

Introduction to Religion

Course Syllabus – SUMMER A 2015 AI 155

REL: 2011 Sec. B51A M W F 12-2:15 pm
 Religious Studies Dept.: 305 348 2186
 Office: DM 301B

Instructor: Ivanessa Arostegui
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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 elements and dimensions that make up most religions around the globe today. Essentially, we will try to engage in an earnest study of religion.

We will discuss these elements and dimensions through case studies based on a range of different traditions. Class assignments, discussions, as well as a sacred site visits are all geared to make the student really think and analyze the ins and outs of religion. In essence the student will explore how they are important in the lives of people and societies, especially in this increasingly globalized world and economy.

Learning Outcomes

- 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 explain the history and development of the belief systems and practices of various religious communities
- 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

Livingston, James C Anatomy of the Sacred: An Introduction to Religion (6th edition)

ISBN-10: 013600380X

ISBN-13: 978-0136003809

*****All other articles available on course reserves from library catalog*****

Gordon Rule Course

This is a Gordon Rule course which means you must demonstrate “college level writing skills” throughout your assignments. FIU requires a minimum of 3 written assignments in order to fulfill the new requirements. You will not receive any credit as a Gordon rule course for a C- or lower upon completion of this course. Your written assignments must

show good control over grammar, style, and structure. A clear thesis, supporting material, and conclusion must be evident. The student should try to utilize the writing lab to improve writing if needed.

Grade Components

10% Participation
 10% Site Visit Draft (3-4 pgs)
 25% Mid-term
 20% Site Visit Essay Final (6-7 pgs)
 10% Presentations
 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 class presentations.
- Each student is allowed one absence 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/assignments are to be done for the day they appear on the course calendar.

Site Visit Essays

Students will write a **6-7 page essay** during the semester.

The essay will be handed in twice:

- as a **draft** worth 10% of the final grade to be turned in **via turnitin.com**, and
- as a **final paper** worth 20% of the final grade to be turned in **via turnitin.com**.

For each essay, the student will do field research by attending a religious service or ceremony outside of their own religious tradition. **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 short essay targeting major concepts and ideas in the study of religion.

Class Presentation

A class presentation will be done based on the experience of the site visit. **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 short essay targeting major concepts and ideas in the study of religion.

No make-up final exams will be allowed.

Turnitin and Grading Scale

The three major written assignments will all be submitted through www.turnitin.com by **11:59 pm on the due dates specified on the course calendar.**

Turnitin 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:

Defining and Studying Religion

- Readings: Chapter 1 and 2 from Anatomy of the Sacred (AS)

The Sacred and the Holy

- Small Assignment (SA): Craft a definition of religion based on the class discussion/lecture and assigned readings in class
- Readings: Chapter 3 Anatomy of the Sacred

Week 2:

Sacred Symbol, Myth, and Doctrine

- Readings: AS Chapter 4
- SA: Bring a “myth” from any tradition to discuss in class

Sacred Ritual

- Readings: AS Chapter 5
- Film: “Inside Mecca”

Week 3:

Sacred Scripture

- Readings: AS Chapter 6
- Film: “Inside the Qur’an”

Society and the Sacred

- Readings: AS Chapter 7
- Film: “Inside the Vatican”

Concepts of the Divine

- Readings Chapter 8
- **Site Visit Draft due May 29th**

Week 4:

Mid-term: June 1st

Cosmogony

- Readings: AS Chapter 9
- Bring a cosmogony from any tradition to discuss in class

The Human Problem

- Readings: AS Chapter 10

- Special Look at PBS's "The Buddha"

Week 5:

Theodicy

- Readings: AS Chapter 11

Ethics

- Readings: AS Chapter 12
- Film: "The Gift of the Jews"

Week 6:

Soteriology

- Readings: AS Chapter 13
- **Site Visit Final Submission June 15th**

Presentations June 17th

Final Exam June 19th

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: 4/18/2015