REL 2011

Introduction to Religion

Section: B53

Hybrid/Certified

Spring Term 2027

Course Meeting Information

In-Person Class Meeting Times	
Day:	Wednesday
Time:	10:00 AM - 11:15 AM
Location:	at BBC. Room Academic One 228

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

Course Prerequisites

Course prerequisites, if any, are listed below.

Course Description

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 introduces methods of critical reflection on religion and some of their applications to fundamental topics such as knowledge, value, the sacred, the individual, and the human society, starting with the classical Western canon up until the contemporary word. Written work meets the state composition

requirement.

How a Hybrid Course Works

In a hybrid course, class time is divided evenly between in-person sessions and independent work outside the classroom.

- **In-person (50%)**: We will meet regularly to apply what you've learned through discussions, group work, debates, and activities that deepen your understanding of key concepts. This course uses a *flipped classroom* approach, meaning that most in-class time will be dedicated to your active participation, while I will guide, support, and clarify questions.
- **Independent work (50%)**: Outside of class, you are responsible for preparing for our sessions. This includes reading the textbook, engaging with assigned articles and videos, writing papers, posting on the discussion board, and completing other assignments. This preparation ensures that you come to class ready to contribute and build on your knowledge.

Textbook and Course Materials

ANATOMY OF THE SACRED:INTRO. TO RELIGION

Required/Recommended: Required

Authors: James C. Livingston

Publisher: Pearson

Publication Date: 2009

Copyright Date: 2009

ISBN 10: 0-13-600380-X

ISBN 13: 978-0-13-600380-9

Notes: Make sure you have the textbook by the beginning of the semester, as you will be required to read it the entire semester. We will be using the 6th. edition

Chapters/Pages: ALL

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

- IDENTIFY RELIGIOUS THEMES AND PATTERNS THAT SHAPE OUR EVERYDAY LIFE.
- RECOGNIZE THE UNIVERSAL FORMS OF RELIGIOUS

EXPERIENCE AND EXPRESSION SUCH AS SACRED SYMBOLS, RITUALS, MYTHS, SCRIPTURES, ETHICS, AND COMMUNITIES.

- EXPLAIN THE STRENGTH OF UTILIZING DIFFERENT APPROACHES, THEORIES, AND METHODOLOGIES TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE STUDY OF RELIGION.
- EVALUATE VARIOUS ISSUES IN THE FIELD OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES, SUCH AS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES, INSIDER AND OUTSIDER PERSPECTIVES, AND SCHOLARLY AND JOURNALISTIC SOURCES.
- GLOBAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
- 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.
- DEVELOP AWARENESS OF THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STUDENT'S OWN VIEWS AND VARIOUS RELIGIOUS VIEWS IN ORDER TO AVOID UNINFORMED ASSUMPTIONS.

- 3. STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE WILLINGNESS TO ANALYZE AND DISCUSS RELIGIOUS ISSUES IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD.

Expectations of this Course

Hybrid Course Expectations

This is a hybrid course, which means half of the coursework takes place online and half during our in-person meetings. Expectations for your performance are the same as in a traditional course. In fact, hybrid courses often require **more self-motivation, self-discipline, and comfort with technology**, which can make them more demanding for some students.

Communication with Your Professor

- **Primary method:** Use the **Inbox** in Canvas. See the Canvas Conversations Help Desk for guidance on communicating with your instructor and peers.
- **Email:** You may also email me at **vschindl@fiu.edu**.
- **Response time:** I will reply to messages within **24 hours on weekdays**. Messages sent on weekends or holidays may take up to **48 hours**.

Attendance Policy

- **Mandatory attendance:** In-person meetings are required. You are expected to engage in class discussion, participate in group projects, and complete in-class assignments.
- **Absences:** Missing more than **3 classes (unexcused)** will result in a **zero grade for attendance and participation**.
- **Tardiness and leaving early:** Arriving more than 15 minutes late, leaving early, or stepping out for long periods may count as an absence.
- **Excused absences:** Religious holidays and illness (with proper documentation).
- **Participation includes:**
    - Preparing readings before class
    - Contributing to discussions
    - Being attentive during lectures and peer presentations
    - Completing in-class activities

Student Responsibilities

You are expected to:

- Review the “Getting Started” page in the course modules
- Take the practice quiz to ensure your computer is compatible with Canvas
- Interact online with your instructor and peers

- Review and follow the course calendar and weekly outlines
- Log in to Canvas **3–5 times per week**
- Submit assignments and discussion posts **by the deadlines** (no late work accepted)
- Respond to emails within 1–2 days
- Read assignment feedback within one day of grades being posted and make corrections if necessary

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Instructor Responsibilities

I will:

- Log in to the course at least **5 times per week**
- Respond to discussion posts within **2 days of the deadline**
- Respond to emails within **24 hours on weekdays**, and within **48 hours on weekends/holidays**
- Grade assignments within **2 days** of the due date (essays: **7–10 days**)

Late Assignment Policy

- **Essays:** Accepted with **points deduction per late day**, up to 16 points on the essay based on the journal, and up to 2 points in each part of the essay on Globalization. No essays will be accepted after **Week 14**.
- **Discussion posts:** No late submissions are accepted.

- **Quizzes and midterm exam:** May be rescheduled if you provide a valid reason **at least 5 days in advance**.
- **Final exam:** No make-up dates are provided.

Extra Credit Opportunities

- Extra credit usually involves attending a special lecture and submitting a written report, or completing surveys I will give out throughout the semester.
- Options:
  - **1 point**: One-page summary of the lecture
  - **Up to 3 points**: Two-page analysis linking the lecture to course content
- Reports must be well-written with proper grammar.
- A maximum of **6 extra credit points** can be earned during the semester.
- Extra credit activities and deadlines (Week 14 cutoff) are listed in the **Extra Credit Module** on Canvas. Additional opportunities may be announced in class or posted on Canvas.

Assignments & Assessments

Assignments

1. **Opinion Paper:** ***Globalization and Religion***

- **Prompt:** Is globalization good for religion or not?
- **Requirements:** Research a case study on globalization and religion using AI tools. Present arguments both for and against the impact of globalization, then state your opinion.
- **Support:** The assignment will be broken down into five (5) different parts with detailed guidance available in the **Modules** section on Canvas.

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2. **Reflection Essay: *Experiencing Religion Around Me* (1000–1500 words)**

- **Journal:** Keep a journal for 5 days, documenting how religion appears in your everyday life. Submit the journal for feedback before writing the essay.
- **Essay:** Write a reflection paper analyzing your journal observations.
- **Details:** Instructions and requirements are provided in the **Modules** section on Canvas.

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3. Online Reflections (Discussions)

- **Before class:** Read the assigned material, post your response to the weekly prompt, and reply to at least one peer.
- **Deadlines:**
    - Initial post due **Friday night**
    - Peer response due by **Sunday night** (final deadline)

- **Grading notes:**
  - No response to a peer = automatic **–7 points**
  - No initial post = **zero**
  - Late or make-up posts are **not allowed**
- **Reminder:** Posts are visible to your classmates, and some may be discussed in class. Write thoughtfully and respectfully.

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4. Group Project: *Create Your Own Religion*

- Work in groups to design a religion, applying concepts from class.
- **Collaboration:** In-class work + group Collaboration tool in Canvas. Progress must be posted online regularly for feedback.
- **Final presentation:** Each group will present their religion during the last weeks of the semester.
- **Rubric & instructions:** Available in the **Modules** section on Canvas.
- **Final grade:** It will be a mix of individual grades and group grades, so it may be that some students in the same group end up with different final grades in the project (see rubric)

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5. In-Class Activities

- Periodic assignments will be completed and submitted during class.

- **Policy:** Students not present will receive a **zero** unless the absence is excused (see attendance policy).

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6. Exit Tickets

- At the end of some in-person classes, you will complete a short activity or question related to the day's lesson.
- **Policy:** Students not present will receive a **zero** unless the absence is excused (see attendance policy).

Assessments

1. **Quizzes** (6 total)- Lowest score to be dropped at the end of the semester

- **Format:** 10 questions each
- **Policy:** Lowest quiz score dropped
- **Timing:** Available on Canvas from **Wednesday after class to Sunday** each week.
- **Rules:**
  - 10 minutes per attempt
  - Two attempts allowed; the higher score is kept
  - Auto-submit when time expires or when the quiz closes

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2. Midterm Exam

- **Coverage:** First half of the semester- chapters 1-7
- **Format:** 50 multiple-choice and true/false questions
- **Time:** 70 minutes
- **Availability:** Canvas, open Wednesday after class to Sunday (5 days)

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3. Final Exam

- **Coverage:** Second half of the semester- chapters 8-13
- **Format:** Multiple-choice and true/false
- **Time:** 70 minutes
- **Availability:** Canvas, open 4 days during the university's scheduled final exam period

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Technology and Exam Policies

- Complete the **Practice Quiz** on each computer you plan to use for quizzes or exams to check system compatibility.
- Exams **cannot be taken on phones or tablets**—a laptop or desktop computer is required.
- All assessments will **auto-submit** when:
    1. The timer runs out, OR
    2. The closing date/time is reached.
       (Example: If a quiz closes at 5:00 p.m. and you begin at 4:55 p.m., you will only have 5 minutes to complete it.)
- For technical assistance, contact the **FIU Canvas Help**

Team.

Grading

Course Grading Table

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Points for Each	Total Points Available	Weight
Quizzes	6	100	500 (lowest will be dropped	10%
Midterm Exam	1	100	100	10%
Final Exam	1	100	100	10%
Opinion Paper on Globalization and Religion	1	100	100	15%
Essay: Experiencing Religion Around Me	1	100	100	15%
Total	54	835	2895	100%

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Points for Each	Total Points Available	Weight
Group Work: Create your own religion	1	100	100	10%
Online Reflection (Discussions)	14	30	420	15%
Attendance and Participation	1	100	100	5%
In Class Activities	13	100	1300	5%
Exit Ticket	15	5	75	5%
Total	54	835	2895	100%

Letter Grade Distribution Table

Letter	Range %	Letter	Range %	Letter	Range %
A	95 and Above	B	83-86	C	70-76
A-	90-94	B-	80-82	F	60-69

B+	87-89	C+	77-79	F	59 or less

Schedule of Topics

This is a tentative outline of the course. It is subject to change with written notice.

Course Communication

Communication in this course will take place via the Canvas Inbox. Check out the Canvas Conversations Tutorial or Canvas Guide to learn how to communicate with your instructor and peers using Announcements, Discussions, and the Inbox. I will respond to all correspondence within 24 hours, unless you send me a message on the weekend.

You can also send me an email at vschindl@fiu.edu

Course Communication

Communication in this course will take place via the **Canvas Inbox and Announcements**.

Check out the Canvas Conversations Tutorial or Canvas Guide to learn how to communicate with your instructor and peers using Announcements, Discussions, and the Inbox.

Policies & Resources

Before starting this course, please review the Policies & Resources Page in Canvas, which includes comprehensive information on various University and Course Level Policies, such as:

- University Policies
- Accessibility and Accommodations
- Online Etiquette
- Technical Requirements and Skills
- Computer & Digital Literacy Skills
- Course Technology Accessibility Statements and Privacy Policies
- Academic Integrity
- Copyright Statement
- Nondiscrimination Statement
- Panthers Care & Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
- Fair Use Policy

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;

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 as well as student resources that can help you prepare for a successful semester.

Artificial Intelligence - AI

- Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of

the learning outcomes of this course, all writing assignments should be prepared by the student.

Developing strong competencies in this area will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, AI-generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism unless it is required in the assignment (there is one assignment in which AI will be used and needs to be cited correctly).

Ethics still matter and plagiarism is a serious offense. Learn more about the academic integrity policies and procedures as well as student resources that can help you prepare for a successful semester.

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.

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 to learn about the tool, how to access your meeting room, and share your screen.

- Access the Zoom Test Meeting Room to test out the software before joining an actual session.

If you encounter any technical difficulties, please contact the FIU Canvas Help Team. Please ensure you contact support immediately upon the issue occurring.

Nondiscrimination Statement

The **Office of Civil Rights** (OCR) 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 OCR team through report.fiu.edu.

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.