

# FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Department of Religious Studies  
REL 2011 Religion: Analysis and Interpretation  
Spring 2013

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Instructor: Mr. Daniel Alvarez

Office Hours: TR, 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m

Office: DM 302

Class Hours: TR 8:00-9:15 a.m..

Class Room: Academic Health Center 3-110

E-Mail Address: [Alvarezd@fiu.edu](mailto:Alvarezd@fiu.edu)

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to the study of religion. It will analyze various elements common to world religions and their expressions. In addition, it will examine the search for the transcendent and its implications at both the personal and the social level.

## TEXTBOOKS

Franklin Edgerton, *Bhagavad Gita*, Harvard University Press, 1972. (9780674069251)

Thomas J. Hopkins, *The Hindu Religious Tradition* (Wadsworth, 1971) (9780822100225)

Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught* (Grove Press, 1974)(9780802130310)

Lavinia and Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *A Short History of Judaism* (One World, 1994) (9781851682065)

John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (Harper Collins, 1994)(9780060616625)

Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam: An Introduction* (SUNY, 1992)(9780791413289)

Daniel Pals, *Eight Theories of Religion* (Oxford, 2006) (978-0195165708)

Additional readings of short selections or articles related to the ANALYSIS OF RELIGION dimension of the course, and the GLOBALIZATION QUESTION in the final exam (all **very short** selections posted on BLACKBOARD):

David F. Strauss, Preface to the *Life of Jesus Critically Examined* (recommended)

Ludwig Feuerbach, "The Essence of Christianity" (recommended)

Ernst Troeltsch, "The Place of Christianity among the World Religions"

\_\_\_\_\_, "Historical and Dogmatic Method in Theology"

Rudolf Otto, selection from *The Idea of the Holy*

"E. B. Tylor," in Pals

"James Frazer," in Pals

"Emile Durkheim," in Pals

"Karl Marx," in Pals

"Clifford Geertz," in Pals

Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System" (recommended)

Mortimer Adler, *Truth in Religion*

Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (chapters 1, 2).

## COURSE STRUCTURE

In this course the student will "immerse" him/herself in **five** (5) of the major world religions, as introduced and interpreted by Hopkins, Rahula, Con-Sherbok, Schimmel, and Alvarez, which will provide the raw data for analysis, comparison, and the application of the conceptual tools and categories of the study of religion (for this course, the categories proffered by Smart in the first chapter of his book). Complementing these texts, which emphasize the content and structure of each particular religion, short selections from sources will be included that focus on the analysis of religion per se (Pals, Schleiermacher, Feuerbach, Troeltsch, Cantwell Smith, Adler) will allow the student to grasp the categories through which religion has been analyzed and interpreted. To further enhance the appreciation of the religious dimension of the human, the student will select

*one* (1) religious traditions outside his/her own for personal observation through visits to places of worship (from the list provided by instructor). The format of the field reports will also be provided by the instructor (see end of syllabus). Films/videos giving the student a unique audio-visual perspective into the rituals, symbols, practices, sensibilities, "look and feel" of religious traditions selected for study in this course will complement the lectures and discussions. Last but not least, the reading of the *Bhagavad Gita* will afford the student the opportunity to engage at a serious and sustained level one of the major non-Christian Scriptures.

In addition to the readings on the world religions, as I explained above, I have posted short selections from the major interpretations of religion. Throughout the course I will be commenting on these interpretations, an understanding of which is fundamental to the central objective of this course, and which is also indispensable for answering the GLOBALIZATION QUESTION included in the final exam.

### INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

1. To provide the student with the "raw materials" for the study of religion by immersing the student in the beliefs, doctrines, rituals, symbols, (select) scriptures, and experiences (through site visits) of five of the major world religions.
2. To facilitate the informed cross-cultural comparison and evaluation of ways of being religious by focused study of select world religions.
3. To introduce the student to the interpretive categories or "dimensions" for the study of religion as proffered by a renowned religious scholar, Ninian Smart, and through the focused study and site visits of select world religions assess/test their applicability to actual religious phenomena.
4. To widen, enhance and enrich the intellectual and spiritual horizons of the student by exposure to the spiritual beauty, vitality, coherence, plausibility and richness of non-Christian, non-Western approaches to the transcendent or ultimate reality.
5. To challenge the student to situate him/herself if only for the duration of a term in the "shoes" of a practitioner of at least one of the great world religions and to "see" the world as the practitioner sees it, to adopt the practitioner's "perspective," to enter sympathetically and creatively into the worldview of Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
6. To equip the student with the conceptual tools and to provide the context for dialogue and discussion that will enable him or her to live in an enormously complex, interdependent, and religious plural world with patience, understanding, and appreciation for that which is different, and in some cases irreconcilably different, from his or her own "worldview."

### UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS: GLOBAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 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.
- 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.

- 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.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

As a **Gordon Rule course**, written assignments are required of all students in order to fulfill the State-mandated standards for this course. The Gordon Rule requirement will be met by:

1. A 6-8 page Essay format Mid-Term Exam (Essay format) (30%)
2. A 6-8 page Essay format Final Exam (Essay format) (30%)
3. One (1) Site Visit Report, 4-5 pages, based on visits to places of worship of select world religions represented in the South Florida area. The Site Visit must be written in *essay* form (20%)
4. Cumulative Objective Exam, 50 questions multiple choice/true or false (20%)

**All work is to be done online and submitted to BLACKBOARD.**

## SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

1. Students will have one week to submit assignments to TURNITIN.COM (ON BLACKBOARD). Due dates will be posted on the weeks assignments are due. Papers submitted **any time within one week** after the first week dates will (that is, the second week) be deducted **10 points**; any time during the week after that (the third week) **20 points**. **No paper will be accepted after the third week** (see dates below).
2. This late papers policy does not apply to the final exam. Final exams will be submitted during the announced submission period and will not be accepted after that.
3. Students should print the **Turnitin.com receipt** that verifies the date and the hour you they submitted their work. Receipts are essential to settle disputes as to when and whether a paper was submitted (and avoid possible late submission point deductions).
4. All written work will be submitted through TURNITIN.COM (midterm, final, and site visit).
5. All written work must be typed, double-spaced, and in a "normal" size font (written work submitted in *large* font will not be acceptable); and any quotations should follow the manual of style or the standard style recommended by FIU.
6. This course may also fulfill the **Critical Inquiry** requirement of the FIU core curriculum if the student earns a grade of "C" or higher. A "C-" or lower grade will **not** satisfy the Critical Inquiry requirement.
7. Grades will be posted **10 days after the last due date** of the week papers are submitted. Please do not ask for your grade before the ten days are up.
8. **Quotations from internet sources** (Wikipedia, Encarta, and the like) **will not be accepted**. All source quotations must be from the assigned textbooks.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY AND PLAGIARISM

### FIU Academic Misconduct Statement

*Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellence in teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly to demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct that demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the*

University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Honors College Student Handbook.

*Academic misconduct includes:*

- *Cheating – The unauthorized use of books, notes, aids, electronic sources, or assistance from another person with respect to examinations, course assignments, field service reports, class recitations or other work; or the unauthorized possession of examination papers or course materials, whether originally authorized or not. Cheating violates both University and College codes.*
- *Plagiarism – The use and appropriation of another’s work without any indication of the source, and the representation of such work as the student’s own. Any student who fails to give credit for ideas, expressions or materials taken from another source, including Internet sources, commits plagiarism. Plagiarism violates both University and College codes.*
- *Unacceptable behavior – Students who show repeated or egregious disrespect for classmates or instructors, are disruptive, or consistently violate course rules are subject to the sanctions of the Honors College.*

## OBJECTIVE FINAL

The objective final will be fifty (50) multiple choice and true or false questions. It will be available in Moodle. The exam will be open during the Final Exam week.

## COURSE GRADES

Mid-Term Exam: 30% of final grade.

Final Exam: 30% of final grade.

Site Visit Report: 20% of final grade.

Cumulative Objective Exam: 20% of final grade.

## GRADE CRITERIA

A-A- = Outstanding/Exceptional in terms of content (grasp of concepts, depth of analysis and comprehension) and expression (grammar, diction, syntax, style, organization/structure)

B+-B = Above average to Very Good

B--C+ = Good to above average

C= Achieving minimum standards

C-= Passing but barely meeting minimum standards

F=Not meeting minimum or acceptable standards

A	94-100	C	70-74
A-	90-93	C-	67-69
B+	87-89	D+	65-66
B	82-86	D	63-64
B-	79-81	D-	60-62
C+	75-78	F	0-59

## Religious Observances

Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students whose religious practices coincide with class requirements or scheduling. Please make sure to notify your instructor at the beginning of the semester of which dates you will be absent or any anticipated problems with completing course work.

## Physical, Mental and Sensory Challenges

Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students who are so

challenged. Should you require accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center, if you have not done so already.

## COURSE OUTLINE

### Week 1

Introduction: Syllabus, Requirements, Overview of course

The Study of Religion in the 19th century: Historical vs. Dogmatic Method in the Study of Religion

*Required Reading:* Alvarez, "Study of Religion in the West: 1800-1900" (on Blackboard).

*Recommended Reading:* Ernst Troeltsch, "Historical and Dogmatic Method in Theology" (on Blackboard).

### Week 2

The Study of Religion in the 19th century (II)

*Required Reading:* Alvarez, "Study of Religion in the West: 1900-1960" (on Blackboard).

History, Relativism, and the Question of Truth

Additional Required Reading: Troeltsch, "The Place of Christianity Among the World Religions" (on Blackboard).

### Week 3

The Question of Religious Truth and the Dimensions of Religion: One Truth, Pluralism, Relativism

*Required Reading:* Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System" (Pals).

Film: Indus Valley Civilization before the Aryans

### Week 4

The Hindu Religious Experience (I): Vedic Religion

*Required Reading:* Hopkins, *Hindu Religious Tradition*, 3-35; Edgerton, *Bhagavad Gita*, 111-119; 3-31 (to be read in that order).

The Upanishads

*Required Reading:* Hopkins, *Hindu Religious Tradition*, 35-51; Edgerton, *Bhagavad Gita*, 120-135; 32-61.

Additional Required Reading: "E. B. Tylor and James Frazer" (Pals).

### Week 5

#### **SITE VISIT REPORT DUE (BLACKBOARD)**

The Hindu Religious Experience (II): On the Threshold of Classical Hinduism: Karma, Jñana, Bhakti

*Required Reading:* Hopkins, *Hindu Religious Tradition*, 52-86; Edgerton, *Bhagavad Gita*, 139-163; 62-91 (again, in that order).

The Hindu Religious Experience (III): Classical Hinduism, Theism, and Devotional Piety

*Required Reading:* Hopkins, *Hindu Religious Tradition*, 87-140; Edgerton, *Bhagavad Gita*, 164-178.

Film: "330 Million Gods"

Additional Required Reading: Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (on Blackboard).

Week 6

**(2<sup>nd</sup> week later paper submission: 10 point deduction)**

The Buddhist Religious Experience (I): Theravada Buddhism, The Four Noble Truths

*Required Reading:* Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, 1-89.

*Recommended:* Film: "Siddhartha," or the novel by Hermann Hesse

*Recommended Reading:* I. B. Horner, "Buddhism: The Theravada," in R. C. Zaehner, editor, *The Concise Encyclopedia of Living Faiths* (handout).

*Nirvana, Anatta, Pratitya Samutpada*

Film: "Footprint of the Buddha"

Additional Required Reading: "Emile Durkheim" (Pals).

Week 7

**SITE VISIT GRADES POSTED AND AVAILABLE FOR VIEWING:**

**(3<sup>rd</sup> week later paper submission: 20 point deduction)**

The Buddhist Religious Experience (II): Mahayana Buddhism: India, Tibet, China, Japan

*Required Reading:* Edward Conze, "Buddhism: The Mahayana"; "Buddhism: In China and Japan," both in R. C. Zaehner, editor, *The Concise Encyclopedia of Living Faiths*, 293-341 (on Blackboard).

*Recommended:* Film: "Little Buddha."

Buddhism in Japan

Film: "Land of the Disappearing Buddha"

Week 8

**MIDTERM EXAM DUE (BLACKBOARD)**

The Jewish Religious Experience: Israel, the Pre-History of Judaism

*Required Reading:* Cohn-Sherbok, *History of Judaism*, 1-40; Psalm 2, Isaiah 58, 61; Jeremiah 7.

The Emergence of Rabbinic Judaism

*Required Reading:* Cohn-Sherbok, *History of Judaism*, 41-71.

Additional required reading: "Karl Marx" (Pals).

Week 9

**(2<sup>nd</sup> week late paper submission: 10 points deduction)**

Judaism from the Middle Ages to the Present

*Required Reading:* Cohn-Sherbok, *History of Judaism*, 72-135.

Week 10

**MIDTERM GRADES POSTED AND AVAILABLE FOR VIEWING:**

The Christian Religious Experience: The Historical Jesus

*Required Reading:* Crossan, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*, 1-74.

The Historical Jesus, continued.

*Additional Reading:* David Friedrich Strauss, "Preface" to the *Life of Jesus Critically Examined* (on Blackboard).

Week 11

The Historical Jesus vs. the Christ of Faith

*Required Reading:* Crossan, *Jesus*, 75-201.

The Historical Jesus, concluded

*Additional Required Reading:* Feuerbach, "Towards a Critique of Hegelian Philosophy" (on Blackboard).

Week 12

Which Jesus: Jewish, Gentile, and Gnostic Christianities

The Muslim Religious Experience: "There is no God but Allah and Muhammed is His Messenger"

*Required Reading:* Schimmel, *Islam*, 1-57.

*Additional Required Reading:* Max Weber (Pals).

Week 13

Film: "There is no God but God"

After the Prophet to the Rise of Fundamentalism and Arab Nationalism

*Required Reading:* Schimmel, *Islam*, 59-100.

*Additional Required Reading:* Freud (Pals).

Week 14

Islamic Fundamentalism: The Struggle for Islam

*Required Reading:* Schimmel, *Islam*, 101-144.

Wither Islam?

*Additional Required Reading:* Mortimer Adler, *Truth in Religion* (in Moodle).

Week 15

**FINAL EXAM DUE DATE TBA (BLACKBOARD)**

**OBJECTIVE FINAL EXAM POSTED WEEK OF FINAL EXAMS**

Film: The Message (required viewing on YOUTUBE.COM)

History, Relativism, and the Question of Truth

*Additional Required Reading:* Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion*

## RELIGIOUS SITES OF SOUTH FLORIDA

A REMINDER TO ALL STUDENTS THAT THE SITE VISIT AND REPORT MUST BE DONE FOR A RELIGIOUS TRADITION **THAT IS NOT THE STUDENT'S OWN**. If a phone number is no longer valid, call information and please let the instructor know that the number(s) has been changed so that the directory can be updated. If you learn about other sites not included below, please let the instructor know also. **I strongly recommend that you visit the site first to familiarize yourself with location and the times officially given by the personnel at the site. Any information concerning service times given below are tentative.**

**ISLAMIC: the times to go are Fridays and Sundays at 1:30 p.m. Female students can bring a scarf with them if they don't want to stand out, but it is not required.**

Miami Gardens Mosque (Sunni)  
4305 N.W. 183 street  
Miami, Florida 33055

Mosque of Miami (Sunni)  
7350 N.W. 3rd Street  
Miami, Florida 33126  
305-261-7622

Masjid Al-Ansar (Sunni)  
5245 N.W. 7th Avenue  
Miami, Florida 33127  
305-757-8741

Islamic School of Miami  
Masjid al-Noor (Sunni)  
11699 SW 147 Ave  
Miami, FL 33196  
(305) 408-0400  
Tasnim Uddin, Principal of School  
Friday: 1:30 pm, Islam School on Sundays: 10am-12pm  
(behind the Exxon gas station)

Islamic Jafferia Association Imambara (Shia)  
10554 N.W. 132nd Street  
Hialeah Gardens, Florida 33016  
(305) 557-6835  
<http://www.ijamiami.org/>

Muhammad's Mosque # 29 (Nation of Islam)  
5660 N.W. 7th Ave.  
Miami, Florida  
305-756-9136

**BAHAI**  
FIU Bahai Club

305-436-2490

Bahai Faith (South)  
9300 S. Dixie Hwy.  
Miami, Florida  
305-570-8886

Bahai Faith (North)  
4365 Rock Island Rd.  
Ft. Lauderdale  
(North of Commercial)  
954-524-4084

## **BUDDHIST**

(Nichiren Buddhist)  
Sokka Gakkai International  
Miami Community Center  
20000 S.W. 36th St.  
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33332  
954-349-5200

Avalokiteshvara Buddhist Study Center  
321 Lamont Road  
Ft. Pierce, Florida 34947-1541  
Email: [info@avalokiteshvara.net](mailto:info@avalokiteshvara.net)

International Zen Institute of Florida (Buddhist)  
Dharma House  
3860 Crawford Avenue  
Miami, Florida 33133  
305-448-8969

Wat Buddharangsi Temple (Thai, Buddhist)  
15200 S.W., 240th Street  
Homestead, Florida  
305-245-2702

International Dharma Center (Buddhist)  
P.O. Box 141728  
Coral Gables, Florida  
33114-1728  
305-267-8000 (Ileana Davis)

Kagyü Shedrup Chöling (Tibetan Buddhist)  
1905 Monroe Street  
Hollywood, Florida 33020 954-920-1346

**HINDU: Plan to attend Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m.**  
Shiva Vishnu Temple 5661 Dykes Rd.  
(S.W. 160th Ave)

Pembroke Pines (Davie)

954-689-0471

webmaster@shivavishnu.org

(I-75 north, exit at Sheridan, go west to Dykes Road, then go north for about a mile, temple on the left)

The South Florida Hindu Temple

13010 Griffin Road

Davie, Florida

954-438-3675

info@sfht.org

Hare Krishna Temple

3220 Virginia St.

Coconut Grove, Florida

305-442-7218

**SIKH: Plan to attend Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m.**

Sikh Society of Florida

16000 Sterling Rd.

Pembroke Pines, Florida

954-680-0221

(Same directions as to Shiva Hindu Temple, but closer to Sheridan on Dykes Road)

**JAIN**

Jain Center of South Florida

1960 N. Commerce Parkway #11

Weston, FL 33326

Here is Direction Link for Jain center.

<http://jaincentersfl.com/direction.html>

**JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN**

Synagogues: Friday evenings, near Sundown; and Saturday mornings, 8:00 a.m. only.

Christian churches: 11:00 a.m. morning service. Consult Yellow Pages for synagogue or church nearest where you live.

Students are encouraged to do detective work and find representatives of the other major world religions in Miami or the South Florida area: **Taoism, Confucianism** (Chinese), **Shinto** (Japanese), and **Zoroastrianism** (Persian/Iranian, and mostly in Bombay, India).

**FORMAT FOR SITE VISIT REPORT**

Name of site visited

Sect/branch and/or subject

Contact person (if any)

Site location (complete address)

Phone number

Hours of worship: Days and Times

1. Fundamental beliefs (important if you are visiting a sectarian group, and note differences in belief and practice from its parent group), and sources of authority or basis for the religion or sect (such as inspired scriptures, teachers, direct revelations, and the like). Specify both the religion and the sect or branch you have visited (e.g., Hindu temple [Shiva, Vishnu, Hare Krishna]; Synagogue [Orthodox, Reformed, Conservative]; Buddhist sect [Pure Land, Nichiren, Tibetan, Mahayana, Theravada] Islamic sect [Nation of Islam, Sunni, Shia], etc.).

2. Why is the religion here in South Florida, whose needs is the religion/sect meeting. Narrate the reasons for the appearance of sect in South Florida.

\*3. Describe art, symbols, images, cultic objects (including sacred scriptures, if of artistic or aesthetic merit) of the religion.

4. Distinctive dress, articles of clothing, of members and/or clergy of the religion you witnessed during visit. Inquire as to whether normally there is a distinctive dress, etc. in other locations. Include how much adaptation or concessions to "American" ways of worshipping you witnessed during your visit (for this you may also have to tap a knowledgeable person for information).

\*5. Forms of ritual, worship/liturgy, special ceremonies, particular/distinctive practices that you saw practice during your visit.

6. Major religious festivals or sacred days (and their dates and days during the year) celebrated in South Florida (and those elsewhere, such as in the country of origin of religion or where religion is strongest).

\*7. Describe how what you saw and heard impacted you; did visit enhance your appreciation for that particular religious faith and/or for religion in general; did you feel you were "worshipping"?; did anything strike you in a negative way?; what was the most positive result of your visit?

**\* Starred/boldfaced items should constitute the bulk of your report**, what you should give priority to when you write your report. Also, it is important that you make an effort to enter sympathetically into the religion you will be visiting. You do not have to agree with what you see and hear, but you should make an effort to understand it. After your visit and as you write your report, you will have the opportunity to express your opinion about what you witnessed.