

Introduction to Christianity

Course: REL 2502

Term: Fall 2023

Times: M/W/F (11:45 AM - 12:35 PM)

Location: MAT 0004

Instructor: Dr. Jeyoul Choi

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Office: 107F Anderson Hall

Office Hours: By appointment

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Course Description:

This course introduces students to the history of Christianity as a global religious tradition. Its purpose is to explore the origin of the Christian faith and its development in different historical, social, and political circumstances around the globe. While putting the evaluation of their “truth claims” aside, in this course, we will examine the various ways to be a “true Christian” by different racial and ethnic groups in each historical context. A better understanding of the history of Christianity will offer students the chance to critically reflect upon their Christian faith and its impact on society.

Course Objectives:

- 1) To be familiarized with the core beliefs, practices, and history of Christianity
- 2) To understand how Christianity has changed in different historical and social contexts

Required Reading Materials

For Purchase:

Chidester, David. 2000. *Christianity: A Global History*. New York: HarperCollins Book.

Additional Readings (book chapters and articles) marked with (*) will be available in Canvas

Assignments:

1. Quizzes (20%)

Starting in the second week of the class, students will take quizzes (11 times) administered through Canvas. The quizzes are composed of multiple-choice and true/false questions based on the lectures and readings. Each set of quizzes has five questions. Students will have 10 minutes to complete it.

2. Reading Responses (25%)

Starting in the second week of the class, students will complete a 12-set of online reading responses throughout the semester. This assignment will be administrated through Canvas to

prepare students for in-class discussion each week. The assignment will ask students to provide a 2-4 paragraph-long (300-400 words) response to the question the instructor posted about the reading material.

3. Church Visit Paper (15%)

Students will write an essay after they visit a Christian religious service (the length of the essay should be five double-spaced pages). A handout with more specific guidelines will become available as the due date approaches. This assignment is due November 17.

4. Midterm Exam (15%)

Students will take a midterm exam that will be administrated via Canvas (October 13). The exam will cover the contents in the first half of the class. The questions will consist of a mixture of multiple-choice and true/false. Once the exam begins, students will have 40 minutes to complete it (15 questions). The exam will comprise 15 percent of students' overall grades for the course.

5. Final Exam (15%)

Students will take a midterm exam that will be administrated via Canvas (December 6). The exam will cover the contents in the second half of the class. The questions will consist of a mixture of multiple-choice and true/false. Once the exam begins, students will have 40 minutes to complete it (15 questions). The exam will comprise 15 percent of students' overall grades for the course.

6. Attendance & Class Participation (10%)

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all classes throughout the semester. Absence will be exempted only with documentation of a hardship affecting performance in the classroom such as sickness, family issues, or deployment.

Class Participation

Although it is the instructor's responsibility to lead each class with lectures or by facilitating class discussion, all students are expected to engage in each class by asking and answering questions concerning the relevant topics.

Reading:

Students are expected to do all the reading for this class. Success in the course depends on the student's close reading of the material. Each week requires 40 to 60 pages of reading.

Grading

- Quizzes (20%)
- Reading Responses (25%)
- Church Visit Paper (15%)
- Midterm Exam (15%)
- Final Exam (15%)

Class Participation & Attendance (10%)

Grade Scale

93 and up	A
90-92.9	A-
87-89.9	B+
83-86.9	B
80-82.9	B-
77-79.9	C+
73-76.9	C
70-72.9	C-
60-69.9	D
<60	F

Policies, Rules, and Resources

1. Late or Make-Up Assignments: You may take an exam early or receive an extension on an exam or essay assignment only in extraordinary circumstances. If possible, please request prior approval from the instructor. If that is not possible, please contact the instructor as soon as possible to arrange for the makeup. If an extension is not granted, the assignment will be marked down 1/3 grade (e.g., from B+ to B) for each day late.

2. Completion of All Assignments: You must complete all written and oral assignments and fulfill the requirement for class participation in order to pass the course. I will not average a grade that is missing any assignment or requirement.

3. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:
catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academicregulations/attendance-policies/

4. Common Courtesy: You may take notes on a laptop computer, although the instructor may ask you to turn off the computer if circumstances warrant. The instructor and TA reserve the right to ask any student engaging in disruptive behavior (e.g., whispering, reading a newspaper) to leave the class.

5. Course Evaluations: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

6. Honor Code: 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. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/) specifies several behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Please note that acts of plagiarism include:

- Turning in a paper or assignment that was written by someone else.
- Copying verbatim a sentence or paragraph of text from the work of another author without proper citation and quotation marks.
- Using and copying verbatim a sentence or paragraph of text from Chatgpt or any other AI software for any kind of course assignments.
- Paraphrasing or restating in your own words, text or ideas written by someone else without proper citation.

For more info, see <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html>

Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

7. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, dso.ufl.edu/drc) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Schedule of Classes

Week 1: Course Introduction & Understanding Religion

Wednesday: (08/23): Course Introduction

Friday (08/25): (*) Esposito, et al. Chapter 1—Introduction: Understanding World Religions in Global Perspective

Week 2: Judaism

Monday (08/28): (*) Esposito, et al. Chapter 3— “Jewish Identity and Faith”

Wednesday (08/30): (*) Esposito, et al. Chapter 3— “Jewish Identity and Faith”

Friday (09/01): Discussion

Week 3: Who is Jesus Christ?

Monday (09/04): No Class (Labor Day)

Wednesday (09/06): Chidester, Chapters 1—Beginnings, 2—Jesus, and 3—Christ

Friday (09/08): Chidester, Chapters 1—Beginnings, 2—Jesus, and 3—Christ

Week 4: Early Christianity I

Monday (09/11): Chidester, Chapters 4—Christians, 5—Churches, and 6—Martyrs

Wednesday (09/13): Chidester, Chapters 4—Christians, 5—Churches, and 6—Martyrs

Friday (09/15): Discussion

Week 5: Early Christianity II

Monday (09/18): Chidester, Chapters 7—Christian Empire, 8—Holiness, and 9—Faith and Reason

Wednesday (09/20): Chidester, Chapters 7—Christian Empire, 8—Holiness, and 9—Faith and Reason

Friday (09/22): Discussion

Week 6: Early Christianity III

Monday (09/25): Movie, “The Da Vinci Code (2006)”

Wednesday (09/27): Movie, “The Da Vinci Code (2006)”

Friday (09/29): Discussion

Week 7: Medieval Christianity I

Monday (10/02): Chidester, Chapters 10—Power, 11—Christendom, and 12—Hierarchy

Supplementary Reading: (*) Esposito, et al. Chapter 5— “Islam: The Many Faces of the Muslim Experience” (p. 173-201)

Wednesday (10/04): Chidester, Chapters 10—Power, 11—Christendom, and 12—Hierarchy

Friday (10/06): Discussion

Week 8: Medieval Christianity II & Midterm

Monday (10/09): Chidester, Chapters 13—Objects and 14—Scholars

Wednesday (10/11): Chidester, Chapters 13—Objects and 14—Scholars

Friday (10/13): No Class

Midterm Exam via Canvas on October 13

Week 9: Medieval Christianity III

Monday (10/16): Chidester, Chapters 16—Heretics and 17—Mary

Wednesday (10/18): Chidester, Chapters 16—Heretics and 17—Mary

Friday (10/20): Discussion

Week 10: Modern Christianity

Monday (10/23): Chidester, Chapters 19—Reformation and 20—Europe

Supplementary Reading: (*) Esposito, et al. Chapter 4— “Christianity: The Christian Tradition” (p. 153-163)

Wednesday (10/25): Chidester, Chapters 19—Reformation and 20—Europe

Friday (10/27): Discussion

Week 11: Christianity and Imperialism

Monday (10/30): Chidester, Chapters 21—New World and 22—Holy Russia

Wednesday (11/01): Chidester, Chapters 21—New World and 22—Holy Russia

Friday (11/03): Discussion

Week 12: Christianity in America

Monday (11/06): Chidester, Chapter 23—American Zion

Supplementary Reading: (*) Butler, Chapters 5—Slavery and the African Spiritual Holocaust and 6—the Plural Origins of American Revivalism

Wednesday (11/08): Chidester, Chapter 23—American Zion

Friday (11/10): Discussion

Week 13: Christianity in Asia

Monday (11/13): Chidester, Chapters 25—Asian Heavens and 26—Hindu Christians

Supplementary Reading: (*) Esposito, et al. Chapter 6—South Asian Religions: Hinduism, Jainism, and Sikhism (p. 266-285) and 8—East Asian Religions: Confucianism, Daoism, Shinto, Buddhism (p.422-436)

Wednesday (11/15): Chidester, Chapters 25—Asian Heavens and 26—Hindu Christians

Friday (11/17): Discussion

Church Visit Paper Due November 17

Week 14: Thanksgiving Week

Monday (11/20): No Class

Wednesday (11/22): No Class

Friday (11/24): No Class

Week 15: Contemporary Christianity

Monday (11/27): Chidester, Chapter 29—Cold War

Wednesday (11/29): Chidester, Chapter 29—Cold War

Friday (12/01): Discussion

Week 16: Final Exam Week

Monday (12/04): Review

Wednesday (12/06): No Class

Final Exam via Canvas on December 6

Friday (12/08): No Class