REL 2011 Introduction to Religion -HYBRID Spring 2022- Biscayne Bay Campus Certified Hybrid Course

Professor Valeria Schindler vschindl@fiu.edu Office: Virtual via Zoom Office Hours: by Appointment via Zoom M-T-Th-F 9:30am-3pm.

Wednesday 2pm-3pm

Mandatory in-Person meeting: Wednesday 10am-11:15am

Room: Academic One 229

Why should we care about religion?

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.

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.

This course is interested in examining the different expressions, practices, and interpretations of religion from an interdisciplinary perspective, and one of the many courses that complete the Global Learning requirement. Although no particular tradition will be favored, materials from several traditions 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.

What are the Course Objectives?

Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

• Understand the complexity of the definitions of religion and secularization.

- Dissect the universal forms of religious experience and expression such as sacred symbols, rituals, myths, scriptures, ethics, and communities.
- Identify religious themes and patterns that shape our everyday life.
- Recognize the strength of utilizing different approaches, theories, and methodologies to better understand the study of religion.
- Evaluate the interrelationship between the student's own and other's religious views in order to avoid uninformed assumptions.
- Develop college-level academic writing and communication skills.
- Important Information

What is important to learn as a global citizen? What about University Requirements for the Global Learning Objectives?

1. *Global Awareness*: Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the interrelatedness of local, global, international, and intercultural issues, trends, and systems.

Course Learning Outcome: Students will demonstrate knowledge of the interrelated dynamics (social-cultural, political, economic, etc.) that shape the actions of multiple figures in diverse cultural contexts.

2. *Global Perspectives*: Students will be able to develop a multi-perspective analysis of local, global, international, and intercultural problems.

Course Learning Outcome: Students will be able to analyze the multiple causal forces that shape the perspectives of historical individuals/persons — economic, political, sociological, technological, cultural, etc.

3. *Global Engagement*: Students will be able to demonstrate a willingness to engage in local, global, international, and intercultural problem solving.

Course Learning Outcome: Students will demonstrate a willingness to engage in negotiation regarding actions of global import within the context of the class simulation.

How does a hybrid course work?

In a hybrid course, 50% of the time dedicated to the course is in person, engaging in learning, clarifying concepts, debating, working in groups, and discussing and developing each of the concepts covered in the course. This course is taught in "reversed classroom" style, in which most of the work in class is done by students, and I will be there to clarify your questions and guide you in your work. We are meeting in person on Wednesdays at 10am.

The other 50% of the time takes place outside the class, and it will be your responsibility to acquire all the knowledge required for the activities in class. This includes reading the textbook, writing papers, watching videos, reading articles, providing opinions on different topics, and posting weekly in a discussion board. My responsibility is to provide you with material and

activities for you to apply and put into practice the concepts learned in the readings, as well as clarify all the questions that may arise from them. Your responsibility is to read the textbook and complete all assignments in a timely manner. This will enable us using the time in class to actively apply the concepts.

What are the Course Prerequisites?

There are no prerequisites for this course.

What Textbook will be used in the course?

Anatomy of the Sacred: An Introduction to Religion James C. Livingston 6th ed., Prentice Hall ISBN-10: 013600380X You may purchase your textbook online at the <u>FIU Bookstore</u>.

What are the Expectations of this Course?

This is a hybrid course, which means a lot of the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in a hybrid course are the same as for a traditional course. In fact, hybrid courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills which can make these courses more demanding for some students.

- Course Communication how to contact your professor
 - Communication in this course will take place via the Inbox. Check out the <u>Canvas</u> <u>Conversations Tutorial</u> to learn how to communicate with your instructor and peers using Announcements, Discussions, and the Inbox. You can also email me at <u>vschindl@fiu.edu</u>. I will reply to your email within 24 hours, unless you sent an email on a holiday or weekend.

How will you and I evaluate your progress?

- *Six 10-questions quizzes* from which the lowest score will be dropped at the end of the semester. The quizzes will be available for four (4) days in Canvas, opening on Thursday and closing at the end of the day on Sunday. Students will have 10 minutes to complete each quiz. You will have the chance to take each quiz twice if you want, and the highest score will be kept as your final score.
- Midterm and Final Exams.
 - *Midterm:* will cover the first half of the semester and will include 50 multiple choice and true and false questions. Students will have one hour and ten minutes to complete it. The midterm will be available for four (4) days in Canvas, opening on Thursday and closing at the end of the day on Sunday.
 - *Final:* will cover from second half of the semester and will include multiple choice, and true and false questions. Students will have one hour and ten minutes

to complete it. The final will be available for four days around the date set by the university. You can consult Panthersoft later on in the semester for the day.

- A 1000-1500 words opinion paper on globalization and religion. Is globalization good for religion or not? Students will have to read the article posted in Canvas and use the arguments that appeal them the most to build their opinion on the topic. Detailed information is provided in the module for Week 4. Note that this essay has two parts. An introduction with a clear thesis and the way you are going to prove it will be submitted first for a peer review. *There is a late policy for this assignment: Two points will be lost per late day, up to 16 points total. No essays will be accepted after Week 14.*
- A 1000-1500-words essay. "Experiencing religion around me." In this assignment students will be required to keep a journal for 5 days and then write a reflection paper stating how religion appears in their every-day life. Students need to submit both the journal and the reflection paper. Detailed information is provided in Canvas. There is a late policy for this assignment: Two points will be lost per late day, up to 16 points total. No essays will be accepted after Week 14.
- Online activities. Every week after covering a topic, you will have to submit one or two activities. Each activity is available in the corresponding module and is due at midnight Sunday, after the link will no longer be available. All the due dates are listed on the course's calendar. Points will be deducted for poor grammar or typos, and not well justified answers. *There is a late policy for this assignment: the grade will be dropped by 20 points per late day.*
- Online Reflection (Discussion): Before covering each topic in class, you will have to read the textbook. In the online reflection you will have to make a post addressing the prompt below and comment on at least one other post or more. Your original post has to be done by Friday at 11:59pm in order to get full marks for it, otherwise, points will be deducted per late day. The online reflection is due on Sunday. Keep in mind that your discussion forum postings will likely be seen by other members of the course and I might bring some of your posts to be discussed in class. Care should be taken when determining what to post. Since these are intended to be online "discussions" (similar to conversations), late submissions or make ups will not be allowed under any circumstances.
- **Group Work: Create your own religion.** Throughout the semester, you will be applying the knowledge gained by creating a religion. This will be done in groups in class, but collaboration in Canvas outside the classroom will be required. Your group will be set up in Canvas and you will have access to different tools to collaborate. You will be required to post your progress online and I will monitor it weekly providing you with feedback. Each group will present their religion at the end of the semester in class. Rubric is available in Canvas on the modules for the last two weeks of the semester.

- Attendance and participation: Attendance to in-Person meetings is mandatory, and students are expected to engage in class discussion. Missing more than 2 classes (unexcused absences) in the semester will result in a zero grade for attendance and participation. Arriving late or leaving early, or stepping out of the class for long periods of time may incur an absence penalty. Excused absences are those related to religious holidays or illness (for the last one you need to show proper documentation). Participation includes reading for class, contributing to discussions, being attentive to lectures and student presentations, and completing an exit ticket activity by the end of the day in which we meet via Zoom. Participation also includes introducing yourself in the online forum
 - *Exit Ticket*: Each student will have the last 5 minutes in class to submit an exit ticket, which is going to be something related to what happened during the class. It is usually a one question that needs to be answered related to what we covered in class. One or two sentences will be enough to fulfill the requirement. *The exit ticket is worth 5% of the grade for attendance and participation*

What are the policies in the course for Covid-19 related issues?

As cases and hospitalizations due Covid-19 continue to increase in our community, we must unite and take necessary steps to prevent further spread.

 \cdot Daily and before arriving to campus, *complete the P3 app*. If you are not given the green check mark to enter campus, then return home, and contact me by email.

 \cdot Please check your FIU email account and your Canvas course at least once a day. Email and Canvas are the best ways for the university, and me to contact you.

• If you do not feel well, have tested positive for COVID, or have been in contact with a person with COVID, please do not come to class, immediately complete the P3 app to notify the COVID Response Team or call them at 305-348-1919, and contact me by email as soon as you can. To excuse absences for P3 failure/COVID, please contact the COVID Response Team at 305-348-1919. If you are directed to quarantine because of COVID-19, your absences will be considered excused. Once I am notified that you have Covid or been exposed to Covid, I will lay out a plan with you for you to catch up on course work. Please also read the policy on attendance and participation.

 \cdot A vaccinated, asymptomatic individual exposed to a COVID positive person does not need to quarantine. They need to continue to wear a mask. It is recommended to test 3-5 days post known exposure. However, if at any time they become symptomatic, they need to test immediately. If the test returns positive, they need to follow the COVID positive protocol at that time.

 \cdot Please take every precaution to keep yourself and others healthy. Per CDC guidelines, you are encouraged to get vaccinated and strongly advised to wear a mask indoors and in public, including all FIU facilities.

• Missing excessive days may lead to failing the course or a grade of incomplete.

Please be advised that classes may be audio and visually recorded and/or subject to course capture for future access by students in this course. Your attendance/ participation in this course constitutes consent to such recordings, which will only be used for educational purposes by students in the course and securely stored in University systems. If there is a concern regarding the recording and use of such recording, please contact FERPA@fiu.edu.

 \cdot For me to assist you in achieving your goals, it is important for you to contact me as soon as you experience any events that might disrupt your participation and performance in the course. For up-to-date information about COVID, please see the <u>repopulation.fiu.edu</u> FAQs.

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Points for Each	Total Points Available	Weight
Quizzes	6	100	500 (lowest score will be dropped)	15%
Midterm Exam	1	100	100	10%
Final Exam	1	100	100	10%
Opinion Paper on Globalization and Religion	1	100	100	10%
Essay: Experiencing Religion around me	1	100	100	15%
Online Activities	13	100	1300	10%
Group Work- Create your own religion	1	100	100	10%
Online Reflection (Discussions)	11	30	330	10%
Attendance and participation	1	100	100	5%
Exit Ticket (part of Attendance and Participation)	14	5	70	5%
Total	50	N/A	2800	100%

How is your Grade calculated?

Letter	Range%	Letter	Range%	Letter	Range%
A	95 or above	В	83 - 86	С	70 - 75
A-	90 - 94	B-	80 - 82	D	60 - 69
B+	87 - 89	C+	76 - 79	F	Below 60

A's are awarded to exceptional work in class and assignments

B's are awarded for good to very good work.

C's are awarded for average to above average work.

D's are awarded for barely passing with below average work.

F's are awarded for unacceptable work.

How will you succeed in this course?

- Attending and participating in class: Be ready to be an active learner and participate in class discussions and activities. In order to maximize your learning experience, I ask you that you refrain from using your phone in class or using your computer for other things than taking notes. We will sometimes use the computer or phone for activities, so have them handy. Late arrivals will count as 0.25 if you are 10 minutes late or 0.5 if you are 10 to 15 minutes late. More than 15 minutes late will be counted as a full absence.
- Complete the assigned reading and online reflection before coming to class: If you know the material, you will be able to actively participate in class. I might also bring your online reflection post to class to talk about it.
- Check Canvas at least 5 times a week. I will be monitoring your participation. To log into Canvas go to <u>canvas.fiu.edu</u> and use your Panthersoft credentials.
- **Submit essays on time.** There will be 2 points taken off your final grade for the essay per late day, up to 16 points total. If students don't submit the essay by the latest for

submission date marked on the calendar, the essay won't be graded and students will receive a zero grade.

- Submit online activities on time
- **Take Quizzes and tests on time:** I understand things happen, so if you let me know in advanced you won't be able to take a quiz, I will re-schedule it for you. However, there will be no make-up dates for the final exam. Dates for midterm and final exam are listed in Canvas.
- *Extra Credit.* Sometimes some students may need an extra help, and it usually involves attending a special lecture and writing a summary and analysis. The essay could be worth up to 3 extra credit points to be added to the final grade. You will have to write a one-page summary of the lecture for one extra credit point. If you want, you can write a two-page analysis linking the lecture to the content of the class for up to two more points. Reports need to be well written with good grammar. A maximum of 6 extra credit points could be awarded. Please refer to the list of events provided in the course resources module. Extra credit reports need to be sent via email by the second to last week of the semester.
- Using FIU's resources to help you. Click on the links below to access information
 - <u>Center for Excellence in Writing (Links to an external site.</u>): To help you draft, revise, or polish any written work.
 - <u>Center for Academic Success (Links to an external site.</u>): To help you with reading skills, study techniques, and grammar.
- Be open minded and have fun!

What is my responsibility as your professor to ensure your success?

I am committed to make sure you learn in this course. I will promptly answer to your emails within 24 hours, unless the email is received on a holiday or weekend. I expect you to do the same. I will provide you with detailed feedback in all graded assignment, filling out a rubric explaining your grade, as well as providing a general comment on the submission. I expect you

to read my feedback and address the issues when prompted to do so. I will be available to meet via Zoom any day of the week for any help you might need in the course. I want you to succeed in the course, so feel free to reach out to me.

What are the school policies for this course?

This is a Gordon Rule course and **you must attain at least a C to receive any credit as a Gordon rule course.** Under the Gordon Rule, FIU requires that student papers: 1) have a clear thesis or controlling idea; 2) have a thesis supported with adequate reasons and evidence; 3) be organized clearly and logically; 4) show sustained analysis and critical thought; 5) show knowledge of conventions of standard written English; and 6) show awareness of disciplinary conventions in regard to content, style, form, and delivery method.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the theft of intellectual property of others, including their ideas, concepts, and words. Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course.

The expectation is that students will submit their own original work. Previously Submitted Coursework will not be admitted.

To clarify what constitutes plagiarism for this university. Offenders will receive an "F" on the paper.

Some examples of plagiarism are:

- Papers acquired online or from other sources that were not produced by the student that have submitted them.
- Copying material and ideas from other sources without attribution.
- Using other students' work.

Behavioral Misconduct: Any student who is subject to sexual harassment, stalking, or physical or verbal abuse should immediately speak to the instructor. The university has policies to protect students in these instances and the instructor will immediately refer the student to the appropriate program or resource. Remember, this is a course in which different ideas are welcomed, even if they do not agree with our own notions.

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities, as defined by law, have the right to receive needed accommodations if their disabilities make it difficult to perform academic tasks in the usual way or in the allotted time frame. However, in order to receive accommodation, students with disabilities must register with Disability Resource Center. This office will keep the student's written request, notify a faculty member who has a student with a disability enrolled in his/her class, and indicate what kinds of arrangements must be made.

Religious Holidays: By university policy, students must notify the instructor at least two weeks in advance that he/she wishes to observe a religious holy day. The student will be excused from class without penalty, but will still be responsible for the material studied in the class.

For University's deadlines, please refer to the Academic Calendar

Important Note: This syllabus is a contract and can be amended determined by the demands of the course. It outlines everything you need to know for this course. Please make sure you have read it carefully.

Course Summary:

	Due Online	Due in Person
	Topics, Learning Resources, and Tasks	Topics, Learning Resources, and Tasks
Week 1	 Self-introduction in Discussion board Online Activity: Answer questions on syllabus - Online Reflection on Chapters 2 and 3 – Read Chapters 1,2, and 3 	 Introduction to the course Review of syllabus Summary of chapter 1, The Study of Religion and in-class hands on activity
Week 2	 Take quiz on Chapters 1 and 2 Read Chapter 4 Online Activity: Read article on fact or opinion and take the quiz Online Reflection: on chapter 4 	 Overview of chapters Watch video on syncretic religions and discuss Watch video on Ramadan- phenomenology exercise Team activity: What discipline would be best? Group activity on sacred space, time, and symbols
Week 3	 Read chapter 5 Take quiz on chapters 3 and 4 Online Activity: Look for a religious myth and explain why it is important for that tradition and what is the message that it provides. Also, think if there are any doctrines coming from that myth. Students can post a video of the myth, or write the 	 Overview of the topic covered: What is a sign, symbol, myth, and a doctrine Group work: Make your own religion. This assignment will be developed throughout the entire semester. The class will be divided into groups. This week they will create a myth for their religion. It could be a

	Due Online	Due in Person
	Topics, Learning Resources, and Tasks	Topics, Learning Resources, and Tasks
	myth, always citing the source used.Online Reflection on chapter 5	creation myth, or a myth that explains a phenomenon.
Week 4	 Read chapter 6 Online Activity: Look for a religious ritual and categorize it Online Reflection on chapter 6 Submit introduction to essay on globalization for Peer Review 	 Overview of the topic. Categorization of rituals Watch videos of different rituals and recognize what type of ritual is it and why. In the case of rites of passages, recognize the three acts as described by Van Gennep Make your own religion group work: Pick a type of ritual and create one. If possible, link it to the myth created last week
Week 5	 Read Chapter 7 Quiz on chapters 5 and 6 - Submit Peer review on essay on globalization and Religion Online activity: Each student will be assigned either a typology of a sect (manipulationist, conversionist, utopian, revolutionist) and look for one example that fits the category (different than the one mentioned in the textbook). Explain the sect and why it fits into that category - Online Reflection on chapter 7 -10/7 	 Overview of topic: Styles of scripture, uses, canonization Look at actual scriptures and see their differences. Bring scriptures from home Make your own religion group work: Design a scripture for the religion. What is its style? What is it used for? Is it canonized? When? Why?
Week 6	 Read chapter 8 Online Activity #1: Watch a video on the Westboro Baptist church and debate: is it a cult or a sect? Online Activity #2: Midterm review Online reflection on chapter 8 Take Midterm Exam- Submit 5-day journal - 	

	Due Online	Due in Person
	Topics, Learning Resources, and Tasks	Topics, Learning Resources, and Tasks
Week 7	 Read chapter 9 Online Activity: Watch movie "The history of God" and answer questions - Online reflection on chapter 9 Submit essay on globalization 	 Overview of the topic, presenting examples on each type of conception. Make your own religion group work: Start fine tuning the religion. What type of religion is it? Polytheistic, monotheistic, dualist, pantheistic, nontheistic? Work on characteristics of deities that fit into the category used.
Week 8	 Read chapter 10 Take quiz on chapters 8 and 9 Online activity: Read the article about the religious Mullahs and answer questions Online reflection on chapter 10 	 Short introduction to concepts Game: What Cosmogony? Class will be divided in different groups. I will show different videos of cosmogonies that fit into each category and students need to tell what category and why. The winner team will get a price to be decide by the entire class Make your own religion group work: Create a creation myth that fits into the type of religion they are creating. Make sure it fits into one of the categories. Of the myth created previously is a creation myth, adjust it to fit the type of religion and a specific category of a myth
Week 9	 Read chapter 11 Online activity: Reflect on what is to you your "human problem". What do you think you should do to overcome it? Online reflection on chapter 11 - 	 Watch video on suffering and catastrophes in our world and discuss what religion does or says about it Overview on the chapter. Focus on what Stoicism, objectivism, Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and Buddhism states about suffering. Watch videos Make your own religion group work: Think of what is the

	Due Online	Due in Person		
	Topics, Learning Resources, and Tasks	Topics, Learning Resources, and Tasks		
		human problem according to the religion.		
Week 10	 Read chapter 12 Take quiz on chapter 10 and 11 Online Activity: Watch documentary of God and Evil and answer questions Online reflection: on chapter 12 Submit essay religion around me 	 Overview of topic. Watch videos on different types of theodicies Group work Make your own religion: Come up with a theodicy that fits your religion. 		
Week 11	 Read chapter 13 Online Activity: Read article: Mother Teresa left Hillary Clinton in stunned silence of abortion" and answer question on what argument you think is more valid (thinking of ethics) and why Online reflection on chapter 13 	 Chapter overview. Talk about different types of ethics, focus on ethics of virtue and do an exercise on how it will work on each student Group work make your own religion: Think if your religion has moral exemplars or prophets. What does make them one of them? What types of ethics does your religion have? 		
Week 12	 Read chapter 14 Quiz on chapters 12 and 13 - Online Activity: Watch video on new religious movements in the US and answer questions Online reflection on chapter 14 Last day to submit any written assignment 11/22 	 Chapter overview Group game: Divided in group they need to say what example, out of all the ones I present, fits each type of soteriology. Get extra points by explaining the example. Prize to be determined by the class. Group work make your own religion. Think of a soteriology that fits your religion. 		
Week 13	Fine tune your religion in your group	 Overview on chapter, define secularization and religious pluralism 		

	Due Online	Due in Person
	Topics, Learning Resources, and Tasks	Topics, Learning Resources, and Tasks
		 Debate: Is globalization good or bad for religion? Does our knowledge of religion accentuate our differences? This would be a good way of closing down the topic of their reflection essay. Group work Make your own religion: Time to fine tune and get ready to present next week
Week 14	Work on your presentation	Group presentation
Week 15	Work on presentation	Group presentation
		Course's closing remarks
Week 16	 Take final exam. Date TBD by the university 	