

## **REL 3308 STUDIES IN WORLD RELIGIONS SUMMER RVBB 2015**

**Instructor Michael Zolondek  
Email:**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE**

This online section of Studies in World Religions will use a multimedia approach to explore Basic Religions, Native American Religions, African Religions, Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Judaism, Daoism/Confucianism, Shinto, Christianity, Islam, Sects & Cults and Religion in the 21st Century. The student will be introduced to each tradition through the textbook, videos, and PowerPoint presentations offered by the members of the Religious Studies faculty, each in their own research specialization. Students will be tested on this material through time-restricted quizzes, a midterm, and a final exam. Additionally, one essay assignment will be required and is due via turnitin.com on Blackboard. The essay assignment will test each student's knowledge of the world religions and how they compare. There are strict guidelines for this assignment that can be found under the "Assignment Dropbox" located under Course Content.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Students will be able to:

- Compare and contrast religious societies and cultures in the local, national and/or international context.
- Situate these societies and cultures within contemporary and historical perspective.
- Critically engage the issue of religious diversity in national and/or international context.

### **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.

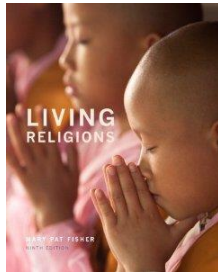
## **COURSE PREREQUISITES**

For information about prerequisites, click here.

## **PROCTORED EXAM POLICY**

This course does not require any proctored exams.

## **TEXTBOOK**



### **Living Religions**

Mary Pat Fisher

Pearson, 9th Ed., 2013

**ISBN-10:** 0205956408

**ISBN-13:** 978-0205956401

## **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.

## **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.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### ❖ **Previously Submitted Coursework**

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 will be offered in this course

### ❖ **Late Papers**

I do not accept late work, except in cases of genuine and documented emergencies. In most cases, excuses will not be accepted. If you wait until the last minute to complete a quiz or an exam, or wait to submit the term paper, the ‘traffic’ may be heavy and the submission may not go through. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO SUBMIT YOUR WORK** because this is not a valid excuse.

### ❖ **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 if you need further clarification.

Offenders will receive a grade of F for the plagiarized assignment, and possibly the course.

### ❖ **Quiz resets**

Quiz resets will not be granted. 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.).

If you know that you will be unable to take a quiz during a specific week, contact the instructor in advance, and the quiz may be opened so you may take it early. It is the responsibility of students to keep up with the readings and take the quizzes on 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.

## ASSIGNMENT DETAILS AND INSTRUCTIONS

### ❖ DISCUSSION FORUMS (10%)

There will be a total of four discussion board assignments throughout the semester (see course calendar for the dates). These discussions are meant to stimulate critical thinking about how religions manifest in our globalized world. There will be discussion questions posted for you to answer on selected weeks throughout the semester. 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 are expected to include links to news articles, other media sites, or other academic materials relevant to the discussion and also to strengthen your positions on particular issues.

In addition to posting your own answers to the discussion topics, you should respond to the postings from your fellow classmates and/or me (the instructor). Each of the five weeks that you participate, 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 posts.

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 unless otherwise noted in the course calendar (see the course calendar for the weeks that have discussion topics posted).

Keep in mind that **forum discussions are public**. That is, what you post can be seen and read by other students. Do not post personal private information. Care should be taken when determining what to post.

### ❖ QUIZZES (20%)

A weekly time-restricted, online quiz will be given on each religious tradition. **You can take each quiz two times, and the highest score of the two attempts will be recorded.** Even if you do well on the first attempt, it is advisable to use both attempts. You will not receive the same quiz every time; the computer randomly chooses the questions from a quiz database. The **objective questions on the Exam 1 and Exam 2** will be taken directly from this

database. Thus, the more times you take the quiz, the more questions you will receive and the better prepared you will be for the exams.

For the quizzes, you will have **20 minutes to complete 10 questions**. Each quiz will be open from Monday to Sunday, and you can take it on any of those days at any time. (**Please check Assessment page for quiz availability dates**).

**Important Policy on Quiz Resets:** Quiz resets will not be granted. 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.). You would have to message me with an attached copy of a doctor's report or receipt or something that indicates you were hospitalized or sick. Quizzes **will not** be reset on the basis of **internet disconnection/interruptions, technical difficulties or unable to finish the quiz within the given time**.

If you know that you will be **unable to take a quiz** during a specific week, **send me a message in advance**, and the quiz may be opened so you may take it early. It is the responsibility of students to keep up with the readings and take the quizzes on 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**.

#### ❖ EXAMS (50%)

Exam 1 and Exam 2 consist of both **objective and essay portions**. The objective portions of Exam 1 and Exam 2 are both online, time-restricted examinations. They are in the **Assessments** area. See course calendar for exam availability dates.

**Students have only one attempt to complete the objective portions of the Exam 1 and Exam 2, unlike the quizzes.** That is, unlike the **two attempts** for the quizzes, you have only **one attempt** for the objective portions of Exams 1 and 2. **Please make note of this important difference.**

The essay topics for the exams will become available in the Assessment area during the exam availability time. **The essay portions of these exams must be submitted to Turnitin via Blackboard (you do not need to register separately with Turnitin.com)**. See the folder under Course Content labeled "**Assignment Dropbox**" for links.

The essay portions of Exam 1 and Exam 2 should each be approximately **500-750 words** long.

*Exam 1* will cover Basic Religions, African Religions, Native American Religions, Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism.

*Exam 2* will cover Daoism/Confucianism, Shinto, Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Sects and Cults, and Religion in the 21st Century.

❖ **TERM PAPER (20%)**

***Turnitin Integration with Blackboard***

The term paper will be turned in through Blackboard; it will be automatically processed by *Turnitin* to check for plagiarism. It is not necessary to create an account on Turnitin.com to submit this assignment.

\*\*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. Plagiarized papers will not be accepted.

Keep electronic and paper copies of all written work. For your own protection, keep a copy of your turnitin.com electronic receipts (confirmation of assignment submission) until you have received your final grade for the course.

**GUIDELINES FOR TERM PAPER**

- Format: MLA format Required
- Length: 1500-2000 words, not including your works cited page
- Double –spaced, 12-pt font, Arial or Times New Roman Font
- Sources: a minimum of three academic sources, excluding your weekly readings/lectures

The Term Paper assignment is to construct an argument to answer **ONE** of the following three questions (Do not forget to provide evidence to support your arguments!):

- Which of the religions you have studied seems to be most focused on behavior and deeds, and which on the cultivation of spiritual and moral character? Explain the reasons for such differences by exploring underlying sociological and historical themes.
- Although Buddhism and Hinduism share many similar beliefs, they differ in their understanding of one's self, or the 'soul.' Explore these two religions and the concepts of anatman and atman, especially in relation to how they conceive of the sacred (god/gods) and the way to salvation.
- What is the meaning of the word Jihad in Islam? How has this concept been interpreted by Muslims and what role does it have within their worldview, especially in modern times?

When reading your essays, I will be looking at **three different elements**: Research, Style, and Argument. Each will be taken into account when assigning a grade.

- **Research** refers to the information in your paper. Is it correct? Is it detailed? Do you demonstrate basic knowledge of the religious tradition from which the concept is taken? Is this knowledge evident in your description? You must use at least **two** academic sources in your paper. One of them must be a book reference.
- **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.
- **Argument** refers to the quality of your analysis, how well you support your argument. (use your sources, include foot/end notes, in-text)

**Important:**

You will need to do research; your textbook and required readings will not have enough information about the topic. You will need to consult **a minimum of three outside sources and one must be a book reference**. You will also need notes (foot/end notes/ in-text reference) in your paper, and a Bibliography/Works in MLA or Chicago style.

Do not use Wikipedia as an internet source. You may use internet sources, but use only academic sources from the internet. (Academic sources list individual authors, name their sources, and have institutional affiliations.) **Points will be deducted for infractions of these rules.**

**GRADING**

Course Requirements		Weight
Term Paper		20%
Quiz Average (13 Quizzes Total)		20%
Midterm (Exam 1) - 50 points objective; 50 points essay		25%
Final (Exam 2) - 50 points objective; 50 points essay		25%
Discussion Board Participation (4 in total)		10%

Letter Grade	Range	Letter Grade	Range	Letter Grade	Range
A	Above 93	B-	80 - 82	D+	67 - 69

Letter Grade	Range	Letter Grade	Range	Letter Grade	Range
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 CALENDAR MODULE WEEKLY SCHEDULE

MODULE	ASSIGNMENTS & READINGS
Week 1 Monday, June 22	<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><b>Topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Basic Religions</li> </ul> <p><b>View:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PowerPoint presentation "Introduction to Religion" by Dr. Northup.</li> <li>• Video "Mystic Lands: Australia: Dreamtime."</li> </ul> <p><b>Read:</b> Fisher - Chapters 1, Religious Responses, and 2, Indigenous Sacred Ways</p> <p><b>Take:</b> Quiz 1 Religious Responses and Indigenous Sacred Ways Available Monday, June 22 – Sunday, July 5, 11:45pm</p> <p><b>Due in Discussion Forum: Introduce Yourself</b></p> <p><b>Topic:</b> Native American Religion</p> <p><b>View:</b> PowerPoint presentation "Native American Religions" by Dr. Huchingson.</p> <p><b>Read:</b> William A. Young, Quest for Harmony: Native American Spiritual Traditions, chapter 1. Full text available through Course Content.</p>



MODULE	ASSIGNMENTS & READINGS
	<p><b>Take:</b> Quiz 2 Native American Religions: Monday, June 22 – Sunday, July 5, 11:45pm</p>
<p>Week 2 Monday, June 29</p>	<p><b>Topic:</b> African Religion</p> <p><b>View:</b> PowerPoint presentation "African Religions" by Dr. Rey.</p> <p><b>Read:</b> E. Thomas Lawson, "The Yoruba and Their Religious Tradition" under Course Content</p> <p><b>Take:</b> Quiz 3: African Religions Available Monday, June 29 – Sunday, July 5</p> <p><b>Due in Discussion Forum:</b> Discussion 1 Available Monday, June 29 – Sunday, July 5</p>
	<p><b>Topic:</b> Hinduism</p> <p><b>View:</b> PowerPoint presentation "Hinduism" (Lecture I and Lecture II) by Dr. Katz.</p> <p><b>Read:</b> Fisher - Chapter 3, Hinduism</p> <p><b>Take :</b> Quiz 4: Hinduism Available Monday, June 29 – Sunday, July 5</p>
<p>Week 3 Monday, July 6</p>	<p><b>Topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jainism</li> <li>• Buddhism</li> </ul> <p><b>View:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PowerPoint presentation "Jainism" by Samani Charitra Prajna</li> <li>• PowerPoint presentation "Buddhism" by Dr. Heine</li> </ul> <p><b>Read:</b></p>

MODULE	ASSIGNMENTS & READINGS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fisher - Chapter 4, Jainism</li> <li>• Fisher - Chapter 5, Buddhism</li> </ul> <p><b>Take:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz 5 Jainism: Available Monday, July 6 – Sunday, July 12</li> <li>• Quiz 6 Buddhism : Available Monday, July 6 – Sunday, July 12</li> </ul> <p><b>Due in Discussion Forum:</b> Discussion 2 Available Monday, July 6 – Sunday, July 12</p>
	<p><b>Midterm - Exam 1</b> Available Monday, July 6 – Sunday, July 12, 11:45pm</p>
<p>Week 4 Monday, July 13</p>	<p><b>Topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taoism</li> <li>• Confucianism</li> </ul> <p><b>View:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PowerPoint presentation "Taoism/Confucianism" by Prof. Avila</li> <li>• PowerPoint presentation "Shinto" by Prof. Avila</li> </ul> <p><b>Read:</b> Fisher - Chapters 6, Taoism/Confucianism, and 7, Shinto</p> <p><b>Take:</b> Quiz 7 Daoism/Confucianism and Shinto Available Monday, July 13 – Sunday, July 19, 11:45pm</p> <p><b>Due in Discussion Forum:</b> Discussion 3 Available Monday, July 13 – Sunday, July 19, 11:45pm</p>
	<p><b>Topic:</b> Judaism</p> <p><b>View:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PowerPoint presentation "Judaism" (Part I and II) by Dr. Stier</li> <li>• Watch video "Mystic Lands: Jerusalem: Mosaic of Faith."</li> </ul> <p><b>Read:</b></p>

MODULE	ASSIGNMENTS & READINGS
	<p>Fisher - Chapter 8, Judaism</p> <p><b>Take:</b> Quiz 8 Judaism Available Monday, July 13 – Sunday, July 19, 11:45pm</p>
<p>Week 5 Monday, July 20</p>	<p><b>Topic:</b> Islam</p> <p><b>View:</b> PowerPoint presentation "Islam" by Dr. Musa.</p> <p><b>Read:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fisher - Chapters 10, Islam,</li> <li>• Fisher – Chapter 11, Sikhism</li> </ul> <p><b>Take:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz 9: Islam Available Monday, July 20 - Sunday, July 26</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Topic:</b> Christianity</p> <p><b>View:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PowerPoint presentation "Christianity: The First Millennium" by Dr. Larson.</li> <li>• PowerPoint presentation "Christianity: The Second Millennium" by Dr. Gudorf</li> <li>• PowerPoint presentation "Religion in North America" by Dr. Northup</li> </ul> <p><b>Read:</b> Fisher - Chapter 9, Christianity</p> <p><b>Take:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz 10: Christianity Available Monday, July 20 - Sunday, July 26</li> <li>• Quiz 11: Christianity and North American Religion Available Monday, July 20 - Sunday, July 26</li> </ul> <p><b>Due via Assignment Dropbox:</b> Term Paper due July 25, 11:59pm</p>
<p>Week 6 Monday, July 27</p>	<p><i>*Note, this week is shorter than the rest of the weeks because Summer B semester ends on Friday, July 31st</i></p> <p><i>Sects and Cults &amp; Religion in the 21st Century</i></p>

**MODULE****ASSIGNMENTS & READINGS****View:**

PowerPoint presentation "Sects and Cults" by Dr. Northup

PowerPoint presentation "Religion in the Future" by Dr. Gudorf

**Read:**

Fisher - Chapter 12, New Religious Movements

Fisher - Chapter 13, Religion in the 21st Century

**Take:**

- Quiz 12: Sects and Cults - New Religious Movements Available Monday, July 20– Friday, July 31
- Quiz 13: Religion in the 21st Century Available Monday, July 20– Friday, July 31

**Due in Discussion Forum:**

Discussion 4 Available Monday, July 27– Friday, July 31

**Final - Exam 2**

Exam 2- Essay: Available Monday, July 27 – Wednesday, July 29 11:45pm

**NOTE: The written exam is due on Wednesday!**

Exam 2-Objective: Available Monday, July 27 – Friday, July 31 11:45pm