

Syllabus
Studies in World Religions
REL 3308

Instructor Jasmin Graham
Summer B 2022
Meet: Thursday 10:50- 2
Office Hours: By appointment

Why Should I Care about Religion?

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? Is God dead? God may be alive, but is he a woman? 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 can this course help you advance in your career?

You do not need to be personally religious, majoring in religious studies, or in a field within humanities to benefit from this course. Whatever your academic field is, this course will train you to make important connections between your career and the world of the sacred and the profane. You will be able to explore the variety of religious expressions and frameworks that shape societies around the world, and the role religion plays in local and international affairs.

Religious literacy will greatly impact our ability to understand personal and social motivations behind financial decisions, political engagement, science and technological advancement, environmental and migration policies, family planning, diet and food production, gender relations, war and terrorist attacks, and more. Whether you notice or not, religion is a universal phenomenon that continues to transform and be transformed by our societies.

Our approach is interdisciplinary, which means you will be critically reflecting from many fields of study such as philosophy, psychology, cultural studies, history, economics, gender studies, among others. This enhances your ability to think critically, communicate effectively, respond sensitively, collaborate with others and creatively resolve conflict.

Introduction and Aims: This course will cover eleven religious traditions of the world: Native American Religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shinto, Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Their major teachings will be discussed in detail and set in their proper historical and cultural contexts. Similarities and differences between the religions will be considered, as well as each religion's unique contribution to world civilization.

Course Objectives:

1. To provide the student with the "raw materials" for the study of religion by immersing the student in the beliefs, doctrines, rituals, symbols, and (select) scriptures of some of the major world religions.
2. To facilitate the informed cross-cultural comparison and evaluation of ways of being religious by focused study of select world religions.
3. To widen, enhance and enrich the intellectual and spiritual horizons of the student by exposure to the spiritual beauty, vitality, coherence, plausibility and richness of non-Christian, nonwestern approaches to the transcendent or ultimate reality.
4. To encourage the student to enter sympathetically into the worldview of the religious traditions selected for study.
5. To provide the context for dialogue and discussion that will enable the student to live in an enormously complex, interdependent, and religiously plural world with patience, understanding, and appreciation for that which is different, and in some cases irreconcilably different, from his or her own "worldview."

[Week 1] Introduction and Indigenous Religions | Indigenous Sacred Ways

Read: Chap. 1 & 2

Quizzes for Week 1 Due. Sunday, June 26th

[Week 2] Native American Religions | African Religions

Reading: "Quest for Harmony: Native American Spiritual Traditions"

Article: "The Yoruba and Their Religious Tradition"

Watch:

- “Indigenous Sacred Ways: Religion Related to Ancestors and Place”
- Video: "Apache Tribe Fights for Oak Flat"
- Lecture: Dr. Rey - "African Religions"
- Video: "The Bushmen of Botswana"

Quizzes for Week 2 Due. Sunday, July 5th

[**Week 3**] Hinduism | Jainism | Buddhism
Read Chap 3, 4, & 5

Watch:

- Lecture: Dr. Katz- “Hinduism, Part 1”
 - Lecture: Samani Charita Prajna- “Jainism”
- Paper 1- Buddhism, Hinduism, Self, and Soul. Due July 7th**

****Midterm Examination, July 8-10****

[**Week 4**] Daoism, Confucianism, and Shinto | Judaism
Read Chap. 6, 7, & 8

At-home Assignment 8: Lecture- Professor Avila: “Daoism and Confucianism”

At-home Assignment 9: Lecture- Dr. Stier: “Judaism, Part 1”

At-home Assignment 10: Paper 2- Religious Significance of the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, Japan. Due July 14th

[**Week 5**] Islam and Sikhism | Christianity
Read Chap. 9, 10, & 11

Watch:

- Lecture- Dr. Musa- “Islam
 - Lecture- Dr. Larson- “Christianity: The First Millennia”
- Paper 3- Islam, Sects, and Jihad. Due July 21st**

[**Week 6**] New Religious Movements | Religions in the 21st Century
Read Chap. 12 and 13

Watch:

- Lecture- Dr. Northup- “Sects and Cults”
- Lecture- Dr. Gudorf- “Religion in the Future”

Globalization Question Due. Thursday July 28th

Quizzes for Week 6 Due. Saturday, July 30^h

****Final Examination, July 28-30****

Grading

Chapter Quizzes 30%

Midterm 15%

Final 15%

3 Short Papers (1-3 pages each) 30%

Globalization Question 10%

Globalization Question: Describe Appiah's approach and discuss its strengths and weaknesses. Then explain how religions help people express their identities both as individuals and as members of a group. Also, what did you learn about the need for and the potential of better understanding between religions? In your view, what is the best way to approach interreligious dialogue (For example, should we all become the same or should we value our diversity? If the latter, how do we do this? Is globalization a help or a hindrance to diversity?)

Examinations: Both midterm and final examinations will be a combination of multiple choice, fill in the blank, matching and essay questions. The final examination is not cumulative—it covers only material from the second half of the semester.

At-home Assignments: Each week there will be assignments to do at home. These assignments will ask you to do various things such as watch some videos for the first two weeks or in weeks 3-5 read some articles related to class content that will ask you to go a little farther. In weeks 3-5, you also be asked to write a short paper summarizing your findings and drawing conclusions. These papers should be 3-4 pages in length. If you make quotations in these papers, you should cite your source, but if you are only summarizing information, you don't need citations. These at-home assignments will usually be due on Mondays in a drop-box on Canvas.

Academic Conduct: 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 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.

Academic Honesty: Each student is expected to do his or her own work. It is absolutely unacceptable to submit someone else's work as your own. This is plagiarism and will result in a failing grade (F) for the assignment and possible disciplinary action. Thus, when in the course of writing your paper you quote or paraphrase an idea found in one of your sources you must give credit to the original author (usually by means of a footnote).

Syllabus Note on Internet Use in Research: You may cite from the Internet in your term papers, but you must be discerning. Anyone can post "information" on the Internet, and thus some of what is there is inaccurate, incomplete, and sometimes even blatantly untrue. As in print collections in libraries, only scholarly articles on the Internet are acceptable as sources for research papers. Internet articles should ideally have authors. Some will list individual authors; others will list institutions as sources. The credibility of the information depends on the credibility of the source. Acceptable sources include individual scholars with academic credentials, educational institutions (e.g., Institute of Reformation History, Princeton University), publicly supported national or international institutions (e.g. the World Health Organization or the National Institutes of Health) or other well-known institutions with credible reputations (e.g. the World Council of Churches, the Children's Defense Fund). Most educational institutions have addresses, which end with the letters "edu." You must use your judgment since many reputable institutions may not be well known by most students. Also, sometimes websites may list a university as the place from which the material emanates, but which does not sponsor or in any way support the information on that site. (You could set up a website that lists FIU as its origin, and purports that the Pope died last month and was replaced by a ringer!). There will be some Internet sources the reliability of which will be difficult to assess. Sometimes you must judge by the tone and range of an article. If it reads like a magazine or newspaper article and cites none of the sources it used, it is not scholarly. You should ask whether the article demonstrates balance: Does it attempt to tell all sides of the story? Does it ask critical questions of the material it covers? How well does its treatment accord with other treatments of the same material you have

found? If you would really like to cite an Internet article but have doubts about its acceptability, look up the institution or the author on the Internet or in the library. Has the author or institution published other works? Have those been reviewed or cited by other scholars?

When you cite from the Internet, you must list the entire address on the web where you found the information and the date you accessed it. When applicable you must also note any search terms needed within the website to find this particular article when these do not appear within the address.

The following are some bibliographic entries:

Musa, Edward, "The Art of the Maya."
<http://www.unescape.org/pop/journal/v1onaal.htm>. 4/27/16.

Zarabozo, Jamaal, "Is Family Planning Allowed in Islam?"
<http://www.albany.edu/~ha4934/famplan.html>. 4/21/016.

Attendance: Attendance is an absolutely essential part of the course! Although it will not be monitored at the beginning of the course, the instructor may choose to keep track of attendance if there is a major problem with students showing up and participating. If so, attendance will be 10% of the final grade, and the chapter quizzes and at-home assignments will each be reduced by 5%. Finally, remember that some material will inevitably be covered in class that is not to be found in the textbook so that each absence negatively affects your ability to do well on the tests.

Textbook

Living Religions Mary Pat Fisher, Robin Rineheart, Pearson, Jan 2016

ISBN-10: 0134168976

ISBN-13: 9780134168975

Print or digital versions of the book may be used. Acceptable editions: 9th, 10th, 11th or 12th. Bookstore Info

(<https://fiu.bncollege.com/shop/fiu/textbook/living-religionsrevel-access-600007838916>)