REL 4936/REL 6196: GLOBALIZING THE SACRED
MONDAY 8-9TH PERIODS, WEDNESDAY 9TH PERIOD
AND 34
SPRING 2015

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Office Hours: Mon. Noon to 1:30PM & Wed. 1PM to 3PM

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the economic, political, and cultural dimensions of globalization in multiple settings. In particular, we will examine the ways in which these dimensions shape and are shaped by religious beliefs, symbols, practices, and institutions. After reviewing key theoretical and methodological tools to understand current global processes, the course will focus on “case studies” – i.e., Christianity, Hindu Traditions, Islam, and New Religion Movements – that highlight the complex historical and contemporary interactions between religion and globalization. The course concludes with an assessment of the value of a globalization framework in the study of religion and a discussion of some of the social and ethical issues that are likely to dominate our global age.

OBJECTIVES

1. To familiarize students with the major theories of globalization.

2. To evaluate the contributions of globalization theories to the study of religion.

3. To examine the contributions that the discipline of religious studies can make to the interdisciplinary study of contemporary global and transnational dynamics.

REQUIREMENTS

1. **THREE short response papers for undergraduates and FIVE for students taking the course for graduate credits** (5-6 pp). These response papers will address key issues and methodological and theoretical questions raised in each of the course’s four sections. The objective of these papers is to encourage students synthesize the readings and class discussions and articulate their own informed and analytically nuanced positions. The papers are due on the Monday following the end of the specific section to which they respond. They constitute 60% of the final grade (20% each for undergraduates and 12% for graduates).

2. **For those taking the course for graduate credit an exploratory piece** (15-20 pp) reflecting on the usefulness of the globalization framework for their particular M.A. or doctoral project. More concretely, I would like students to focus on the following questions: How does taking a “globalization approach” transform their chosen dissertation or thesis topic and methodology? What specific methods and concepts in the readings and class discussions are particularly fruitful in addressing the issues at hand? Which methods and theories do not work as well? Why? The assignment is due during exam week and is worth 30% of the final grade. **For undergraduates, a final paper (10-12 pp.) on a topic connected with religion and globalization.** All students are encouraged to consult with the instructor early in the semester re. the subject of and sources for their final assignment.

3. **Attendance and Active Participation.** Given that this course is a small advanced seminar, attendance is mandatory. Absences will be allowed only under very special circumstances, such as a medical
emergency. In that case, students must bring a doctor’s note. Students are expected to read all the
assigned material before coming to class and to participate actively in class discussion. I reserve the right
to give pop quizzes if students are not doing the readings and class discussions are flagging. Attendance
and participation represent 10% of your final grade.

RULES

1. Plagiarism or cheating: On the issue of plagiarism and cheating, I operate under a zero tolerance policy. I remind you that all UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states: “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code.” Moreover, on all work submitted for credit at the University of Florida, students are bound by the following pledge: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (Please see: http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Please keep in mind that plagiarism does not consist only in copying verbatim someone else’s material and presenting it as if it were yours. It also includes taking ideas (even paraphrased!) from an author without according him/her proper recognition (through a footnote, for instance).

2. Incompletes are strongly discouraged and will be given only when students who have finished most of the assignments satisfactorily cannot complete the final requirements due to unforeseen events. If this is the case, students must arrange for the incomplete before the end of the semester.

3. Late papers: Unless students can present proper, legitimate written documentation (in the form of a medical excuse or a funeral notice, for example) to justify their inability to turn in the assignments on time, I will deduct half a grade (e.g., from A to A-) for every day the paper is late. In case there is a legitimate excuse, the student must arrange with the instructor an alternative due date for the assignment.

4. Grading Scale: A: 100-95; A-: 94-90; B+: 89-87; B: 86-84; B-: 83-80; C+: 79-77; C: 76-74; C-: 73-70; D+: 69-67; D: 66-64; D-: 63-60; E: <60.

5. I expect students to treat each other with civility and respect. I hope that our debates will be lively and that people will feel free to express their opinions and disagree with each other. However, these opinions and disagreements have to be presented in a manner that is appropriate to an academic setting.

6. Students engaging in any sort of disruptive behavior, including passing notes, reading a newspaper, playing computers games, checking their e-mail, or chatting while lectures and class discussions are taking place, will be asked to leave the classroom. They will be counted as absent for that particular day. Please turn phones and pagers off during class.

7. Please make sure to arrive to class on time. I dislike being interrupted once class has started.

8. Students with Disabilities. Students requesting classroom accommodation or special consideration must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation or special consideration.

9. Academic life can be stressful. Be advised that the UF has resources to help students cope with this stress, including counseling and mental health services. See http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx. For emergencies and matters of safety, call the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-11.
10. **Course Evaluations.** Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at https://evaluations.ufl.edu. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. I will try to schedule some time in class for you complete these evaluations. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at [https://evaluations.ufl.edu](https://evaluations.ufl.edu).

**REQUIRED READINGS**

**Books:**


**Journal Articles and Book Chapters:**

Additional readings are available on-line through the databases at Smathers Library or will be posted on the courses CANVAS website.

**SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS**

01/07: **Introduction to the Course** – No readings

I. **What is Globalization?**

01/12: **The Historical Context I**


01/14: **The Historical Context II**


01/19: **MLK’s B-Day** – No Class

01/21: **The Economic and Political Dimensions of Globalization I**

01/26: The Economic and Political Dimensions of Globalization II

Readings: – Harvey, David, 1989. The Condition of Postmodernity, pp. 113-197
201-259.

01/28: The Economic and Political Dimensions of Globalization III


02/02: The Cultural Dimensions of Globalization I: The Relation between Locality and Culture


02/04: The Cultural Dimensions of Globalization II: To Be Hybrid or Not?


*** FIRST SHORT RESPONSE PAPER DUE 02/06 AT 5PM ***

02/09: Religion and Globalization: Theoretical Statements I


02/11: Religion and Globalization: Theoretical Statements II

II. Key Processes and Actors

02/16: Transnational Migration and Diasporas: Theoretical Statements I

**Readings:**

02/18: Transnational Migration and Diasporas: Theoretical Statements II

**Readings:**

02/23: Transnational Migration and Diasporas: Religion I

**Readings:**

02/25: Transnational Migration and Diasporas: Religion II

**Readings:**

*** SECOND SHORT RESPONSE PAPER DUE 02/27 AT 5PM ***

03/02: Spring Break

03/04: Spring Break

03/09: Virtuality and Global Electronic Media I

**Readings:**

03/11: Virtuality and Global Electronic Media II

**Readings:**

### III. Case Studies

**03/16: Islam and Globalization I**

**Readings:**


**03/18: Islam and Globalization II**

**Readings:**


**Additional Grad Readings:**


*** THIRD SHORT RESPONSE PAPER DUE 03/20 AT 5PM ***

**03/23: Christianity and Globalization I**

**Readings:**


**Additional Grad Readings:**


03/25: Christianity and Globalization II

Readings:  

03/30: Christianity and Globalization III

Readings:  

04/01: New Religious Movements and Globalization I

Readings:  

04/06: New Alternative Religious Movements and Globalization II

Readings:  
04/08: Hindu Traditions and Globalization I


04/13: Hindu Traditions and Globalization II


IV. Religion and the Future of Globalization: Ethics, Politics, and Activism

04/15: The Environment at Stake: Religion, the Local, the Global, and the Universal


04/20: Does Religion Matter in Environmental Activism?


04/22: Contesting Globalization: Defense, Critique, and Activism


*** FIFTH SHORT RESPONSE PAPER DUE 04/24 AT 5PM ***

*** FINAL EXPLORATORY PIECE DUE: TBA ***