REL 2011

Introduction to Religion

Section: U19

Hybrid/Certified

Spring Term 2027

Course Meeting Information

Class meeting times	
Day:	Tuesday
Time:	5:00 PM - 6:15 PM
Location:	CP 107

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

Professor Information

Dr. Grisel d'Elena

Roles: Primary Instructor

Email: gdelena@fiu.edu

Response Time: 48 hours

Phone: 305-348-2186

Office Hours: TBD

Office Location: TBD

Department or Academic Unit: SIPA

About your Professor

Dr. d'Elena is an Adjunct Professor for Religious Studies, Politics and International Relations, and SLS. Professor d'Elena is also the Director of the Panthers Care Program at the Dean of Students Office overseeing the crisis management team. She has performed fieldwork abroad with U.N. officials, refugee coalition members and ethnic minorities, specifically in Southeast Asia, where she began to investigate the minority women and ethnic Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar. As victims of systematic, state-sponsored persecution, she began to question why they faced such discrimination. This question led to the Buddhist 969 Movement in Myanmar, which contributes to the isolation and oppression of the Rohingya and minority women in Myanmar. Dr. d'Elena was able to interview Time Magazine's "Buddhist Terror" U Ashin Wirathu and provide feedback directly from the source of the violence for her ethnographic work. This led to several conferences and publications to raise awareness to the issues the

Rohingya face in Myanmar and Bangladesh. Her work has been shared in both national and international academic conferences, colleges, non-profits, and local outreach programs for the youth about issues related to race, class, religion, violence, and politics.

Course Prerequisites

Course prerequisites, if any, are listed below.

Course Description

Course Description and Purpose

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.

This is a Global Learning designated course that counts towards your FIU Global Learning graduation requirement

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

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: 2008

ISBN 10: n/a

ISBN 13: 9780136003809

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

- Explain the basic history, development, and belief systems of various religious traditions.
- Recognize religious themes and concepts found in other aspects of daily life.
- Identify the meaning behind religious concepts.
- Evaluate their own religious views in regards to other cultures and paradigms of the religious.
- Apply critical thinking to various topics in the field of the religious.
- Think creatively about religious issues in the contemporary.
- Perform field research to better understand a particular religious community.
- Global Perspectives: Analyze topics in the field of religious studies from multiple perspectives
- Global Engagement: Demonstrate willingness to think

creatively about religious issues in the contemporary world

- Global Awareness: Assess how global issues and trends are interrelated with the development and practice of religions

Expectations of this Course

Global Learning Objectives Targeted

- Analyze topics in the field of religious studies from multiple perspectives
- Assess how global issues and trends are interrelated with the development and practice of religions
- Demonstrate willingness to think creatively about religious issues in the contemporary world

Important Information

Before starting this course, please review the following pages:

- Accessibility and Accommodation
- Academic Misconduct Statement

*The professor reserves the right to change or modify the syllabus at any time during the semester.

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

*This is a global learning designated course that counts towards

your global learning graduation requirement

To learn more about Global Learning requirements, please click here.

FAQs:

1. Reading is fundamental to this course and your functioning in the real world. **READ THE SYLLABUS.**
2. You will notice I have your extra credit deadline set for the day after the last day of the semester. I do this with the purpose that you can focus on the materials without worrying about every other courses deadlines the week prior. If you turn it in before, it is ok, but I leave it open so that you have an opportunity to prioritize whatever you are having the most difficulty with. I will not be giving any extensions. At all.
3. **Grading:**

When I grade, I will leave comments on your intro posts and discussion posts. PLEASE READ THEM. Comments for discussions can be found on the grade panel. I advise all of you review the syllabus and instructions for your posts. I do not post publicly so that no one feels called out. I will not leave comments for everyone. However, some of you will warrant commentary from me due to errors you made in your discussions or some common ground in your post. **Anything more than 200 words than the word requirement will receive point deductions. You need to stick to guidelines as it is not fair to get your point across in**

more words than the limitations your classmates had.

If you do not get a perfect score on your discussion, **there is a reason** in the comment section in the gradebook. If you have any questions about how you can make your posts more profound and worthy of a perfect score, please feel free to reach out. **I want all of you to succeed in this!**

4. Please keep in mind: **I do not read responses to my comments on Canvas. If you have a response to my comment on your assignment, please email me through canvas or outlook.**
5. **Extra credit** is located under assignments tab and all students have the opportunity to do **10 points of extra credit** toward their final grade. This is game changing. However, because it is game changing I will not be providing extensions unless there is documented evidence of it needed.
6. I also leave all assignments open for the whole semester. This means you will lose 7% per day it is late but even if you turn your work in past that you will never get less than a 50 for late work. A 50 is better than a 0. it makes a huge difference. **For this reason I will not make exceptions. Late is late.** You have chances to fix your mistakes and you are welcome to. Please take advantage of it but be aware i will not allow you to cross boundaries because of this rare opportunity in my pedagogical style.

7. I have a very open door and as Director of the Panthers Care Program at the Dean of Students Office. I hold student wellness high up on a pedestal. **Communicate with me.**
8. In the same light, I have a responsibility to report academic misconduct as I work directly with the office of conduct. I must report any plagiarism. **If your papers come up as plagiarized over 25% or anything over 25% AI use, you will be sent to conduct and I will not be discussing the case with you until it is completed by the office of Conduct for Academic integrity (SCAI).** Please understand this is policy. I do not have control over SCAI nor what comes up as flagged for AI. My job is to report it to the only folks who have authority to make a decision, SCAI. I have given you more than the average university professor provides in opportunities to succeed when you fall behind:
    1. Extra credit on canvas open until the last week after the semester.. Up to 10 points to change your entire grade.
    2. Allowing you to turn in late work for a maximum of 50% or a 7% deduction per day if less than a week late.
    3. Open door policy to talk about your struggles.

Please use all avenues so you succeed!

Grading

COURSE POLICIES

Late Papers

Late submissions will NOT be accepted for full credit, 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.

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.

Assignment Submissions

All work has to be submitted through Canvas. 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.

Plagiarism

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 stolen from another source;
2. Using quotations from another source without properly citing them; and
3. Paraphrasing from another source without proper

Students are expected to understand the definition of plagiarism. See the University Code of Academic Integrity.

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.

Extra Credit

10 points max per student. I will provide lectures you can attend in order to receive it or you can do what is already set on canvas.

Academic Conduct

- Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in a zero. Plagiarism is 1) copying any written material without using proper citation – this includes material from the internet, our

text and my notes; 2) incorporating another person's ideas without giving proper credit/citation (literary theft). 3) Copying or "fixing up" a previous paper written by yourself or another student.

- Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly to demonstrate the quality of their learning.

Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

Citations Bibliographies and citations should be in APA, MLA or Chicago Style format.

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)

Textbook and Course Materials

Anatomy of the Sacred: An Introduction to Religion

Required/Recommended: Required

Authors: James C. Livingston

Publisher: Prentice Hall, Edition: 6th

Publication Date: 2008

Copyright Date: 2008

ISBN 10: 013600380X

ISBN 13: 9780136003809

Chapters/Pages: N/A

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.

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. We will be utilizing this tool to conduct course meetings.

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.

Schedule of Topics

Dates	Course Content Calendar

Dates	Course Content Calendar
Lesson 1 and 2	**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*** **DUE: Introduce Yourself in class discussion** **HW: Watch Samsara** **Class Work:** Analysis of movie: Samsara

Dates	Course Content Calendar
	Discussion of the following topics: • Why are humans religious? • Why Study Religion? • Interpreting and explaining religion
Lesson 3	**Section II. Universal Forms of Religious Experience and Expression** Topic: The Concept of Sacred Power. The Ambivalence of Sacred Power. The Holy as Mysterium Tremendum and Fascinans. Sacred Space and Sacred Time. Religion as Ultimate Concern. ***Read: Chapter 3 p. 35-52*** **DUE: Write Worldview**

Dates	Course Content Calendar
Lesson 4	**DUE: Worldview Essay** **Class Work:** Discussion on sacred power, sacred space and time and Mysterium Tremendum. **Topic:** Symbolic Communication. Religious Symbols. Metaphor, Parable, and Story. Religious Myths. Models and Doctrines. ***Read: Chapter 4 p. 53-73***

Dates	Course Content Calendar
Lesson 5	**Class Work:** Discuss Site Visits and pick sites. Topic: Ritual Action. Types of Sacred Ritual. Ritual and Sacrifice. Rituals as Sacraments. ***Read: Chapter 5 p. 74-95*** **Topic:** The Pervasive Role of Sacred Scripture. Using the Term Scripture. Some Distinctive Features of Sacred Scripture. The Authority and Canonicity of Scripture. The Reception and Uses of Scripture. The Interpretation of Scripture. ***Read: Chapter 6 p. 96-123*** **DUE: Start Site Visits**

Dates	Course Content Calendar
Lesson 6	**Class Work:** Class participation exercise on the interpretation of scripture. **Topic:** 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*** ****Have you visited a religious site yet?*** ***Your Site Visit Essay is due soon!***

Dates	Course Content Calendar
Lesson 7	**Class Work:** Presentation / Site Visits **Section III. Universal Components of a Religious Worldview** ***Topic:*** Polytheism and the Worship of Nature. Dualism. Pantheism and Monism. Monotheism. ***Have you visited a religious site yet?*** ***Your Site Visit Essay is due soon!***

Dates	Course Content Calendar
Lesson 8 and 9	**Class Work:** Discussion on Religion and Society: Social Justice and Evolution of Religion 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***

Dates	Course Content Calendar
Lesson 10	**Class Work:** Lets talk about science and religion, philosophy and religion, balance in religion, good, evil and sex. **Topic:** Modern Views of Our Human Plight. Stoicism. Christianity. Theravada Buddhism. Confucianism. ***Read: Chapter 10 p. 211-234***

Dates	Course Content Calendar
Lesson 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*** **DUE: Site Visit**

Dates	Course Content Calendar
Lesson 12	**Class Work:** Discussion on Moral Authority. TBH: I'm just going to boss you around and tell you what to do for three hours today. If you don't resist, I'll let you play god too. **Topic:** Ways of Salvation and Liberation. The Way of Grace through Faith. The Way of Devotion. The Way of Action and Obligation. The Way of Mediation and Insight. Goals of Salvation and Liberation. Psychic Wholeness and a Healthy Social Order. Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life. Samadhi and Nirvana. ***Read: Chapter 13 p. 287-338*** **DUE: Work on your Project and Study for Final**

Dates	Course Content Calendar
Lesson 13 and 14	**Class Presentation:** Buddhist Terrorism Presentation and Secular presentation **Section IV. The Sacred and the Secular in Modernity View** Topic: Secularization and Pluralism. The Reactions of Religious Fundamentalisms Today. The Characteristics of Contemporary Religious Fundamentalism. The Status and Roles of Women in Religion. Relations between Religion and State. Read: Chapters 14-15 p. 339-398 **FINAL PROJECTS DUE NEXT WEEKS**

Dates	Course Content Calendar
Lesson 15 & 16	**Due: In Class project presentations!** **Take Final Exam - will only be available Monday-Sunday till 11:59pm**

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.

Assignments

Course Work: Full descriptions, rubrics, dates, etc, see below and posted on Canvas.

- Worldview Essay: 15 points. Formal essay format, 1000 words min.
- Site Visit: 20 points Formal essay format, 1500 words min. (in person) 1800 words for virtual.
- Final Exam: There will be 1 Multiple Choice exam, worth 20 points.
- Project: 20 points, 1500-word min. You will choose a visual topic (e.g., artist, art subject, architecture, music video, video game) that highlights at least 4 of the 7 elements of religion discussed in class. Formats for the project can include paper, video, PowerPoint, or a unique proposal.
- Attendance and Class Participation:10 points
- Class Discussions: 15 points. Do your homework and you'll be fine.

Again, going OVER word count by more than 200 words results in point deductions because it is unfair that your classmates stuck to word count to get their point across.

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.