REL 2011

Introduction to Religion

Section: U14

Hybrid/Certified

Spring Term 2027

Course Meeting Information

Class Meeting Times	
Day:	Mondays
Time:	2:00-3:15 pm
Location:	PC 432

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

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.

Professor Information

Niurca Marquez

Roles: Primary Instructor

Email: niumarqu@fiu.edu

Response Time: 48 hours

Phone: 305 348 2186

Office Hours: TBD and By Appointment

Office Location: DM 381 A

Department or Academic Unit: Religious Studies

Course Prerequisites

Course prerequisites, if any, are listed below.

Course Description

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 should we 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.

We will utilize our textbook, videos, internet sources, and discussions to explore these topics. Your grade will include exams, class discussions, and essays to develop your critical thinking skills and writing abilities. This course fulfills the Gordon Rule requirement. Aspects of this course will be facilitated using a team-based learning approach. Students will be responsible for preparing for course activities in advance of each session.

This is a Gordon Rule* class that serves as an introduction to the study of religion. The course explores the ways in which people understand and express religious experience. This course's scope includes the exploration of concepts such as deity, theodicy, cosmology, ritual, as well as religious social implications in society.

Throughout the course the student will also be exposed to specific rituals, myths, doctrines, ethics and symbols from various different world religions and cultures.

*This course fulfills the Gordon Rule requirement; a “C” or better must be earned to receive credit for this course.

Textbook and Course Materials

Anatomy of the Sacred

Subtitle: An Introduction to Religion

Required/Recommended: Required

Authors: James C. Livingston

Publisher: Pearson Education

Publication Date: 2008

Copyright Date: 2008

ISBN 10: 013600380X

ISBN 13: 9780136003809

Chapters/Pages: Full text

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

- Understand the complexity of the definitions of religion and secularization.
- Dissect the universal forms of religious experience and expression such as sacred symbols, rituals, myths, scriptures, ethics, and communities.
- Identify religious themes and patterns that shape our

everyday life.

- Recognize the strength of utilizing different approaches, theories, and methodologies to better understand the study of religion.
- Evaluate the interrelationship between the student's own and other's religious views in order to avoid uninformed assumptions.
- Develop college-level academic writing and communication skills. (GRW)
- Identify key thinkers and their interdisciplinary theories about the patterns and paradoxes of sacred experiences across traditions.

Expectations of this Course

Course Modality & Expectations

This course will be taught in hybrid mode. In a hybrid class, the face-to-face meeting time is reduced by 50%. The other 50% of the class takes place outside of the classroom, whether online, in the field, in the community, or someplace else. It is important to note that this out-of-class "meeting time" is in addition to the homework and preparation that are assigned in all classes regardless of format. If you take a hybrid course, you will need to self-regulate your out-of-class time so that you

can keep up with both the face-to-face and out-of-class assignments and preparation. Some tasks must be completed prior to class and some after class. Paying attention to how the in- and out-of-class materials are connected is important.

You are responsible for carefully reading the syllabus and weekly calendar, meeting deadlines as posted, and submitting mature, thoughtful work. Some of this material may be new, personal, or controversial, so please maintain an open-minded and considerate attitude, allowing others time to reflect and communicate. The online portion of the class is required and constitutes the online attendance. Please review additional expectations below.

Note: It is very important that you not rely on the to-do list generated by Canvas. **Some discussion do not have a hard deadline and as such will NOT appear on the to-do list, so it is very important that you CHECK THE ASSIGNMENT AND DISCUSSION SECTIONS FOR PENDING ASSIGNMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS.**

Course Communication

Communication directly with me in this course will take place via the Inbox. Check out the Canvas Conversations Tutorial to learn how to communicate with your instructor and peers using Announcements, Discussions, and the Inbox. At some points in the semester, my inbox gets quite full. If you message me and don't hear back from me within two business days, please send a follow-up message. I will appreciate the gentle reminder.

Also, there is an open forum pinned to the top of the discussion forum for general questions about the class. If one student has a question about course materials or assignments, that question is usually shared by others. Using the open forum will allow everyone in the course to benefit from each other's questions. I will check the forum several times a week to respond to questions, but, if you see a question that hasn't been answered yet and you know the answer, please feel free to share that knowledge with your classmates.

As a student in this course, you are expected to:

- Review the Getting Started information located in the Modules.
- Introduce yourself to the class during the first week in the appropriate discussion forum.
- Take the Practice Quiz to ensure that your computer is compatible with Canvas.
- Interact online with instructor and peers.
- Log in to the course at least 3-4 times per week, if not daily.
- Respond to Canvas Messages within 1 day.
- Check regularly for any announcements.

I, the professor, will:

- Log in to the course at least 6 days per week.
- Respond to Canvas Messages within 1 day.

- Respond to General Discussion posts within 2 days.
- Provide feedback on assignments within 7 days of submission.

Generally, I post any overall class information, including reminders or announcements, within the Announcements section of Canvas, but, if something is time sensitive, I will send a Canvas Message.

Attendance & Participation

Since we have limited class sessions, you are expected to do your best to attend every session, arrive on time, and stay for the duration of the class. Attendance will be taken during each session. Arriving late, leaving early, or stepping out of the class for long periods of time may incur an absence penalty. Please refrain from texting and emailing in class. Please inform the instructor immediately if a situation develops that will impact your performance or attendance. I cannot help you if you don't reach out to me. Since life can also get in the way sometimes, you are allowed **1 unexcused absence for the duration of the semester.** You are allowed **1 additional excused absence (medical or family emergency providing proof).** After that your attendance **grade will drop a half letter grade for each subsequent absence.**

Participation includes reading for class, contributing to discussions, and being attentive to lectures and student presentations. Participation also includes introducing yourself in the online forum.

Make-up Policy

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.

Note: 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.

Plagirism and AI

All suspected plagiarism will be reported to Student Conduct and Academic Integrity (SCAI), which may result in sanctions. This includes AI use and said use will be determined by the AI usage reported on Canvas when students submit work.

Grading

Grading

I provide multiple opportunities for students to receive feedback on their performance throughout the course in order to give students opportunities to see how they are doing and so they can identify places where they need to apply more effort or new strategies along the way. My hope is that all of you will develop the knowledge and skills that you need to to do well in this course.

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Points for Each	Total Points Available
Discussion Boards	5	10	50
Site Visit Report	2	100	200
My Worldview Essay	1	20	15
Project	1	100	100
Exam	1	40	40
Attendance and Participation	1	100	100
Total	11		

Grades

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

Proctored Exams

Please note that the information contained in this section applies only if your course requires a proctored exam.

Through a careful examination of this syllabus, it is the student's responsibility to determine whether this online course requires proctored exams. Please visit our Student Proctored Exam Instructions webpage for important information concerning proctored exams, proctoring centers, and important forms.

Readings, Materials, and Open Educational Resources (OER)

Note that additional resources may be required for certain topics covered in the course. These will all be made available on Canvas and will be stored in the corresponding modules.

Note that additional course materials may be added in response to a class discussion or because the instructor determines it is necessary for your success. Make sure to check back regularly in the modules for any updates.

Schedule of Topics

This is your preliminary course schedule. This schedule is subject to change, so make sure you are checking it for updates regularly. There are many things that can cause us to adjust slightly, so it is

important that you pay attention during in-class announcements, as well as, check course modules and the schedule below for updates.

Schedule of Topics	

Schedule of Topics	
Weeks 1 & 2	*NOTE: Class calendar does not include in-class presentations as those will be assigned during the second week of the course. Discussion Boards are also not yet included as we will discuss them during the first day of class. Class Work: Review and familiarize yourself with the course syllabus, calendar of due dates, and how content items are setup under Modules and Assignments. Section I - The Study of Religion Topic: Defining Religion. Why Are Humans Religious? Why Study Religion? Read: Chapter 1 p. 1-14 Topic: The Perspective of the Student–Commitment and Objectivity. The Ways Religion Is Studied. Interpreting and Explaining Religion. Read: Chapter 2 p. 15-34 Class Work: Discussion of the following topics: • Why are humans religious?

Schedule of Topics	
Week 3 Week 4	• Why Study Religion? • Interpreting and explaining religion (How the study of religion is interdisciplinary by nature) ***Note: Last Day for Add/Drop is August 27** Work on your group discussion "Ways of Studying Religion." Remember this work is the basis for the group project later this semester, so please devote the time to it that I have set aside for you. **Labor Day, No Classes** Section II. Universal Forms of Religious Experience and Expression Topic: The Sacred and the Holy. The Concept of Sacred Power. The Holy as Mysterium Tremendum and Fascinans. Sacred Space and Sacred Time. Religion as Ultimate Concern.

Schedule of Topics	
	Axis Mundi. Read: Chapter 3 p. 35-52 This week you will work on your Site Visit #1

Schedule of Topics	
Week 5	Class Work: Discussion on sacred power, sacred space, objects and ritual in relation to myth, symbols and doctrine. Case Study of the case of Norse Mythology with guest speaker Aragorn Vitali (Friday 9/17/21) Topic: Symbolic Communication. Religious Symbols, Myth and Doctrines. Read: Chapter 4 p. 53-73 We will also begin work on Ritual Action. Types of Sacred Ritual. Ritual and Sacrifice. Rituals as Sacraments. Read: Chapter 5 p. 74-95 (Monday and Wednesday Topic: Sacred Ritual in a variety of contexts. Ritual in secular spaces. Read: Chapter 6 p. 96-122 Topic: The Pervasive Role of Sacred Scripture. Using the Term Scripture. Some Distinctive Features of Sacred Scripture.

Schedule of Topics	

Schedule of Topics	
Week 6	Class Work: Class participation exercise on the interpretation of scripture. Topic: The Authority and Canonicity of Scripture. The Reception and Uses of Scripture. The Interpretation of Scripture. Read: Chapter 6 p. 96-123 (Monday) The Reciprocal Relationship between Religion and Society. Types of Religious Communities. Voluntary Religious Communities. Protest and Change in Voluntary Religious Communities. The Sect. The Cult: New Religious Movements. Read: Chapter 7 p. 124-150 (Wednesday and Friday)
Week 7	Class Work: Discussion of potential Site Visits and final decisions made. Section III. Universal Components of a Religious Worldview

Schedule of Topics	
Weeks 8	Topic: Polytheism and the Worship of Nature. Dualism. Pantheism and Monism. Monotheism. Read: Chapter 8 *Begin considering the second Site Visit you might want to do Workshopping of Site Visits and Mid-Semester review. In-Class activity for practicing fieldwork and observation. Discussion on Religion and Society: Social Justice and Evolution of Religion.

Schedule of Topics	
Week 9	Continued discussion on Polytheism, Pantheism, Monotheism Action Exercise: "Today, we start a cult. Just Kidding. Maybe" Topic: The Practical Basis of Cosmogony. Emergence or Procreation from a Primal Substance or Being. The Sexual Union of a Primal Male and Female. Creation by Conflict and the Ordering of Chaos. Creation by a Divine Craftsman. Creation by Decree or from Nothing. The Rejection of Cosmogonic Speculation. Cosmogony Today. Read: Chapter 9 p. 183-210 Online Class Work: Lets talk about science and religion, philosophy and religion, balance in religion, good, evil

Schedule of Topics	
Week 10	and sex. Topic: Modern Views of Our Human Plight. Stoicism. Christianity. Theravada Buddhism. Confucianism. Read: Chapter 10 p. 211-234

Schedule of Topics	
Week 11	Class Work: Presentation on Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Topic: The Persistent Demand for Theodicy. Theodicy of "Mystical Participation." A Future, This-Worldly Theodicy. Other-Worldly Theodicy. Dualism. The Karma-Samsara Theodicy. Monotheistic Theodicies. Read: Chapter 11 p. 235-258 Topic: Virtues and Obligations. The Sources and Norms of Moral Authority. Read: Chapter 12 p. 259-286 **FINAL PROJECTS DUE NEXT WEEK**
Week 12	**Last Day to Drop with DR grade is December 5**
Week 13	First half of in-class presentations

Schedule of Topics	
	Second half of in-class presentations

Schedule of Topics	
Week 14	Guest Speaker - Susana Morse Neo-Pagan traditions and New Religious Movements
Week 15	Note: Our guest speaker may have to attend via zoom due to health constraints. More information forthcoming.
Week 16	Review of Synthesis Exam content

Synthesis Exam
Exam opens on December 5 at 12:01AM and closes on December 11 at 11:59PM. You have 1.5hrs to complete it once you start. No Make-ups will be available.

Schedule of Topics	

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.

Assignments & Assessments

Discussion Forums

Keep in mind that your discussion forum postings will likely be seen by other members of the course. Care should be taken when determining what to post.

Discussion Forum Expectations:

- Provide clear guidance on the expectations and requirements
- Available dates (unlimited or for a specific time)

- Criteria for evaluating the originality and quality of students' comments and grade credit expected (Rubric is highly encouraged)
- The expected turn-around time for feedback or grades.

Assignments

- Provide clear guidance on the expectations and requirements
- Provide due dates and late assignment policies
- Define if it is an individual or group assignment (groups: Let the students know how the groups will be formed)
- Specify and describe how to submit assignments
- State the criteria for evaluation (Rubric or list of criteria)
- The expected turn-around time for feedback or grades

Quizzes/Assessments

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. Assessments in this course are not compatible with mobile devices and should not be taken through a mobile phone or a tablet.

- List all assessments (i.e. graded or practice)

- Provide the dates and times when assessments will become available (i.e. From Monday 10:00 am – Tuesday 11:59 pm)
- Provide assessment duration (i.e. 30 minutes, 1 hour)
- Provide details for results
- When will students be able to see the results (i.e. Immediately after the exam, after the availability period has ended, or not at all)
- What will they be able to see the results (i.e. Total score only, all of the questions and answers, etc.)
- The expected turn-around time for feedback or grades

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.