REL 2300

Religions of the World

Section: U08

Hybrid/Certified

Spring Term 2027

Course Meeting Information

Spring Term 2027 REL 2300 - U08

M 12:00 PM - 1:15 PM

CP 115

Course Time Zone: Eastern Time (ET).

Course due dates and times are according to this time zone.

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.

Course Description

REL 2300 introduces students to religions from around the world. Each professor shapes the course independently and chooses which religious traditions to explore. In our class, I focus on Indigenous religious traditions of the First Peoples of the Americas; African diasporic religious traditions across the Americas, particularly in the Caribbean and Latin America; and related spiritist traditions, community-based spiritual practices, and religious movements.

These traditions have deep historical roots, continue to shape the communities around us, and are often featured in popular media. We may also explore religions from around the world for context and comparison, but we'll keep these traditions as our focus. Because our time is limited, we won’t examine every religion or explore each tradition in full.

Throughout the semester, we’ll explore how these religious traditions have shaped individual and cultural identities over time and continue to influence people's lives today. You’ll also have opportunities to reflect on

your own practices, beliefs, and perspectives while learning about those of people
from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds.

Course Prerequisites

Course prerequisites, if any, are listed below.

Textbook and Course Materials

ALL COURSE MATERIALS PROVIDED BY THE PROFESSOR IN MODULE FORMAT

Required/Recommended: Required

Authors: N/A

Publisher: N/A

Publication Date: N/A

Copyright Date: N/A

ISBN 10: N/A

ISBN 13: N/A

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.

Readings, Materials, and Open Educational Resources (OER)

All reading materials are provided by the professor in Module format.

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

- Explore Religious Traditions and Their Historical Development: Identify and explain the major beliefs, histories, teachings, rituals, sacred texts, and influential figures of diverse religious traditions. Examine how religions develop, adapt, and transform through their relationships with culture, history, politics, and social change.
- Develop Cultural and Religious Understanding: Demonstrate respect, cultural sensitivity, and an informed appreciation for religious diversity. Recognize how religious beliefs and practices shape individual identities,

community relationships, cultural values, and ways of understanding the world.

- Critically Examine Religious Beliefs and Practices: Analyze religious traditions through informed, thoughtful, and evidence-based perspectives. Explore how religious communities understand sacred experiences, interpret their traditions, establish religious authority, and respond to contemporary social and ethical questions.
- Apply Different Approaches to the Study of Religion: Use ethnographic, anthropological, historical, psychological, sociological, ethical, and phenomenological approaches to investigate religious beliefs, practices, and experiences. Understand how each approach offers different insights into religion and how people experience and practice it in everyday life.
- Evaluate Religion's Role in Society and Global Affairs: Examine how religion influences social institutions, political movements, cultural traditions, ethical systems, and global events. Assess how religious communities respond to migration, globalization, conflict, social inequality, and changing cultural environments.
- Engage in Meaningful Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue: Communicate thoughtfully and respectfully with

people whose religious beliefs, cultural backgrounds, and worldviews differ from their own. Reflect on personal assumptions, consider alternative perspectives, and develop the ability to discuss religious differences with intellectual curiosity, empathy, and informed understanding.

Expectations of this Course

Hybrid Course Format and Expectations

This is a **hybrid course**, meaning about half of the coursework takes place during scheduled, in-person class sessions, while students complete the remaining coursework independently through Canvas and other assigned activities.

Hybrid courses maintain the **same academic standards and performance expectations as traditional, fully in-person courses**. Because students must manage both classroom and online responsibilities, success requires consistent participation, time management, self-discipline, and familiarity with Canvas and other course technologies.

Students are responsible for staying informed, completing assignments on time, and actively participating in all aspects of the course.

Student Expectations

Students are expected to:

- **Review the Getting Started page** in the Course Modules section of Canvas.
- **Introduce themselves** during the first week by posting in the designated class discussion.
- **Participate actively** in online discussions and engage respectfully with the instructor and classmates.
- **Review the course calendar and weekly modules** to stay informed about readings, assignments, activities, and deadlines.
- **Attend all scheduled in-person class sessions** and arrive prepared to participate.
- **Log in to Canvas regularly throughout the week** to review announcements, course materials, and assignments.
- **Complete discussion posts and responses** by their designated deadlines.
- **Read and respond to instructor emails without delay**, particularly those concerning course requirements or academic progress.
- **Submit all assignments by their posted deadlines. Late assignments will not be accepted.**

Instructor Expectations

The instructor will:

- **Access Canvas regularly throughout the week** to monitor course activity and student participation.

- **Respond to student emails within 24 hours.**
- **Grade assignments and provide constructive feedback** in a timely manner to support student learning and academic progress.

Please remember: A hybrid course offers greater flexibility in how and where students complete their coursework. However, that flexibility also requires greater responsibility for managing time, meeting deadlines, and staying actively engaged throughout the semester.

Assignments & Assessments

COURSE ASSESSMENTS AND GRADING COMPONENTS

1. Attendance, Participation, and Facilitation

Attendance, participation, and facilitation are evaluated together as **one combined grade**. Students must fulfill all three expectations to earn full credit for this component.

- **Attendance:** Students are expected to attend scheduled in-person class sessions consistently and punctually. Physical presence is essential to the learning experience, particularly in a course that emphasizes classroom dialogue and shared interpretations of religious traditions.
- **Participation:** Students must be prepared to contribute to classroom discussions when called upon or invited to share their perspectives. Participation includes

responding to questions, discussing assigned materials, and demonstrating an understanding of the topics under consideration.

- **Facilitation:** When asked, students must help guide or contribute to the direction of classroom discussions. Facilitation may involve introducing a topic, raising thoughtful questions, explaining concepts from the assigned materials, or encouraging classmates to consider different interpretations.

Important: These three responsibilities constitute a single grading component. Attendance alone does not guarantee full credit. Students must attend class, participate when asked, and fulfill facilitation responsibilities when assigned.

2. Weekly Discussion Forums

Weekly discussion forums are **interactive, time-sensitive academic activities** designed to encourage students to exchange ideas, examine different perspectives, and engage with classmates on the week's course material.

Each discussion forum has a designated opening and closing date. Students may participate throughout that period, but they must complete all required contributions before the forum closes.

Because these assignments depend on timely interaction among classmates, **discussion forums cannot be reopened after their deadlines have passed**. Once a forum closes, the opportunity for meaningful peer interaction within that

assignment has ended.

Students are responsible for monitoring forum availability, reviewing the instructions, and submitting their contributions within the designated timeframe. Waiting until the final hours of an assignment may limit opportunities to engage with classmates.

3. Socratic Seminar Labs

Socratic Seminar Labs are **weekly, student-led classroom discussions** that encourage critical thinking, thoughtful interpretation, and active engagement with the assigned course materials.

Each week, students will be **selected at random from the class roster** to lead the seminar discussion. Selected students will present their understanding and interpretations of the weekly readings, concepts, and topics.

These seminars examine how students understand the material, how they arrive at their interpretations, and how those interpretations contribute to a broader classroom conversation.

Student facilitators are expected to:

- Demonstrate familiarity with the assigned weekly materials.
- Present their interpretations clearly and thoughtfully.
- Explain the reasoning behind their observations and conclusions.

- Raise relevant questions that encourage discussion and reflection.
- Engage with classmates' responses and help sustain a productive conversation.

Students should arrive prepared each week, since selections are made randomly. Socratic seminars emphasize discussion and interpretation rather than memorized presentations or formal lectures.

4. Quizzes

Course quizzes assess students' understanding of the concepts, religious traditions, practices, historical developments, and discussions covered in the weekly modules.

All quizzes are **open-book assessments**, meaning students may consult the instructional materials available in Canvas, including the weekly modules and discussion forums, while completing their quizzes.

Each quiz consists of:

- **50 true-or-false questions** based on the assigned course content.
- **A 90-minute time limit** to complete the assessment.
- **Open-book access** to the relevant Canvas modules and discussion forum materials.

Although quizzes are open-book, students are expected to

familiarize themselves with the material before beginning. The 90-minute time limit requires students to read carefully, recognize key concepts, and apply what they have learned without spending too much time searching for individual answers.

Important: Open-book does not mean that preparation is unnecessary. Students who consistently review the weekly modules and participate in classroom and online discussions will be better prepared to complete these assessments within the allotted time.

Grading

GRADING CRITERIA

Course Requirements	Number Of Items	Points Per Item	Total Weight
AttendanceParticipation/Facilitation	***15***	***20***	***30%***
Discussion Forums	***14***	***20***	***30%***
Socratic Seminar Lab	***13***	***15***	***15%***
Quizzes	***14***	***100***	***25%***
TOTAL	***N/A***	***N/A***	***N/A***

Letter Grade Distribution

Table

Letter Grade	Range %
A	95 to 100
A-	90 to 94
B+	86 to 89
B	83 to 85
B-	80 to 83
C+	77 to 79
C	70 to 76
D	60 to 69
F	<60

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.

Schedule of Topics

- ***Elements of Religious Practice***
- ***Indigenous Religious Cultures of the Americas***
- ***African Diasporic Religions (ADR)***
- ***Afro-Brazilian Candomblé***
- ***Afro-Brazilian Candomblé II: Film Review***
- ***Haitian Vodou I***
- ***Haitian Vodou II: Film Review***
- ***La 21 Divisiones: Dominican Vudú***
- ***New Orleans Hoodoo & Conjure***
- ***Afro-Cuban Santería***
- ***Shell Games: Divination***
- ***Jamaican Rastafari***
- ***Espiritismo / Spiritism***
- ***Interreligious Dialogue (IRD)***

Course Communication

Communication in this course will take place via **the Canvas Inbox**. Check out the Canvas Guide to learn how to communicate with your instructor and peers using the Canvas Inbox.

I will respond to all correspondence within **24 HOURS**.

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

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.