REL 2300

Religions of the World

Section: B54

Hybrid/Certified

Spring Term 2027

Course Meeting Information

In-Person Class Meeting Times	
Day:	Wednesday
Time:	12:00 PM - 1:15 PM
Location:	at BBC. Room Academic One 155

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

Professor Information

Valeria Schindler

Roles: Primary Instructor

Email: vschindl@fiu.edu

Phone: N/A

Office Hours: via Zoom by appointment

Office Location: N/A

Department or Academic Unit: Department of Religious Studies

Additional Notes

I am available via Zoom Monday through Friday. Make sure to send m an appointment and check availability.

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. This course

will provide you the tools to learn and understand different religious beliefs from around the world and how they interact with your academic field.

Maybe Jesus was a Buddhist monk. Where exactly did your yoga class come from? Why are Native Americans some of the best eco-advocates today? Is Judaism a religion, a culture, or a tribe? It might be good to wonder if religion is a force for good or evil to begin with. Can we still be spiritual without being religious? These are not just entertaining questions but are highly relevant to your personal and professional development in our globalized world. In this interdisciplinary course, we will explore these questions and many more that emerge as we investigate humanity, religion, and the cosmos.

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.

UCC Category Description

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

Social science courses afford students an understanding of the basic social and behavioral science concepts and principles used in the analysis of behavior and past and present social, political, and economic issues.

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

- Demonstrate an understanding of themes, definitions, and symbols relating to religion.
- Compare and contrast the key underlying beliefs and principles of the major Eastern, Western, indigenous and shamanic religions.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the evolution and movement of religious beliefs from ancient to contemporary times.

- Evaluate religious truth claims as potential sources of knowledge.
- Demonstrate an increased empathetic awareness of religious diversity and differences.

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

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 a **points deduction per late day**. No essays will be accepted after **Week 14**.
- **Perusall Reflections:** 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 a survey

that I will provide in class

- 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 & Assessments

1. Research Paper

- **Objective:** Choose **two different religions** and research, compare, and contrast **one element** that appears in both.
- **Sources:** Use **scholarly sources only**. Websites and Wikipedia are **not allowed**.
- **Topic Approval:** Your topic must be approved by the deadline indicated in Canvas. Failure to submit for approval may result in a **zero grade**.

- **Support:** A **video tutorial** on performing library research is available in the **Student Resources Module**. Details on content and formatting are in the **Canvas Module**.

Components of the Research Paper:

1. **Topic Submission & Approval**
2. **Annotated Bibliography (20% of the grade)**
3. **Findings on topic in religion A (20% of the grade)**
4. **Findings on topic in Religion B (20% of the grade)**
5. **Final Essay: 1200–2000 words (40% of the grade)**

2. Perusall Reflections

- **Platform:** Perusall, an interactive reading app integrated with Canvas.
- **Functionality:** Highlight, take notes, ask questions, and comment on chapters.
- **Requirements:**
  - Post **at least 6 comments** per reading assignment
  - **At least 4** must be original comments; the rest can be responses or additional original comments
- **Deadline:** Reflections are due **Tuesday** of the week assigned
- **Notes:**
  - Posts may be discussed in class—write thoughtfully
  - Late submissions or make-ups are **not allowed**

3. In-Class Activities

- Activities may include: PlayPosits, group discussions, and personal reflections
- **Submission:** Must be submitted during class to receive credit
- **Policy:** Absent students will not receive credit for this assignment unless absence is excused (see attendance policy)

4. Exit Ticket

- A short activity or reflection completed at the end of the in-person class
- Designed to summarize or reflect on the day's lesson
- **Policy:** Absent students will not receive credit for this assignment unless absence is excused (see attendance policy)

5. Group Project:

- **Create a comic story**
- This assignment will be done in groups in class

🧮 Quizzes & Exams

1. Quizzes

- **Number:** 10 quizzes, 10 questions each
- **Policy:** Lowest quiz score **dropped** at the end of the semester
- **Availability:** Canvas, open **Friday after class – Tuesday end of day** (4–5 days)
- **Time Limit:** 10 minutes per attempt
- **Attempts:** Two attempts allowed; **highest score counts**

2. Midterm & Final Exams

- **Midterm:** Covers the first half of the semester
  - 50 multiple-choice and true/false questions
  - 70 minutes to complete
  - Available **4 days** in Canvas (Friday-Tuesday)
- **Final Exam:** Covers the second half of the semester
  - Multiple-choice and true/false questions
  - 70 minutes to complete
  - Available **4 days** around the university-scheduled final exam period (check Panthersoft for exact date)

Important Notes:

- **Practice Quiz:** Take a practice quiz on each computer you plan to use to ensure compatibility
- **Auto-Submit:** Assessments will auto-submit when:
  1. The timer runs out, or
  2. The closing date/time is reached
     (Example: Quiz closes at 5:00 pm, but you start at 4:55 pm—you will have only 5 minutes to complete it)

- **Device Compatibility:** Mobile devices and tablets **cannot** be used for assessments
- **Support:** Contact the **FIU Canvas Help Team** for technical issues

Grading

Course Grading Table

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Points for Each	Total Points Available	Weight
Quizzes	10	100	900 (lowest score dropped)	10%
Midterm Exam	1	100	100	10%
Final Exam	1	100	100	10%
Research Paper	1	100	100	25%
Total	53	835	3010	100

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Points for Each	Total Points Available	Weight
In-Class Activities	10	100	1000	5%
Group Project	1	100	100	10%
Perusall Reflection	15	30	450	20%
Exit Ticket	12	5	60	5%
Attendance and Participation	1	100	100	5%
Total	53	835	3010	100

Letter	Range %	Letter	Range %	Letter	Range %
A	95 and 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

Textbook and Course Materials

RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD-PERUSALL CODE

Required/Recommended: Required

Authors: Lewis Hopfe, Mark Woodward, and Brett Hendrickson

Publisher: Pearson

Publication Date: 2014

Copyright Date: 2014

ISBN 10: 0-13-379400-8

ISBN 13: 978-013-379400-7

Notes: VERY IMPORTANT: You have to purchase the Perusall code. Do not purchase the physical or ebooks. You can purchase the code from the FIU library, which will send you a code (this takes time, so purchase it ASAP) or there is a link in a Module with instructions on how to purchase the code directly from Perusall and be able to access it right away.

Chapters/Pages: N/A

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 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, unless you send me a message on the weekend.

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

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Zoom Video Conference

Zoom Meeting 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 our Synchronous Meeting on Friday from 11am to 12:15pm

Zoom meetings and dates 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.

Schedule of Topics

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

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.