

## Studies in World Religions

### Course Syllabus – FALL 2014 PC 424

REL: 3308 Sec. U –05 MWF 1-1:50 pm  
 Religious Studies Dept.: 305 348 2186  
 Office: DM 301B

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 Office Hours: TBA

#### **Course Objectives**

This course is designed to delve into religion and understand its complex nature. We will explore the various histories, elements, and dimensions that make up today's world religions. Essentially, we will try to engage in an earnest study of religion.

We will discuss world religions in their formative years as well as understanding their subsequent history and development. Class assignments, discussions, as well as a research paper are all geared to make the student really think and analyze the ins and outs of world religions. In essence the student will explore how religions were formed, sustained, and how they are continually evolving, especially in this increasingly globalized world and economy.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

- Students will grasp how today's world religions were initially formed
- Students will obtain a basic understanding of the history corresponding to today's world religions
- Students will learn basic terminology and practices related to today's world religions
- Students will analyze the development and evolution of today's world religions
- Students will understand how an individual's identity and outlook are shaped by religious influences
- Students will be able to analyze topics in the field of religious studies from multiple perspectives
- Students will be able to apply critical thinking to important topics in the field of religious studies
- Students will be able to appreciate the need and willingness to think creatively about religious issues in the contemporary world
- Students will be able to evaluate their own and others' religious views as they relate to understanding other cultures and solving common problems

#### **Required Texts**

Esposito, John L., Darrell J. Fasching, and Todd Lewis: World Religions Today (3<sup>RD</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> edition) Oxford University Press

ISBN-10: 0195365631

ISBN-13: 978-0195365634

#### **Grade Components**

10% Participation/Attendance

10% Research Paper Draft (3-4pgs)

25% Mid-term Exam

20% Research Paper Final Draft (7-8 pgs)

10% Class Presentation

25% Final Exam

### **Participation and Attendance Policy**

- These elements are key and essential components for satisfactory completion of this course. The course is highly interactive and requires heavy student engagement and a class presentation.
- Each student is allowed two absences but keep in mind your own responsibilities and how it might affect your grade. Any religious observances should be discussed with me ahead of time.

### **Reading Policy**

All readings are to be done for the week they appear on the course calendar.

### **Research Paper**

A research paper will be written based on one of the world religions covered in the course. It will be submitted twice. Once as a draft, 3-4 pages long, and as a final draft 7-8 pages long. The research will be limited to contemporary issues that a religion might be facing. All work will be consistent with MLA citation guidelines and submitted through turnitin.com. The final product will be 7-8 pages long and written in “college-level” writing standards.

**A handout with specific requirements will be handed out in class.**

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.

### **Mid-term Exam**

The mid-term will be a timed 50 question multiple choice exam and a timed mid-term essay targeting major concepts and ideas in the study of religion.

### **Class Presentation**

A class presentation will be done based on the research obtained for the paper and the student will discuss and present their findings to the class. **A handout with specific requirements will be handed out in class.**

### **Final Exam**

The final will be given during finals week during the scheduled exam date. There will be a timed 50 multiple choice question exam and a timed final essay targeting major concepts and ideas in the study of religion.

**No make-up final exams will be allowed.**

### **Turnitin and Grading Scale**

The research paper will be submitted through [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) by **11:59 pm on the due date specified on the course calendar.**

**Turnitin Class ID: TBA**

**Password: TBA**

Each assignment will be graded on the following criteria

50% Content  
25% Grammar  
25% Style and Structure

93-100	A	87-89	B+	77-79	C+	67-69	D+	0-59	F
90-92	A-	83-86	B	73-76	C	63-66	D		
		80-82	B-	70-72	C-	60-62	D-		

### **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 at <http://www.fiu.edu/~oabp/misconductweb/2codeofacainteg.htm> if you need further clarification. Offenders will receive a 0 for the plagiarized assignment

### **Late Policy**

For each late day I will deduct 5% off the total percentage for that assignment. The latest day an assignment will be accepted is FOUR DAYS after its original due date with a 20% deduction from the late assignment

*Again, there will be no make-up final exams*

### **Course Calendar**

#### **Week 1: Introduction to World Religions Today**

- Readings: Chapter 1 Pages 1-33  
Topics: The “great transition”, the basics of religious experience and expression, the basics of the academic study of religion, the great religious stories of the world, globalization and modernization inside a religious context

#### **Week 2: Indigenous Religions**

- Readings: Chapter 2 Pages 36-73  
Topics: Origins, traditions, shamans, and indigenous religions today

#### **Week 3: Hinduism**

- Readings: Chapter 6 Pages 302-344  
Topics: The formative, classical, and post-classical eras in Hinduism, Hinduism and modernity

#### **Week 4: Hinduism**

- Readings: Chapter 6 Pages 344-387  
Topics: Hindu festival practice, religious institutions of contemporary Hinduism, and post-modern trends inside Hinduism

#### **Week 5: Buddhism**

- Film: “The Buddha”
- Readings: Chapter 7 Pages 389-430  
Topics: Formative and classical eras in Buddhism, Buddhist expansion

#### **Week 6: Buddhism**

- Readings: Chapter 7 Pages 430-469  
Topics: Buddhism and modernity, post-modern trends inside Buddhism

#### **Week 7: Judaism**

- Readings: Chapter 3 Pages 75-114  
Topics: The formative and classical eras of Judaism
- Film: “History of the Talmud”
- **Draft of research paper due on 10/10 by turnitin.com by 11:59 pm**

#### **Week 8: Mid-term Week**

- **A 50 MC objective exam and short answer essay to be done in class on 10/15 AND 10/17, buy BLUE BOOKS**

#### **Week 9: Judaism**

- Readings: Chapter 3 Pages 114-145  
Topics: Judaism and modernity, post-modern trends in Judaism

#### **Week 10: Christianity**

- Readings: Chapter 4 147-179  
Topics: The formative and classical eras of Christianity

#### **Week 11: Christianity**

- Readings: Chapter 4 Pages 180-211  
Topics: Christianity and modernity, post-modern trends in Christianity

#### **Week 12: Islam**

- Readings: Chapter 5 Pages 213-259  
Topics: The life of the Prophet Muhammad, the formative and classical eras of Islam

#### **Week 13: Islam**

- Readings: Chapter 5 Pages 259-298  
Topics: Islam and modernity, post-modern trends and challenges to Islam
- **Final draft of research papers are due on 11/21 by 11:59 pm through turnitin.com**

#### **Week 14: East Asian Religions (Confucianism, Taoism, and Shinto)**

- Readings: Chapter 8 Pages 471-559

Topics: East Asian religions in their pre-modern, early modern, and post-modern eras

**Week 15: Student Presentations**

- **This week is dedicated to class presentations**

**Final Exam**

- **Finals Week: 12/8-13: Check University Final Exam Schedule (12/8 12 PM)**

**References**

Academic Advising

<http://undergrad.fiu.edu/advising/cv.html>

**\*\*\*This syllabus is subject to change as the course develops but any changes will be notified to students in a timely fashion.**

Last Revised: 8/24/2014