Course Syllabus

REL3308: Studies in World Religion; Section RVG

- **Professor: Valeria Schindler**

- Email: vschindl@fiu.edu

- Office Hours: By Appointment

- Turn Around: Within 24 hours

- Synchronous Meetings: Fridays 11am-12:15pm

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

General Information

Course Description and Purpose

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 is an introductory course to world religions and one of the many courses that complete the Global Learning requirement. Since it is an extensive subject, we will be focusing on some of the major religions of our world, examining them from its historical, sociological, anthropological, psychological, and ritualistic practices. Furthermore, we will also learn about religions that are no longer in practice and had influenced some of today's religions. We will analyze the differences and similarities between religions and associate their practices, beliefs, and applications to contemporary issues in our world.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of themes, definitions, and symbols relating to religion.

2. Compare and contrast the key underlying beliefs and principles of the major Eastern, Western, indigenous and shamanic religions.

3. Demonstrate knowledge of the evolution and movement of religious beliefs from ancient to contemporary times.

4. Evaluate religious truth claims as potential sources of knowledge.

5. Demonstrate an increased empathetic awareness of religious diversity and differences.

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

1. *Global Awareness:* Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the inter-relatedness 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.

Important Information

Policies

Please review the FIU's Policies

Links to an external site. webpage. The policies webpage contains essential information regarding guidelines relevant to all courses at FIU, as well as additional information about acceptable netiquette for online courses. For additional information, please visit FIU's Policy and Procedure Library Links to an external site..

As a member of the FIU community you are expected to be knowledgeable about the behavioral expectations set forth in the [FIU Student Conduct and Honor Code](#)

[Links to an external site.](#).

Technical Requirements and Skills

One of the greatest barriers to taking an online course is a lack of basic computer literacy. By computer literacy, we mean being able to manage and organize computer files efficiently and learning to use your computer's operating system and software quickly and easily. Keep in mind that this is not a computer literacy course, but students enrolled in online courses are expected to have moderate proficiency using a computer. Please go to the [What's Required](#)

[Links to an external site.](#) webpage to find out more information on this subject.

Privacy Policy Statements for Partners and Vendors

- [Canvas](#)
- [Microsoft](#)

☐ [Links to an external site.](#)

☐ [Adobe](#)

☐ [Links to an external site.](#)

☐ [Google](#)

☐ [Links to an external site.](#)

☐ [YouTube](#)

☐ [Links to an external site.](#)

☐ [LinkedIn](#)

☐ [Links to an external site.](#)

☐ [ProctorU](#)

☐ [Links to an external site.](#)

☐ [HonorLock](#)

☐ [Links to an external site.](#)

☐ [Turnitin](#)

☐ [Links to an external site.](#)

☐ [OpenStax](#)

- ☐ [Links to an external site.](#)

- ☐ [Zoom](#)

- ☐ [Links to an external site.](#)

- ☐ [Respondus LockDown Browser](#)

  - [Links to an external site.](#)

Please visit our [Technical Requirements](#)

[Links to an external site.](#) webpage for additional information.

Accessibility and Accommodations

The Disability Resource Center collaborates with students, faculty, staff, and community members to create diverse learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive, and sustainable. The DRC provides FIU students with disabilities the necessary support to successfully complete their education and participate in activities available to all students. If you have a diagnosed disability and plan to utilize academic accommodations, please contact the Center at 305-348-3532 or visit them at the Graham Center GC 190.

For additional assistance please contact FIU's [Disability Resource Center](#)

[Links to an external site.](#).

Web Accessibility Statements for Partners and Vendors

- [Canvas](#)

- ☐ [Links to an external site.](#)

- ☐ [Microsoft](#)

- ☐ [Links to an external site.](#)

- ☐ [Adobe](#)

- ☐ [Links to an external site.](#)

- ☐ [Google](#)

- ☐ [Links to an external site.](#)

- ☐ [YouTube](#)

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- ☐ [Zoom](#)

- ☐ [Links to an external site.](#)

- ☐ [Respondus LockDown Browser](#)

  - [Links to an external site.](#)

Please visit our [ADA Compliance](#)

[Links to an external site.](#) webpage for additional information about accessibility involving the tools used in this course.

Academic Misconduct Statement

Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Conduct and Honor Code. Academic Misconduct includes:

Cheating

- The unauthorized use of any materials, information, study aids or assistance from another person on any academic assignment or exercise, unless explicitly authorized by the course Instructor;

- Assisting another student in the unauthorized use of any materials, information, study aids, unless explicitly authorized by the Instructor; and

- Having a substitute complete any academic assignment or completing an academic assignment for someone else, either paid or unpaid; and

Plagiarism

- The deliberate use and appropriation of another are work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the Student's own.

- Assisting another student in the deliberate use and appropriation of another's work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the student's own.

Learn more about the academic integrity policies and procedures

Links to an external site. as well as student resources

Links to an external site. that can help you prepare for a successful semester.

Panthers Care & Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

If you are looking for help for yourself or a fellow classmate, Panthers Care encourages you to express any concerns you may come across as it relates to any personal behavior concerns or worries you have, for the classmate's well-being or yours; you are encouraged to share your concerns with FIU's Panthers Care website.

Links to an external site.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

Links to an external site. offers free and confidential help for anxiety, depression, stress, and other concerns that life brings. Professional counselors are available for same-day appointments. Don't wait to call (305) 348-2277 to set up a time to talk or visit the online self-help portal.

Inclusivity Statement

This course will serve to embrace the diversity and inclusivity found within Florida International University. We appreciate and respect diversity, equality, equity, cooperativeness, community, and sustainability within our online courses. We are committed to the ongoing education of our students and their participation within the course regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, geographical location, religion, and disability. We strive in encouraging collaboration by preparing our students to value the differences in others. At the core of our intentions is the encouragement of acceptance and appreciation of differences within our student population and community.

Academic Freedom

Academic freedom and responsibility are essential to the integrity of the University. The principles of academic freedom are integral to the conception of the University as a

community of scholars engaged in the pursuit of truth and the communication of knowledge in an atmosphere of tolerance and freedom. The University serves the common good through teaching, research, scholarship/creative activities, and service. The fulfillment of these functions rests upon the preservation of the intellectual freedoms of teaching, expression, research, and debate. We affirm that academic freedom is a protected right in addition to a faculty member's constitutionally protected freedom of expression and is fundamental to the faculty member's responsibility to seek and to state truth as he or she sees it.

Students are encouraged to employ critical thinking and to rely on data and verifiable sources to interrogate all assigned readings and subject matter in this course as a way of determining whether they agree with their classmates and/or their instructor. No lesson is intended to espouse, promote, advance, inculcate or compel a particular feeling, perception, viewpoint of belief.

Copyright Statement

The following conduct is prohibited by the Student Conduct and Honor Code. Lack of familiarity with University policy is not a defense to a violation of this Code. Unless specifically noted, the intent is not a required element to establish a policy violation. The following conduct violation or any attempt to violate the Code will be used in charging all Students or Student Organizations;

Section 5 | Conduct Violations - g. Computer Misuse

- vii. Unauthorized distribution or downloading of copyrighted materials, including but not limited to, unauthorized peer-to-peer file sharing. This is a violation whether the user is using their own personal computer or the University's information technology system for unauthorized distributions.

Copyright Statement: The materials and content in this online course are provided solely for student use during the course. Course materials may not be shared outside of the course or with any third party without the explicit permission of the instructor or content publisher. Visit FIU Library's Copyright Lib Guide

Links to an external site. to learn more about copyright law and restrictions.

Additional Resources:

- Student Conduct and Honor Code

☐ Links to an external site.

☐ Digital Millennium Copyright Act Policy

☐ Links to an external site.
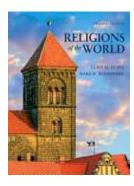
☐ FIU Student Violations - Copyright

☐ Links to an external site.

- ☐ [FIU Library's Copyright Lib Guide](#)

  - [Links to an external site.](#)

Course Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Textbook and Course Materials

- **Religions of the World (Required)**
- Prentice Hall, Oct 2011

RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD-PERUSALL CODE

by PERUSALL (2818000075762) - F22

Note: We will be using Perusall, so the textbook could be purchased online through them (access the first Online Discussion after unlocking the course and it will prompt you to purchase it), or you can get a code from the FIU Bookstore. Do not purchase the physical book or the ebook, just the Perusall code

Online LIVE

In an Online LIVE course, we meet once a week via Zoom. The time we spend together is dedicated to 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.

The remaining of the work 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 lots of 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 understand the concepts.

Expectations of this Course

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 at lest **4 times** per week;

- **respond** to discussions by the due date specified. **No late work will be accepted;**

- **respond** to **emails** within **1 days;**

- **submit** assignments by the corresponding deadline

I, as your instructor will:

- log in to the course 5-6 times a week;

- respond to discussion postings within 2 **days of the deadline**;

- respond to **emails** within **24 hours** unless it is on the weekend or a holiday;

- grade assignments within 2 **days** of the assignment deadline;

- grade essays within 10 **days** of the assignment deadline.

Late Assignment policy

- Late assignments are accepted for online activities with a 20 point penalty per late day.

- Late essays are accepted with a 2 point penalty per late day, up to 16 points. No essays will be accepted beyond Week 13 of the semester

- No late submissions of online discussions are accepted

- Quizzes and the midterm exam can be re-scheduled if a reason is provided at least 5 days prior to the scheduled day.

- No Make up dates are provided for the Final Exam

Course Communication

Communication in this course will take place via the Canvas Inbox or by emailing me directly at vschindl@fiu.edu. Check out the [Canvas Conversations Tutorial](#)

[Links to an external site.](#)or [Canvas Guide](#)

[Links to an external site.](#) 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.

How will you and I evaluate your progress?

- ***Ten 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 Friday after class and closing at the end of the day on Tuesday. 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 Saturday and closing at the end of the day on Tuesday.

  - ***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.

Research Paper

Students will have to choose two different religions, and research, compare, and contrast one element that appears in both religions. You will have to use scholarly sources for this assignment, no websites or Wikipedia articles will be accepted. The topic needs to be approved by the deadline indicated in Canvas by the professor, if not, you will not receive a grade for the essay. Some time in class will be allocated to teach

you how to perform research in the library. Details on the content and format of the essay are provided in Canvas in the module for Course Resources

- **The essay has two components:**

  - **Bibliography and draft:** Should be 1000-1500 words and it is 30% of the final grade of the essay for details click on [Draft and Bibliography](#)

  - **Final essay:** 1200-2000 words for details click on [Research Paper](#)

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 Tuesday, 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.*

Group presentation

This will be done at the beginning of each topic. The group will present on the religion being covered. It should not be more than 15 to 20 minutes. Groups are required to collaborate online. I will monitor and grade your collaboration. You will get a chance to pick the religion you would like to present on by visiting the People tab and clicking on "Group Presentation on Religion". Guidelines, Instructions, and and Rubric are provided in Canvas in the module "Course Resources".

Perusall Reflections

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 Sunday 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 Tuesday. 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.*

Attendance and participation

Attendance to Zoom 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 a chance until 3pm on the day we have in-person class to fill out an exit ticket, which is going to be something related to what happened during the Zoom meeting. It could either be a few multiple choice questions, one open ended question, or if we do a Kahoot at the end of the class and you participate you will get all points. This should not take more than a couple of minutes to do. I highly encourage you to fulfill this as soon as class is over. **_The exit ticket is worth 5% of the grade for attendance and participation_**

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. We will be utilizing this tool to conduct personal meetings and our synchronous weekly meeting every Friday from 11am to 12:15pm

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](#)

☐ [Links to an external site.](#) to learn about the tool, how to access your meeting room, and share your screen.

☐ Access the [Zoom Test Meeting Room](#)

- [Links to an external site.](#) to test out the software before joining an actual session.

If you encounter any technical difficulties, please contact the [FIU Canvas Help Team](#)

[Links to an external site..](#) Please ensure you contact support immediately upon the issue occurring.

Grading

Course Requirements

Assignment	Number of Items	Points for Each	Total Points	Weight
Quizzes	10	100	900 (lowest score dropped)	15%

Midterm Exam	1	100	100	10%
Final Exam	1	100	100	10%
Draft and Bibliography	1	100	100	** This grade is 30% of the grade of your final essay. It will be reflected in your final essay's grade for final grade calculation**
Research Paper	1	100	100	15%
Online Activities	16	100	1600	15%
Group Presentation	1	100	100	10%
Online Reflection	15	30	450	15%
Exit Ticket	15	5	75	5%
Attendance and Participation	1	100	100	5%
Total	10	835	3625	100%

Letter Grade Distribution Table

Letter	Range%	Letter	Range%	Letter	Range%
A	95 or 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

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 canvas.fiu.edu

☐ Links to an external site.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

- [Center for Excellence in Writing (Links to an external site.)](Center for Excellence in Writing)

☐ Links to an external site.**:** To help you draft, revise, or polish any written work.

☐ [Center for Academic Success (Links to an external site.)](Center for Academic Success)

- ☐ Links to an external site.: To help you with reading skills, study techniques, and grammar.

☐ **Be open minded and have fun!**