Instructor: Jasmin Graham  
Contact: 305 348 2186  
E-Mail Address: jngraham@fiu.edu

**When and Where do we meet?**

Class Hours: Thursday, 5-7:40 p.m.  
Classroom: SASC 251  
Office Hours: Saturday 10:30 a.m. or by appointment  
DM 301

**Why Should I Care about Religion?**

Maybe Jesus was a Buddhist monk. Where exactly did your yoga class come from? Why are Native Americans some of the best eco-advocates today? Is Judaism a religion, a culture, or a tribe? Is God dead? God may be alive, but is he a woman? It might be good to wonder if religion is a force for good or evil to begin with? Can we still be spiritual without being religious?

These are not just entertaining questions, but are highly relevant to your personal and professional development in our globalized world. In this interdisciplinary course, we will explore these questions and many more that emerge as we investigate humanity, religion, and the cosmos.

**How can this course help you advance in your career?**

You do not need to be personally religious, majoring in religious studies, or in a field within humanities to benefit from this course. Whatever your academic field is, this course will train you to make important connections between your career and the world of the sacred and the profane. You will be able to explore the variety of religious expressions and frameworks that shape societies around the world, and the role religion plays in local and international affairs.

Religious literacy will greatly impact our ability to understand personal and social motivations behind financial decisions, political engagement, science and technological advancement, environmental and migration policies, family planning, diet and food production, gender
relations, war and terrorist attacks, and more. Whether you notice or not, religion is a universal phenomenon that continues to transform and be transformed by our societies.

Our approach is interdisciplinary, which means you will be critically reflecting from many fields of study such as philosophy, psychology, cultural studies, history, economics, gender studies, among others. This enhances your ability to think critically, communicate effectively, respond sensitively, collaborate with others and creatively resolve conflict.

How will you succeed in this course?

Midterm Exam- Objective and Essay Format (25%): The midterm exam will be a combination of multiple choice, fill in the blank, matching and an essay question; it will focus on Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. 50 questions, 2-hour time limit.

Final Exam- Objective and Essay Format (25%): The final exam will be a combination of multiple choice, fill in the blank, matching and essay questions focus on Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The final examination is not cumulative–it covers only material from the second half of the semester.

Quizzes (20%):
- Quiz #1 will focus on Native American Religions and African Religions. 20 Questions, 60-minute limit.
- Quiz #2 will focus on Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism. 20 Questions, 60-minute limit.
- Quiz #3 will focus on Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. 20 Questions, 60-minute limit.

Globalization Question (essay format) (15%)

Attendance and Participation (15%)

Required Text

Anthology of World Religions: Sacred Texts and Contemporary Perspectives

ISBN-10: 0195332369

* Other reading materials will be provided by the instructor.
Course breakdown

Examinations: Both midterm and final examinations will be a combination of multiple choice, fill in the blank, matching, and essay questions. The final examination is not cumulative—it covers only material from the second half of the semester.

Quizzes: Quizzes will include key terms from the chapters as well as religious concepts. This is to ensure that the student is reading the text and following the class discussions as well.

Globalization Question: Read the article “The Case for Contamination” by Kwame Appiah and use the information you have learned in class this semester to answer the following question in 3-4 pages: (i) Describe Appiah’s approach and discuss its strengths and weaknesses. (ii) Explain how religions help people express their identities both as individuals and as members of a group. (iii) What did you learn about the need for and the potential of better understanding between religions? (iv) In your view, what is the best way to approach interreligious dialogue (For example, should we all become the same or should we value our diversity? If the latter, how do we do this? (v) Is globalization a help or a hindrance to diversity?) This Paper carries 10% of the total score. In your reflection on the Appiah’s article, make sure you have read thoroughly and understood its subject matter and the emerging themes. Also, for clarity and details, you may reference specific pages or as well as quote few sentences from the article to support your points. For this reason, you do not need to use references from other materials in reflecting on the article.

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory, and absences will affect your grade. If you know that you will have a conflict, notify the instructor in advance. Timely attendance is also critical; therefore recurrent lateness will affect your participation.

Class Participation: It is critical that you come to class prepared to discuss the assigned materials. Active Learning is essential when wanting to grasp new concepts. This class requires small group work and critical reflection. Not only will the quality of your participation in class affect your final grade, but also lack of participation will make this a very long class meeting. DO NOT BE LATE TO CLASS!!!

Goals

- Analyze and interpret the universal dimensions of the sacred.
- Discover the relevance and practice of religion in everyday life.
- Recognize the academic impact of religion as an interdisciplinary field.
- Identify the role of religion as a transformational force for the self and society.
- Develop a critical and open-minded approach to religion that questions assumptions.
- Explore religion as a platform that increases civic engagement and global awareness.
Objectives

1. Understanding the complexity of the definitions of religion and secularization.
2. Recognize the strength of utilizing different approaches, theories, and methodologies to better understand the universal forms of religious experience and expression such as sacred symbols, rituals, myths, scriptures, ethics, and communities.
3. Identify religious themes and patterns that shape our everyday life.
4. Analyze a wide range of religious beliefs and practices as an avenue for better understanding religion in our individual, cultural, economic, and political contexts.
5. Critically engage the issue of religious diversity and dialogue in national and international context.
6. Reflect upon and enhance student’s potential for moral agency and compassion.

Gordon Rule Requirement

As this is a Gordon Rule course, students will be required to write a minimum of two major assignments. Each paper will be at least 1500-2000 words and will be submitted through Turnitin. All source material must be cited correctly using MLA Style and long quotes should be avoided. Please be aware that papers with an originality score of over 35% similarity will be subject to additional scrutiny and may incur additional penalties, up to and including receiving an F (0 points).

Global Learning Objectives

As a Global Learning course, students will be 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.

Plagiarism

Do you know what plagiarism is? Avoid the pitfalls of plagiarism by asking me, a representative from the writing center or our library to explain. Many students end up plagiarizing material because they do not know what it entails. In short, 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](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 papers are not allowed, even if it is your own work and even if you are retaking this class. You may not “reuse” papers.

### Class Schedule and Topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reminder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Introduction and overview: Syllabus, requirements, textbook, and overview of course.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 29th</td>
<td>Defining religion and major characteristics. Importance of studying religions in contemporary world and identifying some of the world’s major religions.</td>
<td>Welcome to World Religions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Indigenous Religions: North America and Africa</td>
<td>Read Vaughn pgs. 33-40 46-51, 76-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 5th</td>
<td>Iroquois Myth: The Creation</td>
<td><strong>Prepare to complete a Kahoot at the end of class</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cherokee Myth: How the World Was Made and Origin of Disease and Medicine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African Traditional Religions: Worldviews and Cosmology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 12th</td>
<td>Hinduism: beliefs, rituals, philosophies, and beginnings</td>
<td><strong>Prepare to use your notes to collaboratively answer study questions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hindu Scriptures: The Vedic Period and After the Vedas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quiz #1 available on Sunday, September 8th.**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>September 19&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th><strong>Hinduism Practices:</strong> Yoga; chanting the sacred syllable Om; Bhakti Yoga; Cremation; Domestic Worship; Seeing the Sacred; Treatment of Women; and Untouchability</th>
<th>Read Vaughn pgs. 119-130</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>September 26&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td><strong>Religions originating in India: Jainism and Buddhism</strong>&lt;br&gt;Jainism: history; teachings and practices; scriptures; and teachings&lt;br&gt;Buddhism: Buddhist complexities; The Buddha’s Life; and The Buddha’s Teachings</td>
<td>Read Vaughn pgs. 133–141, 144 (There Is No Creator God) 147–148 (The Five Great Vows), 155–159 167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>October 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Buddhism Continued: Modern Challenges to Buddhism&lt;br&gt;Film: “Footprint of the Buddha”</td>
<td>Read Vaughn pgs.163-167, 190, 204–205&lt;br&gt;<strong>Students will complete a gallery walk at the completion of the film</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>October 10&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td><strong>Introduction to religions originating in China:</strong> Confucianism and Daoism</td>
<td>Read Vaughn pgs. 231-237, 246, 248, 261-267&lt;br&gt;One page research proposal due&lt;br&gt;<strong>Quiz #2 available on Sunday, October 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>October 17&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td><strong>Introduction to religions originating in Japan: Shinto</strong>&lt;br&gt;Shinto: beliefs and practices; sacred writings; teachings; practices; contemporary challenges</td>
<td>Read Vaughn pgs. 287-300&lt;br&gt;<strong>Prepare to complete a Kahoot at the end of class</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Midterm</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>October 24&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td><strong>Religions of Abraham: Judaism</strong>&lt;br&gt;Judaism: history; beliefs; scriptures; observing the</td>
<td>Read Vaughn pgs. 325–334, 363–370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>October 31&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Religions of Abraham: Christianity</td>
<td>Read Vaughn pgs. 383-393, 419–422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbath; Yom Kippur; The Seder; and Contemporary Challenges</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity from Judaism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity: history; scriptures; The Nicene Creed; prayer and fasting; the Eucharist; Baptism; anointing the sick; and Teachings of the Apostles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religions of Abraham: Islam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islam: beginnings; practice; scriptures; teachings; women and the Quran; women and the Shari’a; tolerating the beliefs of others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quiz #3 available on Sunday, November 10<sup>th</sup>**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 12</th>
<th>November 14&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>New Religious Movements: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Christian Science</th>
<th>Read Vaughn pgs. 482-484, 486-499</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Globalization Question Due</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 13</th>
<th>November 21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>New Religious Movements: Baha’i and Wicca</th>
<th>Read Vaughn pgs. 485, 502-510</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 14</th>
<th>December 5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Final Exam</th>
<th>Final Exam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**This is a Cellphone FREE environment, DON’T TEXT AND LEARN; it’s hazardous to your health!**

**Subject to change. I reserve full right to amend, alter, and otherwise change this syllabus at any time.**