REL3308 Studies in World Religions

Professor Information

Instructor: Erin Weston
Phone: (305) 348-1329
Office:
Office Hours: By Appointment
E-mail: Please use Canvas course messages
Website: https://religion.fiu.edu/faculty/full-time-faculty/erin-weston/

Course Description and Purpose

“Studies in World Religions” is a survey of the major religious traditions of the world. The course is designed to provide students with an understanding and appreciation of these traditions, and to enable students to think sensitively and critically about the religious world. This course will cover general concepts in: the Academic Study of Religion, Indigenous Religious Practices, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Alternative Paths, and Religion and the Modern World. In an effort to create a multifaceted understanding of the myriad ways in which the sacred is expressed, we will be viewing both orthodox and various popular forms of religious expression.

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- identify the essential characteristics that distinguish the major religious traditions;
- describe the basic components of each major religious tradition, such as its myths, rituals, doctrines, ethics, and artistic expressions;
- describe religious conflicts and trends in the modern world;
- express ideas and opinions clearly in writing as well as orally;
Global Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- **Global Awareness**: Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the interrelatedness of local, global, international, and intercultural issues, trends, and systems.
- **Global Perspective**: Students will be able to conduct a multi-perspective analysis of local, global, international, and intercultural problems.
- **Global Engagement**: Students will be able to demonstrate willingness to engage in local, global, international, and intercultural problem solving.

This course may satisfy either the Foundations or the Discipline-Specific Global Learning graduation requirements.

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.

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 (Links to an external site.)" webpage to find out more information on this subject.

This course utilizes the following tools:

- **Instagram**
  Please visit our Technical Requirements webpage for additional information.
Technical Requirements and Skills

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Please visit our Technical Requirements (Links to an external site.) webpage for additional information.

Accessibility And Accommodation

Please visit our ADA Compliance (Links to an external site.) webpage for information about accessibility involving the tools used in this course.

For additional assistance please contact FIU’s Disability Resource Center (Links to an external site.).

Panthers Care & Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

If you are looking for help for yourself or a fellow classmate, Panthers Care encourages you to express any concerns you may have or concerns as it relates to any personal behavior concerns or worries you have, for the classmate’s well-being or yours; you are encouraged to share your concerns with FIU’s Panthers Care website. (Links to an external site.) Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) (Links to an external site.) offers free and confidential help for anxiety, depression, stress, and other concerns that life brings. Professional counselors are available for same-day appointments. Don’t wait to call 305-348-2277 to set up a time to talk or visit the online self-help portal.

Academic Misconduct Statement

Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly to demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct,
they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

Academic Misconduct includes: **Cheating** – The unauthorized use of books, notes, aids, electronic sources; or assistance from another person with respect to examinations, course assignments, field service reports, class recitations; or the unauthorized possession of examination papers or course materials, whether originally authorized or not. **Plagiarism** – The use and appropriation of another’s work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the student’s own. Any student who fails to give credit for ideas, expressions or materials taken from another source, including internet sources, is responsible for plagiarism.

Learn more about the academic integrity policies and procedures (links to an external site.) as well as student resources (Links to an external site.) that can help you prepare for a successful semester.

**Course Prerequisites**

There are no prerequisites for this course.

**Proctored Exam Policy**

There are no proctored exams in this course.

**Textbook**

Experiencing the World's Religions: Tradition, Challenge, and Change

Michael Molloy
ISBN-10: 1260171116
You may purchase your textbook online at the [FIU Bookstore](https://www.fiu.edu/bookstore). Important Note: To successfully view the online videos in this class, you will need a high-speed Internet connection. If you only have dial-up Internet, you will need to visit one of the FIU computer labs to download and watch the videos.

The most affordable option for the Connect course materials required for this course section will be available under the “First Day” program.

**What is the First Day Program?**

- **The FIU Bookstore and the publisher have directly negotiated the best possible price under the “First Day” program, which results in an average 40% discount on these course materials.**
- **Don’t wait!** The First Day Program discounted course materials are only available during the first 3 weeks of class. This rate will expire at 11:59 pm on Friday, January 24th.
- **It’s easy!** Purchase your course materials at the FIU Barnes and Noble store, online or in-person, and pay using your FIU OneCard or any other traditional payment method. This is a physical access code, therefore, you will need to either pick the code up in store or you may choose to have it shipped to you.

**Purchase by Friday, January 24th, 2020 [RECOMMENDED]:**

- Purchase your course materials at the FIU Barnes and Noble, online or in person, and pay using your FIU OneCard or any other traditional payment method. If ordering online, you **WILL** need to pick up a code from the bookstore if you choose “pick up” upon checkout. You can also choose to have it shipped to you for an additional fee.
  - “First Day” course materials price = $60
  - Molloy, 7th edition, Experiencing the World's Religions, Connect Access w/ebook
  - 9781264052622

**Purchase after Friday, January 24th, 2020 [MORE EXPENSIVE]:**

- Purchase your course materials at the FIU Barnes and Noble, online or in person, and pay using your FIU OneCard or any other traditional payment method. If ordering online, you **WILL** need to pick up a code from the bookstore if you choose “pick up” upon checkout. You can also choose to have it shipped to you for an additional fee.
  - National course materials price = $114
  - Molloy, 7th edition, Experiencing the World's Religions, Connect Access w/ebook
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.

In addition to the completion of writing assignments and exams, the primary requirement for successful completion of this course will be an open mind. Students are expected to exhibit respect to all religious traditions and peoples at all times. Thus, disrespectful or derisive commentary will not be tolerated in this course. Religion is, after all, a very personal and sensitive subject for many.

On the other hand, class participants can expect academic freedom to express their views. Although religion can be personal, this is an academic course taken for college credit and thus students are expected to examine the topic rigorously. Religion shall not be exempt from the scrutiny placed on any and all academic subjects.

Students will be responsible for all materials covered in class. Exams may include any and all of the aforementioned materials.

Students are expected to:

- **Review** the how to get started information located in the course content
- **Introduce** yourself to the class during the first week by posting a self introduction in the appropriate discussion forum
- **Take** the practice quiz to ensure that your computer is compatible with Canvas.
- **Interact** online with instructor/s and peers
- **Review and follow** the course calendar
- **Log in to the course at least 5 times per week**
- **Respond to discussion boards, blogs and journal postings by the deadline.**
- **Respond to [messages] within 3 days or sooner.**
- **Submit assignments by the corresponding deadline**

The instructor will:

- **Log in to the course 4 times per week**
- **Respond to blogs and journal postings within 1 week.**
- **Respond to [emails/messages] within 3 days or sooner.**
- **Grade assignments within 2 weeks** of the assignment deadline.
COURSE DETAILS

Course Communication

Communication in this course will take place via 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 Canvas to send, receive, or read messages. 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.

This is the best method to communicate with your instructor privately.

Visit our Writing Resources webpage for more information on professional writing and technical communication skills.

ASSIGNMENTS

Introduce Yourself Video Blog

Blogs are an open communications tool for students to share their thoughts. Here you can post text, images, links and attachments, open for comments.

1. This course has 1 assignment utilizing the Video Blog tool. Within the lesson 1 you will find how to upload a video into the Introduce Yourself blog. Students will upload all course videos to the particular assignment blogs and by the due date noted in the Blogs portion of this syllabus.
2. Blogs can be found in the Blog portion of the Discussion or within the content area of the course.

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 (Links to an external site.).
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 (Links to an external site.).

Weekly Blogs

Blogs are an open communications tool for students to share their thoughts. Here you can post text, images, links and attachments, open for comments.

There will be twelve blog topics. The topics will be posted in "Discussions" folder in the Course Content. Students must post well thought-out comments based on the required work throughout the semester. Participation is required and represents 12% of your final grade. Both the quantity and the quality of your posts will contribute to your grade. Please see the sample blogs and blog rubric to review the expected components. All students are required to participate in all of the topics (at least 200 words). Blogs must be posted during the period they are assigned and are due by 11:59 pm on the Monday after the end of the lesson. You can miss one blog without penalty.

Once you have composed your original posting, take some time to carefully review other postings within your discussion group. Pick two that are most interesting to you and provide meaningful, detailed, and constructive feedback.

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.

Quizzes

A weekly time-restricted, online quiz will be given on each religious tradition. You can take each quiz two times, and the higher 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 of the assigned week to Monday of the following week, and you can take it on any of those days at any time.
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 a 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 (Links to an external site.).

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 (Links to an external site.).

Exams

The Midterm Exam and the Final Exam are both online and time-restricted examinations. They are located in the Assessments area of the course menu. **Students have only one attempt to complete both exams, unlike the course quizzes. Please make note of this important difference.**

**Midterm Exam** will cover Introduction to Studying Religions, Indigenous Religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and Shinto.

**Final Exam** will cover Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Alternative Paths, and the Modern Search.

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 (Links to an external site.).

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 (Links to an external site.)
### Instagram Assignment

For this semester, students will be required to participate in an Instagram assignment. You must submit at least three pictures or Instagram videos throughout the semester and tag these pictures/videos to the FIU Religious Department’s Instagram page @fiu_religion. Each picture/video must be accompanied by a short comment and the hashtag #Weston1201. The picture/video must demonstrate an interaction between any religion and everyday life. Students are encouraged to interact with the content posted by their classmates and others on the fiu_religion Instagram page.

**In order to receive credit for this assignment you must:**

- Post at least 1 picture/video by each Instagram assignment due date. There will be 3.
- Tag the FIU Religious Department’s Instagram page @fiu_religion
- Accompany each picture/video with the hashtag #Weston1201
- Accompany each picture/video with a short comment (<140 characters) about the picture and your purpose for posting it.
- Post a screenshot to the class discussion board. This makes sure that everyone is able to see it, even if you have privacy settings on your account.

Feel free to Review wiki How’s "How to Use Instagram webpage (Links to an external site.)."

**In order to use Instagram you will need a mobile device such as a smartphone, ipad, or tablet.** Instagram cannot be accessed on a desktop. Students who do not have access to a mobile device can upload pictures to the class discussion board. Students are expected to post responsibly, adhere to copyright laws, and post images that are deemed respectful in accordance with University guidelines.

### Contemporary Applied Analysis Term Paper

There will be one essay assigned throughout the semester, which is aimed at assisting in the comprehension and synthesis of the concepts presented throughout the course. This assignment is specifically related to your Global Learning engagement outcome that you will demonstrate an ability to engage critically with diverse forms of religion in local, regional, national and international contexts.

For your research paper, you will choose a specific religious tradition that we have studied in class and apply it to a contemporary moral or philosophical issue. For example, a paper may explore the response of Theravada Buddhism to prostitution in...
Thailand. Another example may be to explore abortion through the lens of Japanese Shinto. Other possibilities include: Brahmanic Hindu perspectives on poverty, Evangelical Christian perspectives on in vitro fertilization (IVF), Native Hawaiian perspectives on genetically modified food. You may choose to use the religion that you researched for your WIKI, or you may choose another. You must do research on a specific religious group, i.e. Southern Baptists not “Christianity.” You will need to provide a well-thought out argumentative essay where you support your analyses. You must utilize at least three academic sources.

This essay will be at least 1500-2000 words long (6 pages double-spaced) and will be worth 20% of your grade. This is a formal academic essay and students must cite their sources. MLA is the preferred citation style in Religious Studies.

Submission: Students must submit their essays to Turnitin.

Late Papers: Late papers are only accepted under extreme and verifiable conditions. Papers are deducted 1 letter grade per calendar day and are only accepted within the first 3 days late.

Students are responsible for reading their messages and all announcements posted by the instructor. The instructor also reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus by means of announcements or messages with ample time allowed for students to respond and adjust appropriately.

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 (Links to an external site.) if you need further clarification. Offenders will receive a grade of F for the plagiarized assignment, and possibly the course.

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 in your paper, and a Bibliography/Works Cited page in MLA 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.
If you have questions regarding how to cite or what to cite, ask me BEFORE you submit your essay. If you turn in your paper and you "accidentally" plagiarize parts of your essay, you will fail the assignment and possibly the course. Better safe than sorry! To reiterate, ask me before the due date if you are unsure about how to cite your sources.

**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.**

Be sure to read the Grademark comments (feedback) from your professor.

**Group Wiki Project**

Students will write up short summaries (at least 250 words) of five contemporary problems, discussing why it is a problem for the religious tradition and how the religion is responding to it. In addition to student written summaries, your wikis should also include: links to articles and websites, images, infographics, videos, or other relevant visual aids on your group pages. Please review the wiki rubric for a more complete idea of the required elements for a successful wiki page.

Your project is only as good as your resources. You need to make sure that you use reliable resources, especially online. There is a lot of misinformation out there! Look for official websites, government websites, academic articles, and legitimate newspaper articles.

**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 in your paper, and a Bibliographic/Works Cited page in MLA 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.

The tool allows the professor the ability to see each student's contributions to the group wiki. Group members are encouraged to equally contribute content to the wiki, as group participation will be factored into your final grade.

Furthermore, students will have the ability to evaluate their group members and their own contributions to the final project utilizing the iPeer evaluation tool. This group evaluation assignment is worth 50% of the wiki total grade and must be completed by the wiki due date.
# Grading

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<th>Course Requirements</th>
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<td>Introduce Yourself Video Blog</td>
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<td>Weekly Blog</td>
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## WEEKLY SCHEDULE
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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| WEEK 1  January 6th-13th | WELCOME – COURSE INTRODUCTION  
Topic: Understanding Religion  
Read: Course Introduction  
Review and fully familiarize yourself with the course and site. Print and read the course syllabus and course calendar.  
Powerpoint: Chapter 1 – Understanding Religion  
| WEEK 2  January 13th-20th | Topic: Indigenous Religions  
PowerPoint: Indigenous Religions  
Read: Chapter 2 – Indigenous Religions  
Videos: 1. The Men of the Fifth World (Full Documentary) | Due 1. Quiz 2 2. Weekly Blog |
| WEEK 3  January 20th-27th | Topic: Hinduism  
PowerPoint: Hinduism  
Read: Chapter 3 – Hinduism  
2. Indus Valley Civilization: Crash Course World History #2 | Due 1. Quiz 3 2. Weekly Blog |
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<th>WEEK 4</th>
<th>Topic: Buddhism</th>
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| January 27th-February 3rd | **PowerPoint**  
Buddhism  
**Read**  
Chapter 4 - Buddhism  
**Videos**  
1. The Life of Buddha (BBC Documentary) + Eng Sub (HQ)  
2. Buddha and Ashoka: Crash Course World History #6 |
| **Due** | 1. Quiz 4  
2. Weekly Blog  
3. Paper Proposal |

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<th>WEEK 5</th>
<th>Topic: Jainism &amp; Sikhism</th>
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| February 3rd-10th | **PowerPoint**  
Jainism & Sikhism  
**Read**  
Chapter 5 – Jainism & Sikhism  
**Videos**  
1. The Last Life of Nirmala: Jainism  
| **Due** | 1. Quiz 5  
2. Weekly Blog  
3. Instagram Post |

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<th>WEEK 6</th>
<th>Topic: Daoism &amp; Confucianism</th>
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| February 10th-17th | **PowerPoint**  
Daoism & Confucianism  
**Read**  
Chapter 6 – Daoism & Confucianism  
**Videos** |
| **Due** | 1. Quiz 6  
2. Weekly Blog  
3. Research Paper Initial Submission |
<table>
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<th>WEEK 7</th>
<th>February 17th-24th</th>
<th>1. 2,000 Years of Chinese History! The Mandate of Heaven and Confucius: World History #7</th>
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<td>1. Religion's of the world Shinto pt 1 - 4</td>
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<td>WEEK 8</td>
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<td><strong>Spring Break (2/24-2/29)</strong></td>
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<td>1. Midterm Exam</td>
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<td><strong>Videos</strong></td>
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<td>1. Judaism Part 1 - 5</td>
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<td>2. Judaism: Inside the Torah - National Geographic</td>
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<td>WEEK 10</td>
<td>March 9th-16th</td>
<td><strong>Topic: Judaism Part II</strong></td>
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<td><strong>WEEK 12</strong>&lt;br&gt;March 23rd-30th</td>
<td>Christianity Part II</td>
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<td><strong>WEEK 13</strong>&lt;br&gt;March 30th-April 6th</td>
<td>Islam</td>
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| WEEK 14 | April 6th-13th | Islam  
Read  
Chapter 10 – Islam  
Videos  
1. Religions of the World Islam pt 1 | 1. Quiz 10  
2. Weekly Blog  
3. Final Research Paper Due |
|---------|----------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| WEEK 15 | April 13th-20th | **Topic: Alternative Paths**  
PowerPoint  
Alternative Paths  
Read  
Chapter 11 – Alternative Paths  
Videos  
1. National Geographic Witchcraft Myths and Legends 1 of 2 Witchcraft | 1. Quiz 11  
2. Weekly Blog |
| WEEK 16 | April 20th-25th | **Topic: The Modern Search**  
PowerPoint  
The Modern Search  
Read  
Chapter 12 – The Modern Search | 1. Quiz 12  
2. Weekly Blog  
3. Group Wiki Due  
4. iPeer Evaluation |
| WEEK 16 | April 20th-25th | Final Exam | 1. Final Exam  
2. Final Instagram Post |