



# Syllabus

## REL 3100 [online] - Introduction to Religion and Culture

### Professor Information



Prof. Albert Wuaku

Office Hours:

By appointment

Phone:

(305) 348-0112

Email:

wuakua@fiu.edu

**E-mail Response Time:**

48 hour response time (Excluding weekends)

### Course Description

This course explores religion from sociological and anthropological perspectives. Students will examine the ways in which sociologists and anthropologists try to explain the phenomenon of religion [that is, religious beliefs, religious behavior, and religious institutions]. The course exposes students to a range of sociological and anthropological theories that explore the origins of religion as a social and cultural phenomenon and the interplay between religious belief, ritual, and religious institutions and their social and cultural contexts. Note that this is not a course in theology! We will not focus much attention on the content of beliefs and practices of specific religious traditions. Our interest is in the social and cultural dimensions of the phenomenon of religion. Topics include, the origins of the human religious experience, the typology of religious groups [churches, sects, denominations, cults], the evolution of religious organizations and patterns of religious leadership, religion and women, religion and societal conflict, religion and the economy and religious fundamentalism. Throughout the semester we will

watch and discuss about 4 exciting documentaries that shed considerable light on these themes.

## **Course Objectives**

Four objectives underlie the course:

- To introduce students to socio-cultural concepts relevant to the understanding of religion as a dimension of societal life.
- To examine the dynamics of the relationship between religion and other aspects of society such as politics and the economy.
- To develop critical thinking skills by analyzing and evaluating theoretical perspectives on religious belief and action.
- To encourage students to apply socio-anthropological concepts in the understanding of their personal religious lives and past and contemporary religious issues in their societies.

## **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the semester students will

- Gain an intellectual understanding of the interconnection between religion and society in western and non western cultures
- Improve on their writing skills through the writing of essays
- Develop the culture of participating in intellectual conversations through the interchanges discussion questions require of them.
- Be excited about the dynamics of religion in societal life enough to want to pursue studies in this area further

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## **Important Information**

## **Policies**

Please review the [policies page](#) as it contains essential information regarding guidelines relevant to all [courses](#) at FIU and additional information on the standards for acceptable netiquette important 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](#)" page to find out more information on this subject.

Please visit our [technical requirements page](#) for additional information.

## **Accessibility And Accommodation**

Obtain more detailed information about the [specific limitations with the technologies](#) used in this course.

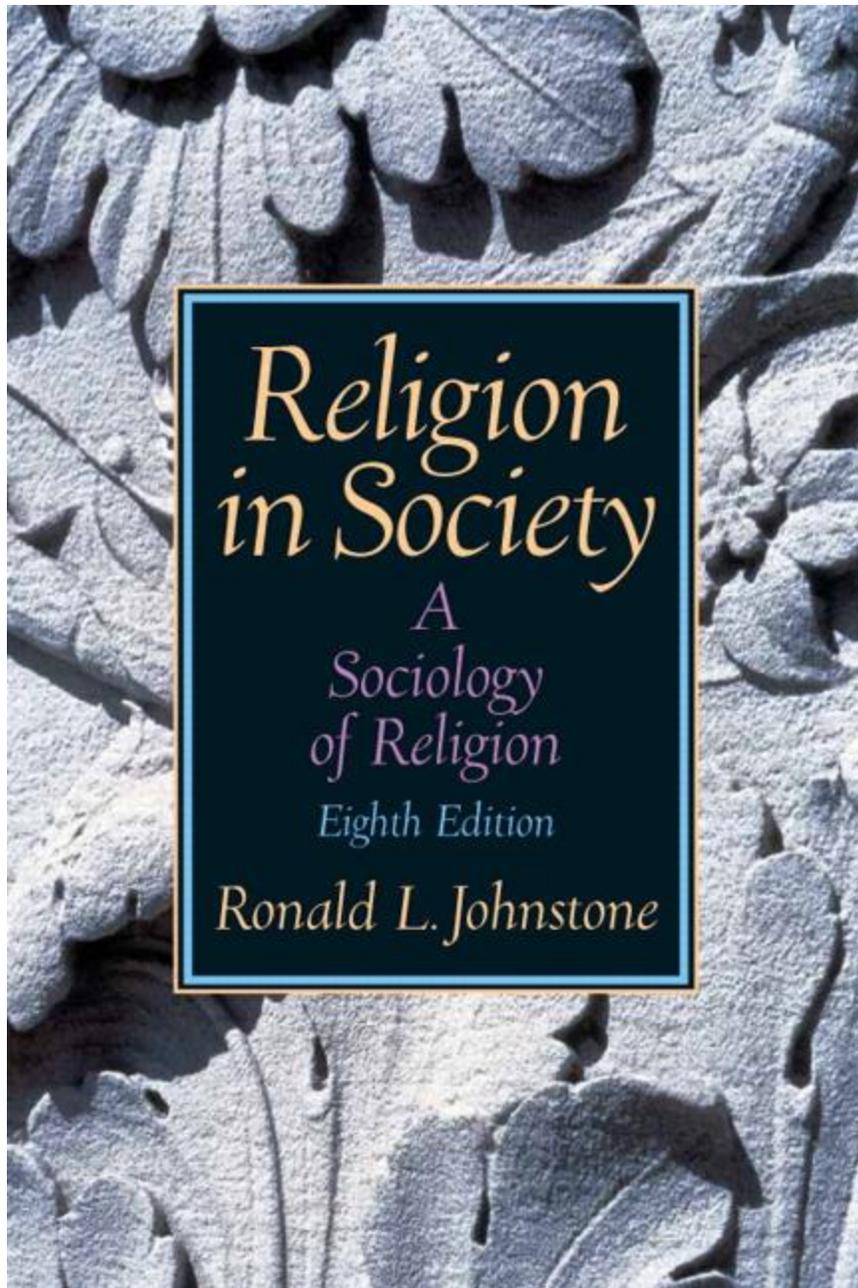
Review [Blackboard's Accessibility Commitment](#) for more information.

For additional assistance please contact our [Disability Resource Center](#).

## **Course Prerequisites**

There are no prerequisites for this course.

## **Textbook**



Religion in Society: A Sociology of Religion (8th Ed)

Ronald L. Johnstone

Prentice Hall (latest edition)

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

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

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For detailed information about the technical requirements, please [click here](#).

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## **Course Detail**

## **Course Communication**

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

The email feature is **external** communication that allows users to send emails to users enrolled in the course including the instructor and other students. Emails are sent to the student's FIU email on record.

This is the best method to communicate with your instructor privately.

All students are expected to use their FIU e-mail address/account for course correspondence. Like Blackboard, you are expected to check your FIU e-mail at least every other day for the duration of this course.

All e-mails sent to the instructor should reflect a professional manner and adhere to the following format:

Subject Line/Heading: Place your question/comment in the subject heading.

Also identify this class (Web Class 3100),

Text: The text of the message should begin with Dear Dr. Wuaku. The message should follow and end with the students full name.

Example E-mail: Below is an example of the format I expect from e-mail inquiries.

Please remember you can also call me on 305-348-0112 if you need to speak with me.

From: Joe Doe doe@fiu .edu (Use FIU email address/account)

To: Albert Wuaku wuakua@fiu .edu

Subject: Textbook (Web Class 3100)

Dear Dr. Wuaku,

I have a question about the textbook. Do we have to buy it from the bookstore or can we order it online? I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Joe Doe.

**Please remember** you can also call me on 305-348-0112 if you need to speak with me.

## **Discussion Forums**

Throughout the semester the instructor will post messages to the discussion board that require a response or activity from each student. Each post will be graded. Each discussion is worth 25 points. To receive all possible points, a posting must be on time, be easy to read, free of careless mistakes, and appropriately address the issue(s) or question(s) presented by the instructor. Also each student must address or respond to viewpoints of at least three others in the class.

Keep in mind that forum discussions are public, and care should be taken when determining what to post.

## Quizzes

There will be a multiple choice quiz or essay assignment after each topic or combination of topics. Each assignment will be worth a total of 25 points. Each essay assignment will consist of 1, 2, 3 or 4 essay questions out of which a student will be required to answer a specified number of questions. If the chosen question has sub-divisions [e.g questions 1 a, 1 b, etc] the student must address all questions in the subdivisions to be awarded full points for the question. A student has only 3 attempts at answering the multiple choice questions. The highest score will be recorded.

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](#).

## Assignments

The essay questions will be based on the lectures, class discussions, and assigned readings. The purpose of these essays is to test the student's knowledge of the vocabulary, issues, theoretical perspectives and the ability to apply the ideas covered to the understanding of lived religious experience.

### How to respond to essay questions:

All essay questions must be thoroughly answered. A thorough response is one that shows evidence of familiarity with the text and the power-point notes and shows the student's own originality. The points in the essay must be discussed thoroughly and illustrated with practical examples from the readings or the author's own experiences. The essay must be written in grammatically correct prose. It must be very well structured and organized. **YOU WILL SCORE A ZERO IF YOU SUBMIT WORK THAT IS POORLY WRITTEN.**

Read the questions ahead of time. Read the text and power point notes and draft your responses. Read the question again to make sure you are on the right course. Proof read your work before you submit it.

## Final Grade

The Final Grade will be determined by a tally of points scored throughout the semester. These points will be converted into percentages [**that is, Points scored by student/total number of points [200] x 100**]. Please keep printed copies of all assignments and graded material. If you cannot produce your class material in a grade dispute, the grade recorded in the instructor's grade book will take precedent.

Students are required and responsible for all assigned text readings and material from Blackboard. Students are expected to check the Announcement and Assignment sections of Blackboard for this class at least every other day. Students who take this course are expected to have the skills necessary to [complete](#) all assignments. **Essay Assignments must not be sent as attachments to the professor. They must be posted in the Assignment [drop box](#). I will not grade them if you send them to me as attachments.** If you have computer technology questions during the semester, you should contact the FIU [Computer Help Desk](#).

**Note: I reserve the right to alter this syllabus if and whenever necessary.**

## Grading

Course Requirements				Weight	
Essays and Multiple Choice Quizzes				70%	
Discussion Assignments				30%	
Total				100%	

Letter Grade	Range	Letter Grade	Range	Letter Grade	Range
A	Above 93	B-	81 - 83	D+	67 - 70
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

## Weekly Schedule

Module	Chapters and Tasks
Week 1	There are no assignments this week. Class introductions and acquisition of textbook.

**Module**  
august 25th –31st

**Chapters and Tasks**

Week 2                    **Chapter 1 & 2: Introduction to Sociology of Religion & The sources of Religion**

Sept 1 – sept 7

Read Chapter 1 and 2.  
Read the corresponding Lecture summaries/supplements (located in the Course Content section of Blackboard).  
**Quiz 1 Due:** sept 7 at 11:55pm

Week 3  
sept 8- 14

Start reading Chapter 3 – “Religion as a group phenomenon” & Chapter 5 – “Becoming Religious”

There are no assignments this week.

Week 4  
sept 15-21

Based on Chapter 3 - Religion as a group phenomenon & Chapter 5 - Becoming Religious

**Quiz 2 Due:** sept 21 at 11:55pm

Week 5  
sept 22-28

There are no assignments this week.

Week 6

**Discussion based on Chapter 3 - Religion as a group phenomenon**

sept 29 –oct 5

Deadline oct 5<sup>th</sup> at 11:55pm

- Week 7  
oct 6 -12
- Read Chapter 4 on the church/sect continuum.
- Essay 1** based on Chapter 4 The church/sect continuum, due oct 12 11:55 pm.
- Week 8  
oct 13-19
- Watch the Documentary movies “ The People’s Temple” and “The Secret Swami Satya Sai Baba”[ a 2004 BBC documentary] and respond to the discussion questions. Due on oct 19, 11:55 pm**
- Week 9  
oct 20<sup>th</sup>-26
- Read Chapters 6 & 9 Religion and the Economy & Religion and Conflict
- Essay 2** based on Chapters 6 & 9, due oct 26, 11:55pm
- Week 10  
oct 27-nov 2
- Read Chapter 11-[no power-point notes]  
**Quiz 3-Based on Chapter 11 Due: NOV 2** at 11:55pm
- Week 11  
NOV 3-9
- Read chapter 8
- Week 12  
NOV 10-16
- Essay 3-Based on chapter 8. Due: NOV 16<sup>th</sup>** at 11:55pm
- Week 13  
Nov 17-22
- Read Chapters 12 & 13
- Week 14  
NOV, 23-29
- Essay 4**, based on Chapters 12 & 13, due NOV 29, 11: 55pm
- Week 15
- Week for making-up all Quizzes and Late Essays

