

Religious Studies Department
REL 2011 Religion: Analysis and Interpretation
Fall 2014
Biscayne Bay Campus

Instructor: Valeria Schindler

Office: Academic One 223

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays

8:30am to 9:45am and by Appointment

Class Days and Hours: MWF 10am-10:50am

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Course Description:

This course is an introduction to the study of religion. We shall examine the different expressions and practices of religion, focusing on religious experience in interdisciplinary contexts. Although no particular tradition will be treated at length, materials from several religions will be chosen to exemplify thematic topics in the experience of the Sacred. We will also be focusing on the common underlying tenets of different religions, dispelling common misconceptions, and looking at the emergence of new practices among the post-denominational generation.

We will use different techniques as a way of learning in this class, such as debates, lectures, personal assignments, videos, and group assignments. We will also have different guest speakers' expert in diverse religions or religious related subjects.

Objectives:

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- Better understand how an individual's identity and outlook are shaped by religious influences
- Apply critical thinking to important topics in the field of religious studies
- Appreciate the need and willingness to think creatively about religious issues in the contemporary world
- Write college-level, academic papers and communication with proper structure of content, format, etc.

- Challenge his/her own misconceptions of what religion and its practices are and open his/her mind to new ideas.

University Requirements for the Global Learning Objectives:

1. **Global Awareness:** Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the interrelatedness of local, global, international, and intercultural issues, trends, and systems.

Course Learning Outcome: Students will demonstrate knowledge of the interrelated dynamics (social-cultural, political, economic, etc.) that shape the actions of multiple figures in diverse cultural contexts.

2. **Global Perspectives:** Students will be able to develop a multi-perspective analysis of local, global, international, and intercultural problems.

Course Learning Outcome: Students will be able to analyze the multiple causal forces that shape the perspectives of historical individuals/persons — economic, political, sociological, technological, cultural, etc.

3. **Global Engagement:** Students will be able to demonstrate a willingness to engage in local, global, international, and intercultural problem solving.

Course Learning Outcome: Students will demonstrate a willingness to engage in negotiation regarding actions of global import within the context of the class simulation.

Required Textbooks:

Anatomy of the Sacred: An Introduction to Religion 6th ed., by James C. Livingston [Prentice Hall] ISBN-10: 013600380X

- **Note:** *extra handouts are going to be provided by the instructor and posted online. It is your responsibility to complete the readings.*

Assignments:

- **Six (6) ten-question quizzes – lower score to be dropped**
 - On the reading material and class lectures including multiple choice and true or false questions. These quizzes will be taken on Blackboard
- **Midterm and Final Exams.**
 - **Midterm:** will cover the first half of the semester and will include multiple choice, and true and false questions.
 - **Final:** will cover from second half of the semester and will include multiple choice, and true and false questions.

- **A 1000-1500 words report on article** “The case for Contamination” By Appiah (Global learning requirement)
- **A 1500-2000-words essay.** “*Experiencing religion around us.*”

In this assignment you will have to keep a personal journal for 5 days in which you will record all that happens to you and around you. You will then have to produce an essay analyzing how religion “pops up” in your every-day life. Remember to utilize the approaches and information learned in the course.

Your grade on this essay will consist of three parts: **Content and Argument** (40% of grade), **Organization, Structure, and Research** (30% of grade), and **Style and Grammar** (30% of grade).

- **Content and Argument** refers to how well you logically build your case and follow the FIRES model (Facts, Incidents, Reasoning/Rationale, Examples, and Statistics). FIRES makes for a more interesting paper in which you back up your points with specific examples and facts.
 - **Organization, Structure and Research** refers to solid introduction (with thesis statement), building of argument and points, and finishing with a sound conclusion.
 - **Style and Grammar** refers to how well you write: grammar, sentence structure, word usage, including use of interesting and varied words and phrasing.
- Remember that we count with resourceful departments at FIU to help you out with your written assignment. Please refer to <http://casgroup.fiu.edu/writingcenter> for more information and useful tips.
 - **In class presentation:** You will be presenting on one of the chapters from the textbook, not on the concepts (that is my job,) but bringing an example of the concept. You can use images, games, debates, videos, etc., the more creative, the better! This presentation will be no more than 10 minutes. It could be done in couples as well.
 - **Creating your own religion.** This assignment will be done **in groups and in class** throughout the semester. After each unit, you will get together in your group and start creating your own religion. We will start by creating myths and rituals and then fine tuning it down to every other aspect of the religion. The last week of class each group will present their religion to the rest of the class.

- **Extra Credit** opportunities are available and usually involves attending a special lecture or event and writing a two-page review and analysis: at least one page should summarize the event and provide evidence of attendance, and at least one page must analyze the event in the context of a course theme or concept. The essay could be worth up to 3 extra credit points to be added to the final grade. A maximum of 6 extra credit points could be awarded. Please refer to the list of events provided on Blackboard. Extra Credit reports are due on the last week of the semester.

Grading Criteria:

- Quizzes: 10%
- Midterm: 20%
- Final: 20%
- Written Assignment: 20%
- Report on article 10%
- Group Work: 5%
- In class presentation: 5%
- Attendance and Participation: 10%
- **Total: 100%**

Letter Grade	Range	Letter Grade	Range
A	93 and Above	C	74-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-73
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	84-86	D	64-66
B-	80-83	D-	60-63
C+	77-79	F	Below 60

A's are awarded to exceptional work in class and assignments

B's are awarded for good to very good work.

C's are awarded for average to above average work.

D's are awarded for barely passing with below average work.

F's are awarded for unacceptable work.

Course Policies:

- Essays must be submitted through Turnitin in Blackboard
- **Blackboard** will be used as an online assistance to the course. Additional material and readings will be posted there. **It is your responsibility to check Blackboard before each class.** To log into Blackboard Go to www.ecampus.fiu.edu and use the login to Blackboard tab. To login you

have to use your FIU email address, just the part before the "@" Your password is the same you use for your email account or to login to MyFIU. The course is REL 2011 Section B-52. Please let me know if you have any problems.

- **This is a Gordon Rule** course with a three paper written word requirement and you must attain at least a C (not a C- or less) to pass a Gordon Rule course. You will not receive any credit as a Gordon rule course for a C- or lower upon completion of this course. Under the Gordon Rule, FIU requires that student papers: 1) have a clear thesis or controlling idea; 2) have a thesis supported with adequate reasons and evidence; 3) be organized clearly and logically; 4) show sustained analysis and critical thought; 5) show knowledge of conventions of standard written English; and 6) show awareness of disciplinary conventions in regard to content, style, form, and delivery method.

- **Plagiarism**
 - It is the theft of intellectual property of others, including their ideas, concepts, and words. Plagiarism **will not be tolerated** in this course. Please visit <http://www.fiu.edu/~oabp/misconductweb/2codeofacainteg.htm> To clarify what constitutes plagiarism for this university. Offenders will receive an "F" on the paper, and could fail the entire course. Some examples of plagiarism are:
 - Papers acquired online or from other sources that were not produced by the student that have submitted them.
 - Copying material and ideas from other sources without attribution.
 - Using other student's work.

IF YOU HAVE ANY DOUBTS, PLEASE TALK TO ME FIRST.

- **Late assignments, missed tests.** Points are going to be deducted for both. If you miss a quiz, you will lose the points the quiz is worth. If you turn in a paper after its due date, **2 points are going to be deducted per late day, up to 16 points total.** If you know in advanced you won't be able to take a quiz or if you have any issues with your assignments' due date, **PLEASE TALK TO ME BEFORE IT HAPPENS** and I might be able to give you a make-up date. However, **NO MAKE-UP DATES FOR FINAL EXAM!!**

- **NO CELL PHONES OR COMPUTERS** in class please. If necessary, power point presentations will be available to you after each class through

Blackboard. If you need to use your computer to take notes, please talk to me.

- **Attendance and participation** are extremely important. **ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY.** If you know you will be absent for any reason, please inform me **before** the class you will miss. Tardiness will be penalized as well. I value your participation and your comments, so is very important that you take an active role in class. If you have any problems, please consult with me in advanced. **MORE THAN 8 ABSENTS IN THE SEMESTER WILL RESULT IN A 0 GRADE FOR ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION**

COMMUNICATION is the key for a successful relationship.

Behavioral Misconduct: Any student who is subject to sexual harassment, stalking, or physical or verbal abuse should immediately speak to the instructor. The university has policies to protect students in these instances and the instructor will immediately refer the student to the appropriate program or resource. Remember, this is a course in which different ideas are welcomed, even if they do not agree with our own notions.

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities, as defined by law, have the right to receive needed accommodations if their disabilities make it difficult to perform academic tasks in the usual way or in the allotted time frame. However, in order to receive accommodation, students with disabilities must register with Disability Resource Center. This office will keep the student's written request, notify a faculty member who has a student with a disability enrolled in his/her class, and indicate what kinds of arrangements must be made.

Religious Holidays: By university policy, students must notify the instructor at least two weeks in advance that he/she wishes to observe a religious holyday. The student will be excused from class without penalty, but will still be responsible for the material studied in the class.

For University's deadlines, please refer to http://onestop.fiu.edu/academic-calendar/Academic%20Calendar%20Archives/2013-2014%20Academic%20Calendar%20-%2010_23_13%20Sheet1.pdf

- **Important Note:** *This syllabus is a contract and can be amended determined by the demands of the course. It outlines everything you need to know for this course. Please make sure you have read it carefully.*

REL 2011: Religion: analysis and interpretation

FALL 2013

Course Outline and Calendar

- **NOTE:** Readings must be completed *prior to* the class meeting for which they are assigned.

Week 1 August 25, 27, 29	Welcome/Introduction Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 1 "What is Religion?"
Week 2 September 1,3,5	Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 2 "Ways of Studying Religion" and start with Chapter 3 "The Sacred and the Holy." 9/1 LABOR DAY – NO CLASS
Week 3 September 8,10,12	Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 2 "Ways of Studying Religion" and start and Chapter 3, "Sacred and the Holy" 9/8 Quiz #1- Chapters 1 and 2
Week 4 September 15,17,19	Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 4, "Symbol, Myth, and Doctrine" 9/19 Quiz #2 – Chapters 3 and 4
Week 5 September 22,24,26	Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 5, "Sacred Ritual" and start with chapter 6 "Sacred Scripture" 9/22: Journal due by 11:59pm. Please submit it through Blackboard. 9/26- NO CLASS
Week 6 September 29 October 1, 3	Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 6, "Sacred Scripture" and Chapter 7 "Society and the Sacred: The Social Formations and Transformations of Religion" 9/29: REPORT ON ARTICLE DUE BY 11:59 PM. PLEASE SUBMIT IT THROUGH TURNITIN IN BLACKBOARD
Week 7 October 6,8,10	Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 7, "Society and the Sacred: The Social Formations and Transformations of Religion" Chapter 8 "Concepts of the Divine and Ultimate Reality" 10/6 Quiz #3- Chapters 5 and 6
Week 8 October 13, 15, 17	10/13: MIDTERM Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 8, "Concepts of the Divine and Ultimate Reality" and start Chapter 9 "Origins of the Natural and Social Order" 10/17 – Group Work

Week 9 October 20,22,24	Finish with Concept of the Divine and then Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 9, "Origins of the Natural and Social Order"
Week 10 October 27,29,31	Finish with Cosmogony and start with Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 10, "Views of the Human Problem" and start with Chapter 11, "Theodicy: Encountering Evil" 10/31 Quiz #4 – chapters 8 and 9
Week 11 November 3,5,7	Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 11, "Theodicy: Encountering Evil" And start with chapter 12, , "Ethics: Foundations of Moral Action" 11/3 LAST DAY TO DROP COURSE WITH DR GRADE
Week 12 November 10,12,14	Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 12, "Ethics: Foundations of Moral Action" and start with Chapter 13, "Soteriology: Ways and Goals of Salvation and Liberation" 11/10: Written Assignment due by 11:59pm through turnitin. 11/14: Quiz #5 – Chapters 10, 11, and 12
Week 13 November 17,19,21	Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 13, "Soteriology: Ways and Goals of Salvation and Liberation" and Chapter 14, "Secularization: Religious Revitalization Movements—Contemporary Religious Fundamentalism"
Week 14 November 24,26,28	Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 14: "Religious Fundamentalism and Secularization" 11/28: THANKSGIVING- NO CLASS
Week 15 December 1,3,5	Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 15, "Contemporary challenges to traditional religion" Group presentations 12/3 Quiz #6 Chapters 13 and 14 Conclusions and Course review

December 8th, Final Exams Week. Please consult FIU's website for finals schedule

- **Important Note:** *This calendar can be amended determined by the demands of the course.*