REL 4030

Methods in the Study of Religion

Section: RVC

Internet/Fully Online

Spring Term 2027

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

Professor Information

Erik Larson

Roles: Primary Instructor

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Office Hours: T 2-3:15, R 12:30-1:45, and by appointment

Office Location: SIPA I, 504

Department or Academic Unit: Religious Studies

Course Prerequisites

Course prerequisites, if any, are listed below.

Prerequisite: Admission to program or permission of the instructor.

Course Description

This online section of Methods in the Study of Religion will introduce you to some of the major ways that religious traditions and practices may be studied. You will be introduced to each methodology through the assigned readings of the scholars studied and PowerPoint presentations by members of the Religious Studies faculty.

You will be tested on your knowledge of the course material through:

- 12 Time-restricted Quizzes
- A Midterm Exam (objective)
- A Final Exam (objective)
- Paper 1 – Critique Paper
- Paper 2 - Research Paper*

*The research paper will develop your ability to evaluate and apply a methodology of your choosing.

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

- Please see course goals

Expectations of this Course

This is an online course, meaning that most of the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in an online course are the same as for a traditional course; in fact, online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills that can make them 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 and peers;
- review and follow the course calendar;

Textbook and Course Materials

No textbook required

Required/Recommended: Recommended

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.

Grading

Insert notes about grading here. You may want to use something similar to the table below. Edit or remove the table as needed for your course.

Example:

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Weight
Weekly Quizzes	12	20%
Exam 1 (Objective)	1	15%
Exam 2 (Objective)	1	15%
Paper 1 - Critique Paper	1	20%
Paper 2 - Research Paper	1	30%
Total	16	100%

Letter Grade	From	To
A	100%	95%
A-	< 95%	90%
B+	< 90%	87%
B	< 87%	83%
B-	< 83%	80%
C+	< 80%	77%
C	< 77%	70%
D	< 70%	60%
F	< 60%	0%

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.

Schedule of Topics

Schedule

Date	Course Content and Assignments

Week 1 Jan 11	PowerPoint: History of Religions: Troeltsch and James by Professor Larson Read: Ernst Troeltsch, “Historical and Dogmatic Method in Theology” Ernst Troeltsch, “The Place of Christianity among the World-Religions” Christian Thought: Its History and Application William James, Excerpt from The Varieties of Religious Experience in Charles Taliaferro and Paul Griffiths Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology William James, Postscript to The Varieties of Religious Experience. Take Quiz 1 - Available Monday-Sunday of this week (will remain open until end of 2nd week to accommodate late registration)

Date	Course Content and Assignments
Week 2 **Jan 18**	PowerPoint: Reductionist: Marx and Freud by Professors Gudorf and Stier Read: The Marx-Engels Reader, Robert C. Tucker, ed. (New York: Norton, 1972) 11-23, 107-109, 335-353. Take Quiz 2 - Available Monday-Sunday of this week

Week 3 **Jan 25**	PowerPoint: Myth and Ritual: Jung, Otto, and Eliade by Professor Northup Read: Otto: The Idea of the Holy, Translator's Preface (19 pp) + pp. 1-34 Eliade: The Sacred and the Profane, Introduction Images and Symbols: Introduction Myth and Reality, Excerpt Jung Foundation article: "Myth and Psyche" Take Quiz 3 - Available Monday-Sunday of this week

Date	Course Content and Assignments
Week 4 Feb 1	PowerPoint: Sociological: Durkheim and Weber by Professor Wuaku Read: “Society as Sacred : Emily Durkheim” and “A Source of Social Action : Max Weber” from Eight Theories of Religion 1-40 Take Quiz 4 - Available Monday - Sunday of this week

Week 5 **Feb 8**	PowerPoint: Anthropological: Geertz and Turner by Professor Seidel Read: Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays (NY: Basic Books, Inc., l973) Chapter 4: Religion as a Cultural System, pp. 87-125. Mathieu Deflem, “Ritual, Anti-Structure, and Religion: A Discussion of Victor Turner’s Processual Symbolic Analysis.” Journal for the Scientific Stu dy of Religion 30 (1991) 1-25. Take Quiz 5 - Available Monday - Sunday of this week

Date	Course Content and Assignments

Week 6 Feb 15	PowerPoint: Anthropological/Sociological: Douglas and Berger by Professors Stier and Alvarez Read: Purity and Danger - Mary Douglas Take Quiz 6 - Available Monday - Sunday of this week
Week 7 **Feb 22**	Take Exam 1 – Midterm (objective) Available from Monday, 12:00 am – Sunday, , 11:59 pm Paper 1 – Critique Paper - DUE Saturday

	PowerPoint: Perennialist/Non-Perennialist: Huxley, Nasr and S. Katz by Professor Katz
Week 8 Mar 8	Read: Aldous Huxley, Introduction to the Bhagavad Gita Steven Katz, “Language and Mysticism” Aseem Shukla, “Exclusivists vs. Pluralists: very different paths to one Truth” Take Quiz 7 - Available Monday - Sunday of this week

Date	Course Content and Assignments

Week 9 Mar 15	PowerPoint: Structuralist/Post-Structuralist: Levi-Strauss by Professor Alvarez Read: Levi Strauss, “History and Anthropology,” from Structural Anthropology (Basic Books, 1963 [Anchor Books, 1967]), 1-28. Levi Strauss, “The Structural Study of Myth,” from ibid., 202-229. Mary Douglas, “The Meaning of Myth,” from The Structural Study of Myth and Totemism (Tavistock Publications, 1967), 49-69. K. O. L. Burridge, “Levi-Strauss and Myth,” ibid., 91- 115. Take Quiz 8 - Available Monday - Sunday of this week

Date	Course Content and Assignments
Week 10 Mar 22	PowerPoint: Structuralist/Post-Structuralist: Foucault by Professor Alvarez Read: Michel Foucault, "Panopticism," from Discipline and Punish (Pantheon, 1977), 195-228. Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power," from Power/ Knowledge, 109-133. Michel Foucault, "Two lectures," from Power/ Knowledge, 78-108. Take Quiz 9 - Available Monday - Sunday of this week

Date	Course Content and Assignments
Week 11 Mar 29	PowerPoint: Feminist: Ruether and Mahmoud by Professor Gudorf Read: Rosemary Radford Ruether, Sexism and God- Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology (Boston: Beacon, 1983) 1- 46, 93-138. Saba Mahmoud, Politics of Piety: Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005) 1-117. Take Quiz 10 - Available Monday - Sunday of this week

Date	Course Content and Assignments

Week 12 **Apr 5**	PowerPoint: Liberation: Gutierrez, Boff and Phan by Professor Bidegain Read: Gustavo Gutierrez, A theology of Liberation: history, politics, and salvation, Trans. By Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988; First Edition 1973- in Spanish 1971) Introduction, Chap 1 and 2. Peter Phan, “Method in Liberation Theologies” Theological Studies, March 1, 2000 Clodovis Boff, “Epistemology and Method of the Theology of Liberation” in Mysterium Liberationis Fundamental Concepts of Liberation Theology, ed. Ignacio Ellacuria and Jon Sobrino (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1993) 57-84.

	Take Quiz 11 - Available Monday - Sunday of this week

Date	Course Content and Assignments
Week 13 Apr 12	PowerPoint: Ecological: Gottlieb by Professor Bauman Read: Whitney A. Bauman, Rick Bohannon, and Kevin J. O'Brien, eds., Grounding Religion: A Field Guide to Religion and Ecology (Routledge 2010), pp1-78. Take Quiz 12 - Available Monday - Sunday of this week

Week 14 Apr 19	Start writing your Paper 2- Research Paper (due next week) Happy Thanksgiving!
Week 15 Apr 26	**Research Paper due Saturday, 11:59pm Take Exam 2 (objective) Available Monday, 12:00pm to Saturday, 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.

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

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.