

REL 3191 Course Syllabus (Spring 2021)

Course Description

This course is divided into two sections and both examine conceptions of death and the afterlife. The first (and longer) section examines conceptions of death and the afterlife from the perspective of various religious traditions from around the world. Topics that will be explored in this section include: conceptions of a soul (if any), what happens to a person at death, funerary rites, various conceptions of a/the ultimate reality (theistic, monistic, and so forth), notions of salvation and/or liberation, judgment, and various conceptions time (e.g., linear or cyclical). The second section will explore how some of these religious perspectives are reflected in popular culture and spiritual movements. This section will focus on views of reincarnation and debates over the topic of near-death experiences.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course the student will be able to:

- Provide a background for each religious tradition to contextualize notions of death and the afterlife.
- Recognize basic conceptions of death and the afterlife according various Western and Eastern religious traditions (Hindu, Buddhist, Chinese, Japanese Indigenous, Christian, Judaic, and Islamic traditions) as exemplified through sacred texts (written or oral), ritual practices and popular beliefs.
- Identify a few funerary practices associated with different religious traditions.
- Understand relationships between conceptions of death and the afterlife and key doctrinal positions maintained by the respective religious tradition.

Required Text

- Bregman, Lucy ed. *Death & Dying in World Religions*, 2nd ed. Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt Publishing, 2019.

Grading Breakdown

Quizzes: 40%

Discussion Reflection/Response Postings: 20%

Two Reflection Papers: 20% (10% each)

Final Exam: 20%

Grading Scale

A: 100-93; A -: 92-90

B+: 89-87; B: 86-83

B -: 82-80; C+: 79-77

C: 76-73; C -: 72-70

D+: 69-67; D: 66-63

D -: 62-60; E: 59 or below

For more information about UF's minus grade system

visit: <http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html> (Links to an external site.)

Quizzes

This course will conduct weekly online quizzes to evaluate the student's grasp and understanding of concepts, facts, arguments, and other important information covered in the lectures and readings presented during that particular week. Before taking a quiz, students should have watched all the videos and completed the required readings for the week. All quizzes will be administered online through the Canvas website.

All quizzes will be made available according to assigned due dates. **Please refer the syllabus for the due dates.** Unless otherwise stated the quizzes will be ten minutes. You will be notified in advance in case any changes are made concerning the time. Questions will be randomly generated from a pool predetermined questions which ensures that no two students have the same exact quiz. This procedure is necessary in an online class in order to discourage cheating. These quizzes will comprise 40% of your overall grade for the course.

For further information on taking quizzes in - Canvas please consult the online help files.

Online Discussion Postings

Every week students are expected to post a minimum of two responses/reflections to the online course discussion forums in Canvas. These forums are only available to the instructors and other students enrolled in the course. One post will be a reflection to the course readings and/or lectures required for that week. The other will be a response to a fellow classmate. The student should feel free to compose posts on a topic that most interests him or her from the readings and/or videos for that week. A few example topics will be made available to students should selecting a topic prove too difficult.

For credit, the reflection post must be made by the assigned due date. The response post must be made by the assigned due date. All posts should be articulate, well thought out and adhere to the rules of grammar, punctuation and spelling of the English language. Two posts must meet the minimum requirement of 100 words each (200 words total). Additional posts beyond these two can be of any length. Additionally, all posts should be courteous, academic and non-aggressive. Rude and demeaning online behavior will not be tolerated for any reason and could adversely affect your grade. While students may certainly be critical, such critical responses and observations should be presented in a professional and academic manner. Students are encouraged to make multiple (relevant) posts, although this is not mandatory. These discussion posts will comprise 20% of your overall grade for the course. You can use audio, video, and/or written mediums of communication in the discussion section.

The rubric for the discussion post can be found by clicking on the [Accessibility score: Low Click to improve](#) found in the right corner of a discussion forum. From the drop-down menu, click on "Show Rubric." It will display on your screen and you can read the criteria there in case you forget what's listed above.

Reflection Papers

This course will require you to write **two 5-page reflection papers**. For each paper, you will be provided with a general topic by your instructor. Students are expected to write about this topic by drawing upon their course readings, lectures and discussions. The papers should be double-spaced and have 1-inch page margins. The font should be 12pt Times New Roman (or Calibri). The first reflection paper will be due **February 3rd**. The second reflection paper will be due **March 10th**. Additional details will be provided online via a Reflection Paper Handout at a later time in the semester. Each reflection paper will comprise 10% of your overall grade for the course (total 20%).

Final Exam

This course will conduct a final exam that will be administered online via Canvas. The exam will be cumulative, and the questions will consist of a mixture of multiple choice, true/false, matching and so forth. **The Final exam will become available on 04/27/2019 at 12:00 am and will remain available until 12:00 pm on 04/29/2019.** Once started, students will have 45 minutes to complete the final exam. The final exam will comprise 20% of your overall grade for the course. Additional details on the final exam will be provided later in the semester. All course activities will be conducted via Canvas (<https://lss.at.ufl.edu/>).

Academic Honesty

Guidelines for academic honesty at the University of Florida can be found at: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/> (Links to an external site.). Students are expected to familiarize themselves with the guidelines detailed at the above site and related links and adhere to them.

Online Behavior

Students are expected to be courteous to the instructor and other students in the class. Rude and demeaning online behavior will not be tolerated and could adversely affect a student's grade. All posts, emails and other forms of electronic correspondence should be courteous and professional.

Although the course is online, the University's honor and conduct codes still apply: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/> (Links to an external site.)

Students with Disabilities

Any student with a disability must register with the office of the Dean of Students: <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/> (Links to an external site.)

Assignments:

Due Date

Fri Jan 15, 2021	Assignment Introduce Yourself
Tue Jan 19, 2021	Assignment Discuss Hinduism
Fri Jan 22, 2021	Assignment Syllabus Quiz
Tue Jan 26, 2021	Assignment Discuss Buddhism
Fri Jan 29, 2021	Assignment Quiz 01
Sun Feb 7, 2021	Assignment Reflection Paper 1
Tue Feb 9, 2021	Assignment Discuss East Asian Traditions
Tue Feb 16, 2021	Assignment Discuss Indigenous Traditions
Fri Feb 19, 2021	Assignment Quiz 02
Tue Feb 23, 2021	Assignment Discuss Christianity
Fri Mar 12, 2021	Assignment Quiz 03
Sun Mar 14, 2021	Assignment Reflection Paper 2
Tue Mar 16, 2021	Assignment Discuss Judaism
Tue Mar 23, 2021	Assignment Discuss Islam
Fri Apr 2, 2021	Assignment Quiz 04
Tue Apr 6, 2021	Assignment Discuss Reincarnation
Tue Apr 13, 2021	Assignment Discuss Contemporary Culture
Fri Apr 16, 2021	Assignment Quiz 05

Tue Apr 27, 2021

Assignment [Final](#)

Thu Apr 29, 2021

Assignment [Extra Credit Quiz](#)
