

Introduction to Religion

Course Syllabus- Summer B 2015-Room # AC1261

REL: 2011 Sec. B51B

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Office/Hours: By appointment only

Course Description

Religion: Analysis and Interpretation is a fundamental study in Religion. The format of the course will help facilitate the learning of the tools to study religion. The course explores concepts such as deity, theodicy, cosmology, ritual, sacredness, ethics, etc. The student will be exposed to these concepts primarily through the textbook, class discussion, and online videos. Throughout the course, the student will also be exposed to numerous myths and religious doctrines as well.

Please note that this is a summer course. Thus, the regular 15 week semester is compressed into six weeks.

Course Objective

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
 - Compare and contrast these different themes and concepts among different 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 fields of religious studies.

Required Text

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

ISBN-10: 013600380X

ISBN-13: 978-0136003809

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

20% Quizzes

20% Site Visit Essay (5-6 pg.)

25% Mid-Term (6-7 pg. Essay)

25% Final Exam (6-7 pg. Essay)

Participation and Attendance Policy

Attendance will not be taken every day; however, participation will. Each student is responsible to participate and provide feedback during each class discussion.

Reading Policy

It is expected of each student to read the assigned chapters prior to class discussion.

Quizzes

There will be a total of 5 Quizzes. The majority of the quizzes will include the key terms of the chapters. This is to insure that the student is reading the text and following the lectures as well. The Quizzes will be timed and given during the week.

Site Visit and Essay

**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 o Content: Field research and supplementary research
- Length: 1800-2000 Words, Not Including Your Works Cited Page o 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:

1. **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}.)
2. **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.
3. **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?

Midterm and Final Essay

The Midterm and Final is a series of 5 essays in which you will receive the week of Midterms/Finals. You will then choose which 2 essays you want to complete. Each essay is to be 3 pages long. The Midterm and Final will be a take home and therefore will be submitted through turnitin.

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

Late paper will not be accepted unless there is prior notice to the inability of completing the assignment on time.

Course Calendar

Week 1:

The Study of Religion

- Readings: Chapter 1

Ways to Study Religion

- Reading: Chapter 2

Week 2:

What is Sacredness and Holiness?

- Reading: Chapter 3

Sacred Symbol, Myth, and Doctrine

- Reading: Chapter 4

Sacred Ritual

- Reading Chapter 5

Week 3

Sacred Scripture

- Chapter 6

Society and the Sacred

- Chapter 7

Deity: Concepts of the Divine and Ultimate Reality

- Chapter 8

Midterm: July 12th

Week 4

Cosmology

- Chapter 9

Views of the Human Problem

- Chapter 10

The Problem of Evil

- Chapter 11

Site Visit Due: July 19

Week 5

Ethics

- Chapter 12

Soteriology

- Chapter 13

Week 6

Secularization

- Chapter 14

Contemporary Challenges to Traditional Religion

- Chapter 15

Final due on July 31st