

**FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY**  
**REL 3308-U01 STUDIES IN WORLD RELIGIONS**  
**SPRING 2023**

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**Contact Information:**

Instructor: Dr. Alfonso Matas                      Meeting location: Comp, Arts, Sci & Edu 138  
Office Location: DM 304                              Meeting time: Tu Th 11:00 am – 12:15 pm  
Office Hours: after class, by appointment  
Email: CANVAS Inbox

**Course Description:**

This course is a survey of the origins, beliefs, and contemporary practices of the world's religions: Hinduism, Islam, Taoism, Shinto, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Confucianism, as well as an immersion into native religions and new religious movements (NRM). Emphasis is given to the believers' own accounts of their religion and its practice in the contemporary world.

This is a Global Learning Course; Gordon Writing Requirement - Other Courses UCC: Social Science Group Two. This course may also fulfill the **Critical Inquiry** requirement of the FIU core curriculum if the student earns a grade of "C" or higher. A "C-" or lower grade will **not** satisfy the Critical Inquiry requirement.

**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.

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.

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Explain the interaction between religions and culture, history, ecology, economics, and politics.
2. Evaluate the ways in which culture and group differences such as race, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status contribute to shaping and interpreting belief systems.
3. Analyze how religion relates to other fields of study, such as science, philosophy, ethics, environment, and the creative arts.
4. Apply knowledge of major religions to contemporary religious issues, such as tolerance, diversity, pluralism, and interfaith dialogue.
5. Interpret religious content from a variety of sources and perspectives, including sacred texts and contemporary media.

**Required Course Material:**

**Revel:** You are required to purchase the **Revel** version of **Fisher and Rinehart, *Living Religions, 10e*** for this course. I will assign reading, writing, and other homework activities in Revel.

While access to Revel is required, the printed version of this text is optional - see purchasing options below. There are two ways to purchase Revel access.

Choose the option that works best for you:

Option #1: Purchase a Revel access code from the campus bookstore.

Option #2: Online Instant Access: If you decide not to purchase Revel from the bookstore, you can purchase Revel access online. You will see this as an option after clicking on the course invite link listed below.

When you register (via access code or online instant access), you also have the option of adding the print upgrade for \$19.95 extra (no shipping cost).

**Follow these steps to get started or watch a short video ([www.pearsonhighered.com/Revel/students/registration](http://www.pearsonhighered.com/Revel/students/registration)) on how to register for Revel:**

1. Enter your Course Invite Link in your web browser. Please use a recommended browser like Google Chrome, FireFox, or Safari.

**COURSE INVITE LINK:**

<https://console.pearson.com/enrollment/XXXXXXXX>

2. If you already have a Username and Password for another Pearson technology (i.e. MyMathLab), go ahead and sign in. If you do not have one, you'll need to create one using a valid email that you check regularly, like your school email address. Once you've signed in or created your Pearson Account, you'll immediately be directed to your Revel account. Here you'll see your course appear.

3. To access Revel throughout the semester log onto <http://console.pearson.com>. Make sure to bookmark this URL and NOT the course invite link. Remember to always use the same username and password to logon.

If you encounter any issues, support materials are available at [www.pearsonhighered.com/Revel/students/support/index.html](http://www.pearsonhighered.com/Revel/students/support/index.html), including a call in number: 855-875-1801.

Access to a computer or mobile electronic device (tablet or smartphone) with internet access is required to complete your Revel assignments. Please let me know if you need information on computers available for use on campus.

**Grading and Assessments:**

20 percent	Revel quiz assignments (chapter quizzes)
20 percent	Mid-term Exam - essay format, due March 21 <sup>st</sup>
5 percent	One-page Preliminary RE Site Visit Report, due March 25th
20 percent	Final project – RE Site Visit Report, due April 12th
25 percent	Final exam, due April 24 <sup>th</sup>
5 percent	Attendance
5 percent	Class Participation

**1. INDIVIDUAL (ONLINE) CANVAS QUIZZES (20% OF FINAL GRADE)**

CANVAS Quizzes are short multiple choice, True/false, and/or short answer quizzes on the week's content that you will be taken individually, online before class. No make-ups are allowed for these quizzes. Even if you are not planning to attend the lecture, you are required to take the quiz online before class time. Late submissions will not be accepted, so plan accordingly.

**2. MID-TERM EXAM (20% OF FINAL GRADE)**

This is a 3-6-page single spaced paper in essay format covering the first half of the textbook and class lectures.

**3. PRELIMINARY SITE VISIT REPORT (5% OF FINAL GRADE)**

This is a one-page report you are required submitting prior to attending your final visit to the religious site you have selected (read the project description in CANVAS).

#### **4. FINAL RELIGIOUS SITE VISIT REPORT (20% OF FINAL GRADE)**

For this individual project students are required to write a term paper (5-6 pages). Further guidelines for this project can be found in CANVAS. (Global Awareness, Global Perspective, and Global Engagement).

#### **5. FINAL EXAM – ONLINE (25% OF FINAL GRADE)**

Final Exam is a multiple-choice exam. You will take it online during finals week. It is a timed test. It will test your overall understanding/learning in the course. It will not be based on memorization. It will be based on your individual assignments, team activities/discussions, and key learning points in the course. You can find the detailed guidelines and exam review on CANVAS.

#### **6. ATTENDANCE – (5% OF FINAL GRADE)**

#### **7. CLASS PARTICIPATION – (5% OF FINAL GRADE)**

##### **Attendance policy:**

Attendance: all students are expected to be prepared and to be on time. Students are expected to treat the instructor, as well as other students with dignity and respect, especially in cases where a diversity of opinion arises. Students who engage in disruptive behavior are subject to disciplinary action, including removal from the course. Attendance will be graded and will represent 5% of your final grade). If you need to miss a class due to illness (medical doctor's note), religious observances or team participation (official paperwork) you must notify me prior to the class. In order to receive attendance credit for justified irregular attendances student must send me a CANVAS mail identifying in detail the missed calendar dates and provide as well a justifiable excused. If this step is omitted the student will receive a grade commensurate with FIU Check In records. Your attendance score is calculated by the number of times you attend class, divided by total class meetings. It is your responsibility to make sure you are signed in for attendance. Attendance will be taken through an electronic attendance solution called [FIU Check-in](#). If you leave class early or arrive to class late, it will be reflected in your attendance score.

**CANVAS - My Grades:** Check your grades periodically. It is your responsibility to check your grades on CANVAS and to inform me on missing grades/assignments

before the semester ends. DO NOT CONTACT ME ABOUT MISSING GRADES AFTER FINAL GRADES ARE POSTED!!!

**Academic Conduct:** 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 to 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 Handbook.

**Plagiarism/Academic Honesty:** As an FIU student, you are always expected to abide by the university's policies particularly those governing academic honesty and plagiarism as they appear in the FIU Student Handbook. If you are not familiar with how to avoid plagiarism, you will receive some instruction and additional guidelines in this course. In sum, should anything you/your team produces cite any data, research or information that you have not generated and which is not general knowledge then you must cite it appropriately following one of the disciplinary conventions of the academic disciplines represented by the faculty teaching this course. More information about citation formatting will be given to you via CANVAS. Please become completely familiar with bibliographic styles and citation conventions. If you do not cite others' work adequately you can be accused of plagiarism and FIU takes these accusations very seriously. Several of your written assignments will be submitted using Turnitin.com to check your work for plagiarism. Finally, I reserve the right to alter the syllabus as needed. You will be notified of any changes.

**Tardiness:** Assignments received after the deadline will lose 1/2 or 1 grade; one week and over 1 full grade or more.

**SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS:** Please notify the faculty prior to or immediately upon commencement of this course about your accommodation needs as in accordance with FIU policy. You will be accommodated accordingly.  
Accessibility and Accommodation

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 Main Campus (see below).

### **SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK**

Students will have one week to submit assignments to TURNITIN.COM (ON CANVAS). Due dates will be posted on the week's assignments are due. Papers submitted **any time within one week** after the first week dates will (that is, the second week) be deducted **10 points**; any time during the week after that (the third week) **20 points**. **No paper will be accepted after the third week** (see dates below).

This late paper policy does not apply to the final exam. Final exams will be submitted during the announced submission period and will not be accepted after that.

**GET THE RECEIPT:** Students should print the **Turnitin.com receipt** that verifies the date and the hour you they submitted their work. Receipts are essential to settle disputes as to when and whether a paper was submitted (and avoid possible late submission point deductions).

All written work will be submitted through TURNITIN.COM (midterm, and site visit).

All written work must be typed, double-spaced, and in a "normal" (12 pt) size font (written work submitted in *large* font will not be acceptable); and any quotations should follow the manual of style, or the standard style recommended by FIU.

Grades will be posted **10 days after the last due date** of the week papers are submitted. Please do not ask for your grade before the ten days are up.

**Quotations from internet sources** (Wikipedia, Encarta, and the like) **will not be accepted**. All source quotations must be from the assigned textbooks.

### **Covid19**

For the latest, please check the COVID Information link on your CANVAS' navigation bar.

### **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.

### **Getting Help**

Please come to me with any problems or questions because I want to help you succeed in my class. Beyond the instructor, students may benefit from other resources FIU offers. Here are some frequent obstacles students face, and the programs and services that FIU provides to assist with the obstacle.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):

**I'm having trouble with a writing assignment. I can't get started, organize my ideas, develop this beyond the first two pages, etc.**

**Center for Excellence in Writing** (more casually called the Writing Center): During any stage of the writing process, the writing consultants at the writing center are available to help you set clear goals, bring focus to your ideas, and encourage creative and critical thinking. I may, at any point in the semester, recommend you visit the writing center. However, I do actively encourage all students to take advantage of this great resource. Even the most confident writers can benefit from the help our writing center provides.

**I'm having trouble reading these academic articles. I am finding it difficult to study effectively. My high school study strategies aren't working in college.**

**University Learning Center:** The Learning Center also has peer tutors available to help you. The Learning Center is the place to go if you want assistance focused on reading or study skills.

**I'm really stressed out and it's affecting my classwork or my life. I'm having personal problems that are interfering with school.**

**Counseling Services:** If you find your academic performance (or just your daily life) is hindered because of anxiety, stress, depression, relationship issues, or other personal struggles, FIU offers Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) to help you. CAPS consists of licensed psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, and trainees with expertise in dealing with student concerns and development. Registered students are eligible to utilize these services and participate in the programs.

**I have a diagnosed disability and need accommodations to do my best.**

**Disability Resource Center:** Any student with a diagnosed disability has access to special accommodations through the DRC. You must register with the DRC to receive such accommodations.

**I am encountering technical problems in my Canvas course.**

**Educational Technology Services:** Please ensure you contact support immediately upon the issue occurring. I can usually help you if you are having a problem with a very specific assignment. However, if you are having trouble accessing Canvas or if you are noticing something that seems like a technical glitch, please contact Canvas support (305-348-2814).

### **[\\*5 Tips for Using Revel to Succeed in This Course\\*](#)**

1. Quizzes can help you learn more as you read.
2. Track your performance in Revel throughout the semester.
3. Highlighting important sections in the chapter will allow you to easily refer to them later on in the semester.
4. You may want to try listening to the audio while you read.
5. If you forget your login information, go to the [Forgot Username or Password](#) link to retrieve your username or reset your password. Then, enter your email address and click continue. Check your email account for an email with the subject, "Pearson Username/Password Request." The message will contain all of the usernames that are found for that email address. Choose one account to use with Revel.



## COURSE OUTLINE

<u>M</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Out-of-class Assignments (Revel)</u>	<u>In-class Focus</u>
JAN	Tu	1/10	Register for Revel using the course invite link listed at the top of this syllabus. Read all chapters before out class meeting for that chapter	Cover Syllabus <a href="#">Revel Registration</a>
	Th Th	1/12 1/18	Introduction: Religious Responses 1.1: Attempts to Define Religion 1.2: Why Are There Religions? 1.3: Understandings of Ultimate Reality 1.4: Ritual, Symbol, and Myth 1.5: Absolutist and Liberal Responses to Modernity 1.6: The Encounter between Science and Religion 1.7: Women in Religions 1.8: Negative Aspects of Organized Religion 1.9: Lenses for Studying Religions Religion: An Object to Be Studied Review: Religious Responses <b>Quiz Chapter 1 due Th Jan 12 10 am</b>	Chapter 1: Religious Responses
	Tu Th	1/23 1/25	Chapter 2: Introduction: Indigenous Sacred Ways 2.2: Cultural Diversity 2.3: The Circle of Right Relationships Learning to protect the environment 2.4: Spiritual Specialists 2.5: Group Observances 2.6: Globalization 2.7: Development Issues Indigenous Sacred Ways: Religion Related to Ancestors and Place <b>Quiz Chapter 2 due Tu Jan 23 10 am</b>	Chapter 2: Indigenous Sacred Ways
JAN FEB	Tu Th Tu	1/30 2/1 2/6	Chapter 3: Introduction: Hinduism 3.1: Philosophical and Metaphysical Origins 3.2: Theistic Foundations 3.3: Devotional Traditions 3.4: Major Philosophical Traditions	Chapter 3: Hinduism

			<p>3.5: The Hindu Way of Life  3.6: Hinduism in the Modern World  Hinduism: The Countless Faces of the Divine  Quiz Chapter 3 Tu due Jan 30 10 am</p>	
	Th Tu Th	2/8 2/13 2/15	<p>Chapter 5: Introduction: Buddhism  5.1: The Life and Legend of the Buddha  5.2: The Dharma  Fundamental Teachings of the Buddha  5.3: The Spread of Buddhism  5.4: Mahayana in East Asia  5.5: Vajrayana: The Indestructible Path  5.6: Buddhist Festivals  5.7: Buddhism in the West  5.8: Socially Engaged Buddhism  Buddhism: The Interconnectedness of Life  Quiz Chapter 5 due Th Feb 8 10 am</p>	Chapter 5: Buddhism
	Th Tu	2/20 3/22	<p>Chapter 6: Introduction: Daoism and Confucianism  6.1: Ancient Traditions  6.2: Daoism—The Way of Nature and Immortality  6.3: Popular Religion and Organized Daoism  6.4: Daoism Today  Daoism in China and the West  6.5: Confucianism—The Practice of Virtue  6.6: Confucianism after Confucius  6.7: Confucianism in the Modern World  Daoism and Confucianism: Coexisting and Complementary Value Systems  Quiz Chapter 6 due Th Feb 20 10 am   SPRING BREAK 2/27 – 3/4</p>	Chapter 6: Daoism and Confucianism
MAR	Tu Th	3/6 3/8	<p>Chapter 7: Introduction: Shinto  7.1: The Roots of "Shinto"  Purification and Belief  7.2: Buddhist, Daoist, and Confucian</p>	Chapter 7: Shinto

			<p>Influences</p> <p>7.3: State Shinto</p> <p>7.4: "Sect Shinto"</p> <p>7.5: Shinto Today</p> <p>Shinto: Veneration and Worship</p> <p>Quiz Chapter 7 due Th Mar 6 10 am</p>	
	Tu Th Tu	3/13 3/15 3/20	<p>Chapter 8: Introduction: Judaism</p> <p>8.1: Biblical and Rabbinic Judaism</p> <p>Covenants</p> <p>8.2: Evolving Judaism</p> <p>8.3: Torah</p> <p>8.4: Sacred Practices</p> <p>8.5: Holy Days</p> <p>8.6: Contemporary Judaism</p> <p>Judaism: An Evolving Tradition</p> <p>Quiz Chapter 8 due Tu Mar 13 10 am</p> <p>Midterm Exam Due 3/21 11:59pm</p>	Chapter 8: Judaism
	Th Tu Th	3/22 3/27 3/29	<p>Chapter 9: Introduction: Christianity</p> <p>9.1: The Christian Bible</p> <p>9.2: The Life and Teachings of Jesus</p> <p>9.3: The Early Church</p> <p>9.4: Church Administration</p> <p>9.5: Reform Efforts</p> <p>Roots of the Reformations</p> <p>9.6: The Orthodox World Today</p> <p>9.7: Central Beliefs in Contemporary Christianity</p> <p>9.8: Sacred Practices</p> <p>9.9: Contemporary Trends</p> <p>Loving Your Neighbor as Yourself</p> <p>Quiz Chapter 9 Due Tu Mar 22 10 am</p> <p>Preliminary Site Visit Report Due Sun 3/25 11:59pm</p>	Chapter 9: Christianity
APRIL	Tu Th Tu	4/3 4/5 4/10	<p>Chapter 10: Introduction: Islam</p> <p>10.1: Pre-Islamic Arabia</p> <p>10.2: The Prophet Muhammad</p> <p>10.3: The Qur'an</p> <p>10.4: The Central Teachings</p> <p>10.5: The Five Pillars</p> <p>10.6: Sunni and Shi'a</p> <p>The Possibility of Peace</p> <p>10.7: Shari'ah: Islamic Law and</p>	Chapter 10: Islam

			<p>Ethics          10.8: Sufism          10.9: The Development of Islam          10.10: Relationships with the West          10.11: Muslim Resurgence          Islam: Muhammad as the Restorer of One True Religion          Quiz Chapter 10 due Tu April 3 10 am          Final Project – Site Visit Report Due Sun April 15 11:59pm</p>	
	<p>Th          Tu          Th</p>	<p>4/12          4/17          4/19</p>	<p>Chapter 12: Introduction: New Religious Movements          12.1: Social Context of New Religious Movements          12.2: Charismatic Leadership          12.3: Offshoots of Older Religions          12.4: Combinations of Older Religions          12.5: Universalism          Human Rights and Interfaith Dialogue          12.6: Social Trends          12.7: Opposition to New Religious Movements          12.8: Will New Religious Movements Last?          New Religious Movements: The Book of Mormon          Quiz Chapter 12 due Th April 12 10 am          Final Exam – multiple choice format Due Tu 4/24 9am -11:59pm</p>	<p>Chapter 12: New Religious Movements          Final Exam Review</p>