

REL 4030 RVC Online
Methods in the Study of Religion
Semester: Spring 2024
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Office Hours: TR 12:30-1:45 and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

This online section of Methods in the Study of Religion will introduce you to some of the major ways that religious traditions and practices may be studied. You will be introduced to each methodology through the assigned readings of the scholars studied and PowerPoint presentations by members of the Religious Studies faculty.

You will be tested on your knowledge of the course material through:

- 12 Time-restricted Quizzes
- A Midterm Exam (objective)
- A Final Exam (objective)
- Paper 1 – Critique Paper
- Paper 2 - Research Paper*

*The research paper will develop your ability to evaluate and apply a methodology of your choosing.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Understand the major approaches to the study of religion.
- Be familiar with selections from the writings of the scholars studied.
- Have sufficient knowledge to write research papers critically evaluating the methodologies examined.
- Be able to compare and/or contrast approaches.
- Recognize the importance of methodology in the study of religion.
- Be prepared to apply the relevant approaches in your own studies.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION **POLICIES**

Please review the [policies page](#) as it contains essential information regarding guidelines relevant to all courses at FIU and additional information on the standards for acceptable netiquette important for online courses.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS & 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](#)" webpage to find out more information on this subject.

Please visit our [Technical Requirements](#) webpage for additional information.

ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATION

Please visit our [ADA Compliance](#) webpage for information about accessibility involving the tools used in this course.

Please visit [Blackboard's Commitment Accessibility](#) webpage for more information.

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

COURSE PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for this course.

TEXTBOOK

No textbook required

There are no textbooks for this course. All weekly readings will be available in online format. It is your responsibility to view and read these in time to take the quizzes. If you have any trouble viewing the material, contact the professor on Monday or Tuesday of the week.

EXPECTATIONS OF THIS COURSE

This is an online course, meaning that most of the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in an online course are the same as for a traditional course; in fact, online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills that can make them more demanding for some students.

Students are expected to:

- **Review the how to get started information** located in the course content
- **Introduce yourself to the class** during the first week by posting a self introduction in the appropriate discussion forum
- **Take the practice quiz** to ensure that your computer is compatible with Blackboard
- **Interact** online with instructor/s and peers
- **Review** and follow the course calendar

COURSE DETAIL

COURSE COMMUNICATION

Communication in this course will take place via **Email**.

For more information on professional writing and technical communication [click here](#).

DISCUSSION FORUMS

Keep in mind that forum discussions are public, and care should be taken when determining what to post.

QUIZZES (20% OF TOTAL GRADE)

A time-restricted, online quiz will be given on each week's religious concept. You can take each quiz twice, and the higher of the two attempts will be recorded. Even if you do well on the first attempt, it is advisable to use both attempts. You will not receive the same quiz the second time; the computer randomly chooses the questions from a quiz database. You will have 15 minutes to complete 10 questions.

Please see the Assessments area of Blackboard for the dates each quiz will be available.

In order to mitigate any issues with your computer and online assessments, it is very important that you take the "Practice Quiz" from each computer you will be using to take your graded quizzes and exams. It is your responsibility to make sure your computer meets the minimum [hardware requirements](#).

Assessments in this course are not compatible with mobile devices and should not be taken through a mobile phone or a tablet. If you need further assistance please contact [FIU Online Support Services](#).

EXAMS (30% EACH OF TOTAL GRADE)

Exam 1 and Exam 2 will each consist of multiple-choice, true/false, and matching questions. These two exams will be time-restricted and will be based on weekly lectures and readings.

Note: Exam 2 is not cumulative—it covers only material from the second half of the semester.

Please see the Assessments area of Blackboard for the dates each exam will be available.

PAPER 1 – CRITIQUE PAPER (20% OF TOTAL GRADE)

For the first essay, please follow the directions below:

- Choose one of the methodologies that we have covered in the first half of this course.
- Using the research databases available to you via library.fiu.edu, find a critique of the methodology that you have selected.
- After giving the article a thorough reading, compose an essay (4-5 pages) arguing in favor or against the critique. Is the author's critique valid? Why or why not?

Please make sure you include the article you selected in a works cited page at the end of your essay.

Formatting

12 pt font, double-spaced, Arial or Times New Roman

Margins- 1 inch on all sides

Length – 3-5 pages excluding bibliography

Writing Style - *MLA* or the *Chicago Manual of Style*

You may use either footnotes or endnotes.

PAPER 2- RESEARCH PAPER (30% OF TOTAL GRADE)

You will write a research paper using **two** of the approaches covered in the course that particularly interests you. The paper will identify a topic in the field of religious studies and then discuss how you could use the methodologies to study the relevant issues. Compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses of each method.

The paper topic must receive the approval of the professor before it is submitted.

Formatting

12 pt font, double-spaced, Arial or Times New Roman

Margins- 1 inch on all sides

Length – 9-12 pages excluding bibliography

Writing Style - *MLA* or the *Chicago Manual of Style*

You may use either footnotes or endnotes.

Submit paper via **Turnitin** in the Assignment Dropbox inside Blackboard. You **do not** have to create an account with Turnitin.com in order to submit the paper. Review the detailed [Turnitin Instructions](#) on how to submit your assignments and how to review the Grademark comments (feedback).

ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND INTEGRITY

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.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism, or attempting to pass off another's work as your own, falls into three different categories:

- A written work that is entirely stolen from another source;
- Using quotations from another source without properly citing them; and
- Paraphrasing from another source without proper citations.

Students are expected to understand the definition of plagiarism. See the [University Code of Academic Integrity](#) if you need further clarification. Offenders will receive a grade of F for the plagiarized assignment, and possibly the course.

****STUDENTS MAY NOT SUBMIT WORK FROM A PREVIOUS SEMESTER OR FROM ANOTHER CLASS FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT OR ANY OTHER ASSIGNMENT IN THIS COURSE. IT WILL BE FLAGGED FOR PLAGIARISM BY TURNITIN.**

GRADING

Course Requirements	Weight
Weekly Quizzes (12 total) – 2 lowest grades will be dropped	20%
Exam 1 (objective)	15%
Exam 2 (objective)	15%
Paper 1 – Critique Paper	20%
Paper 2 - Research Paper	30%

Course Requirements	Weight
Total	100%

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

COURSE CALENDAR - WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Dates	Tasks
Week 1 - Monday, January 8 - Sunday, January 14	<p>PowerPoint: <i>History of Religions: Troeltsch and James</i> by Professor Larson</p> <p>Read: - Ernst Troeltsch, "Historical and Dogmatic Method in Theology" - Ernst Troeltsch, "The Place of Christianity among the World-Religions" <i>Christian Thought: Its History and Application</i> - William James, Excerpt from <i>The Varieties of Religious Experience</i> in Charles Taliaferro and Paul Griffiths <i>Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology</i> - William James, Postscript to <i>The Varieties of Religious Experience</i>.</p> <p>Take Quiz 1 - Available Monday-Sunday of this week (will remain open until end of 2nd week to accommodate late registration)</p>
Week 2 - Monday, January 15 - Sunday, January 21	<p>PowerPoint: <i>Reductionist: Marx and Freud</i> by Professors Gudorf and Stier</p> <p>Read: - <i>The Marx-Engels Reader</i>, Robert C. Tucker, ed. (New York: Norton, 1972) 11-23, 107-109, 335-353.</p> <p>Take Quiz 2 - Available Monday-Sunday of this week</p>

Dates	Tasks
<p>Week 3 - Monday, January 22 - Sunday, January 28</p>	<p>PowerPoint: <i>Myth and Ritual: Jung, Otto, and Eliade</i> by Professor Northup</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Otto: <i>The Idea of the Holy</i>, Translator’s Preface (19 pp) + pp. 1-34 - Eliade: <i>The Sacred and the Profane</i>, Introduction - <i>Images and Symbols</i>: Introduction - <i>Myth and Reality</i>, Excerpt - Jung Foundation article: “<i>Myth and Psyche</i>” <p>Take Quiz 3 - Available Monday-Sunday of this week</p>
<p>Week 4 - Monday, January 29 - Sunday, February 4</p>	<p>PowerPoint: <i>Sociological: Durkheim and Weber</i> by Professor Wuaku</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Society as Sacred : Emily Durkheim” and “A Source of Social Action : Max Weber” from <i>Eight Theories of Religion</i> 1-40 <p>Take Quiz 4 - Available Monday - Sunday of this week</p>
<p>Week 5 - Monday, February 5 - Sunday, February 11</p>	<p>PowerPoint: <i>Anthropological: Geertz and Turner</i> by Professor Seidel</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clifford Geertz, <i>The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays</i> (NY: Basic Books, Inc., 1973) Chapter 4: Religion as a Cultural System, pp. 87-125. - Mathieu Deflem, “Ritual, Anti-Structure, and Religion: A Discussion of Victor Turner’s Processual Symbolic Analysis.” <i>Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion</i> 30 (1991) 1-25. <p>Take Quiz 5 - Available Monday - Sunday of this week</p>
<p>Week 6 - Monday, February 12 - Sunday, February 18</p>	<p>PowerPoint: <i>Anthropological/Sociological: Douglas and Berger</i> by Professors Stier and Alvarez</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Purity and Danger</i> - Mary Douglas

Dates	Tasks
	Take Quiz 6 - Available Monday - Sunday of this week
Week 7 - Monday, February 19 - Sunday, February 25	Take Exam 1 – Midterm (objective) Available from Monday, October 2nd, 12:00 am – Sunday, October 8th, 11:59 pm
February 26- March 3	Spring Break
Week 8 - Monday, March 4 - Sunday, March 10	<p>PowerPoint: <i>Perennialist/Non-Perennialist:</i> Huxley, Nasr and S. Katz by Professor Katz</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aldous Huxley, Introduction to the Bhagavad Gita - Steven Katz, "Language and Mysticism" - Aseem Shukla, "Exclusivists vs. Pluralists: very different paths to one Truth" <p>Take Quiz 7 - Available Monday - Sunday of this week</p>
Week 9 - Monday, March 11 - Sunday, March 17	<p>PowerPoint: <i>Structuralist/Post-Structuralist:</i> Levi-Strauss by Professor Alvarez</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Levi Strauss, "History and Anthropology," from <i>Structural Anthropology</i> (Basic Books, 1963 [Anchor Books, 1967]), 1-28. - Levi Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth," from <i>ibid.</i>, 202-229. - Mary Douglas, "The Meaning of Myth," from <i>The Structural Study of Myth and Totemism</i> (Tavistock Publications, 1967), 49-69. - K. O. L. Burridge, "Levi-Strauss and Myth," <i>ibid.</i>, 91-115. <p>Take Quiz 8 - Available Monday - Sunday of this week</p> <p>Paper 1 – Critique Paper - DUE March 17th.</p>
Week 10 - Monday, March 18 - Sunday, March 24	<p>PowerPoint: <i>Structuralist/Post-Structuralist:</i> Foucault by Professor Alvarez</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Michel Foucault, "Panopticism," from <i>Discipline and Punish</i> (Pantheon, 1977), 195-228. - Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power," from <i>Power/Knowledge</i>, 109-133.

Dates	Tasks
<p>Week 11 - Monday, March 25 - Sunday, March 31</p>	<p>- Michel Foucault, "Two lectures," from <i>Power/Knowledge</i>, 78-108.</p> <p>Take Quiz 9 - Available Monday - Sunday of this week</p> <p>PowerPoint: <i>Feminist: Ruether and Mahmoud</i> by Professor Gudorf</p> <p>Read:</p> <p>- Rosemary Radford Ruether, <i>Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology</i> (Boston: Beacon, 1983) 1-46, 93-138.</p> <p>- Saba Mahmoud, <i>Politics of Piety: Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject</i> (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005) 1-117.</p> <p>Take Quiz 10 - Available Monday - Sunday of this week</p>
<p>Week 12 - Monday, April 1 - Sunday, April 7</p>	<p>PowerPoint: <i>Liberation: Gutierrez, Boff and Phan</i> by Professor Bidegain</p> <p>Read:</p> <p>- Gustavo Gutierrez, <i>A theology of Liberation: history, politics, and salvation</i>, Trans. By Sister Caridad Ina and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988; First Edition 1973- in Spanish 1971) Introduction, Chap 1 and 2.</p> <p>- Peter Phan, "Method in Liberation Theologies" <i>Theological Studies</i>, March 1, 2000</p> <p>- Clodovis Boff, "Epistemology and Method of the Theology of Liberation" in <i>Mysterium Liberationis Fundamental Concepts of Liberation Theology</i>, ed. Ignacio Ellacuria and Jon Sobrino (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1993) 57-84.</p> <p>Take Quiz 11 - Available Monday - Sunday of this week</p>
<p>Week 13 - Monday, April 8 - Sunday, April 14</p>	<p>PowerPoint: <i>Ecological: Gottlieb</i> by Professor Bauman</p> <p>Read:</p> <p>- Whitney A. Bauman, Rick Bohannon, and Kevin J. O'Brien, eds., <i>Grounding Religion: A Field Guide to Religion and Ecology</i> (Routledge 2010), pp1-78.</p> <p>Take Quiz 12 - Available Monday - Sunday of this week</p>
<p>Week 14 - Monday, April 15 - Sunday, April 21</p>	<p>Start writing your Paper 2- Research Paper (due next week)</p>

Dates	Tasks
	**Research Paper due Saturday, April 20th, 11:59pm
Week 15 - Monday, April 22 - Saturday, April 27	Take Exam 2 (objective) Available Monday, April 4th 12:00pm to Saturday, April 27th 11:59pm