

Do not copy without the express written consent of the instructor.



Syllabus

Introduction to Religion

1168-FIU01-REL-2011-SECUHA-83386

[GENERAL INFORMATION](#) | [IMPORTANT INFORMATION](#) | [COURSE DETAIL](#) | [COURSE CALENDAR](#)

GENERAL INFORMATION

Professor Information



Instructor:

Joseph Holbrook

Phone:

305-348-2186

Office:

GL 150 (MMC)

Office Hours:

M-W, 11:30 am - 12:30 pm, or
by appointment

E-mail:

Please use Blackboard Messages. In case of emergencies, email me at jholbroo@fiu.edu.

Website:

[Class Religious Studies Blog](#)

Twitter:

[@REL_FIU](#)

YouTube:

[My Channel](#)

Note: this is hybrid course which requires both in-person meetings and online coursework.

Do not copy without the express written consent of the instructor.

Course Description And Purpose

This course will explore basic concepts in the study of religion, such as deity, cosmology and myth, ritual, scripture, ethics and salvation/liberation. The student will be introduced to each concept through the textbook, class lectures, videos, Internet sources, and discussions. Throughout the course, the student will also be exposed to specific rituals, myths, doctrines, ethics, and symbols from various different world religions and cultures. Students will be tested on this material with exam(s) , class discussions, and essays to develop their critical-thinking skills and writing abilities. This course fulfills the Gordon Rule requirement.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of the course, 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.
- 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 field of religious studies.
- Think creatively about religious issues in the contemporary world.
- Perform field research to better understand a particular religious community.

Global Learning Objectives Targeted:

- Analyze topics in the field of religious studies from multiple perspectives
- Assess how global issues and trends are interrelated with the development and practice of religions
- Demonstrate willingness to think creatively about religious issues in the contemporary world

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Policies

Please review the [FIU's Policies](#) webpage. The policies webpage contains essential information regarding guidelines relevant to all courses at FIU, as well as additional information about acceptable netiquette for online courses.

Statement on Plagiarism

You are expected to understand the definition of plagiarism. See the [University Code of Academic Integrity](#) if you need further clarification. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism, or attempting to pass off another's work as your own, falls into three different categories:

11. A written work that is entirely stolen from another source;
12. Using quotations from another source without properly citing them; and
13. Paraphrasing from another source without proper citations.

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.

Technical Requirements & Skills

Do not copy without the express written consent of the instructor.

One of the greatest barriers to taking a hybrid 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 hybrid courses are expected to have moderate proficiency using a computer.

Please go to the "[What's Required](#)" webpage to find out more information on this subject.

Technical course requirements include the following.

- A reliable Internet connection
- Regular access to a laptop or desktop computer with an updated operating system and web browser
- An active FIU email account that is checked daily (or forwarded to an email that is checked daily)
- Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc)
- Anti-virus software
- [Required Browser Check](#) for [Blackboard Learn](#) (our online learning platform)

This course utilizes the following tools.

- **Respondus Lockdown Browser**
- **Turnitin**
- **Wikis**

Please visit our [Technical Requirements](#) webpage for additional information.

If you encounter any technical problems while submitting an assignment or assessment, it is your responsibility to contact [FIU Online Support Services](#) immediately and take note of your case number for future reference.

Accessibility And Accommodation

The Disability Resource Center collaborates with students, faculty, staff, and community members to create diverse learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive and sustainable. The DRC provides FIU students with disabilities the necessary support to successfully complete their education and participate in activities available to all students. If you have a diagnosed disability and plan to utilize academic accommodations, please contact the Center at 305-348-3532 or visit them at the Graham Center GC 190.

Please visit our [ADA Compliance](#) webpage for information about accessibility involving the tools used in this course.

Please visit [Blackboard's Commitment Accessibility](#) webpage for more information.

For additional assistance please contact FIU's [Disability Resource Center](#).

Course Prerequisites

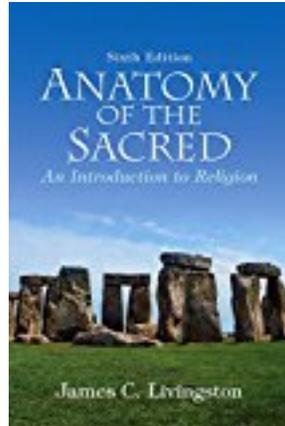
There are no prerequisites for this course.

Proctored Exam Policy

There is no online proctoring required for this course.

Textbook

Do not copy without the express written consent of the instructor.



Anatomy of the Sacred: An Introduction to Religion (6th Edition)

James C. Livingston Emeritus

Pearson, 6th Edition, 2008

ISBN-10: 013600380X

ISBN-13: 9780136003809

[Book Info](#). You may purchase your textbook online at the [FIU Bookstore](#).

Additional Notes

Expectations of this Course

This is a hybrid course. Hybrid courses require self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills sometimes make these courses more demanding for some students. If you find that you are having difficulty keeping up with the out-of-class work, please make an appointment with or email me.

You are responsible for carefully reading the syllabus and weekly calendar, meeting deadlines as posted, and submitting mature, thoughtful work. 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. The online portion of the class is required and constitutes the online attendance. Please review additional expectations below.

As a student in this course, you are expected to:

- Review the how to get started information located in the course content
- Introduce yourself to the class during the first week in the appropriate discussion forum
- Take the practice quiz to ensure that your computer is compatible with Blackboard
- Interact online with instructor/s and peers
- Log in to the course **3-4 times per week**
- Respond to Blackboard Messages **within 1 day**

As the instructor, I will:

- Log in to the course at least **6 days per week**
- Respond to discussion boards, blogs and journal postings **within 2 days**
- Respond to Blackboard Messages **within 1 day**
- Grade assignments **within 7 days** of the assignment deadline

COURSE DETAIL

Course Communication

Communication in this course will take place via **Blackboard Messages**.

Messages is a private and secure text-based communication system which occurs within a course among its Course members. Users must log on to Blackboard to send, receive, or read messages.

Do not copy without the express written consent of the instructor.

The Messages tool is located on the Course Menu, on the left side of the course webpage. It is recommended that students check their messages routinely to ensure up-to-date communication.

Visit our [Writing Resources](#) webpage for more information on professional writing and technical communication skills.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance and Participation together are worth **10% of the final grade**.

You are expected to attend every in-person session, arrive on time, and stay for the duration of the class. Every student will need to sign in on the class roster as documentation of his/her attendance. Students with 10 or more absences will receive 0 points for attendance. Arriving late, leaving early or stepping out of the class for long periods of time may incur an absence penalty. Please refrain from texting and emailing in class. Please inform the instructor immediately if a situation develops which will impact your performance or attendance.

Participation includes reading for class, contributing to discussions, and being attentive to lectures and student presentations. Almost every week, you are required to bring to the in-person session 1 current event news item that has a religious theme or undertone (please refer to the weekly calendar). The current event news item will count for 6 points, or the equivalent of 2 attendance days.

Discussion Forums

You are required to participate in six (6) online discussions about historical films, documentaries, and particular concepts or issues covered in the course. Each discussion requires that you answer the a discussion prompt and then comment on a peer's post. Overall, this assignment contributes 1,200 words toward fulfilling the University Gordon Rule requirement.

Only five (5) out of the six (6) will count toward your final grade (lowest discussion grade will be dropped). Discussions constitute **15% of your final grade**.

- Discussion prompts open **Monday at 12:00 am** the week they are assigned and close on **Friday at 11:59 pm** that same week.
- You must answer the prompt early enough in the week (at least by Wednesday) to allow others the opportunity to comment on your post before the due date.

Posting Guidelines and Grade Distribution

- Post a 300-word minimum response to each film
- Give a summary of the movie: who? what? when? where? (20%)
- Give your critical reaction to the film. (20%)
- Discuss what aspects of religious study or elements of religion are illustrated by the movie? What role did European politics play? Back up your argument with examples. Back up your argument with examples. (20%)
- Proofread your post for grammar, punctuation and verb agreement. Use the spell checker! (20%)
- Post a 50-word-minimum reply to at least one peer's post. (20%)

Keep in mind that your discussion forum postings will likely be seen by other members of the course. Care should be taken when determining what to post. Be sure to review acceptable [netiquette](#) for online courses.

Assignments

Do not copy without the express written consent of the instructor.

Essays

As this is a Gordon Rule course, you are required to write a minimum of two major writing assignments.

- Each essay listed on this section needs to be 1000 - 1200 words in length.
- Source material must be cited correctly using MLA Style, and long quotes should be avoided.
- Papers need to be submitted in Blackboard through Turnitin. Be sure to review the detailed [Turnitin Instructions](#) on how to submit your assignments and how to review the Grademark comments (feedback) from me.
- Please do NOT send any writing assignments as email or message attachments! All writing assignments must be submitted in the proper drop box in Blackboard; there are no exceptions.
- Papers with an originality score of over 35% similarity in Turnitin will be subject to additional scrutiny and may incur additional penalties, up to and including receiving an F (0 points).
- Late papers may be accepted with a legitimate excuse and a 10% penalty for late submission. After more than two weeks, papers either be refused, or will be discounted by 50 percent at the professor's discretion.

Essay 1: Religious Site Visit

For this essay, you will need to visit a religious site from a religious tradition that is not your own and write a report on it. Detailed assignment instructions and format are provided in the course.

- First draft is due **Friday, September 16 at 11:59 pm, ET**, and it is worth **5% of the final grade**.
- Final draft (after my feedback on first draft) is due **Friday, October 21 at 11:59 pm, ET**, and it is worth **10% of the final grade**.

Essay 2: Contamination

For this essay, you will analyze and discuss the article "The Case for Contamination" by Kwame Anthony Appiah. You will pick a position and give support for your argument using the Appiah article and at least two other scholarly sources. Detailed assignment instructions and format are provided in the course.

- Single and final draft is due **Friday, November 18 at 11:59 pm, ET**, and it is worth **15% of the final grade**.

Group Presentation

You will give a group presentation on a topic related to course readings. Each group presentation might include a demonstration, an explanation of a term/idea, a brief travel description/slide show, or a book review. You are encouraged to be creative and informative! The presentation will be worth **10% of the final grade**. Please review guidelines below.

- Each group member should speak for about 5-10 minutes
- You are responsible for signing up for presentation slots during the in-person sessions.
- If you cannot attend on the day of the presentation, you may arrange with another student to switch slots, but please inform me by email of changes to the schedule.

Do not copy without the express written consent of the instructor.

- If you miss your presentation slot and there is no other available slot, you will receive 0 points for the presentation.

A more detailed grading rubric is provided in the course. Please refer to the weekly calendar for dates.

Group Project

Each group will collaborate in a group Wiki to design their own sect, church, or religion. The following components of the sect/church/religion must be thought out and articulated in writing: myth, rituals, scriptures, community practices, deity(ies), cosmogony, human problem(s), theodicy, ethics, and salvation. This project is worth **10% of your final grade**.

Further assignment details are provided in the course and will be discussed during the in-person sessions. Please refer to the weekly calendar for dates.

Assessments

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](#).

Assessments in this course are not compatible with mobile devices and should not be taken through a mobile phone or a tablet. If you need further assistance please contact [FIU Online Support Services](#).

Please review the [Respondus LockDown Browser Instructions](#) before taking any assessment. After installing the browser, please take the Practice Quiz to familiarize yourself with the testing environment and to ensure that you have downloaded the Respondus Lockdown Browser correctly.

Exams

The Midterm Exam and Final Exam will be available online during their respective scheduled dates. Each exam is worth 10% of the final grade, for a **total of 20% of the final grade**. Format: 50 multiple-choice and true/false questions based on assigned readings

- **Midterm:** material from weeks 1-7. Available online **Friday Oct. 14, from 12:00 am - 11:59 pm, ET.**
- **Final:** material from weeks 8-15. Available online **Monday Dec. 5, from 12:00 am - 11:59 pm, ET.**

Weekly Chapter Quizzes

There are 15 weekly chapter quizzes (one quiz per textbook chapter). Each quiz is worth 10 points. Together, all of the quizzes make up **10% of your final grade**. Format: 10 multiple-choice and true/false questions. Please refer to the weekly calendar for dates.

Extra Credit Opportunities

The maximum amount of extra credits that are possible are 3 points on the final grade or $\frac{1}{4}$ of a grade level. All extra credit assignments are due no later than **Friday, December 2 at 11:59 pm, ET**. Absolutely no extra credits or make-up work will be accepted after the Final Exam.

Do not copy without the express written consent of the instructor.

Extra-Credit Reaction Paper

Review a movie and write a five- paragraph reaction paper describing the role that religion plays in the story or event. Focus on religious symbols, rituals, myths or the ways in which religious beliefs or practices influence the plot or meaning of the movie. Do not tell the whole story of the movie, but just enough so that your points are clear. The movie selection must be approved by the instructor. The extra credit paper is worth 1% of the final grade.

Extra-Credit Social Media Participation

Extra credits will also be given for students who follow the class twitter account, @REL_FIU, or who make at least 10 comments (complete sentences) on the [Class Religious Studies Blog](#).

Grading

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Points for Each	Total Points	Total Weight
Attendance and Participation	1	50	50	5%
Discussions	5 (out of 6)	10	50	15%
Essay 1: Religious Site Visit, 1st Draft	1	100	100	5%
Essay 1: Religious Site Visit, Revision	1	100	100	10%
Essay 2: Contamination	1	100	100	15%
Group Presentation	1	50	50	5%
Group Project	1	100	100	15%
Weekly Quizzes	15	10	150	10%
Exams	2	50	100	20%
Total	28	N/A	800	100%

Letter	Range (%)	Letter	Range (%)	Letter	Range (%)
A	93 or above	B	83 - 86	C	70 - 76
A-	90 - 92	B-	80 - 82	D	60 - 69
B+	87 - 89	C+	77 - 79	F	59 or less

COURSE CALENDAR

Weekly Schedule

Notes. Weeks are scheduled Monday - Friday. Holidays and non-weekly assignments due are bolded. This schedule is subject to change; please pay attention to class announcements in-person or online regarding any changes.

Do not copy without the express written consent of the instructor.

Week	Activities
<p>Week 1 Aug. 22 - Aug. 26</p>	<p><u>What is Religion?</u></p> <p>In-person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aug. 22: Introductions, syllabus review, class plan• Aug. 24: Discussion <p>Online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Chapter 1, pp. 1-14• Take Chapter 1 Quiz (due Wednesday)• Begin watching film "The Mission" (1986 with Robert De Niro) <p><i>Remember to start your Religious Site Visit research early!</i></p>
<p>Week 2 Aug. 29 - Sept. 2</p>	<p><u>Ways of Studying Religion</u></p> <p>In-person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aug. 29: Lecture "Methods of Social Science Analysis"• Aug. 31: Discussion and review <p>Online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Chapter 2, pp. 15-34• Take Chapter 2 Quiz (due Wednesday)• Finish watching film "The Mission"• Complete Discussion 1: "The Mission" (due Friday)
<p>Week 3 Sept. 5 - Sept. 9</p>	<p><u>The Sacred and the Holy</u></p> <p>In-person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sept. 5: No Class (Labor Day)• Sept. 7: Chapter 3, Sacred Power <p>Online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You will be randomly assigned to a group by Blackboard (Monday)• Read Chapter 3, pp. 35-52• Take Chapter 3 Quiz (due Wednesday)• Review Class Religious Studies Blog and comment (extra credit)
<p>Week 4 Sept. 12 - Sept. 16</p>	<p><u>Sacred Symbol, Myth and Doctrine</u></p> <p>In-person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sept. 12: Lecture "Myth"; Current Events News item• Sept. 14: Review, discussion, Current Events News item <p>Online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Chapter 4, pp. 53-73• Take Chapter 4 Quiz (due Wednesday)• Begin watching film "Luther" (2003, with Joseph Fiennes)• Update Group Project for #Myth• Essay 1: Religious Site Visit due by Friday, Sept. 16 at 11:59 pm, ET

Do not copy without the express written consent of the instructor.

Week	Activities
<p>Week 5 Sept. 19 - Sept. 23</p>	<p><u>Sacred Ritual</u></p> <p>In-person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sept. 19: Group Presentation; Lecture "Ritual"• Sept. 21: Review, discussion, Current Events News item <p>Online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Chapter 5, pp. 74-95• Take Chapter 5 Quiz (due Wednesday)• Update Group Project for #Ritual• Finish watching "Luther" film• Complete Discussion 2: "Luther" (due Friday)
<p>Week 6 Sept. 26 - Sept. 30</p>	<p><u>Sacred Scripture</u></p> <p>In-person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sept. 26: Group Presentation; Lecture "Scripture"• Sept. 30: Review discussion, Appiah article <p>Online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Chapter 6, pp.96-123• Take Chapter 6 Quiz (due Wednesday)• Update Group Project for #Scripture
<p>Week 7 Oct. 3 - Oct. 7</p>	<p><u>Society and the Sacred</u></p> <p>In-person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oct. 3: Group Presentation; Lecture "Society and the Sacred"• Oct. 5: Review, Current Events News item <p>Online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Chapter 7 p. 124-150• Take Chapter 7 Quiz (due Wednesday)• Review Class Religious Studies Blog and comment (extra credit)• Update Group Project for #Community• Complete Discussion 3: "Appiah" (due Friday)
<p>Week 8 Oct. 10 - Oct. 14</p>	<p><u>Concepts of Deity, or Ultimate Reality</u></p> <p>In-person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oct. 10: Group Presentation; Lecture "Deity"• Oct. 12: Review, discussion, Current Events News item <p>Online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Chapter 8, pp. 151-182• Take Chapter 8 Quiz (due Wednesday)• Begin watching film "Gandhi" (1982, with Ben Kingsley)• Update Group Project for #Deity• Take Midterm Exam by Friday, Oct. 14 at 11:59 pm, ET

Do not copy without the express written consent of the instructor.

Week	Activities
<p>Week 9 Oct. 17 - Oct. 21</p>	<p><u>Cosmogony</u></p> <p>In-person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oct. 19: Group Presentation; Lecture “Cosmogony”• Oct. 21: Review, Discussion, Current Events News item <p>Online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Chapter 9, pp. 183-210• Take Chapter 9 Quiz (due Wednesday)• Update Group Project for #Cosmogony• Finish watching film "Gandhi"• Complete Discussion 4: "Gandhi" (due Friday)• Essay 1: Religious Site Visit REVISION due by Friday, Oct. 21 at 11:59 pm, ET
<p>Week 10 Oct. 24 - Oct. 28</p>	<p><u>The Human Problem</u></p> <p>In-person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oct. 24: Group Presentation; Current Events News item• Oct. 26: Review, discussion, Current Events News item <p>Online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Chapter 10 pp. 211-234• Take Chapter 10 Quiz (due Wednesday)• Begin watching film “Malcolm X” (1992, with Denzel Washington)• Update Group Project for #Human Problem
<p>Week 11 Oct. 31 - Nov. 4</p>	<p><u>The Problem of Evil and Suffering</u></p> <p>In-person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oct. 31: Group Presentation; Lecture "Theodicy"• Nov. 2: Review, discussion, Current Events News item <p>Online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Chapter 11 pp. 235-258• Take Chapter 11 Quiz (due Wednesday)• Update Group Project for #Theodicy• Finish watching film “Malcolm X”• Complete Discussion 5: “Malcolm X”
<p>Week 12 Nov. 7 - Nov. 11</p>	<p><u>Ethics</u></p> <p>In-person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nov. 7: Group Presentation, Lecture "Ethics"• Nov. 9: Review, discussion, Current Events News item <p>Online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Chapter 12 pp. 259-286• Take Chapter 12 Quiz (due Wednesday)• Update Group Project for #Ethics

Do not copy without the express written consent of the instructor.

Week	Activities
<p>Week 13 Nov. 14 - Nov. 18</p>	<p><u>Salvation and Liberation</u></p> <p>In-person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nov. 21: Group Presentation; Lecture "Salvation" • Nov. 23: Group Presentation; Review, discussion • Nov. 24-25: Thanksgiving Weekend <p>Online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 13 pp. 287-338 • Take Chapter 13 Quiz (due Wednesday) • Update Group Project for #Salvation and finalize • Begin watching film "The Ten Commandments" (1956) Cecil B. DeMille • Essay 2: Contamination is due on Friday, Nov. 18 at 11:59 pm, ET.
<p>Week 14 Nov. 21 - Nov. 25</p>	<p><u>New Age and New Religious Movements</u></p> <p>In-person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sept. 26: Group Presentations; Lecture "New Religious Movements" • Sept. 30: Group Presentations; Review discussion <p>Online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 14 p.338 • Take Chapter 14 Quiz (due Wednesday) • Finish watching the film "The Ten Commandments" • Complete Discussion 6: "The Ten Commandments"
<p>Week 15 Nov. 28 - Dec. 2</p>	<p><u>Secularization and Pluralism</u></p> <p>In-person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nov. 28: Group Presentation • Nov. 30: Group Project Presentations <p>Online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Project due online Monday, Nov. 28 at 11:59 pm, ET • Read Chapter 15 • Take Chapter 15 Quiz (due Wednesday) • Review Class Religious Studies Blog and comment (extra credit) • Review all quizzes for Final Exam • All Extra-Credit assignments due on Friday, December 2 at 11:59 pm, ET.
<p>Week 16 Dec. 5 - Dec. 9</p>	<p><u>Final Exam Week</u></p> <p>Online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take Final Exam by Monday, Dec. 5 at 11:59 pm, ET.