

Department of Religious Studies
Florida International University

STUDIES IN WORLD RELIGIONS REL 3308 UHA

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Office Hours: TR 12:30-1:45 and by appointment

Spring 2024
T 11:00-12:15
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RB 130

Introduction and Aims: This course will cover ten religious traditions of the world: Native American Religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Confucianism, Daoism, Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Their major teachings will be discussed in detail and set in their proper historical and cultural contexts. Similarities and differences between the religions will be considered, as well as each religion's unique contribution to world civilization. In addition, we will spend some time at the beginning of the semester discussing what is religion and how do we study it in an academic setting.

Course Objectives:

This course satisfies the University Core Curriculum for Humanities Group Two (FIU required) as supported by the following learning outcomes for our course:

1. To provide the student with the "raw materials" for the study of religion by immersing the student in the beliefs, doctrines, rituals, symbols, and (select) scriptures of some of the major world religions.
2. To facilitate the informed cross-cultural comparison and evaluation of ways of being religious by focused study of select world religions.
3. To widen, enhance and enrich the intellectual and spiritual horizons of the student by exposure to the spiritual beauty, vitality, coherence, plausibility and richness of non-Christian, non-Western approaches to the transcendent or ultimate reality.
4. To encourage the student to enter sympathetically into the worldview of the religious traditions selected for study.
5. To provide the context for dialogue and discussion that will enable the student to live in an enormously complex, interdependent, and religiously plural world with patience, understanding, and appreciation for that which is different, and in some cases irreconcilably different, from his or her own "worldview."

Syllabus

Week 1 [January 8-14] Introduction. Read: RM, Introduction and Overview (pp. 7-17).

At-home Assignment 1 Due January 25

Week 2 [January 15-21] Theories on the Origin of Religion. Read: RM, Chapter 1 (pp. 17-25).

Quiz on Chapter 1 Due January 22

At-home Assignment 2 Due February 1

Week 3 [January 22-28] Native American Religions Read: RM, Chap. 10 (pp. 441-489).

Quiz on Chapter 10 Due January 29

At-home Assignment 3 Due February 8

Week 4 [January 29-February 4] Hinduism. Read: RM, Chap. 2 first half (pp. 26-54).

Week 5 [February 5-11] Hinduism, Jainism. Read: RM, Chap. 2 second half (pp. 54-77).

Quiz on Chapter 2 Due February 12

At-home Assignment 4 Due February 15

Week 6 [February 12-18] Buddhism. Read: RM, Chap. 3 (pp. 78-127).

Quiz on Chapter 3 Due February 19

At-home Assignment 5 Due February 22

Week 7 [February 19-25] Confucianism. Read: RM, Chap. 8 (pp. 340-389).

Spring Break February 26- March 3

Quiz on Chapter 8 Due March 4

At-home Assignment 6 Due March 7

Week 8 [March 4-10] Daoism. Read: RM, Chap. 9 (pp. 390-439).

Quiz on Chapter 9 Due March 11

Midterm Examination due on Thursday, March 14

Week 9 [March 11-17] Judaism. Read: RM, Chap. 5 first half (pp. 172-197).

At-home Assignment 7 Due March 22

Week 10 [March 18-22] Judaism Read: RM, Chap. 5 second half (pp. 198-223).

***Extra Credit: Paper Proposal Due on Monday, March 18*

Quiz on Chapter 5 Due March 25

Week 11 [March 25- 31] Christianity Read: RM, Chap. 6 first half (pp. 224-260).

Week 12 [April 1-7] Christianity. Read: RM, Chap. 6 second half (pp. 260-291).

Quiz on Chapter 6 Due April 8

At-home Assignment 8 Due April 11

Week 13 [April 8-14] Islam. Read: RM, End Chap. 7 first half (pp. 292-314).

***Extra Credit: Research Paper Due on Monday, April 8*

Globalization Question Due on Monday, April 15

Week 14 [April 15-21] Islam. Read: RM, Chap. 7 second half (pp. 314-339).

Quiz on Chapter 7 Due April 21

Final Examination due on Thursday, April 25 by midnight.

Textbook: Stephen Prothero, *Religion Matters* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton 2020) = RM.
Paperback ISBN: 97801393912852 To access the online book, use the link in the Canvas shell.

Grading:

Quizzes	25%
At-Home Assignments	40%
Midterm	10%
Final	10%
Attendance and Participation	10%
Globalization Question	5%

Extra Credit: If you wish to improve your grade, you may write an optional term paper, the topic of which must be approved by the instructor. You will secure this approval by turning in a proposal by the date noted in the calendar above. The proposal should be 1-2 pages in length and outline as clearly as possible what issue you intend to investigate and why you think it important or interesting. The topic should deal with some matter relating to how religious communities change and adapt as they move to different areas or how they deal with other faith communities. Examples of the former would be how Christianity began in the Near East as a Jewish movement but eventually spread to non-Jews throughout the Roman Empire, or how Buddhism started in India but today has spread to places such as China and Japan where it has exerted immense influence, or how the slave trade led to a synthesis of African religions with Christianity

producing the religions we know today as Santeria and Vodou. Examples of the latter, would be how Muslims view Jews and Christians as Peoples of the Book while rejecting polytheistic religions, or how Hindus view the Buddha as an incarnation of Vishnu (though this doesn't mean they convert to Buddhism).

The paper should be 6-9pp. long, excluding bibliography with lines double-spaced. Margins for the pages should be 1 inch on all sides and the style should conform to either that of MLA or the Chicago Manual of Style. In the body of the paper you may use either footnotes or endnotes. **If you elect to write the optional paper, it will count for an additional 20% of your final grade.**

Academic Honesty: Each student is expected to do his or her own work. It is absolutely unacceptable to submit someone else's work as your own. This is plagiarism and will result in a failing grade (F) for the assignment and possible disciplinary action. Thus, when in the course of writing your paper you quote or paraphrase an idea found in one of your sources you must give credit to the original author (usually by means of a footnote).

Academic Conduct: 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 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.

Quizzes: We will be using Norton's InQuizitive textbook system that includes chapter quizzes with questions drawn from the information in our textbook. You need to buy the code at the bookstore and create an Inquizitive account if you don't already have one. The quizzes will be due each Sunday night after we complete a particular chapter.

At-Home Assignments: There will be eight assignments to do at home interspersed throughout the semester. These assignments will ask you to do various things such as read articles and watch videos, conduct research, and then explain your findings and discuss how your views have been enlarged or changed as a result of what you have learned. These at-home assignments will be due on Wednesdays in a drop-box on Canvas.

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

Attendance: An absolutely essential part of the course! Some material will inevitably be covered in class that is not to be found in the textbook so that each absence will affect your ability to do well on the tests. Through the course of the semester, there may be a time or two when you just can't make it to class, but to get an A, you should come at least 10 out of the 14 classes.

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:

Describe Appiah’s approach and discuss its strengths and weaknesses. Then explain how religions help people express their identities both as individuals and as members of a group. Also, what did you learn about the need for and the potential of better understanding between religions? 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? Is globalization a help or a hindrance to diversity?)

Syllabus Note on Internet Use in Research: You may cite from the internet in your term papers, but you must be discerning. Anyone can post “information” on the internet, and thus some of what is there is inaccurate, incomplete, and sometimes even blatantly untrue. As in print collections in libraries, only scholarly articles on the internet are acceptable as sources for research papers.

Internet articles should ideally have authors. Some will list individual authors; others will list institutions as sources. The credibility of the information depends on the credibility of the source. Acceptable sources include individual scholars with academic credentials, educational institutions (e.g., Institute of Reformation History, Princeton University), publicly supported national or international institutions (e.g. the World Health Organization or the National Institutes of Health) or other well-known institutions with credible reputations (e.g. the World Council of Churches, the Children’s Defense Fund). Most educational institutions have addresses which end with the letters “edu.” You must use your judgment since many reputable institutions may not be well known by most students. Also, sometimes websites may list a university as the place from which the material emanates, but which does not sponsor or in any way support the information on that site. (You could set up a website that lists FIU as its origin, and purports that the Pope died last month and was replaced by a ringer!).

There will be some internet sources the reliability of which will be difficult to assess. Sometimes you must judge by the tone and range of an article. If it reads like a magazine or newspaper article and cites none of the sources it used, it is not scholarly. You should ask whether the article demonstrates balance: Does it attempt to tell all sides of the story? Does it ask critical questions of the material it covers? How well does its treatment accord with other treatments of the same material you have found? If you would really like to cite an internet article but have doubts about its acceptability, look up the institution or the author on the internet or in the library. Has the author or institution published other works? Have those been reviewed or cited by other scholars?

When you cite from the internet, you must list the entire address on the web where you found the information and the date you accessed it. When applicable you must also note any search terms needed within the website to find this particular article when these do not appear within the address.

The following are some bibliographic entries:

Musa, Edward, “The Art of the Maya.” <http://www.unescape.org/pop/journal/v1onaal.htm>. 4/27/17.

Zarabozo, Jamaal, "Is Family Planning Allowed in Islam?"
<http://www.albany.edu/~ha4934/famplan.html>.

Procedures Related to the COVID-19 Situation:

As cases and hospitalizations due to the Omicron variant continue to increase in our community, we must unite and take necessary steps to prevent further spread.

- A. Daily and before arriving to campus, complete the P3 app. If you are not given the green check mark to enter campus, then stay home, and contact me by email by forwarding your P3 app email notification advising you to stay home.
- B. Please check your FIU email account and your Canvas course at least once a day. Email and Canvas are the official ways for the university, and your professors, to contact you.
- C. If you do not feel well and/or have tested positive for COVID-19, please do not come to class, immediately complete the P3 app to notify the COVID Response Team and contact me by email by forwarding your P3 app email notification as soon as you can. In order to receive an excused absence for P3 failure/COVID-19, you must complete the P3 app and forward the email notification. If directed to stay home by the P3 app, that email notification will serve as your excused absence when you forward it to me.
- D. **MAKE-UP POLICY:** If you notify me that you are going to miss classes due to COVID, I will arrange to turn on the classroom camera so that you can Zoom into class. If you are too sick to attend, you can email me as to what lesson we are doing so that you can study the book at home. I will also be happy to meet with you during office hours for any extra help you might need, once you are feeling better.
- E. FIU is following current [CDC Guidance](#). Please refer to the link where you can access their most current information.
- F. Please take every precaution to keep yourself and others healthy. Per CDC guidelines, you are encouraged to get vaccinated and strongly advised to wear a mask indoors and in public including all FIU facilities.
- G. Missing excessive days may lead to failing a class or a grade of incomplete.
- H. For me to assist you in achieving your goals, it is important for you to contact me as soon as you experience any events that might disrupt your course participation. For up-to-date information about COVID-19, please see the repopulation.fiu.edu F FAQs.
- I. Please be advised that classes may be audio and visually recorded and/or subject to course capture for future access by students in this course. Your attendance/participation in this course constitutes consent to such recordings, which will only be used for educational purposes by students in the course and securely stored in University systems. If there is a concern regarding the recording and use of such recording, please contact FERPA@fiu.edu.