

Religious Studies Department
REL 2011 Religion: Analysis and Interpretation
Spring 2013
Biscayne Bay Campus

Instructor: Valeria Schindler

Office: TBA

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays
8:30am to 9:45am and by Appointment

Class Days and Hours: MWF 10am-10:50am

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Course Description:

This course is an introduction to the study of religion. We shall examine the different expressions and practices of religion, focusing on religious experience in interdisciplinary contexts. Although no particular tradition will be treated at length, materials from several religions will be chosen to exemplify thematic topics in the experience of the Sacred. We will also be focusing on the common underlying tenets of different religions, dispelling common misconceptions, and looking at the emergence of new practices among the post-denominational generation.

We will use different techniques as a way of learning in this class, such as debates, lectures, personal assignments, videos, and group assignments. We will also have different guest speakers' expert in diverse religions or religious related subjects.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- Better understand how an individual's identity and outlook are shaped by religious influences
- Apply critical thinking to important topics in the field of religious studies
- Appreciate the need and willingness to think creatively about religious issues in the contemporary world
- Evaluate their own and others' religious views as they relate to understanding other cultures and solving common problems

- Write college-level, academic papers and communication with proper structure of content, format, etc.
- Challenge his/her own misconceptions of what religion and its practices are and open his/her mind to new ideas.

Required Textbooks:

Anatomy of the Sacred: An Introduction to Religion 6th ed., by James C. Livingston [Prentice Hall] ISBN-10: 013600380X

- **Note:** *extra handouts are going to be provided by the instructor and posted online. It is your responsibility to complete the readings.*

Assignments:

- **Midterm and Final Exams.**
 - **Midterm:** will cover the first half of the semester and will include multiple choice, and true and false.
 - **Final:** will cover from second half of the semester and will include multiple choice, true and false, and essay questions.
 - **A 800-1500 words report on article** (Global learning requirement)
 - **A 1500-2000-words essay.** Experiencing religion around us.

Experiencing Religion around us. In this assignment you will have to keep a personal journal for 5 days in which you will record all that happened to you and around you. You will then have to produce an essay analyzing how religion “pops up” in your every-day life. Remember to utilize the approaches and information learned in the course.

Further instructions to be provided in class

Your grade on this essay will consist of three parts: **Content and Argument** (50% of grade), **Organization, Structure, and Research** (30% of grade), and **Style and Grammar** (20% of grade).

- **Content and Argument** refers to how well you logically build your case and follow the FIRES model (Facts, Incidents, Reasoning/Rationale, Examples, and Statistics). FIRES makes for a more interesting paper in which you back up your points with specific examples and facts.
- **Organization, Structure and Research** refers to solid introduction (with thesis statement), building of argument and points, and finishing with a sound conclusion. Additionally, you must demonstrate college level research practices and use the MLA format correctly.

- **Style and Grammar** refers to how well you write: grammar, sentence structure, word usage, including use of interesting and varied words and phrasing.
- Remember that we count with resourceful departments at FIU to help you out with your written assignment. Please refer to <http://casgroup.fiu.edu/writingcenter> for more information and useful tips.
- **In class presentation:** You will be presenting on one of the topics that will be covered in the semester. This presentation will be 10 minutes the most and has not specific format. It could be done in couples as well. The more inventive the better!
- **Creating your own religion.** This assignment will be done **in groups and in class** throughout the semester. Details to be given in class
- **Extra Credit** opportunities are available and it usually involves attending a special lecture or event and writing a two-page review and analysis: at least one page should summarize the event and provide evidence of attendance, and at least one page must analyze the event in the context of a course theme or concept. The essay could be worth up to 3 extra credit points to be added to the final grade. A maximum of 4 extra credit points could be awarded. Please refer to the list provided on Blackboard for a list of events. Extra Credit reports are due on the week of March 15th, 2013.

Grading Criteria:

- Midterm: 30%
- Final: 30%
- Written Assignment: 25%
- Report on article 5%
- Attendance and Participation: 10%
- **Total: 100%**

Letter Grade	Range	Letter Grade	Range
A	93 and Above	C	74-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-73
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	84-86	D	64-66
B-	80-83	D-	60-63
C+	77-79	F	Below 60

A's are awarded to exceptional work in class and assignments

B's are awarded for good to very good work.

C's are awarded for average to above average work.

D's are awarded for barely passing with below average work.

F's are awarded for unacceptable work.

Course Policies:

- Research essay must be submitted through Turnitin in Blackboard. **Late assignments will be penalized with a downgrade.** Please inform me in advanced if you have any questions.
- **Blackboard** will be used as an online assistance to the course. Additional material and readings will be posted there, as well as the power point presentations. It is your responsibility to check and make sure you are up to date with the information. Go to www.ecampus.fiu.edu and use the login to Moodle tab. To login you have to use your FIU email address, just the part before the "@". If you are using Moodle for the first time, your password will be your date of birth in the following format day + first three letters of month with the first capitalized + year. For example, for January 1st 2010 it would be 01Jan2010. You then will be able to change your password. If you have used Moodle before, login with your password. The course is REL 2011 Section B-52. Please let me know if you have any problems.
- **This is a Gordon Rule** course with a three paper written word requirement and you must attain at least a C (not a C- or less) to pass a Gordon Rule course. Under the Gordon Rule, FIU requires that student papers: 1) have a clear thesis or controlling idea; 2) have a thesis supported with adequate reasons and evidence; 3) be organized clearly and logically; 4) show sustained analysis and critical thought; 5) show knowledge of conventions of standard written English; and 6) show awareness of disciplinary conventions in regard to content, style, form, and delivery method.

- **Plagiarism**

- It is the theft of intellectual property of others, including their ideas, concepts, and words. Plagiarism **will not be tolerated** in this course. Please visit

<http://www.fiu.edu/~oabp/misconductweb/2codeofacainteg.htm>

To clarify what constitutes plagiarism for this university. Offenders will receive an “F” on the paper, and could fail the entire course.

Some examples of plagiarism are:

- Papers acquired online or from other sources that were not produced by the student that have submitted them.
- Copying material and ideas from other sources without attribution.
- Using other student's work.

IF YOU HAVE ANY DOUBTS, PLEASE TALK TO ME FIRST.

- **Late assignments, missed tests.** Points are going to be deducted for both. If you miss a quiz, you will lose the points the quiz is worth. If you turn in a paper after its due date, 2 points are going to be deducted per late day. If you know in advanced you won't be able to be at a quiz or if you have any issues with your assignments' due date, **PLEASE TALK TO ME BEFORE IT HAPPENS** and I might be able to give you a make-up date. However, **NO MAKE-UP DATES FOR FINAL EXAM!!**
- **NO CELL PHONES OR COMPUTERS** in class please. If necessary, power point presentations will be available to you after each class through Blackboard.
- **Attendance and participation** are extremely important. Remember: if you are not in class, you cannot participate. If you know you will be absent for any reason, please inform me **before** the class you will miss. More than four absents throughout the semester will result in downgrade. Tardiness will be penalized as well. Please refrain from coming to class if you will be more than 10 minutes late, it is very disruptive. Remember that being physically in class does not mean participation. I value your participation and your comments, so it is very important that you take an active role in class. If you have any problems, please consult with me in advanced. **MORE THAN 8 ABSENTS IN THE SEMESTER WILL RESULT IN A 0 GRADE FOR ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION**

COMMUNICATION is the key for a successful relationship.

Behavioral Misconduct: Any student who is subject to sexual harassment, stalking, or physical or verbal abuse should immediately speak to the instructor. The university has policies to protect students in these instances and the instructor will immediately refer the student to the appropriate program or resource. Remember, this is a course in which different ideas are welcomed, even if they do not agree with our own notions.

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities, as defined by law, have the right to receive needed accommodations if their disabilities make it difficult to perform academic tasks in the usual way or in the allotted time frame. However, in order to receive accommodation, students with disabilities must register with Disability Resource Center. This office will keep the student's written request, notify a faculty member who has a student with a disability enrolled in his/her class, and indicate what kinds of arrangements must be made.

Religious Holidays: By university policy, students must notify the instructor at least two weeks in advance that he/she wishes to observe a religious holyday. The student will be excused from class without penalty, but will still be responsible for the material studied in the class.

For University's deadlines, please refer to http://registrar.fiu.edu/fileadmin/templates/Registration/images/Forms/Records/2012-2013_Academic_Calendar.pdf

*Remember, this course is designed for you and your benefit. Complete the readings, bring questions, participate, and make it fun. If you have questions or concerns you can always email me. I am good at replying the same day or the day after. You can come to my office during my office hours or schedule an appointment. **I AM HERE TO MAKE YOUR LEARNING EXPERIENCE PLEASANT AND TO HELP YOU IN AS MUCH AS I CAN.***

- **Important Note:** This syllabus is a contract and can be amended determined by the demands of the course. It outlines everything you need to know for this course. Please make sure you have read it through carefully.

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Course Outline and Calendar

- **NOTE:** Readings must be completed *prior to* the class meeting for which they are assigned.

Week 1 January 7, 9, & 11	Welcome/Introduction Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 1 "What is Religion?"
Week 2 January 14, 16, 18	Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 2 "Ways of Studying Religion" and start with Chapter 3 "The Sacred and the Holy."
Week 3 January 21, 23, 25	Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 3, "Sacred and the Holy" 91/21 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.S' DAY – NO CLASS
Week 4 January 28, 30 2/1	Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 4, "Symbol, Myth, and Doctrine"
Week 5 February 4, 6 & 8	Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 5, "Sacred Ritual" and start with chapter 6 "Sacred Scripture" 2/10: Journal due by 11:59pm. Please submit it through Blackboard.
Week 6 February 11, 13, & 15	Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 6, "Sacred Scripture" and Chapter 7 "Society and the Sacred: The Social Formations and Transformations of Religion"
Week 7 February 18, 20, 22	Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 7, "Society and the Sacred: The Social Formations and Transformations of Religion" 2/20: MIDTERM 2/22: Chapter 8 "Concepts of the Divine and Ultimate Reality"
Week 8 February 25, 27 3/1	Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 8, "Concepts of the Divine and Ultimate Reality" and start Chapter 9 "Origins of the Natural and Social Order"
Week 9 March 4, 6, & 8	Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 9, "Origins of the Natural and Social Order" 3/8: REPORT ON ARTICLE DUE BY 11:59 PM. PLEASE SUBMIT IT THROUGH TURNITIN IN BLACKBOARD

Week 10 March 11 through 15	SPRING BREAK
Week 11 March 18, 20, 22	Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 10, "Views of the Human Problem" and start with Chapter 11, "Theodicy: Encountering Evil"
Week 12 March 25 27, & 29	Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 11, "Theodicy: Encountering Evil" And start with chapter 12, , "Ethics: Foundations of Moral Action"
Week 13 April 1, 3 & 5	Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 12, "Ethics: Foundations of Moral Action" and start with Chapter 13, "Soteriology: Ways and Goals of Salvation and Liberation" 4/1: Written Assignment due by 11:59pm through turnitin.
Week 14 March 8, 10, & 12	Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 13, "Soteriology: Ways and Goals of Salvation and Liberation" and Chapter 14, "Secularization: Religious Revitalization Movements—Contemporary Religious Fundamentalism"
Week 15 March 15 17, & 19	Anatomy of the Sacred, Chapter 15, "Contemporary challenges to traditional religion" Group presentations Conclusions and Course review
Week 16 March 22 through 26	Final Exams Week. Please consult FIU's website for finals schedule

- **Important Note:** *This calendar can be amended determined by the demands of the course.*