

REL 2011 Religion Analysis and Interpretation

Summer A 2014

PROFESSOR DANIEL ALVAREZ

EMAIL: alvarezd@fiu.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

This online section of Religion: Analysis and Interpretation will use a multimedia approach to explore the basic concepts in the study of religion. This format's scope includes the exploration of concepts such as deity, theodicy, cosmology and ritual and others such as religious social implications in society. The student will be introduced to each concept through the textbook, videos, and PowerPoint presentations by members of the Religious Studies faculty, each in their own research specialization. Throughout the course the student will also be exposed to specific rituals, myths, doctrines, ethics and symbols from various different world religions and cultures. Students will be tested on this material through time-restricted quizzes, a midterm, and a final exam. Two essays will develop the student's critical thinking skills and writing abilities. For one of these essays, the student will conduct field research by attending a religious service outside of their own tradition.

Note for summer courses of REL 2011:

Please remember that this course is a regular 15-week semester compressed into six weeks. Time management and organizational skills are key in helping you complete this course with minimal stress. Plan your weeks ahead, so that you do not miss fast approaching deadlines.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Explain the basic history, development, and belief system of various religious traditions.
- Recognize religious themes and concepts found in other cultures.
- Identify the meaning behind religious concepts and symbols.
- Evaluate their own religious views in regards to other cultures and paradigms of religious thought.
- Apply critical thinking to various topics in the field of religious studies.
- Think creatively about religious issues in the contemporary world.
- Perform field research to better understand a particular religious community.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for this course.

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.

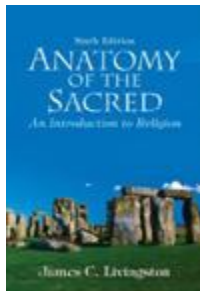
Review [Blackboard's Accessibility Commitment](#) for more information.

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

COURSE PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for this course.

TEXTBOOK



Anatomy of the Sacred: An Introduction to Religion

James C. Livingston

Prentice Hall, 6th Edition

013600380X

9780136003809

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

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 FORUMS

Each week there will be discussion questions posted for you to respond to. These discussions are meant to stimulate critical thinking about how religions manifest in our globalized world. 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 may use links to news articles or other media sites to strengthen your positions on particular issues.

In addition to posting your own answers to the weekly discussion topics, you should respond to the postings from your fellow classmates and/or the instructor. Each week, 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 you have written.

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 your discussion forum postings will be seen by other members of the course. Care should be taken when determining what to post.

QUIZZES

A time-restricted, online quiz will be given on each week's religious concept. You can take each quiz twice, and the highest of the two attempts will be recorded. Even if you do well on the first attempt, it is advisable to use both attempts. Since there is a large database of quiz questions, many of the questions in your second attempt will be new to you.

For the quizzes, you will have **20 minutes to complete 10 questions**. Each quiz will be open for one week, from Monday to Sunday until midnight, and you can take it on any of those days at any 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](#).

Assessments in this course are not compatible with mobile devices and should not be taken through a mobile phone or a tablet. If you need further assistance please contact [FIU Online Support Services](#).

Note: Quiz resets will not be granted for technical issues. 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.).

The correct answers for quizzes will not be released to students. Students will be able to see their submitted answers only. Students should refer to their course materials for the correct answers.

WRITTEN EXAMS (MIDTERM AND FINAL)

The essay topics for **Written Exam 1** and **Written Exam 2** will become available in the Assessment area during the exam availability time (check the weekly calendar). The essay exams must be submitted to Turnitin.com. All assignments can be submitted to Turnitin.com via Blackboard in the Assignment Dropbox Folder. Review the detailed [Turnitin Instructions](#) on how to submit your assignments and how to review the Grademark comments (feedback) from your professor.

The written exams should each be approximately 750-900 words long.

RESEARCH PAPER 1 - SITE VISIT ESSAY

Guidelines:

**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.

- Format: MLA Format Required
- Content: Field research and supplementary research
- Length: 1800-2000 Words, Not Including Your Works Cited Page
- Double –Spaced, 12-Pt Font, Arial Or Times New Roman Font
- Sources: 3 Academic Sources Minimum
- Works Cited Page required

At the top of your paper, please include the name of the place you visited, the date you visited, and the names of any people you may have interviewed. Also include the particular sect of the religion. [If you visited a Muslim mosque, was it Sunni or Shi'ite? If you visited a Jewish synagogue, was it Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform? If you visited a Buddhist temple, was it Theravadan or a Mahayana sect?] You may want to ask this when you call to find out if you visit is acceptable.

Full details below:

For the Site Visit, the student must perform field research by attending a religious service outside of their own religious tradition. For this assignment, I'd like you to immerse yourself in something unfamiliar (example: Christians should perform field research on a non-Christian religion, like Buddhism, Hinduism etc.)

Your research should ideally progress in three stages:

(A) Preliminary Research. Before going to the service, it is a good idea to do some preliminary research on the religious tradition. For example, if you're attending a Hindu ceremony, you will want to read the textbook chapter and watch the PowerPoint presentation on Hinduism. Additionally, I strongly recommend that you call the site you'll be visiting and let them know you're coming to do research for a class project. Ask them if there's any dress code requirements, or anything else you should keep in mind. You may also want to ask if they will allow you to take notes during the service. (Some Jewish denominations, for example, do not allow writing on Shabbat {Saturday}.)

(B) Field Research. Attend the service and observe closely. You may want to take notes. Some students have found it helpful to attend services in groups, and you're welcome to do this.

(C) Supplementary research. After your visit, you'll need to do research on things that may have been unfamiliar to you. If you go to a Jewish service and you see the men wearing

kippahs (or yarmulkes), you don't want to write in your essay, "There were these men and they were wearing these funny hats but I don't know why." This is where your additional research comes in. Find out what the hats are called, and find out why they're worn. If you go to a Muslim mosque and you see the worshippers washing their hands and feet, you don't want to write in your essay, "Everyone was washing their hands and feet but I don't know why they did that and it was pretty weird."

Research the practice and find out why it's done.

Finally, after completing these three stages, write a detailed and insightful essay. You should demonstrate a general understanding of the religious tradition, but make most of your essay about your visit. Use your research to explain your experience. What did you see around you? What did the place of worship look like? Did you see any religious art or religious symbols there? How were people dressed? What rituals were performed? Finally, include your personal reaction to the service. How did you respond? Did you enjoy the visit or did you feel uncomfortable? Was your opinion on the religion changed at all?

RESEARCH PAPER 2- APPIAH ANALYSIS ESSAY

Guidelines:

****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.**

- Format: MLA Format Required
- Length: 1800-2000 Words, Not Including Your Works Cited Page
- Double –Spaced, 12-Pt Font, Arial Or Times New Roman Font
- Sources: Class Readings And Powerpoint Lectures

For the second essay, the student must analyze and discuss the article "The Case for Contamination" by Kwame Anthony Appiah (posted under Course Content).

You should follow these two steps:

PART 1 – Discussion Board Portion (20 points)

Read the article "The Case for Contamination" by Kwame Anthony Appiah and post your initial response to the following questions to the Discussion Board: "What roles do religions play in Appiah's analysis? How is your approach similar to or different from his?"

Once you have posted your answer, respond to at least three of your fellow students' posts and explain how you agree/disagree with them. (a total of 4 posts: 1 original thread + 3 comments)

Each response should be at least 100 words and should demonstrate knowledge of the article as well as class readings and PowerPoints.

PART 2 - Essay (80 points)

After reading your classmates' responses and considering your initial response, write a more detailed answer to the question in an essay format. Your essay should be at least 1800-2000 words and your argument should be supported with information from the class readings and PowerPoints.

Submit your essay to Assignment Dropbox inside Blackboard.

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.

In every Gordon Rule course at FIU, students must demonstrate “college-level writing skills.” College-level writing must exhibit the following characteristics:

- It has clear purpose and thesis or controlling ideas.
- The thesis is supported with adequate reasons and evidence.
- It shows sustained analysis and critical thought.
- It is organized clearly and logically.
- It shows knowledge of conventions of standard written English.
- It shows awareness of disciplinary conventions in regard to content, style, form, and delivery methods.
- Moreover, sources must be cited as appropriate.

Thesis Statement:

The thesis is the central idea of your paper around which all your evidence and claims are organized. Every single paragraph should be dedicated in a clear way to proving your thesis. In your essay, the thesis should be stated as quickly and as clearly as possible. In fact, many teachers will expect your thesis statement to appear in the last sentence of your essay's first paragraph. A vivid thesis statement will announce the steps of its argument, not just provide a flat statement of the essay's ultimate goal. Think of the thesis as a roadmap that gives directions to your reader rather than as a picture of your final destination.

A good thesis should not state something that is obviously true. When your thesis is too easy to prove, your essay can become repetitive and you may feel that you do not have enough to write about. A complex thesis, on the other hand, requires you to convince your reader that your argument is logical and will reveal ideas that cannot be easily anticipated. A worthwhile thesis will always outline an argument with which a reader can readily disagree.

These are two links to guide you to write a good thesis statement:

http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/thesis_statement.shtml

<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/thesis.html>

When reading your essays, I will be looking at three different elements: **Content, Style, and Research**. You will receive a grade in each of these areas, and these grades will then be averaged together for your final essay grade.

Content *refers to the information* in your paper. Is it correct? Is it detailed? Do you demonstrate basic knowledge of the religious tradition? Is this knowledge evident in your description of the service?

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.

Research *refers to the quality and quantity of your research*.

GORDON RULE REQUIREMENT

As this is a Gordon Rule course, students will be required to write a minimum of two major assignments: Site Visit Report and Appiah Analysis Essay.

COURSE POLICIES

Late Papers

Late papers will not be accepted.

Plagiarism

All Essays, 'Research Paper 1 -Site Visit' and 'Research Paper 2- Appiah Analysis' and 'Written Exam 1' and 'Written Exam 2', will be checked for plagiarism using Turnitin.com via a link in Blackboard. It is not necessary to create a separate Turnitin account. Review the detailed [Turnitin Instructions](#) on how to submit your assignments and how to review the Grademark comments (feedback) from your professor.

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 grade of F for the plagiarized assignment, and possibly the course.

****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.**

Extra Credit

No Extra Credit work will be accepted in this course.

Quiz Resets

Quiz resets will not be granted for technical issues. 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.).

The correct answers for quizzes will **not** be released to students. Students will be able to see their submitted answers only. Students should refer to their course materials for the correct answers.

GRADING

COURSE REQUIREMENTS	POINTS	PERCENTAGE OF FINAL GRADE
Research Paper 1 – Site Visit	100	20%
Research Paper 2 - Appiah Analysis		
Part 1- Discussion Portion	20	20%
Part 2- Appiah Analysis	80	
Quizzes (13*100) / 13	100	10%
Participation in weekly discussion topics (4 in total)	100	10%
Midterm (Written Exam 1)	100	20%
Final (Written Exam 2)	100	20%
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

Letter Grade	Range	Letter Grade	Range	Letter Grade	Range
B+	87 - 90	C	74 - 76	D-	61 - 63
B	84 - 86	C-	71 - 73	F	< 61

COURSE CALENDAR WEEKLY SCHEDULE

MODULE	TOPIC	TEXT
	<p>Before you start the course: Review and fully familiarize yourself with the course deadlines and assignment details. Use the course calendar below to navigate through the course's contents.</p> <p>The first three weeks of the course will cover Sections I-II from <i>Anatomy of the Sacred</i> - The Study of Religion & Universal Forms of Experience and Expression</p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining Religion. • Why Are Humans Religious? • Why Study Religion? • The Perspective of the Student–Commitment and Objectivity. • The Ways Religion Is Studied. • Interpreting and Explaining Religion. • The Concept of Sacred Power. • The Ambivalence of Sacred Power. • The Holy as <i>Mysterium Tremendum and Fascinans</i>. • Sacred Space and Sacred Time. • Religion as Ultimate Concern. <p>View Presentations: <i>Dr. Northup - What Is Religion? How Is It Studied?</i> <i>Dr. Huchingson -The Sacred and the Holy.</i></p> <p>Take:</p> <p>Quiz 1: Available Monday, May 12 – Sunday, May 25</p> <p>Quiz 2: Available Monday, May 12 – Sunday, May 25</p>	<p>Chapters 1-3 p. 3-52</p>
Week 1 May 12-18		

MODULE	TOPIC	TEXT
<p>Due in Discussion Forum: Introduce Yourself</p>		
	<p>View Presentation: <i>Dr. Northup - Sacred Symbol, Myth, and Doctrine.</i></p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symbolic Communication. • Religious Symbols. • Metaphor, Parable, and Story. • Religious Myths. • Models and Doctrines. <p>Take:</p> <p>Quiz 3: Available Monday, May 12 – Sunday, May 25</p>	<p>Chapter 4 p. 53-73</p>
<p>Week 2 May 19-25</p>	<p>View Presentation: <i>Dr. Northup - Sacred Ritual.</i></p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ritual Action. • Types of Sacred Ritual. • Ritual and Sacrifice. • Rituals as Sacraments. <p>Take:</p> <p>Quiz 4: Available Monday, May 19 – Sunday, May 25</p>	<p>Chapter 5 p. 74-95</p>
	<p>View Presentation: <i>Dr. Larson - Sacred Scripture.</i></p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pervasive Role of Sacred Scripture. • Using the Term Scripture. • Some Distinctive Features of Sacred Scripture. • The Authority and Canonicity of Scripture. • The Reception and Uses of Scripture. • The Interpretation of Scripture. <p>Take:</p>	<p>Chapter 6 p. 96-123</p>

MODULE	TOPIC	TEXT
	<p>Quiz 5: Available Monday, May 19 – Sunday, May 25</p> <p>Due in Discussion Forum: Discussion 1 Available Monday, May 19 – Sunday, May 25</p>	
<p>Week 3 May 26- June 1</p>	<p>View Presentation: <i>Dr. Wuaku - Society and the Sacred: The Social Formations and Transformations of Religion.</i></p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Reciprocal Relationship between Religion and Society. • Types of Religious Communities. • Voluntary Religious Communities. • Protest and Change in Voluntary Religious Communities. • The Sect. • The Cult: New Religious Movements. <p>Take: Quiz 6: Available Monday, May 26 – Sunday, June 1</p>	<p>Chapter 7 p. 124- 149</p>
	<p>The next three weeks will cover Section III. Universal Components of a Religious Worldview</p> <p>View Presentation: <i>Dr. Huchingson- Deity: Concepts of the Divine and Ultimate Reality.</i></p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polytheism and the Worship of Nature. • Dualism. • Pantheism and Monism. • Monotheism. <p>Take: Quiz 7: Available Monday, May 26 – Sunday, June 1</p> <p>Due via Assignment Dropbox: Site Visit Essay #1 - DUE: Sunday, June 1 11:45pm</p>	<p>Chapter 8 p. 153- 182</p>
<p>Week 4 June 2-8</p>	<p>Take: Written Exam 1: Available Monday, June 2 – Sunday, June 8</p>	

MODULE	TOPIC	TEXT
	<p>View Presentation: <i>Rabbi Shulkes - Cosmogony: Origins of the Natural and Social Order.</i></p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Practical Basis of Cosmogony. • Emergence or Procreation from a Primal Substance or Being. • The Sexual Union of a Primal Male and Female. • Creation by Conflict and the Ordering of Chaos. • Creation by a Divine Craftsman. • Creation by Decree or from Nothing. • The Rejection of Cosmogonic Speculation. • Cosmogony Today. <p>Take:</p> <p>Quiz 8: Available Monday, June 2 - Sunday, June 8</p> <p>Quiz 9: Available Monday, June 2 - Sunday, June 8</p> <p>Due in Discussion Forum: Discussion 2 Available Monday, June 2 – Sunday, June 8</p>	<p>Chapter 9 p. 183-210</p>
<p>Week 5 June 9-15</p>	<p>View Presentation: <i>Dr. Wuaku - Anthropology: The Human Problem. Dr. Gudorf - Theodicy: Encountering Evil.</i></p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modern Views of Our Human Plight. • Stoicism. • Christianity. • Theravada Buddhism. • Confucianism. <p>The Persistent Demand for Theodicy. Theodicy of "Mystical Participation." A Future, This-Worldly Theodicy. Other-Worldly Theodicy. Dualism. The <i>Karma-Samsara</i> Theodicy. Monotheistic Theodicies.</p> <p>Take: Quiz 10: Available Monday, June 9 - Sunday, June 15</p> <p>Due in Discussion Forum: Part 1 of Appiah Analysis Due Wednesday, June 11</p>	<p>Chapter 10-11 p. 211-258</p>

MODULE	TOPIC	TEXT
	<p>View Presentation: <i>Dr. Gudorf - Ethics: Patterns of Moral Action.</i></p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtues and Obligations. • The Sources and Norms of Moral Authority. <p>Take: Quiz 11: Available Monday, June 9 - Sunday, June 15</p> <p>Due via Assignment Dropbox: Part 2 – Appiah Analysis Essay- Due June 15</p> <p>Due in Discussion Forum: Discussion 3 Available Monday, June 9 – Sunday, June 15</p>	<p>Chapter 12 p. 259- 286</p>
<p>Week 6 June 16-22</p>	<p>View Presentation: <i>Dr. Huchingson - Soteriology: Ways and Goals of Salvation and Liberation.</i></p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ways of Salvation and Liberation. • The Way of Grace through Faith. • The Way of Devotion. • The Way of Action and Obligation. • The Way of Mediation and Insight. • Goals of Salvation and Liberation. • Psychic Wholeness and a Healthy Social Order. • Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life. • <i>Samadhi</i> and Nirvana. <p>Take: Quiz 12: Available Monday, June 16 - Sunday, June 22</p> <p>Global Learning Quiz: Available Monday, June 9 – Sunday, June 22 (This is for University Assessment Purposes)</p>	<p>Chapter 13 p. 287- 338</p>
	<p>This week will over the last section of the <i>Anatomy of the Sacred</i> textbook: Section IV. The Sacred and the Secular in Modernity</p> <p>View Presentation: <i>Dr. Bidegain - The Sacred and the Secular in Modernity.</i></p> <p>Topics:</p>	<p>Chapters 14-15 p. 339- 398</p>

MODULE	TOPIC	TEXT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secularization and Pluralism. • The Reactions of Religious Fundamentalisms Today. • The Characteristics of Contemporary Religious Fundamentalism. • The Status and Roles of Women in Religion. • Relations between Religion and State. <p>Take: Quiz 13: Available Monday, June 16 - Sunday, June 22</p> <p>Global Learning Quiz: Available Monday, June 9 – Sunday, June 22 (This is for University Assessment Purposes)</p> <p>Due in Discussion Forum: Discussion 4 Available Monday, June 16– Sunday, June 22</p>	
<p>Final Exam June 16 -20</p>	<p>****You must take the Global Learning Quiz prior to attempting Written Exam 2.</p> <p>Take: Written Exam 2: Available Monday, June 16 – Friday, June 20</p>	