



REL 3380

Native American Religions

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

Course prerequisites, if any, are listed below.

Course Description

REL 3380: Native American Religions introduces the spiritual and religious traditions of Indigenous Peoples across the Americas, with particular attention to North America, the Caribbean, the Andes, and Florida. The course examines how Indigenous communities understand the sacred through relationships to land, territory, and water; ancestors; ritual, storytelling, and everyday practices; and how these understandings have been shaped by histories of colonization, displacement, and resilience. Students will analyze primary sources, peer-reviewed scholarship, and multimedia materials, and engage with key concepts such as tribal sovereignty, kinship, oral tradition, language, sacred place, and environmental stewardship. A central purpose of the course is to develop critical,

decolonial approaches to Indigenous religions that challenge stereotypes, foreground Indigenous voices and self-representation, and illuminate contemporary issues, including religious revitalization, cultural survival, and struggles over sacred lands and Indigenous rights in Florida and beyond.

Textbook and Course Materials

No textbook required

Subtitle: N/A

Required/Recommended: Recommended

Authors: N/A

Publisher: N/A

Publication Date: N/A

Copyright Date: N/A

ISBN 10: N/A

ISBN 13: N/A

Notes: N/A

Description: N/A

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

By completing this course, students will be able to: Examine Indigenous

religious beliefs, rituals, and practices across the Americas, emphasizing both similarities and differences among communities and Nations.

Apply interdisciplinary perspectives (history, religious studies, decolonial studies, the social sciences, art, law, and ecology) to the study of Indigenous religions.

Explain key Indigenous concepts, including tribal sovereignty, kinship, oral tradition, spirituality, language, the arts, and the sacred bonds to land and water.

Develop well-supported arguments regarding the impacts of colonization, modernization, and globalization on Indigenous religions, cultures, and communities.

Produce reflective and analytical written work that incorporates Indigenous perspectives and addresses issues like loss and revitalization of sacred lands, languages, and cultures, using appropriate sources and academic conventions.

Identify key Indigenous Peoples and Nations in Florida and South Florida, and explain the historical and contemporary significance of their religious and cultural practices.

Expectations of this Course

ONLINE ATTENDANCE

This is an online course with required weekly engagement. Students are expected to log in regularly, complete readings and assignments by the posted deadlines, and participate in online activities as directed. **Expectations for performance in an online course**

are the same as a traditional course.

EXPECTATIONS FOR THIS COURSE

PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

- Students are expected to engage respectfully and consistently with course materials and with one another, whether in online discussions, group activities, or peer feedback.
- Participation includes: timely completion of readings, thoughtful contributions to discussions, and adherence to guidelines for respectful dialogue.
 - **Review the Getting Started and Intro** page located in the course modules;
 - **Introduce yourself to the class** during the first week by posting a self-introduction in the appropriate discussion;
 - **Ensure** that your computer is compatible with the learning management system, Canvas;
 - **Interact** online with the instructor and peers;
 - **Review** and follow the course calendar and weekly outlines;
 - **Log in** to the course **3 times** per week;
 - **Respond** to discussions by the due date specified. **No late work will be accepted;**
 - **Respond to emails** within **2 days**;
 - **Submit** assignments by the corresponding deadline.

The instructor will:

- log in to the course **4 times** per week;
- respond to **emails** within **48 hours**;
- grade assignments and/or provide feedback within **7 days** of the assignment deadline.

RESPECTFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- This course features materials and viewpoints from various Indigenous Peoples and Nations across the Americas. Students should engage with these materials respectfully and analytically.
- Virtual Classroom-online- interactions must demonstrate respect for differences in culture, religion, sexuality, political views, and background, in accordance with university and state policies.
- Disagreement is welcome when expressed in a civil and evidence-based manner; personal attacks or discriminatory remarks are not permitted.
- The goal is to encourage critical thinking and informed discussion about complex histories and current issues, not to endorse any specific religious or political position.

COURSE POLICIES

Please review the [FIU's Policies and Netiquette](#) webpage. The policies webpage contains essential guidelines relevant to all FIU courses, as well as additional information on acceptable netiquette for online courses.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

- All students must follow the university's Academic Integrity policy. Plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and other forms of academic misconduct are prohibited.
- Work submitted in this course must be the student's own and must properly acknowledge all sources.
- Suspected violations will be reported and handled in accordance with university procedures.

Academic Integrity and Turnitin

To support Academic Integrity at Florida International University, Turnitin will be used to review the papers you submit for this course. The instructor will thoroughly review the Turnitin reports to assess the authenticity and originality of your work. Turnitin does not determine whether plagiarism has occurred. It will not be used as a punitive tool or measure.

Academic Misconduct includes

Cheating includes the unauthorized use of books, notes, aids, electronic sources, or assistance from others during exams, course assignments, field service reports, or class recitations. It also covers the unauthorized possession of exam papers or course materials, whether or not they were originally authorized.

Plagiarism involves using and claiming another person's work without proper attribution and presenting it as one's own. Any student who fails to credit ideas, expressions, or materials taken from another source, including the internet, is responsible for plagiarism.

Learn more about the [academic integrity policies and procedures](#) as well as [student resources](#) that can help you prepare for a successful semester.

Assignments & Assessments

ASSIGNMENTS

A brief biography, eight weekly written assignments, a research paper, and two exams will meet the requirements for the course content.

1. **BIO AND INTRODUCTION (20 POINTS / 20%)** Students will submit a short written or multimedia introduction that identifies their academic interests, prior experiences (if any) with Indigenous topics, and learning goals for the course. This assignment helps build community and sets expectations for respectful engagement. Assessed on completion, clarity, and adherence to guidelines.

Assignment	Date Posted	Deadline	Points	Weight
------------	-------------	----------	--------	--------

Biography	08-26-26	09-02-26	20P	20%
-----------	----------	----------	-----	-----

2. WEEKLY WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS (WWAS) – 10 × 2 POINTS (20 POINTS / 20%)

Students will complete brief weekly written responses based on the assigned readings, lectures, and/or media. Each WWA will ask students to summarize key ideas, identify essential concepts, and apply course materials to a guiding question. WWAs are assessed on accuracy, use of course materials, and clarity of explanation. Late submissions are subject to the course lateness policy.

Assignment	Date Posted	Deadline	Points	Weight
WWA 1	09-02-26	09-09-26	2P	2%
WWA 2	09-09-26	09-16-26	2P	2%
WWA 3	09-16-26	09-23-26	2P	2%
WWA 4	09-23-26	09-30-26	2P	2%
WWA 5	09-30-26	10-14-26	2P	2%
WWA 6	10-14-26	10-21-26	2P	2%
WWA 7	10-21-26	10-28-26	2P	2%
WWA 8	10-28-26	11-04-26	2P	2%
WWA 9	11-04-26	11-11-26	2P	2%
WWA 10	11-11-26	11-18-26	2P	2%
TOTAL			20P	20%

3. RESEARCH PAPER (20 POINTS / 20%)

Students will complete a research paper on an Indigenous religion topic approved by the instructor. The paper must:

- Use peer-reviewed and/or reputable community-based sources.
- Present a clear thesis.
- Integrate course concepts (e.g., sovereignty, sacred land, ritual, colonial impact).
- Follow academic citation guidelines as provided.

The paper is assessed on research quality, critical analysis, organization, and

adherence to ethical research standards.

-

Assignment	Date Posted	Deadline	Points	Weight
Research Paper	08-26-26	11-04-26	20P	20%

4. MIDTERM EXAM (EXAM 1) (20 POINTS / 20%)

The midterm exam will assess students' understanding of key terms, concepts, communities, and case studies from the first half of the course. The exam will include a combination of objective items (e.g., identification, short-answer) and analytical prompts that ask students to apply course concepts to specific examples.

Assignment	Date	Points	Weight
EXAM 1	10-07-26	20	20%

5. FINAL PROJECT (EXAM 2) (20 POINTS / 20%)

For the final project, students will select a region (e.g., North America, Caribbean, Andes, or Florida) and create a case study, reflection, or critical analysis focused on Indigenous religion, sovereignty, or a current issue. The project must:

- Integrate at least one course learning outcome.
- Draw on course materials and peer-reviewed or community-based sources.
- Be presented as a written paper, multimedia project (e.g., video, podcast, website), or slide presentation, following the instructor's guidelines.

The project serves as the Final Exam and is assessed on depth of analysis, use of sources, organization, and clarity of communication.

-

Assignment	Date	Points	Weight
FINAL PROJECT (EXAM 2)	11-18-26	20P	20%

LATE WORK POLICY

- All assignments are due on the date and time specified in the course schedule or

LMS.

- Late work will only be accepted in documented cases of extenuating circumstances (e.g., medical emergency, jury duty, military service) and must be communicated to the instructor as soon as reasonably possible.
- Approved late work may be subject to a revised deadline; unapproved late work will receive a zero.

EXTRA CREDIT

If deemed beneficial to the class, the instructor may assign an additional opportunity for extra credit.

Assignment	Date Posted	Points	Weight
Extra Credit	12-09	5P	5%

DISCUSSIONS

Students will demonstrate their ability to critically engage with the course concepts and assigned readings during class discussions with peers.

Grading

The instructor reserves the right to make any necessary changes to the course regarding assignments, assessments, or course information.

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Points for Each	Total Points Available	Weight
Bio and Introduction	1	20	20	20%
Weekly Written Assignments (WWA)	10	2	20	20%
Research Paper	1	1	20	20%
Midterm EXAM 1	1	20	20	20%
Final Project (EXAM 2)	1	20	20	20%
Total			100	100%

Letter Grade Distribution Table

Letter Grade	Range (%)
A	Above 93
A-	90- 92
B +	87- 89
B	83- 86
B-	80- 82
C +	77- 79
C	70- 76
D	60- 69
F	59 or less

EVALUATION CRITERIA	
A (90-100)	Excellent work that is engaged, insightful, and demonstrates that you are able to apply the concepts from class for critical reflection and evaluation of new content.
B (80-89)	Above-average work that demonstrates your understanding of class concepts by using course material to support your argument. Work develops meaningful ideas.
C (70-79)	Average, Passable work that considers the themes of the class, but lacks focus and does not develop class material effectively or in a sustained fashion.
D (60-69)	Below average work that fails to consider the class themes in any substantial way.
F (0-59)	Work fails to meet minimum assignment requirements.

Schedule of Topics

COURSE CALENDAR

Weekly Schedule

This schedule may change at the instructor's discretion. Any updates will be communicated promptly via email. Students are responsible for making any necessary adjustments to prepare for class. All other assignments are due as specified in the schedule below.

COURSE CHANGES

This is an outline of the course. The instructor reserves the right to modify it and will promptly notify students of any changes. Students are responsible for adjusting accordingly to prepare for class. Additionally, the instructor may use class documents (quizzes, papers, presentations, and communications) for academic purposes.

EEK	DATE	READINGS	DEADLINES
		UNIT 1 NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIONS IN THE AMERICAS Holistic relationships, ethical engagement, and the connection between spiritual and material worlds. Relational cosmology, land as sacred, plural ceremonial traditions, oral transmission, sovereignty, and cultural survival	
	08-26	1. Silverman, D. J. (2012). 2. Keegan, B. (2022). Post: Short Bio Post: Essay Rubrics "Earth as a Sacred Place"	
	09-02	1. Ryan, J., Barry. (2021). 1. King, Sarah J. (2013). Post: W. W. Assignment 1 (WWA1)	Short Bio Deadline
	09-09	1. Gill, S. (2024). 2. Fishel, S., Winter, C. J., & Burke, A. (2021). Post: W. W. Assignment 2 (WWA2)	WWA1 Deadline

09-16	1. American Academy of Arts & Sciences. (2001). 2. Littletree, S., Belarde-Lewis, M., Duarte, M. (2020) 3. Garrouette, E. M., et al. (2009). Post: W. W. Assignment 3 (WWA3)	WWA2 Deadline
UNIT 2 CARIBBEAN INDIGENOUS RELIGIONS Taino and Carib spiritual legacy, nature-rooted cosmologies, ritual and syncretism, revival movements		
09-23	1. Morejon, J. L. (2018). 2. Udo, E. M. (2020). Post: W. W. Assignment 4 (WWA4)	WWA3 Deadline
09-30	1. Perdomo, M. M. (2022). 2. Gobin, E. (2022). Post: W. W. Assignment 5 (WWA5)	WWA4 Deadline
10-07	EXAM1 (Midterm)	
UNIT 3 ANDEAN RELIGIONS, SPIRITUALITIES, & PHILOSOPHIES Cosmological Unity & Spiritual Interconnection: The Andean cosmos is alive; humans, nature, and spirits are inseparable. Sacred Landscape (Huacas, Apus) are sacred places or objects, often natural (mountains, springs, rocks), inhabited by spiritual forces. Apus are mountain spirits, guardians, and providers, central in rituals and daily life. These landscapes embody the relationship between humans and divine forces, remaining vital in contemporary indigenous life. Reciprocity (Ayni), is the foundational principle of mutual exchange and communal responsibility. It defines relationships within communities and between humans and nature, ensuring balance and social cohesion. Pachamama, or Mother Earth, is a living, conscious being. Offerings, ceremonies, and everyday practices honor her, underscoring the ethical, spiritual, and practical unity of earth and cosmos.		

10-14	Titizano, C. (2017). Inquilla-Mamani, J. and Chambi-Apaza, E. (2019). Apaza Huanca, Y. K. (2019). Deines, Tina (2023). Pachamama. Post: W. W. Assignment 6 (WWA6)	WWA5 Deadline
10-21	1. Janusek, J. W. (2006). 2. TREVER, L. (2011). 3. López, G. E. J., Coloca, F. I., & Seguí, S. T. (2025). 4. Christie, J. J. (2006). 5. Sáenz, S. D.-S. (2017). Post: W. W. Assignment 7 (WWA7)	WWA6 Deadline Research Paper Deadline
10-28	1. Joslyn, C. (2013) 2. Conklin, W. J. (1997) 3. Arnold, D. Y., Espejo Ayca, E., & Maidana Rodríguez, F. L. (2015). 4. Arnold, D.Y. (2018). 5. McHugh, J. (2020) Post: W. W. Assignment 8 (WWA8)	WWA7 Deadline
UNIT 4 FLORIDA: SEMINOLE AND MICCOSUKEE Sovereignty, clan-based social structure, land and Everglades as sacred, ceremony and healing, adaptation and autonomy, environmental stewardship		

1	11-04	1. The Eco Preservation Project. Auntie Betty Osceola's Closing Speech at the Climate Leadership Summit. 2. GoGlobal FIU. TTR: Healing the Everglades: Indigenous Perspectives from PBS's Native America, with Betty Osceola. 3. Rodgers, Jr., William H. (2024). 4. Reyes-García, V., Fernández-Llamazares, Á., McElwee, P., Molnár, Z., Öllerer, K., Wilson, S.J. and Brondizio, E.S. (2019), Post: W. W. Assignment 9 (WWA9)	WWA8 Deadline Due: Essay "Earth as a Sacred Place"
2	11-11	Veterans Day-no classes POW-WOW Post: W. W. Assignment 10 (WWA10)	WWA9 Deadline
3	11-18	EXAM 2 Critical Book Review- Research Paper or PPT presentation that serves as the FINAL EXAM	WWA10 Deadline
4	11-25	THANKSGIVING WEEK	
5	12-02	PPT PRESENTATIONS- MAKE-UP EXAM1	
5	12-09	EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITY- FINALS WEEK	
7	12-17	DEADLINE FOR FACULTY TO SUBMIT GRADES	

Course Communication

COURSE COMMUNICATION

Communication in this course will take place via **the Canvas Inbox**. For inquiries regarding the course content or learning outcomes, please do not hesitate to email me to schedule a virtual appointment. 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 **two (2) business days**.

Policies & Resources

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

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

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.