



## FIU Religious Studies Department - course syllabus Fall 2013

REL 3308 World Religions  
Religious Studies Dept.: 305. 348 2186

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Office Hours by appointment: availability: M, T, TH, F @ MM campus; W @ Pines campus; through Bb's adobe connect M, T, TH, F evenings after 4pm

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*The task of religions is to give humankind another world to live, an imaginative world of beauty, harmony, and perfection, that the soul of humans may be strengthened and deepened by contemplating, and its beauty and serenity fill the mind –*  
Ratner

### **Course Description:**

This course explores the world's various religious traditions and the individual's personal experience within their chosen religion. We will discuss various practices, rituals, and symbols of the religions as well as read from many of the various sacred texts of the world. In this course we will also address many ethical issues from various religious perspectives through discussion and reading.

### **Course Objectives:**

The objective of this course is to have students develop a working familiarity with major religious traditions throughout the world and be able to discuss and compare varying theological/cosmological ideas and concepts. Students will also be able to compare various historical and contemporary religious and ethical perspectives through reading and discussion. Additionally, this course will help students develop an understanding of religious cultures ranging from local to international and be able to recognize, compare and contrast various cultural/societal differences created by religious traditions.

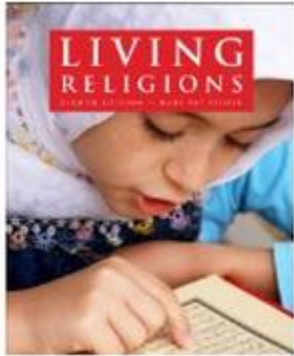
### **University Requirements for the Global Learning Objectives:**

1. Global Awareness: Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the interrelatedness of local, global, international, and intercultural issues, trends, and systems.
  - 1.1. **Course Learning Outcome**: Students will demonstrate knowledge of the interrelated dynamics (social-cultural, political, economic, etc.) that shape the actions of multiple figures in diverse cultural contexts.
2. Global Perspectives: Students will be able to develop a multi-perspective analysis of local, global, international, and intercultural problems.
  - 2.1. **Course Learning Outcome**: Students will be able to analyze the multiple causal forces that shape the perspectives of historical individuals/persons — economic, political, sociological, technological, cultural, etc.
3. Global Engagement: Students will be able to demonstrate a willingness to engage in local, global, international, and intercultural problem solving.
  - 3.1. **Course Learning Outcome**: Students will demonstrate a willingness to engage in negotiation regarding actions of global import within the context of the class simulation.

**Text:**

1. Fisher, M.P. (2011). Living Religions, 8e. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall. ISBN: 978-0205835850

Amazon price as of 8.16.2013:



**Living Religions (8th Edition)** by Mary Pat  
**\$16.69 - \$16.74** to rent Paperback Prime  
 \$134.90 to buy  
 Order in the next **20 hours** and get it by **Monday, Aug 19**.  
 More Buying Choices - Paperback  
**\$79.90** new (19 offers)  
**\$14.04** used (151 offers)

You may also want to try the site: [bigwords.com](http://bigwords.com) for comparison pricing.

**Course Grading:**

<b>Quizzes (4)</b>	<b>20%</b>
Ethical Essays (3)	15%
Midterm exam	15%
Comparative Site Review	20%
Global Engagement Discussion Board	5%
Global Perspective Essay	10%
Final exam	15%

**Attendance:**

You are allowed 2 absences. Every absence after 2 will result in your final grade being lowered by a third of a grade point (ex. from an A to an A-). If you leave early or show up at the break your attendance will not be counted for that day.

**Quizzes:**

All quizzes will be completed online through blackboard. There are 4 quizzes, two before the midterm exam, two after the midterm exam. Quizzes are multiple-choice and timed (15 minutes/15 questions) and you will have two attempts. Only the highest score will be used to calculate your final quiz total.

You will see some different questions on your second quiz attempt since the quiz database has more than 15 questions. 50% of the quiz material will come from the book and 50% from the lectures.

You will have a 4 day period to take each quiz, therefore, I will NOT re-open quizzes for people who miss the allotted quiz time period.

**Exams:**

The midterm and final will be multiple-choice and based on the questions from the quizzes. The quizzes will be released the previous week for you to study from (answers not included, but you will be able to see which questions you missed and look up the correct answer)! The final is not cumulative and will cover only the material from after the midterm.

**Study Guide Policy:**

Study guides are the responsibility of the student to create if you so choose. You can do this in groups or as individuals. Learning how to make a study guide is part of learning how to study.



I realize the detriment exams may cause to your extended family, but rest assured, good research has been done on this topic. I take full responsibility for the numerous grandmothers that will be killed during this period. You may want to read this in order to gage my gullibility/sympathy during this stressful time!

<http://www.math.toronto.edu/mpugh/DeadGrandmother.pdf>

**Discussion Board:**Global Engagement

There will be a discussion board available after the Site Review has been handed in. You will need to answer the 3 questions posted in an original thread of approximately 300 (+) words. Afterwards, you need to read & respond to 4 of your classmates posts as well. (60% for your original thread and 10% for each response you post = 100%). Responses must be thoughtful and constructive. They may ask for further clarification. Responses that consist only of: “me too!” or “I agree” will not be counted as a substantive post. There will also be class discussion on this topic. Check the calendar for due dates.

**Essay Assignments:**Ethical Essays

There are 3 articles you will read that deal with specific ethical issues within particular religions. The assignment entails reading the article, accessing the related questions (via blackboard), and answering the questions in essay format (600-900 words). The article, the related assignment question, and the turnitin.com submission box can be found on blackboard under the corresponding religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism). Check the calendar for due dates.

Global Perspective Essay

This essay involves your ability to think critically about the emphases found in each religion and make a persuasive argument for your decisions in answering the given question. The essay should be in proper MLA or APA essay format (no works cited needed if accessing only lectures and the textbook) and should be 900 words. Check the calendar for due date.

## Comparative Site Review

**\*This assignment requires a works cited page!**

**1800-2100 words**

The comparative site review requires visiting two religious services, (NOT from your own religious/secular background), comparing their services, rituals, symbolism, and theology. You must choose one service from each of the following two groups:

### **Category I**

1. One service should be from an Eastern tradition such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Sikh, or any other indigenous Asian ritual.

### **Category II**

2. Another service must come from any sect of Judaism (Kabbalah, Orthodox, Reform, etc.), Islam (Sufi), Christianity (Orthodox, Catholic, or Protestant sects), Unitarian Universalism, Humanist/Secular meetings, or any indigenous (Native American), pagan or other religion not previously mentioned (such as Zoroastrianism, Santeria, etc.).

### **Here is what your paper must include in order to receive an A grade:**

1. Fundamental beliefs (important if you are visiting a sectarian group, and note differences in belief and practice from its parent group), and sources of authority or basis for the religion or sect (such as inspired scriptures, teachers, direct revelations, and the like).

Specify both the religion and the sect or branch you have visited (e.g., **Hinduism:** Shiva, Vishnu, Hare Krishna; **Judaism:** Orthodox, Reformed, Conservative, Reconstructionist; **Buddhism:** Pure Land, Nichiren, Tibetan, Mahayana, Theravada; **Islam:** Nation of Islam, Sunni, Shia, etc.)

2. Why is the religion here in South Florida, whose needs is the religion/sect meeting? Narrate the reasons for the appearance of sect in South Florida.

3. What psychological role does this particular religion fulfill for its followers? (sense of community, absolution of guilt, mystical experience, hope, relief from anxiety stress – or maybe it creates stress with guilt? ). How does the theology play into the psychology? Is it a theology of love, guilt, submission, etc.? How does this sect/religion feel about or treat outsiders or those of different traditions? What psychological impact does this have on its adherents and what are the consequences for the larger community?

4. Describe art, symbols, images, cultic objects (including sacred scriptures, if of artistic or aesthetic merit) of the religion – **and most importantly, their meaning and importance!** Explain how they were used in the building/service. Remember, all kinds of things may have importance – such as the direction the building is facing, the colors used, any symbols.

5. Distinctive dress, articles of clothing, of members and/or clergy of the religion you witnessed during visit. Inquire as to whether normally there is a distinctive dress, etc. in other locations. Include how much adaptation or concessions to "American" ways of worshipping you witnessed during your visit (for this you may also have to tap a knowledgeable person for information).

6. Forms of ritual, worship/liturgy, special ceremonies, particular/distinctive practices that you saw practice during your visit. Be sure you can describe the flow of the service and what rituals were performed.

7. Describe how what you saw and heard impacted you; did visit enhance your appreciation for that particular religious faith and/or for religion in general; did you feel you were "worshipping"?; did anything strike you in a negative way?; what was the most positive result of your visit?

8. Finally, be sure this is a COMPARATIVE paper! Discuss the similarities and differences (do not say there aren't any) between the services you attended. You may also draw in comparisons with your own religious/secular background. The paper should be 1800-2100 words.

**Your paper should include proper citation and a works cited page that does NOT include Wikipedia or any other encyclopedic or non-scholarly web site.**

You may use APA or MLA, whichever style you are more comfortable with. Use the [OWL @ Purdue](#) as your reference if necessary. Check Blackboard under the assignment folder for more writing and religion reference resources.

#### **Late Paper Policy:**

I will consider accepting late papers on a case by case basis. There is no guarantee I will accept a late paper. If I do, you will lose 10% of your final grade on the paper.

#### **Critical Thinking and Writing in this Class:**

Critical thinking is one of the most important aspects of a university education. Logical and analytical thinking are at the heart of criticism which is the hallmark of scholarly thinking and writing. Logical and analytical thinking is necessary in order to utilize evidence in the construction of ideas. If your thinking is incoherent, if it is illogical, if it flies in the face of evidence, then it will not pass muster as "critical thinking".

Your imagination is important. What you feel is important. What you believe is important. But, as you articulate these matters you should be able to reflect on them logically, analytically, and with an eye to evidence. If you cannot, then you run the danger of falling into **solipsism** (extreme preoccupation with and indulgence of one's feelings, desires, etc.; egoistic self-absorption). This should be avoided.

Among the most important of the ideas in the study of religion has to do with the importance of *context* for the construction of ideas and for the very notion of truth itself. Historical and cultural context are especially important for the study of religion. If you do not understand how the contextuality of religious discourse and behavior influences our thinking about matters of theology, belief, ritual, spirituality, ethics, and inner searching, then this is something you'll need to work on. I will expect your papers to show me that you can think critically as you look at religion, what you have read, and your own ideas.

## *University Policies you should know about*

### **Academic dishonesty policy:**

#### Cheating

Cheating is defined as the attempt, successful or not, to give or obtain aid and/or information by illicit means in meeting any academic requirements, including examinations. Cheating includes falsifying reports and documents.

#### Plagiarism

Plagiarism is 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, commits plagiarism. Plagiarism violates both University and College codes.

#### Penalty for the above infractions include:

The instructor's choice of failing you on said assignment, failing you in the class, reporting you to the university which will lead to your expulsion from the university (and probably any form of higher education in your future – from a reputable institution).

### **Incomplete Grades:**

Due to an increase in incompletes being given it will be harder to obtain an incomplete.

You must have completed at least 60% of the class work and been attending class regularly. There will need to be proof of your hospitalization or other such trauma. A death certificate will need to be presented in the case of immediate relatives (parents, siblings).

Here is the policy concerning incomplete grades:

1. Students are only eligible for IN grades if they have completed 60% of the work in the course and if they request the IN in advance (not during exam week). Professors are still under no obligation to grant requests for IN grades, even if the students meet the above criteria.
2. Students given IN grades **MUST NOT** re-register for the course. They must submit the missing work, at which time the faculty will change the IN grade to a regular letter grade.
3. Faculty who give IN grades are urged to make the due dates as short as possible, since the longer the delay in submitting the work, the lower the completion rate and the lower the grades on work that is handed in. Generally, the due date should be the date the student plans on beginning his/her next classes.

## Calendar

\*EWR = Ethics in World Religions available on Bb/Fisher = course text

<b>Date</b>	<b>Lecture Topics &amp; Readings</b>	<b>Assignment due</b>
<b>Aug 28</b>	Syllabus; Introduction (Religious Responses Fisher Ch.1)	
<b>Sept. 4</b>	Introduction; Hinduism (Fisher Ch. 3) EWR (Hindu)	<b>EWR Hindu article: Sept. 10</b>
<b>Sept. 11</b>	Hinduism/EWR discussion	
<b>Sept. 18</b>	Jainism/Buddhism/ EWR (Buddhism)	<b>Quiz #1: Sept. 19-22 EWR Buddhism article: Sept. 24</b>
<b>Sept. 25</b>	Buddhism/EWR discussion	
<b>Oct. 2</b>	Daosim/ EWR (Confucian)	<b>EWR Confucian article: Oct. 8</b>
<b>Oct. 9</b>	Confucianism/EWR discussion	<b>Quiz #2: Oct. 10-13</b>
<b>Oct. 16</b>	Review; Midterm	<b>Midterm: Oct. 17-20</b>
<b>Oct. 23</b>	Judaism	
<b>Oct. 30</b>	Judaism	
<b>Nov. 6</b>	Christianity	<b>Quiz #3: Nov. 7-10</b>
<b>Nov. 13</b>	Christianity	<b>Site Review: Nov. 17</b>
<b>Nov. 20</b>	Islam	<b>Global Perspective essay: Nov. 24</b>
<b>Nov. 27</b>	Islam/Sikh	<b>Global Engagement Discussion Board: Nov. 27-Dec. 5</b>
<b>Dec. 4</b>	New Religious Movements	<b>Quiz #4: Dec. 5-8 Discussion board closes Dec. 5</b>
<b>Dec. 11</b>	<b>FINALS WEEK</b>	<b>Final: Dec. 11-14</b>

## Religious Sites of South Florida

**\* REMINDER: you may not visit a site of your own religious background!**

### ISLAMIC

Female students can bring a scarf with them if they don't want to stand out, but it is not required.

<b>Miami Gardens Mosque (Sunni)</b> 4305 N.W. 183 street Miami, Florida 33055	<b>Mosque of Miami (Sunni)</b> 7350 N.W. 3rd Street Miami, Florida 33126 305-261-7622
<b>Masjid Al-Ansar (Sunni)</b> 5245 N.W. 7th Avenue Miami, Florida 33127 305-757-8741	<b>Islamic School of Miami</b> Masjid al-Noor (Sunni) 11699 SW 147 Ave Miami, FL 33196 (305) 408-0400
<b>Tasnim Uddin, Principal of School</b> Friday: 1:30 pm, Islam School on Sundays: 10am-12pm (behind the Exxon gas station)	<b>Islamic Jafferia Association Imambara (Shia)</b> 10554 N.W. 132nd Street Hialeah Gardens, Florida 33016 (305) 557-6835 <a href="http://www.ijamiami.org/">http://www.ijamiami.org/</a>
<b>Muhammad's Mosque # 29 (Nation of Islam)</b> 5660 N.W. 7th Ave. Miami, Florida 305-756-9136	

### BAHAI

<b>FIU Bahai Club</b> 305-436-24907	<b>Bahai Faith (South)</b> 9300 S. Dixie Hwy. Miami, Florida 305-570-8886
<b>Bahai Faith (North)</b> 4365 Rock Island Rd. Ft. Lauderdale 954-524-4084	



## BUDDHIST

<p><b>Nichiren Buddhist Sokka Gakkai International</b> Miami Community Center 20000 S.W. 36th St. Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33332 954-349-5200</p>	<p><b>Avalokitesvara Buddhist Study Center</b> 7550 S.W. 82nd Court Miami, Florida 33143 305-271-6361 267-8000</p>
<p><b>International Zen Institute of Florida Dharma House</b> 3860 Crawford Avenue Miami, Florida 33133 305-448-8969</p>	<p><b>Wat Buddharangsi Temple (Thai, Buddhist)</b> 15200 S.W., 240th Street Homestead, Florida 305-245-2702</p>
<p><b>Amida Temple ("Pure Land" Buddhist)</b> c/o Kuang-Hsi Wu 12815 S.W. 119 Terrace Miami, Florida 33186 305-385-2866</p>	<p><b>International Dharma Center</b> P.O. Box 141728 Coral Gables, Florida 33114-1728 305-267-8000 (Ileana Davis)</p>
<p><b>Kagyü Shedrup Chöling (Tibetan Buddhist)</b> 1905 Monroe Street Hollywood, Florida 33020 954-920-1346</p>	

## HINDU

<p><b>Shiva Vishnu Temple 5661 Dykes Rd.</b> (S.W. 160th Ave) Pembroke Pines (Davie) 954-689-0471 webmaster@shivavishnu.org (I-75 north, exit at Sheridan, go west to Dykes Road, then go north for about a mile, temple on the left)</p>	<p><b>The South Florida Hindu Temple</b> 13010 Griffin Road Davie, Florida 954-438-3675 info@sfht.org</p>
	<p><b>Hare Krishna Temple</b> 3220 Virginia St. Coconut Grove, Florida 305-442-7218</p>

## SIKH & JAIN

SIKH	JAIN
<p><b>Sikh Society of Florida</b> 16000 Sterling Rd. Pembroke Pines, Florida 954-680-0221 (Same directions as to Shiva Hindu Temple, but closer to Sheridan on Dykes Road)</p>	<p><b>Jain Center of South Florida</b> 1960 N. Commerce Parkway #11 Weston, FL 33326 Here is Direction Link for Jain center. <a href="http://jaincentersfl.com/direction.html">http://jaincentersfl.com/direction.html</a></p>

## JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN

Synagogues: Friday evenings, near Sundown; and Saturday mornings.

Christian churches: Consult Yellow Pages for church nearest where you live.

Students are encouraged to do detective work and find representatives of the other major world religions in Miami or the South Florida area: Taoism, Confucianism(Chinese), Shinto(Japanese), and Zoroastrianism (Persian/Iranian, and mostly in Bombay, India).