

**Summer 2015 – REL 3308 RVEB (51617) – Studies in World Religions**

Fully Online Course (and a Global Learning designated course)

June 22 to July 31, 2015 (6-week class)

**Instructor: Ellen Randolph**

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Office hours by email or phone (please email first to arrange a time)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This comparative religions course examines the world's major religions, both ancient and contemporary, from historical, psychological, sociological, anthropological and archeological perspectives. We will explore the various myths, rituals, symbols, scriptures, festivals and spiritual leaders of indigenous and tribal communities, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and New Religious Movements.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this course, the successful student will be able to:

- Understand the key underlying beliefs and principles of the major world religions.
- Appreciate the early bases and origins of religion among Indigenous Peoples and Shamanic cultures.
- Discern the major similarities and differences between Eastern and Western religions, including cultural and historical contexts, as well as local, national and/or international contexts.
- Be aware of the broad movements and developments in religious belief and practices from ancient to contemporary times.
- Critically engage the issue of religious diversity in national and international context (Global Engagement).
- Analyze issues in the field of religions studies from multiple approaches (Global Perspective).
- Evaluate the interrelationship between his/her own and others' religious views as they relate to understanding other cultures and solving common problems (Global Awareness)

**REQUIRED TEXT**

Religions of the World, 12th edition (2012)

Lewis M. Hopfe and Mark R. Woodward

ISBN 978-0-205-158607 OR ISBN 0-205-15860-9

**EXPECTATIONS FOR THIS COURSE**

This is an online class which runs from June 22 to July 31, 2015. Since the class is only six weeks long, the course material and assignments will require at least eight hours per week to complete. Students should be prepared to participate daily by reading the assignments and by developing discussion or presentation material as requested. Students are responsible for

carefully reading the syllabus and calendar, meeting deadlines as posted, and submitting mature, thoughtful work.

### **COURSE COMMUNICATION**

Communication in this course will take place in Blackboard and through FIU email. The best method to communicate with your instructor privately is through email. Please contact the instructor immediately if a serious situation arises which will impact student performance.

### **GLOBAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

As a Global Learning course, students will meet the following objectives through text readings, assignments, and class discussions:

1. Students will be able to analyze topics in the field of religious studies from multiple perspectives.
2. Students will be able to assess how global issues and trends are interrelated with the development and practice of religions
3. Students will be able to demonstrate willingness to think creatively about religious issues in the contemporary world.

### **DISCUSSION AND PRIVACY**

Some of this material may be new, personal or controversial, so please maintain an open-minded and considerate attitude, allowing others time to reflect and communicate. Keep in mind that in-class and online discussions are public. Be cautious with your words and your sources. Respect others' privacy and do not share class conversations with others outside of class. Recognize that fellow students may not wish to give personal opinions about some topics.

### **QUIZZES (6)**

The quizzes will be taken online and will include twenty questions (worth one point each) based on that week's text readings. Each quiz will be timed and you will be able to take each quiz twice, with the average counted towards your total. The six average totals together are worth 20% of the final grade. There is no final exam.

### **ASSIGNMENTS (4)**

Student Presentation – Each student will submit a 10-slide presentation on religion from the list given on Blackboard using PowerPoint, Prezi or similar. The student will present population information, history, major rituals and festivals, and current events according to the guidelines given on Blackboard. Students are responsible for signing up for a religion on Blackboard and submitting their presentation in the Discussion Board during the week scheduled (see calendar below). The presentation is worth 100 points and is 20% of the final grade.

Globalization Discussions (2) – There will be two discussions on concepts which highlight changes in religion due to modernization and/or globalization. Students will post a 400-word response to a question (using the presentations of fellow students as sources) and respond to

two other students (200-word replies). Each discussion will be worth 50 points and each will be worth 20% of the final grade.

Site Visit Essay - The student will do field research by attending a religious service or ceremony outside of his/her own religious tradition. The Site Visit should be 1000-1200 words and is typically written in a narrative (first person) style. For more details about this assignment, see Assignments in Blackboard. The Site Visit is worth 100 points and 20% of the final grade.

The Site Visit Essay will be turned into Turnitin.com via Assignments in Blackboard. It is not necessary to create a separate Turnitin account. Keep electronic and paper copies of all written work. For your own protection, keep a copy of your Turnitin.com electronic receipt until you have received your final grade for the course.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS Late assignments will not be accepted. If a student has an approved, documented excuse, late assignments may be accepted with a penalty of 10 points per day for up to three days, after which assignments will not be accepted.

EXTRA CREDIT Due to the short length of class and the commitment necessary for completing the readings, quizzes and assignments, there is no extra credit offered.

### **PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism, or attempting to pass off another's work as your own, falls into three categories:

1. A written work that is partially or entirely stolen from another source;
2. Using quotations from another source without proper citation; and
3. Paraphrasing from another source without proper citation.

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 (0 points) for the plagiarized assignment, and possibly for the course. Please be aware: Previously submitted assignments are not allowed, even if it is your own work and even if you are retaking this class. You may not "reuse" papers or presentations.

### **GRADING**

LETTER GRADE	RANGE	LETTER GRADE	RANGE	LETTER GRADE	RANGE
A	93 - 100	B-	80 - 82	D+	67 - 69
A-	90 - 92	C+	77 - 79	D	63 - 66
B+	87 - 89	C	73 - 76	D-	60 - 62
B	83 - 86	C-	70 - 72	F	< 60

COURSE REQUIREMENTS	POINTS	PERCENTAGE OF FINAL GRADE
Quizzes (6, weekly)	120	20%
Student Presentation	100	20%
Globalization Discussion (1/2)	50	20%
Globalization Discussion (2/2)	50	20%
Site Visit Essay	100	20%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

### CALENDAR

MODULE	TOPIC	
Week 1	<p><b>Class Week:</b> June 22 – June 27  <b>Topic:</b> Traditional Religions  <b>Read:</b> Chapter 1, 2 and 3 (55 pages)</p> <p><b>*** Go on your site visit early! ***</b></p>	<b>QUIZ 1 due 6/27 by 11:59 pm</b>
Week 2	<p><b>Class Week:</b> June 28 – July 4  <b>Topic:</b> Hinduism and Jainism  <b>Read:</b> Chapter 4 and 5 (58 pages)</p> <p><b>First set of presentations due by 6/29 at 11:59 pm</b>  <b>Discussion (1/2) due 7/4 at 11:59 pm</b></p>	<b>QUIZ 2 due 7/4 by 11:59 pm</b>
Week 3	<p><b>Class Week:</b> July 5 – July 11  <b>Topic:</b> Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism  <b>Read:</b> Chapter 6 and 8 (52 pages)</p> <p><b>Second set of presentations due by 7/6 at 11:59 pm</b>  <b>Discussion (2/2) due 7/11 at 11:59 pm</b></p>	<b>QUIZ 3 due 7/11 by 11:59 pm</b>
Week 4	<p><b>Class Week:</b> July 12 – 18  <b>Topic:</b> Zoroastrianism and Judaism  <b>Read:</b> Chapter 10 and 11 (48 pages)</p>	<b>QUIZ 4 due 7/18 by 11:59 pm</b>

Week 5	<b>Class Week:</b> July 19 – July 25 <b>Topic:</b> Christianity <b>Read:</b> Chapter 12 (71 pages)	<b>QUIZ 5 due 7/25 by 11:59 pm</b>
Week 6	<b>Class Week:</b> July 26 – July 31 <b>Topic:</b> Islam and Sikhism <b>Read:</b> Chapter 13 and 7 (39 pages)	<b>QUIZ 6 due 7/31 by 11:59 pm</b> <b>Site Visit Essay due 7/31 by 11:59 pm</b>