REL 2011

Introduction to Religion

Section: B52

In Person

Spring Term 2027

Course Meeting Information

Class Meeting Details	
Day:	Tuesdays
Time:	6:30PM - 9:05PM

Class Meeting Details	
Location:	Biscayne Bay Campus Academic Center One Room 263

Tuesdays, 6:30PM- 9:05PM at Academic Center One, Room 263

Professor Information

Sharma Danesh Dammar

Roles: Primary Instructor

Email: sdammar@fiu.edu

Phone: 305-348-2186

Office Hours: By appointment on Tuesdays, 9:05p.m. to 9:40p.m.

Office Location: AC1 300

Department or Academic Unit: Department of Religious Studies

Course Prerequisites

Course prerequisites, if any, are listed below.

Course Description

This course introduces students to the nature and variety of religious phenomena, belief, and practice. It shows the ways religion is studied, a cross-cultural study of the variety of history forms of religious belief and practice, such as deity conceptions at the divine myth, ritual scripture, rites of passage, views of the human problem evil, and the ways and goals of an examination of the challenges faced by religion today.

Why Should I Care about 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. 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.

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.

Course Goals

At the end of this course, students will able to:

1. Explain the basic history, development, and belief systems of various religious traditions.

2. Recognize religious themes and concepts found in other cultures.

3. Identify the meaning behind religious concepts and symbols.

4. Evaluate their own religious views in regards to other cultures and paradigms of religious thought.

5. Apply critical thinking to various topics in the field of religious studies.

6. Demonstrate creative thinking about religious issues in the contemporary world.

7. Conduct field research about a particular religious community.

8. Analyze topics in the field of religious studies from multiple perspectives.

9. Assess how global issues and trends are interrelated with

the development and practice of religions.

10. Recognize the strength of utilizing different approaches, theories, and methodologies to better understand the study of religion.

UCC Category Description

This course satisfies the University Core Curriculum **Humanities, Group 2** requirement.

Humanities courses must afford students the ability to think critically through the mastering of subjects concerned with human culture, especially literature, history, art, music, and philosophy, and must include selections from the Western canon.

Textbook and Course Materials

Anatomy of the Sacred: An Introduction to Religion

Required/Recommended: Required

Authors: Livingston, James C.

Publisher: Prentice Hall

Publication Date: 2008

Copyright Date: © 2009

ISBN 10: 013600380x

ISBN 13: 9780136003809

Notes: An Ebook(digital book) or a hard copy of Anatomy of the Sacred: An Introduction to Religion is acceptable to satisfy the book requirement for this course.

Chapters/Pages: Chapters 1-15

Panther Book Pack

Get all required course materials for $22 per undergrad credit hour through Panther Book Pack. You'll be charged automatically unless you opt out within 3 days after the add/drop deadline.

For more details, to compare costs, and to learn how to access your course materials, visit the Panther Book Pack information page on FIU OneStop.

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

- meet the following objectives through text readings, assignments, and class discussions:
- 1. Students will be able to analyze topics in the field of religious studies from multiple perspectives.
- 2. Students will be able to assess how global issues and trends are interrelated with the development and practice of religions.

- 3. Students will be able to demonstrate willingness to think creatively about religious issues in the contemporary world.

Expectations of the Course

Course Policies

1. Read each assignment prior to the date on which it is scheduled to be discussed. Students are expected to complete the required readings for each session and formulate Discussion Points concerning the readings to facilitate class discussion.

2. Take exams and turn in assignments at the scheduled times. Late submission of assignments is unacceptable and will result in 0 points.

3. Be on time to our class meetings. If a student must arrive late or leave early, the student should be courteous and observe silence.

4. Be respectful of the beliefs of others. This is of utmost importance in a religion class. This course acknowledges and honors the vast array of individual and group

disparities in our community. Any behaviors that threaten, harass, or discriminate against another individual will not be tolerated and may be subject to disciplinary actions. Together, we will embrace a respectful learning environment.

5. Know and abide by FIU's Student Conduct and Honor Code. Cheating and plagiarizing will result in an "F" for this course.

6. Turn off all cellular phones. Texting is not permitted in the classroom.

7. Silence is golden when your professor/classmate is speaking. Essentially, one individual at a time has the right to speak unless otherwise instructed by your professor.

8. Disrespectful behavior (sleeping, using headphones as well as using electronic devices to oppose academic purposes, verbal disruption, and physical disruption) is unacceptable and may result in removal from the course.

9. Assignments are due on established due dates via Canvas. Assignment scores and feedback will be given

within 14 days after the due date. Groups will be assigned in class.

10. Students will take all exams online via Canvas during the time slot of class meetings. Exams will be administered online. Questions may be multiple choice, matching, fill in the blank, and short answer. Scores will be posted within 7 days after the due date.

11. Class emails will be answered during office hours and when possible, within 24-36 hours. If you need information related to a test or assignment, plan ahead and submit your questions in advance of the due date. You may contact your instructor during their office hours or schedule an appointment

Attendance Policy

Class attendance is an expectation of this course and attendance will be tracked. Students may be excused at the professor's discretion for legitimate reasons to be absent, such as verified illnesses, emergencies, etc. Reasonable verification as to the nature of the absence must be provided to a suitable department within FIU. Being absent because of work, vacations, or sport activities will not be excused. It is

the student's responsibility to obtain missed notes and assignments. Communicating with your professor before you are absent is a key to your success.

Late Work Policy

For this course, unless otherwise noted by the instructor, submitting work late will be permitted only under qualifying circumstances. Computer and internet connectivity problems, scheduling appointments, and vacations are not valid reasons for late work. There are no make-ups if you decide not to complete an exam/ assignment on time, unless there is/was a true emergency that restricted you from taking it. Students will only be able to take a make-up exam due to legitimate reasons. In order to take a make-up exam, students will need to provide reasonable verification to a suitable department within FIU as to why he/she missed the scheduled exam.

Changes to the Syllabus

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the class syllabus. The syllabus is a guide, and every attempt is made to provide an accurate overview of the class. However, circumstances and events may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. In the event changes become necessary, students will be notified through class email, discussions, and/or the announcements tool. Changes will be announced in a fair and timely fashion.

Assignments, homework, and exams will be adapted for the benefit of the student; students will always know of any changes ahead of time. Check the "Announcements" section of your Canvas account daily for possible course updates.

Assignments & Assessments

How will you succeed in this course?

Examinations (50%):

Exam #1 (25%)
Exam #2 (25%)

Assignments (50%):

Comparative Reaction Paper on Chapters 11-15 (25%)
Religious Visitation Paper (25%)

Assessments

There will be **two exams**, a **religious visitation paper**, and a **comparative reaction paper on Chapters 11-15** where each is worth ¼ of your final grade**.** Examinations will entail true and false, fill in the blanks, and multiple-choice questions. Exams will be available via Canvas during a class date and time slot. The religious visitation paper and the comparative reaction paper are mandatory as this course has a writing requirement. Failure to submit one and/or both writing assignments on time, via Canvas, will result in zero points for the papers. Extra credit is optional and can only elevate the final grade by 5 points. It is your duty to attend class meetings and complete all graded

items before this course is over. After a graded item is completed/submitted via the use of Canvas, scores will be posted within 7-14 days after the due date.

Grading

Course Grading Table

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Points for Each	Total Points Available	Weight
Exam #1	1	110	100	25%
Exam #2	1	100	100	25%
Comparative Reaction Paper	1	100	100	25%
Religious Visitation Paper	1	100	100	25%
Total	N/A	N/A	400	100%

Grading Scale

A = 95 – 100

A- = 90 – 94.99

B+ = 87 – 89.99

B = 83 – 86.99

B- = 80 – 82.99

C+ = 77 – 79.99

C = 70 – 76.99

D = 60 – 69.99

F = below 60

Proctored Exams

Exams (Non-Cumulative & Remote)	
Exam	**Subject on Exam**

Exams (Non-Cumulative & Remote)	
Exam One via Canvas (middle of the semester)	Chapter 1. What is Religion? Chapter 2. Ways of Studying Religion Chapter 3. The Sacred and the Holy Chapter 4. Sacred Symbol, Myth, and Doctrine Chapter 5. Sacred Ritual

Exams (Non-Cumulative & Remote)	
Exam Two via Canvas (end of the semester)	Chapter 6. Sacred Scripture Chapter 7. Society and the Sacred: The Social Formations and Transformations of Religion Chapter 8. Deity: Concepts of the Divine and Ultimate Reality Chapter 9. Cosmogony: Origins of the Natural and Social Order Chapter 10. Views of the Human Problem

Readings, Materials, and Open Educational Resources (OER)

Required Readings from Anatomy of the Sacred: An introduction to Religion

Required Readings from Anatomy of the Sacred: An introduction to Religion	
Chapters to Read Prior to Exam One	**Chapters to Read Prior to Exam Two**
Chapter 1. What is Religion? Chapter 2. Ways of Studying Religion Chapter 3. The Sacred and the Holy Chapter 4. Sacred Symbol, Myth, and Doctrine Chapter 5. Sacred Ritual	Chapter 6. Sacred Scripture Chapter 7. Society and the Sacred: The Social Formations and Transformations of Religion Chapter 8. Deity: Concepts of the Divine and Ultimate Reality Chapter 9. Cosmogony: Origins of the Natural and Social Order Chapter 10. Views of the Human Problem

Schedule of Topics

Schedule of Lecture Order with Discussions

Semester Timing	**Lecture Order (first to last)**

Semester Timing	Lecture Order (first to last)
(middle of the semester)	Chapter 1. What is Religion? Chapter 2. Ways of Studying Religion Chapter 3. The Sacred and the Holy Chapter 4. Sacred Symbol, Myth, and Doctrine Chapter 5. Sacred Ritual
(end of the semester)	Chapter 6. Sacred Scripture Chapter 7. Society and the Sacred: The Social Formations and Transformations of Religion Chapter 8. Deity: Concepts of the Divine and Ultimate Reality Chapter 9. Cosmogony: Origins of the Natural and Social Order Chapter 10. Views of the Human Problem

Policies & Resources

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.

In addition, the FIU Policies and Procedures Library website serves as the official repository for university-wide policies and procedures.

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.

Nondiscrimination Statement

The **Office of Civil Rights Compliance and Accessibility** (CRCA) is responsible for ensuring that FIU maintains a workplace and learning environment free from discrimination, where current and prospective faculty, staff, and students are treated equitably. If any student, employee, or applicant has a sincere and reasonable belief that they have been discriminated against or harassed based on age, color, disability, marital status, ethnic or national origin, race, religion, retaliation, sex, or any other protected category, they can report their concerns to the CRCA team through report.fiu.edu