

REL 3308 STUDIES IN WORLD RELIGIONS

RVC/RPC

INSTRUCTOR ERIN WESTON

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

This online section of Studies in World Religions will use a multimedia approach to explore Basic Religions, Native American Religions, African Religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Judaism, Daoism/Confucianism, Shinto, Christianity, Islam, Sects & Cults and Religion in the 21st Century. The student will be introduced to each tradition through the textbook, videos, and PowerPoint presentations offered by the members of the Religious Studies faculty, each in their own research specialization.

Students will be tested and graded on this material through:

- time-restricted quizzes
- a midterm (objective and essay portions)
- a final exam (objective and essay portions)
- a term paper*
- interactive discussion posts

*The term paper assignment will test each student's knowledge of the world religions and how they compare. There are strict guidelines for this assignment that can be found under the "Term Paper Information" folder located under Course Content.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Compare and contrast religious societies and cultures in the local, national and/ or international context.
- Situate these societies and cultures within contemporary and historical perspective.
- Critically engage the issue of religious diversity in national and/ or international context.

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

TEXTBOOK



Living Religions
Mary Pat Fisher
Prentice Hall, 9th edition w/ MyReligion Lab Code Access
ISBN 9780205956906

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

Important Note: To successfully view the online videos in this class, you will need a high-speed Internet connection. If you only have dial-up Internet, you will need to visit one of the FIU computer labs to download and watch the videos.

EXPECTATIONS OF THIS COURSE

This is an online course, meaning that all 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.

COURSE DETAIL

COURSE COMMUNICATION

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

The message feature is a private, internal Blackboard only communication system. Users must log on to the blackboard system to send/receive/read messages. There are no notifications in Blackboard to inform users when a new message has been received; therefore, it is recommended that students check their messages routinely to ensure up-to-date communication.

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

DISCUSSION BOARD ASSIGNMENTS (10% OF OVERALL GRADE)

There will be a total of **FIVE** discussion board assignments throughout the semester (see course calendar for the dates). These discussions are meant to stimulate critical thinking about how religions manifest in our globalized world. There will be discussion questions posted for you to answer on selected weeks throughout the semester. 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 are expected to include links to news articles or other media sites to strengthen your positions on particular issues.

In addition to posting your own answers to the discussion topics, you should respond to the postings from your fellow classmates and/or the instructor. Each of the five weeks 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 your posts.

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

QUIZZES (20% OF OVERALL GRADE)

A weekly time-restricted, online quiz will be given on each religious tradition. **You can take each quiz two times, and the higher of the two attempts will be recorded.** Even if you do well on the first attempt, it is advisable to use both attempts. You will not receive the same quiz every time; the computer randomly chooses the questions from a quiz database. The objective questions on the Exam 1 and Exam 2 will be taken directly from this database. Thus, the more times you take the quiz, the more questions you will receive and the better prepared you will be for the exams.

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

Important Policy on Quiz Resets: Quiz resets will not be granted. 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.).

If you know that you will be unable to take a quiz during a specific week, contact the instructor in advance, and the quiz may be opened so you may take it early. It is the responsibility of students to keep up with the readings and take the quizzes on 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](#).

EXAMS (50% OF OVERALL GRADE)

Exam 1 (25%) and Exam 2 (25%) consist of both objective and essay portions. The objective portions of Exam 1 and Exam 2 are both online, time-restricted examinations. They are in the Assessments area in Blackboard.

Students have only one attempt to complete the objective portions of the Exam 1 and Exam 2, unlike the quizzes. Please make note of this important difference.

The essay topics for the exams will become available in the Assessment area during the exam availability time. **The essay portions of these exams must be submitted to turnitin.com via Blackboard (you do not need to register separately with Turnitin.com).** See the Assignment Dropbox content area for essay topics.

The essay portions of Exam 1 and Exam 2 should each be approximately 500-750 words long.

Exam 1 will cover Basic Religions, African Religions, Native American Religions, Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism.

Exam 2 will cover Daoism/Confucianism, Shinto, Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Sects and Cults, and Religion in the 21st Century

TERM PAPER (20% OF OVERALL GRADE)

The term paper will be automatically checked for plagiarism using Turnitin Tools via Blackboard. It is not necessary to create an account on Turnitin.com to submit this assignment.

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.

- Format: MLA format Required
- Length: 1500-2000 words, not including your works cited page
- Double –spaced, 12-pt font, Arial or Times New Roman Font
- Sources: a minimum of three academic sources, excluding your weekly readings/lectures

**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.

The Term Paper assignment is to construct an argument to answer **ONE** of the following three questions (Don't forget to provide evidence to support your arguments!):

1. Which of the religions you have studied seems to be most focused on behavior and deeds, and which on the cultivation of spiritual and moral character? Explain the reasons for such differences by exploring underlying sociological and historical themes.
2. Although Buddhism and Hinduism share many similar beliefs, they differ in their understanding of one's self, or the 'soul.' Explore these two religions as regards their

teachings of anatman and atman, especially in relation to how they conceive of the sacred (god/gods) and the way to salvation.

3. What is the meaning of the word Jihad in Islam? How has this concept been interpreted by Muslims and what role does it have within their worldview, especially in modern times?

When reading your essays, I will be looking at three different elements: Research, Style, and Argument. Each will be taken into account when assigning a grade.

- **Research** refers to the information in your paper. Is it correct? Is it detailed? Do you demonstrate basic knowledge of the religious tradition from which the concept is taken? Is this knowledge evident in your description? You must use at least three academic sources in your paper. One of them must be a book reference.
- **Style** refers to how that information is presented. This includes the way the information is organized and language skills such as spelling, grammar, and proper sentence structure.
- **Argument** refers to the quality of your analysis, how well you support your argument.

Important:

You will need to do research; your textbook and required readings will not have enough information about the topic. You will need to consult a minimum of three outside sources and one must be a book reference. You will also need notes in your paper, and a Bibliography/Works Cited page in MLA style. Your paper should be between 1500-2000 words.

Do not use Wikipedia as an internet source. You may use internet sources, but use only academic sources from the internet. (Academic sources list individual authors, name their sources, and have institutional affiliations.) Points will be deducted for infractions of these rules. [COURSE POLICIES](#)

Extra Credit

No Extra Credit will be offered in this course

Late Papers

I do not accept late work, except in cases of genuine and documented emergencies. In most cases, excuses will not be accepted. If you wait until the last minute to complete a quiz or an exam, or wait to submit the term paper, the 'traffic' may be heavy and the submission may not go through.

DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO SUBMIT YOUR WORK because this is not a valid excuse.

Plagiarism

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

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

Students are expected to understand the definition of plagiarism. See the [University Code of Academic Integrity](#) if you need further clarification. Offenders will receive a grade of F for the plagiarized assignment, and possibly the course.

Quiz resets

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offline or you have technical failure while attempting the quiz, then you still have the second attempt to complete the quiz.

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GRADING

Course Requirements		Weight	
Term Paper		20%	
Quiz Average (13 Quizzes Total)		20%	
Midterm (Exam 1) - 50 points objective; 50 points essay		25%	
Final (Exam 2) - 50 points objective; 50 points essay		25%	
Discussion Board Assignments (5 total)		10%	
Total		100%	

Letter Grade	Range	Letter Grade	Range	Letter Grade	Range
A	Above 93	B-	80 - 82	D+	67 - 69
A-	90 - 92	C+	77 - 79	D	63 - 66
B+	87 - 89	C	73 - 76	D-	60 - 62
B	83 - 86	C-	70 - 72	F	< 60

**COURSE CALENDAR
WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

Date	Tasks
<p>Week 1 August 25th-31st</p>	<p><i>Intro and Basic Religions</i></p> <p>View: PowerPoint presentation "Introduction to Religion" by Dr.. Northup. Video "Mystic Lands: Australia: Dreamtime."</p> <p>Read: Fisher - Chapters 1, Religious Responses, and 2, Indigenous Sacred Ways</p> <p>Take Quiz 1 (extend due date to end of Week 2 for students who enroll late) Religious Responses and Indigenous Sacred Ways</p> <p>Introduce yourself in the Discussion Forum</p>
<p>Week 2 September 1st -7th</p>	<p><i>Native American Religion</i></p> <p>View: PowerPoint presentation "Native American Religions" by Dr. Huchingson.</p> <p>Read: William A. Young, Quest for Harmony: Native American Spiritual Traditions, chapter 1. Full text available through Course Content.</p> <p>Take Quiz 2: Native American Religions</p> <p>DUE: Participate in Discussion Forum #1</p>
<p>Week 3 September 8th – 14th</p>	<p><i>African Religion</i></p> <p>View: PowerPoint presentation "African Religions" by Dr. Rey.</p> <p>Read: E. Thomas Lawson, "The Yoruba and Their Religious Tradition"</p>

Date	Tasks
	<p>Take Quiz 3: African Religions</p>
<p>Week 4 September 15th – 21st</p>	<p><i>Hinduism</i></p> <p>View: PowerPoint presentation "Hinduism" (Lecture I and Lecture II) by Dr. Katz.</p> <p>Read: Fisher - Chapter 3, Hinduism</p> <p>Take Quiz 4: Hinduism</p>
<p>Week 5 September 22nd- 28th</p>	<p><i>Jainism</i></p> <p>View: PowerPoint presentation "Jainism" by Samani Charitra Prajna</p> <p>Read: Fisher - Chapter 4, Jainism</p> <p>Take Quiz 5: Jainism</p>
<p>Week 6 September 29th – Oct. 5th</p>	<p><i>Buddhism</i></p> <p>View: PowerPoint presentation "Buddhism" by Dr. Heine</p> <p>Read: Fisher - Chapter 5, Buddhism</p> <p>Take Quiz 6: Buddhism</p> <p>DUE: Participate in Discussion Forum #2</p>
<p>Week 7 October 6th – 12th</p>	<p>Take Midterm - Exam 1</p>

Date	Tasks
	Midterm - Exam 1 (Objective and Essay portions) Available Monday, October 6th, 12:00 am – Friday, October 10th, 11:59 pm
Week 8 October 13 th – 19 th	<i>Taoism/Confucianism</i> View: PowerPoint presentation "Taoism/Confucianism" by Prof. Avila PowerPoint presentation "Shinto" by Prof. Avila Read: Fisher - Chapters 6, Taoism/Confucianism, and 7, Shinto Take Quiz 7: Daoism/Confucianism and Shinto DUE: Participate in Discussion Forum #3
Week 9 October 20 th -26 th	<i>Judaism</i> View: PowerPoint presentation "Judaism" (Part I and II) by Dr. Stier Watch video "Mystic Lands: Jerusalem: Mosaic of Faith." Read: Fisher - Chapter 8, Judaism Take Quiz 8: Judaism
Week 10 October 27 th - November 2 nd	**Begin reviewing the Term Paper requirements and begin a draft of your paper. The Term Paper is due in two weeks!
Week 11 November 3 rd - 9 th	Islam View: PowerPoint presentation "Islam" by Dr. Musa. Read: Fisher - Chapters 10, Islam, and 11, Sikhism

Date	Tasks
	<p>Take Quiz 9: Islam</p> <p>DUE: Participate in Discussion Forum #4</p>
<p>Week 12 November 10th- 16th</p>	<p>Christianity</p> <p>View: PowerPoint presentation "Christianity: The First Millennium" by Dr. Larson. PowerPoint presentation "Christianity: The Second Millennium" by Dr. Gudorf.</p> <p>Read: Fisher - Chapter 9, Christianity</p> <p>Take Quiz 10: Christianity</p> <p>Term Paper Due Saturday, November 15th, 11:59 pm via Turnitin in Assignment Dropbox</p>
<p>Week 13 November 17th – 23rd</p>	<p>Christianity in North America</p> <p>View: PowerPoint presentation "Religion in North America" by Dr. Northup</p> <p>Take Quiz 11: Christianity and North American Religion</p>
<p>Week 14 November 24th- 30th</p>	<p>Sects and Cults</p> <p>View: PowerPoint presentation "Sects and Cults" by Dr. Northup</p> <p>Read: Fisher - Chapter 12, New Religious Movements</p> <p>Take Quiz 12: Sects and Cults - New Religious Movements</p>

Date	Tasks
<p>Week 15 December 1st – 7th</p>	<p><i>Religion in the 21st Century</i></p> <p>View: PowerPoint presentation "Religion in the Future" by Dr. Gudorf</p> <p>Read: Fisher - Chapter 13, Religion in the 21st Century</p> <p>Take Quiz 13: Religion in the 21st Century</p> <p>DUE: Participate in Discussion Forum #5</p>
<p>Week 16 December 8th- 12th</p>	<p>Take Final - Exam 2</p> <p>Final - Exam 2 (Objective and Essay portions) Monday, Dec. 8th 12:00AM– Friday, Dec. 12th 11:45pm</p>