REL 2011

Introduction to Religion

Section: U10

In Person

Spring Term 2027

Course Meeting Information

CLASS MEETING TIMES

Class Meeting time

DAY	Tuesday & Thursdays
TIME	12:30 pm - 1:45 pm

LOCATION	SIPA 2 258

Professor Information

Mariana Montero

Roles: Primary Instructor

Email: mmontero@fiu.edu

Response Time: 48 hours

Phone: 305 3482823

Office Hours: Tues / Thur in person 8 am to 9 am and by appointment. Other times available via ZOOM appointment

Office Location: SIPA II 223

Department or Academic Unit: Green School Dean's Office

Course Prerequisites

Course prerequisites, if any, are listed below.

Course Description

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 will offer an explorative introduction to the basic's concepts of religion, and how we should study it. We will examine how interdisciplinary thinkers have analyzed religions around the world. We will examine the different expressions of religion, such as sacred space and time, myth, rituals, rites, scriptures and our human views of good and evil. 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.

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

- Recognize the universal forms of religious experience and expression, including sacred symbols, rituals, myths, scriptures, ethical systems, and religious communities.
- Explain and evaluate different approaches, theories, and methodologies used in the academic study of religion
- Apply key concepts from religious studies to analyze the role of religion in shaping individuals, cultures, societies,

and contemporary issues.

- 1. Analyze religious beliefs, practices, and issues from multiple cultural, historical, and disciplinary perspectives.
- GLOBAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
- 3. Demonstrate awareness of the relationship between their own perspectives and those of individuals from diverse religious traditions, fostering informed and respectful dialogue.
- 2. Assess how global issues and trends are interconnected with the development and practice of religions around the world.
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Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

Student learning outcomes allow faculty to assess the level of proficiency in content knowledge and skills that their students acquire in a course

If the objective meets a special designation, you will see the code after the objective:
University Core Curriculum UCC,
Gordon Rule Writing: GRW
Global Learning: GL

Civic Literacy: CL

Textbook and Course Materials

Anatomy of the Sacred An Introduction to Religion

Required/Recommended: Required

Authors: James C. Livingston

Publisher: Pearson/Prentice Hall

Publication Date: 2009

Copyright Date: 2009

ISBN 10: 9780136003809

ISBN 13: 9780136003809

Chapters/Pages: All chapters

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.

Course Goals

The aim of this course is to understand the many facets of the religions of the world and also to be able to formulate our own questions and apply different mythologies. By the end of the semester students will be able to:

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

-Recognize differences and similarities found in different cultures.

-Identify the meaning behind religious concepts and symbols.

-Demonstrate knowledge of the evolution and movement of religious beliefs from the past to contemporary times.

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

-Analyze topics in the fields of religious studies from multiple perspectives.

Expectations of the Course

This is a traditional in-person course, which means most of the course work, especially instructions and some assignments will be conducted in classroom setting. Expectations for performance in this class is the same for all traditional courses. Students are,

however, required to master a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills which to access some course resources as well as be able to communicate effectively through canvas.

Students are expected to:

- Review course syllabus to familiarize yourself with course content.
- Read and review course materials assigned to each topic before coming to class.
- Acquire required reader (textbook) by the end of first week of class.
- Be punctual in class and participate in class discussions. Students who arrive **more than 15 minutes late** will receive **80% of the attendance/participation credit for that class session**.
- Log in to the course canvas regularly for any announcements
- Refrain from using phones during class. Phones should be silenced and kept out of sight unless instructed otherwise.
- Respond to emails within 24hour.
- Submit assignments by the corresponding deadline

Statement on Plagiarism

You are expected to understand the definition of plagiarism. See the University Code of Academic Integrity if you need further clarification. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism, or attempting to pass off another's work as your own, falls into three different categories

1. A written work that is entirely or partially stolen from another source;

2. Using quotations from another source without properly citing them; and

3. Paraphrasing from another source without proper citations.

Students are expected to understand the definition of plagiarism. See the University Code of Academic Integrity at http://www.fiu.edu/~oabp/misconductweb/2codeofacainteg.htm if you need further clarification. Offenders will receive a grade of F (0 points) for the plagiarized assignment, and possibly for the course. Please be aware: Previously submitted papers are not allowed, even if it is your own work and even if you are retaking this class. You may not “reuse” papers.

AI Policy

In this course, AI tools such as ChatGPT may be used for initial idea generation and clarifying concepts; however, direct use of AI-generated content as your own analytical or creative work is strictly prohibited unless explicitly permitted by the instructor.

Misuse of AI tools—such as unauthorized use on assessments, failure to cite appropriately, or submission of fully AI-generated work as your own—will be treated as violations of academic integrity policies, potentially leading to disciplinary action as outlined in the University's Code of Conduct.

FIU AI Polcies

Assignments & Assessments

ASSIGNMENTS

All work must be submitted through Canvas. Canvas does not allow instructors to submit on behalf of students. Please do not email your assignments to your instructor.

If you encounter errors or issues submitting an assignment, click on "Help" inside Canvas Course (located on the left-hand panel inside the course) and select Chat with Canvas Support (student). A live chat with Canvas support can fix the issue immediately.

Pop quizzes may take place during the semester

All written assignments will be automatically checked for plagiarism. See section titled Course Policies to learn more about what plagiarism is and how to properly cite your work.

In-Class Assignments

Throughout the semester, students will complete a variety of in-

class assignments related to the course material. These activities may include reflections, discussions, interviews, quizzes, group work, short writing exercises, or other classroom activities designed to reinforce key concepts and support preparation for major assignments and exams.

In-class assignments must be completed during the scheduled class session and require the student's physical presence in class. Students who are absent, arrive late, leave early, or do not complete the assignment during class may receive reduced credit or no credit for that activity unless the absence is documented and excused in accordance with University policy.

Reflection Essays : 750 words

You will complete three reflection essays based on assigned chapters. These short assignments are designed to help you engage with course concepts, develop your ideas, and practice analytical writing.

Each reflection should:

- Go beyond summary and include your own analysis
- Use course concepts and examples
- Include citations from the textbook

Final Paper: “Create your own Religion”

For the final assignment, you will design your own religion using the concepts studied throughout the semester. This

paper should demonstrate your ability to apply course theories and ideas to create a coherent and meaningful belief system.

This is not just a creative assignment—your religion must be grounded in academic concepts from the course.

Your paper should include:

- A clear description of your religion's **beliefs and worldview**
- Explanation of key elements, including:
    - The sacred (sacred vs. profane)
    - Rituals and religious practices
    - Symbols, myths, or narratives
    - Sacred texts or teachings
    - Structure of community (church, sect, or movement)
    - Ethical system (right vs. wrong)

**Students may not submit work from a previous semester or from another class for this assignment or any other assignment in this course.

Assignment Details and Instructions:

- Format: MLA Format Required
- Content: Field research and supplementary research
- Length: 1800-2000 Words, Not Including Your Works Cited Page

- Double –Spaced, 12-Pt Font, Arial Or Times New Roman Font
- Sources: Minimum 6 MLA in-text citations
- Works Cited Page required
- In addition to the paper, you will prepare a short presentation summarizing your ideas.
- .**Presentation Requirements**
  - **Length:** 3 minutes
  - **Slides:** 5 slides maximum

Midterm Exam

- **Coverage:** First half of the semester
- **Format:** 25 multiple-choice and true/false questions, 1 short essay question
- **Time:** 75 minutes

Final Exam

- **Coverage:** Second half of the semester
- **Format:** 25 multiple-choice and true/false questions, 2 short essay question
- **Time:** 120 minutes

- **Handwritten Notes Requirement:**
  Handwritten class notes will be collected at the midterm and final exams and are part of your course grade (15 points). Notes should reflect consistent engagement with lectures and course material. Random, minimal, or incomplete notes may not receive full credit.
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Grading

Late Work

Late submissions will not be accepted, except in cases of genuine and documented emergencies.

Avoid leaving assignment/quiz submissions for the last minute before a deadline. “Heavy user traffic” during this timeframe may cause delays and/or errors, which can lead to students missing crucial deadlines.

Participation is evaluated at the instructor’s discretion and is included across all assignments and course activities. It is based on attendance, preparedness, engagement in discussions, and adherence to classroom policies (including phone use)..

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus

by means of announcements or messages with ample time allowed for students to respond and adjust appropriately.

Extra Credit

No extra credit will be offered or accepted in this course.

Assignments

Course Requirements	**Number of items**	**Points for each**	**Weight**
Reflection Essays	3	100	15%
Exams	2	100	30%
Term Paper and presentation	1	100	25%
Attendance	13	100	15%
In class Assignments	10	100	15%
	34	500	100%

Grade Scale

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

This syllabus is subject to change; you are responsible for regularly monitoring Canvas Announcements, Conversations/Inbox and your FIU student email to be aware of any noted changes

Your attendance will be monitored, and makes up 10% of the final grade of the course. We use the FIU checkin App. If you are not in class your grade will be affected. You will also be lacking critical information to complete the assignments.

Students are allowed up to three absences without penalty to the attendance portion of their grade. However, any in-class assignments missed during those absences cannot be made up unless the absence is documented and excused.

Schedule of Topics

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

Textbook and Assigned Readings

Anatomy of the Sacred: An Introduction to Religion, 6th ed. James C. Livingston. (Pearson, 2009) is the only textbook for this course. A schedule of readings is given below. The topics refer to chapter titles in the aforementioned textbook rather than giving

page numbers.

Module 1 Introducing each other and the course

What is religion?

Module 2 Ways of Studying Religion

Module 3 The Sacred and the Holy

Module 4 Sacred Symbol, Myth, and Doctrine

Module 5 Sacred Ritual

Module 6 Sacred Scripture

Module 7 Society and the Sacred: The Social Formations and Transformations of Religion

Module 8 MID term review and exam

Module 9 Symbolism and Art, Frost Museum visit

Module 10 Religious altars, offerings and ethics

Module 11 Churches , cults and sects

Week 12 Mystical Experiences and the Sacred

Week 13 Theodicy : Encountering Evil, and the concept of Karma

Week 14 Final paper presentation

Week 15 Final Exam Review

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 correspondences within 24 hours.

Policies & Resources

Please review the FIU's Policies 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.

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.

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

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.

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.