you have already joined, and meeting recordings. Before joining an actual class session:

- Reference the [Zoom Student Tutorials](#) to learn about the tool, how to access your meeting room, and share your screen.
- Access the [Zoom Test Meeting Room](#) to test out the software before joining an actual session.

If you encounter any technical difficulties, please contact the [FIU Canvas Help Team](#). Please ensure you contact support immediately upon the issue occurring.

## 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).