

REL 2011 -RELIGION ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION
RVD
PROFESSOR ERIK LARSON

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

This online section of Religion: Analysis and Interpretation will use a multimedia approach to explore the basic concepts in the study of religion. This format's scope includes the exploration of concepts such as deity, theodicy, cosmology and ritual and others such as religious social implications in society. The student will be introduced to each concept through the textbook, videos, and PowerPoint presentations by members of the Religious Studies faculty, each in their own research specialization. Throughout the course the student will also be exposed to specific rituals, myths, doctrines, ethics and symbols from various different world religions and cultures.

Students will be tested on this material through:

- time-restricted quizzes
- long-response midterm and final exams
- Two research papers*
- Interactive discussion posts

*The research papers will develop the student's critical thinking skills and writing abilities. For the site visit essay, the student will conduct field research by attending a religious service outside of their own tradition. There are strict guidelines for these assignments that can be found under the "Essay Information" folder located under Course Content.

This course fulfills the Gordon Rule requirement; you must earn a "C" or better to receive credit for this course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Explain the basic history, development, and belief system of various religious traditions.
- Recognize religious themes and concepts found in other cultures.
- Identify the meaning behind religious concepts and symbols.
- Evaluate their own religious views in regards to other cultures and paradigms of religious thought.
- Apply critical thinking to various topics in the field of religious studies.
- Think creatively about religious issues in the contemporary world.
- Perform field research to better understand a particular religious community.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION
POLICIES

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.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS & SKILLS

One of the greatest barriers to taking an online course is a lack of basic computer literacy. By computer literacy we mean being able to manage and organize computer files efficiently, and learning

to use your computer's operating system and software quickly and easily. Keep in mind that this is not a computer literacy course; but students enrolled in online courses are expected to have moderate proficiency using a computer. Please go to the "[What's Required](#)" webpage to find out more information on this subject.

Please visit our [Technical Requirements](#) webpage for additional information.

ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATION

Please visit our [ADA Compliance](#) webpage for information about accessibility involving the tools used in this course.

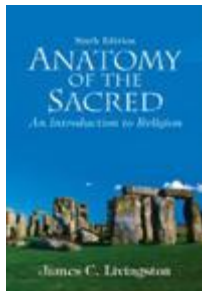
Please visit [Blackboard's Commitment Accessibility](#) webpage for more information.

For additional assistance please contact FIU's [Disability Resource Center](#).

COURSE PREREQUISITES

For more information about prerequisites, [click here](#).

TEXTBOOK



Anatomy of the Sacred: An Introduction to Religion

James C. Livingston

Prentice Hall, 6th Edition

013600380X

9780136003809

You may purchase your textbook online at the [FIU Bookstore](#).

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 for 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 Blackboard
- **Interact** online with instructor/s and peers
- **Review** and follow the course calendar

COURSE DETAIL

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 Blackboard 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.

DISCUSSION FORUMS (10% OF TOTAL GRADE)

Each week, beginning with the second week of class, there will be discussion questions posted for you to respond to. These discussions are meant to stimulate critical thinking about how religions manifest in our globalized world. The responses in the discussions should be well thought out and written in standard American English (that is to say, use correct spelling and proper punctuation and capitalization). You may use links to news articles or other media sites to strengthen your positions on particular issues.

In addition to posting your own answers to the weekly discussion topics, you should respond to the postings from your fellow classmates and/or the instructor. Each week that you participate, you should respond to at least two of your classmates' posts. In other words, you should have at least three substantial posts in total for each discussion topic. At the end of the course, your discussion thread will be graded based on the quantity and the quality of what you have written.

In responding to others, it is important to be courteous and respectful. If you disagree with something that has been said, that is fine. But be sure to explain why and where appropriate support your own view with evidence. Also, it is fine to ask questions that are related to our topic to extend the discussion. But please make sure the questions are relevant. Please remember that this is an academic forum.

Discussion topics will be open from Monday to Sunday of each week that a discussion topic is posted. See the course calendar for the weeks that have discussion topics posted.

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.

QUIZZES (10% OF TOTAL GRADE)

A time-restricted, online quiz will be given on each week's religious concept. You can take each quiz twice, and the highest of the two attempts will be recorded. Even if you do well on the first attempt, it is advisable to use both attempts. There is a large database of quiz questions so many of the questions in your second attempt will be new to you since the computer randomly chooses the questions.

For the quizzes, you will have 20 minutes to complete 10 questions. Each quiz will be open for one week, from Monday to Sunday until midnight, and you can take it on any of those days at any time.

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](#).

Note: Quiz resets will not be granted for technical issues. 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.).

The correct answers for quizzes will not be released to students. Students will be able to see their submitted answers only. Students should refer to their course materials for the correct answers.

WRITTEN EXAMS (40% OF TOTAL GRADE)

The essay topics for **Written Exam 1** and **Written Exam 2** will become available in the Assessment area during the exam availability time (check the weekly calendar). The essay exams must be submitted to Turnitin.com. All assignments can be submitted to Turnitin.com via Blackboard in the Assignment Dropbox Folder. Review the detailed [Turnitin Instructions](#) on how to submit your assignments and how to review the Grademark comments (feedback) from your professor.

The written exams should each be approximately 750-900 words long.

RESEARCH PAPER 1 - SITE VISIT ESSAY (20% OF TOTAL GRADE)

All Essays, 'Research Paper 1 -Site Visit (Draft & Final Copy)' and 'Research Paper 2- Appiah Analysis' and 'Written Exam 1' and 'Written Exam 2', will be checked for plagiarism using Turnitin.com via a link in Blackboard. It is not necessary to create a separate Turnitin account. Review the detailed [Turnitin Instructions](#) on how to submit your assignments and how to review the Grademark comments (feedback) from your professor.

DRAFT: Your first submission will be a draft version of the site visit (30 points of assignment total). This section does not need to include all of the supplementary research you will do on the religion you chose to explore. The draft should include your experience at the actual site and be approximately 600-750 words.

FINAL COPY: The final copy of the Site Visit should include a works cited page that DOES NOT include Wikipedia (or any other encyclopedic web sites), all of the research you completed as related to all rituals, symbols, and theology as well as the information from the actual site visit. The final copy should be 1800-2000 words.

RESEARCH PAPER 2- APPIAH ANALYSIS ESSAY (20% OF TOTAL GRADE)

This assignment requires two parts:

1. A discussion in the related forum (20 POINTS of your assignment grade) and
2. Your analysis and reflections on the article (80 POINTS of your assignment grade) in 1800-2000 words. The article you will be analyzing and discussing is 'The Case for Contamination' by Kwame Anthony Appiah.

PART 1 - Discussion Board Portion (20 points)

Read the article "The Case for Contamination" by Kwame Anthony Appiah and post your initial response to the following questions to the Discussion Board: "What roles do religions play in Appiah's analysis? How is your approach similar to or different from his?"

Once you have posted your answer, respond to at least three of your fellow students' posts and explain how you agree/disagree with them (a total of 4 posts: 1 original thread + 3 comments).

Each response should be at least 100 words and should demonstrate knowledge of the article as well as class readings and PowerPoints.

*The discussion posts are due no later than one week prior to the essay deadline. Check Course Calendar in Syllabus for exact due dates.

PART 2 - Essay (80 points)

After reading your classmates' responses and considering your initial response, write a more detailed answer to the question in an essay format. Your essay should be at least 1800-2000 words and your argument should be supported with information from the class readings and PowerPoints. Submit your essay to Assignment Dropbox inside Blackboard.

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.

COURSE POLICIES

Late Papers

Late papers will not be accepted. Students are responsible for reading their blackboard messages and all announcements posted by the instructor. The instructor also reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus by means of announcements or messages with ample time allowed for students to respond and adjust appropriately.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism, or attempting to pass off another's work as your own, falls into three different categories:

- A written work that is entirely stolen from another source;
- Using quotations from another source without properly citing them; and
- Paraphrasing from another source without proper citations.

Students are expected to understand the definition of plagiarism. See the University Code of Academic Integrity at <http://www.fiu.edu/~oabp/misconductweb/2codeofacainteg.htm> if you need further clarification. Offenders will receive a grade of F for the plagiarized assignment, and possibly the course.

**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.

Extra Credit

No Extra Credit work will be accepted in this course.

Quiz resets

Quiz resets will not be granted for technical issues. 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.).

The correct answers for quizzes will not be released to students. Students will be able to see their submitted answers only. Students should refer to their course materials for the correct answers.

GRADING

Course Requirements		Points	Percentag of Final Grade		
<u>Research Paper 1 – Site Visit:</u>					
Rough Draft		30	20%		
Final Draft		70			
<u>Research Paper 2</u>					
Part 1- Discussion Portion		20	20%		
Part 2- Appiah Analysis		80			
Multiple Choice Quizzes - (13*100) / 13		100	10%		
Participation in Weekly Discussion Topics (13 in total)		100	10%		
Written Exam 1		100	20%		
Written Exam 2		100	20%		
Total			100%		
Letter	Range	Letter	Range	Letter	Range
A	Above 93	B-	81 - 83	D+	67 - 70

Letter	Range	Letter	Range	Letter	Range
A-	91 - 92	C+	77 - 80	D	64 - 66
B+	87 - 90	C	74 - 76	D-	61 - 63
B	84 - 86	C-	71 - 73	F	< 61

COURSE CALENDAR WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Date	Tasks
Week 1 August 25 th -31 st	<p>Review and fully familiarize yourself with the course and site. Print and read the course syllabus and course calendar.</p> <p>Section I - The Study of Religion</p> <p>Topic: Defining Religion. Why Are Humans Religious? Why Study Religion?</p> <p>Read: Chapter 1 p. 1-14</p> <p>DUE: Introduce Yourself in the Discussion Forum</p>
Week 2 September 1 st -7 th	<p>Section I - The Study of Religion</p> <p>View Presentations: Dr. Northup - What Is Religion? How Is It Studied?</p> <p>Topic: The Perspective of the Student–Commitment and Objectivity. The Ways Religion Is Studied. Interpreting and Explaining Religion.</p> <p>Read: Chapter 2 p. 15-34</p> <p>DUE: Take Quizzes 1 & 2</p> <p>DUE: Participate in Discussion Forum</p>

Date	Tasks
Week 3 September 8 th – 14 th	<p>Section II. Universal Forms of Religious Experience and Expression</p> <p>View Presentation: Dr. Huchingson -The Sacred and the Holy.</p> <p>Topic: The Concept of Sacred Power. The Ambivalence of Sacred Power. The Holy as Mysterium Tremendum and Fascinans. Sacred Space and Sacred Time. Religion as Ultimate Concern.</p> <p>Read: Chapter 3 p. 35-52</p> <p>DUE: Take Quiz 3: The Sacred and the Holy</p> <p>DUE: Participate in Discussion Forum</p>
Week 4 September 15 th – 21 st	<p>View Presentation: Dr. Northup - Sacred Symbol, Myth, and Doctrine.</p> <p>Topic: Symbolic Communication. Religious Symbols. Metaphor, Parable, and Story. Religious Myths. Models and Doctrines.</p> <p>Read: Chapter 4 p. 53-73</p> <p>DUE: Take Quiz 4: Sacred Symbol, Myth, and Doctrine</p> <p>DUE: Participate in Discussion Forum</p>
Week 5 September 22 nd -28 th	<p>View Presentation: Dr. Northup - Sacred Ritual.</p> <p>Topic: Ritual Action. Types of Sacred Ritual. Ritual and Sacrifice. Rituals as Sacraments.</p> <p>Read: Chapter 5 p. 74-95</p> <p>DUE: Take Quiz 5: Sacred Ritual</p> <p>DUE: Participate in Discussion Forum</p> <p>*Have you visited a religious site yet? Your Site Visit Draft is due in two weeks!</p>

Date	Tasks
Week 6 September 29 th – Oct. 5 th	<p>View Presentation: Dr. Larson - Sacred Scripture.</p> <p>Topic: The Pervasive Role of Sacred Scripture. Using the Term Scripture. Some Distinctive Features of Sacred Scripture. The Authority and Canonicity of Scripture. The Reception and Uses of Scripture. The Interpretation of Scripture.</p> <p>Read: Chapter 6 p. 96-123</p> <p>DUE: Take Quiz 6: Sacred Scripture</p> <p>DUE: Participate in Discussion Forum</p>
Week 7 October 6 th – 12 th	<p>View Presentation: Dr. Wuaku - Society and the Sacred: The Social Formations and Transformations of Religion.</p> <p>Topic: The Reciprocal Relationship between Religion and Society. Types of Religious Communities. Voluntary Religious Communities. Protest and Change in Voluntary Religious Communities. The Sect. The Cult: New Religious Movements.</p> <p>Read: Chapter 7 p. 124-150</p> <p>DUE: Take Quiz 7: Society and the Sacred</p> <p>DUE: Research Paper 1- Site Visit Draft Copy due via Turnitin in Assignment Dropbox – Saturday, October 11th 11:45pm</p> <p>DUE: Participate in Discussion Forum</p>
Week 8 October 13 th – 19 th	<p>Take Written Exam 1 –will only be available Monday-Friday</p> <p>Covers materials from Week 1-7</p> <p>Monday, October 13th 12:00am- Friday, October 17th 11:45pm</p> <p>Submit your essay exam via Assignment Dropbox link in Blackboard</p>

Date	Tasks
<p>Week 9 October 20th-26th</p>	<p>Section III. Universal Components of a Religious Worldview</p> <p>View Presentation: Dr. Huchingson- Deity: Concepts of the Divine and Ultimate Reality.</p> <p>Topic: Polytheism and the Worship of Nature. Dualism. Pantheism and Monism. Monotheism.</p> <p>Read: Chapter 8 p. 151-182</p> <p>DUE: Take Quiz 8: Deity</p> <p>DUE: Participate in Discussion Forum</p> <p>**Start working on the final copy of your Research Paper 1 -Site Visit. It is due in two weeks!</p>
<p>Week 10 October 27th- November 2nd</p>	<p>View Presentation: Rabbi Shulkes - Cosmogony: Origins of the Natural and Social Order.</p> <p>Topic: The Practical Basis of Cosmogony. Emergence or Procreation from a Primal Substance or Being. The Sexual Union of a Primal Male and Female. Creation by Conflict and the Ordering of Chaos. Creation by a Divine Craftsman. Creation by Decree or from Nothing. The Rejection of Cosmogonic Speculation. Cosmogony Today.</p> <p>Read: Chapter 9 p. 183-210</p> <p>DUE: Take Quiz 9: Cosmogony</p> <p>DUE: Participate in Discussion Forum</p>
<p>Week 11 November 3rd- 9th</p>	<p>View Presentation: Dr. Wuaku - Anthropology: The Human Problem.</p> <p>Topic: Modern Views of Our Human Plight. Stoicism. Christianity. Theravada Buddhism. Confucianism.</p> <p>Read: Chapter 10 p. 211-234</p> <p>DUE: Remember to Take Quiz 9 and participate in last week's discussion forum if you have not already completed them</p> <p>DUE: Take Quiz 10: The Human Problem</p> <p>DUE: Research Paper 1- Site Visit Final Copy due via Turnitin in Assignment Dropbox Saturday, November 8th 11:45pm</p> <p>DUE: Participate in Discussion Forum</p>

Date	Tasks
Week 12 November 10 th -16 th	<p>View Presentation: Dr. Gudorf - Theodicy: Encountering Evil.</p> <p>Topic: The Persistent Demand for Theodicy. Theodicy of "Mystical Participation." A Future, This-Worldly Theodicy. Other-Worldly Theodicy. Dualism. The Karma-Samsara Theodicy. Monotheistic Theodicies.</p> <p>Read: Chapter 11 p. 235-258</p> <p>DUE: Take Quiz 11: Theodicy</p> <p>DUE: Participate in Discussion Forum</p> <p>**Start working on Research Paper 2 – Appiah Analysis. It is due in two weeks! Make sure you complete Part 1 of the assignment before starting the paper.</p>
Week 13 November 17 th – 23 rd	<p>View Presentation: Dr. Gudorf - Ethics: Patterns of Moral Action.</p> <p>Topic: Virtues and Obligations. The Sources and Norms of Moral Authority.</p> <p>Read: Chapter 12 p. 259-286</p> <p>DUE: Take Quiz 12: Ethics</p> <p>DUE: Participate in Discussion Forum</p> <p>DUE: This is the last week to do Part 1 of Research Paper 2-Appiah Analysis (see Assignment Details) – Due Sunday, November 23rd 11:45pm</p>
Week 14 November 24 th - 30 th	<p>View Presentation: Dr. Huchingson - Soteriology: Ways and Goals of Salvation and Liberation.</p> <p>Topic: Ways of Salvation and Liberation. The Way of Grace through Faith. The Way of Devotion. The Way of Action and Obligation. The Way of Mediation and Insight. Goals of Salvation and Liberation. Psychic Wholeness and a Healthy Social Order. Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life. Samadhi and Nirvana.</p> <p>Read: Chapter 13 p. 287-338</p> <p>*NO QUIZ THIS WEEK</p> <p>DUE: Research Paper 2- Appiah Analysis Essay — due on Saturday, November 29th 11:45pm via Turnitin in Assignment Dropbox</p> <p>DUE: Participate in Discussion Forum</p> <p>Thanksgiving Day- November 27th</p>

Date	Tasks
<p>Week 15 December 1st – 7th</p>	<p>Section IV. The Sacred and the Secular in Modernity</p> <p>View Presentation: Dr. Bidegain - The Sacred and the Secular in Modernity.</p> <p>Topic: Secularization and Pluralism. The Reactions of Religious Fundamentalisms Today. The Characteristics of Contemporary Religious Fundamentalism. The Status and Roles of Women in Religion. Relations between Religion and State.</p> <p>Read: Chapters 14-15 p. 339-398</p> <p>DUE: Take Quiz 13: Soteriology and Fundamentalism (this quiz covers material from Week 14 and Week 15)</p> <p>DUE: Participate in Discussion Forum</p> <p>Due: Take Global Learning Quiz (This is for University Assessment Purposes)</p>
<p>Week 16 December 8th- 12th</p>	<p>You must take the Global Learning Quiz prior to attempting Written Exam 2.</p> <p>Take Written Exam 2 - will only be available Monday-Friday</p> <p>Covers materials from Week 8-15</p> <p>Monday, Dec. 8th 12:00AM– Friday, Dec. 12th 11:45pm</p> <p>Submit your essay exam via Assignment Dropbox link in Blackboard</p>