# REL 3027

# Meditation and the Mystical Traditions

Section: RVD

Internet/Fully Online

Spring Term 2027

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

## Professor Information

Daniel Alvarez

**Roles:** Primary Instructor

**Email:** alvarezd@fiu.edu

**Department or Academic Unit:** Religious Studies

## Course Prerequisites

Course prerequisites, if any, are listed below.

## Course Description

This course has been developed by the faculty of the Department of Religious Studies, with each professor lecturing on meditation and mysticism in his or her area of religious specialization. The course will examine meditation and mysticism within each of the major world religions, as well as within some indigenous religions. Each module consists of PowerPoint lectures by faculty, readings, a weekly quiz, brief weekly assignments, and two exams, each consisting of multiple-choice questions and an essay portion.

## Textbook and Course Materials

**Mysticism: Holiness East and West**

**Required/Recommended:** Required

**Authors:** Mysticism: Holiness East and West

**Publisher:** Oxford University Press

**Publication Date:** 1996

**Copyright Date:** 1996

**ISBN 10:** 0195088190

**ISBN 13:** 978-0195088199

**Chapters/Pages:** N/A

**Worldly Wonder**

**Required/Recommended:** Required

**Authors:** Mary Evelyn Tucker

**Publisher:** Open Court Publishing

**Publication Date:** 2002

**Copyright Date:** 2002

**ISBN 10:** 9780812695298

**ISBN 13:** 0812695291

**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

- Recall the basic history, development, and belief system of various religious traditions.
- Differentiate key concepts, ideas, scholars, and contributions to the study of mysticism.

- Compare and contrast mysticism and mystical experiences across different cultures.
- Analyze the interconnectedness of religion and mysticism.
- Summarize mystical experiences, traditions, and histories.

## Expectations of this Course

This is an online course, which means most (if not all) of the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in an online course are the same as a traditional course. In fact, online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills which can make these courses more demanding for some students.

Students are expected to:

- **Review the how to get started information** located in the course content
- **Introduce yourself to the class** during the first week by posting a self introduction in the appropriate discussion forum
- **Take the practice quiz** to ensure that your computer is compatible with Canvas
- **Interact** online with instructor/s and peers

- **Review** and follow the course calendar

# Assignments & Assessments

### Short Response Assignments (20%)

**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.

There will be ten (10) short written response assignments in this course. However, only four (4) of these are required to be completed. At the end of the course, only the 4 highest scores of the 10 assignments will be factored into your final grade in the class. The assignments will become available under the Assignments area according to the course calendar dates.

Assignments will become available on Monday ,12:00AM and will close on Sunday, 11:59PM. Submit your work directly in Canvas under the Assignments area. See course calendar for assignment availability.

Your written responses should demonstrate that you have done the readings and have reviewed the Modules. Each assignment will have specific instructions. You need not agree with all or any claims made in the course material, but you should be able to explain the basis of your agreements and/or disagreements. Some of the assignments require longer responses than others;

most can be easily answered in less than 2 paragraphs.

Keep electronic and paper copies of all written work. For your own protection, keep a copy of your turnitin.com electronic receipt (confirmation of assignment submission) until you have received your final grade for the course.

## 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. It is your responsibility to make sure your computer meets the minimum hardware requirements .

Assessments in this course are not compatible with mobile devices and should not be taken through a mobile phone or a tablet. If you need further assistance please contact FIU Online Support Services .

### QUIZZES (20%)

- A weekly time-restricted, online quiz will be given based on the materials covered each week. **You can take each quiz two times, and the higher of the two attempts will be recorded.** Even if you do well on the first attempt, it is advisable to use both attempts. You will not receive the

same quiz every time; the computer randomly chooses the questions from a quiz database. The objective questions in Exam 1 and Exam 2 will be taken directly from this database. Thus, the more times you take the quiz, the more questions you will receive and the better prepared you will be for the exams.

- For the quizzes, you will have **20 minutes to complete the questions.** Each quiz will be open from Monday to Monday, and you can take it on any of those days at any time.

- **Important Policy on Quiz Resets:** Quiz resets will not be granted. You will receive two attempts to complete each quiz, if you are logged offline, or you have technical failure while attempting the quiz, then you still have the second attempt to complete the quiz.

- Resetting quizzes after they have passed will require a serious and verifiable reason (death in the family, hospitalization, serious accident, etc.).

- If you know that you will be unable to take a quiz during a specific week, contact the instructor in advance, and the

quiz may be opened so you may take it early. It is the responsibility of students to keep up with the readings and take the quizzes on time.

## EXAMS (60%)

Exam 1 (30% of overall grade) and Exam 2 (30% of overall grade) consist of both objective and essay portions.

The objective portions of Exam 1 and Exam 2 are both online, time-restricted examinations. These are in the

Assessments area in Canvas.

Students will have only one attempt to complete the objective portions of Exam 1 and Exam 2, unlike the

quizzes. Please make note of this important difference.

The essay prompts for the exams will become available in the Assessment area during the exam availability

period. The essay portions of these exams must be submitted via Canvas. See the Assignments content

area for essay topics.

The essay portions of Exam 1 and Exam 2 should each be approximately 500-750 words long.

# Grading

**Grading**

| Course Requirements | Number of Items | Points for Each | Total Points Available | Weight |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Quizzes | 13 | 10 | 130 | 20% |
| Midterm Objective and Essay | 2 | 50 | 100 | 30% |
| Final Objective and Essay | 2 | 50 | 100 | 30% |
| Short-Response Assignments (lowest 6 scores will be dropped) | 10 | 100 | 400 | 20% |
| **Total** | 27 | N/A | 730 | 100% |

| Letter | Range (%) | Letter | Range (%) | Letter | Range (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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 |

# Course Communication

Communication in this course will take place via **Messages.**

Messages is a private and secure text-based communication system which occurs within a course among its Course members. Users must log on to Canvas to send, receive, or read messages. The Messages tool is located on the Course Menu, on the left side of the course webpage. It is recommended that students check their messages routinely to ensure up-to-date communication.

Visit our Writing Resources Webpage for more information on professional writing and technical communication skills.

## 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.

## Schedule of Topics

| Week | Topic | View | Read | Assignments, quizzes, and exams |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| Week | Topic | View | Read | Assignments, quizzes, and exams |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Introduction to Meditation and Mysticism in World Religions | Dr. Northup, *Introduction to Meditation and Mysticism*; Dr. Huchingson, *The Hardware of Mysticism* | *Mysticism: Holiness East and West*, ch. 1; Nancy Murphy, "Whatever Happened to the Soul?" (Modules); James Ashbrook and Carol Rausch Albright, "The Humanizing Brain: An Introduction," *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science* 34, no. 1 (March 1999), pp. 7–43 (FIU Library) | **A1:** Hardware of Mysticism.<br>**Quiz 1:** Introduction. |

| Week | Topic | View | Read | Assignments, quizzes, and exams |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Mysticism in African and Afro-Caribbean Religions | Dr. Rey, *Mysticism in Africa and the Afro-Caribbean* | Leslie Desmangles, *The Faces of the Gods* (Modules); Dominique Zahan, "Reflections on African Spirituality" (Modules); Mary Ann Clark, *Santería: Correcting the Myths and Uncovering the Realities of a Growing Religion*, ch. 7 | **A2:** African and Afro-Caribbean Mysticism.<br>**Quiz 2:** African and Afro-Caribbean Religions. |

| Week | Topic | View | Read | Assignments, quizzes, and exams |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | Meditation and Mysticism among Native Americans | Dr. Huchingson, *Meditation and Mysticism Among Native Americans*, parts I and II | *Mysticism: Holiness East and West*, ch. 8; William A. Young, *Quest for Harmony: Native American Spiritual Traditions*, chs. 1, 4, and 5 | **A3:** Native American.<br>**Quiz 3:** Native American Religions. |
| 4 | Meditation and Mysticism in Indian Religions | Dr. Katz, *Meditation and Mysticism in Theistic Hinduism*, parts I–III | *Mysticism: Holiness East and West*, ch. 2 | **Quiz 4:** Indian Religions. |
| 5 | Meditation and Mysticism in Daoism and Chinese Religions | Dr. Heine, *Meditation and Mysticism in Chinese Religions* | *Mysticism: Holiness East and West*, ch. 4 | **A4:** Daoism.<br>**Quiz 5:** Daoism and Chinese Religions. |

| Week | Topic | View | Read | Assignments, quizzes, and exams |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | Meditation and Mysticism in Buddhism / Zen Buddhism | Dr. Heine, *Intro to Meditation and Mysticism in Buddhism* and *Meditation and Mysticism in Zen* | *Mysticism: Holiness East and West*, ch. 3 | **A5:** Zen Mysticism Readings and Questions.<br>**Quiz 6:** Buddhism/ Zen. |
| 7 | Midterm (Exam 1) | — | — | **Exam 1:** Complete both the objective and essay parts. |
| 8 | Mysticism in Judaism and Sephardic Judaism | Dr. Zohar, *Mysticism in Judaism and Sephardic Judaism* | *Mysticism: Holiness East and West*, ch. 5 | **Quiz 7:** Judaism and Sephardic Judaism. |

| Week | Topic | View | Read | Assignments, quizzes, and exams |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | Hasidic Judaism | Dr. Stier, *Hasidic Judaism*. Recommended documentary: *A Life Apart*. | Immy Humes, 15 short "Additional Essays on Hasidism." The syllabus corrects the translation of **Chabad** in "Inside the Community: A Holy Life" to "Wisdom, Knowledge, and Understanding." | **A6:** Hasidic.<br>**Quiz 8:** Hasidic Judaism. |
| 10 | Meditation and Mysticism in Early Christianity | Dr. Larson, *Mysticism in Early Christianity*, parts I and II | *Mysticism: Holiness East and West*, ch. 6; Gregory of Nyssa, Homily 6, *On the Beatitudes*, pp. 90–91 | **A7:** Early Christianity.<br>**Quiz 9:** Christianity. |

| Week | Topic | View | Read | Assignments, quizzes, and exams |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | Mysticism in Catholicism | Dr. Gudorf, *Meditation and Mysticism in Catholicism* | Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, pp. 25–42 | **A8:** Christian Mystic.<br>**Quiz 10:** Catholicism. |
| 12 | Mysticism in Protestantism | Prof. Alvarez, *Mysticism in Protestantism* | Jonathan Edwards, *A Divine and Supernatural Light*, pp. 439–451 | **A9:** Protestant Mysticism.<br>**Quiz 11:** Protestantism. |

| Week | Topic | View | Read | Assignments, quizzes, and exams |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | Meditation and Mysticism in Islam | Dr. Musa, *Meditation and Mysticism in Islam* | *Mysticism: Holiness East and West*, ch. 7; Annemarie Schimmel, “Mystical Islam and Sufi Brotherhoods,” in *Islam: An Introduction* (1992); “What Is Tasawwuf (Sufism)?” an anonymous Persian poem translated by A. A. Godlas; Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, “The Chapter on Dhikr,” from *at-Targhib wa at-Tarhib* | **A10:** Islamic Assignment.<br><br>**Quiz 12:** Islam. |

| Week | Topic | View | Read | Assignments, quizzes, and exams |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14 | Mysticism in Emerging Nature Religions | Dr. Bauman, *Nature Mysticism* | Mary Tucker, *Worldly Wonder*, pp. 1–54 | **Quiz 13:** Nature Religions. |
| 15 | Final (Exam 2) | — | — | **Exam 2:** Objective and essay parts. |

# Nondiscrimination Statement

The **Office of Civil Rights Compliance and Accessibility** (CRCA) 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 CRCA team through report.fiu.edu.