

## **REL3191 - Death and Afterlife**

Spring 2022

Instructor: Carol Rodriguez Gutierrez

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Office Hours: Fridays 12am – 3pm (Anderson Hall 009)

Online Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Location: Online Course

### **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 of 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

### Quizzes

This course will conduct a total of 5 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.

### 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.

## 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 26th**. The second reflection paper will be due **April 2nd**. 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 04/24/2020 at 12:00 am and will remain available until 11:59 pm on 04/27/2020.** 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.

## 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/>. 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 polite and professional.

Any student with a disability must register with the office of the Dean of Students:

<https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>

## Succeeding in an Online Course

Taking a course online can be a lot of fun! Here are some tips that will help you get the most of this course while taking full advantage of the online format:

- Schedule "class times" for yourself. It is important to do the coursework on time each week. You will receive 0 points for work that is turned in late.
- Read ALL of the material contained on this site. There is a lot of helpful information that can save you time and help you get a better grade.

- Complete all assessments, assignments and activities well in advance of the due date.
- Take full advantage of the online discussion boards. Ask for help or clarification of the material if you need it. Do not wait to ask questions! Waiting to ask a question might cause you to miss a due date.
- Sometimes technology malfunctions. If you experience technical difficulties, call the UF Computing Help Desk immediately at 352-392-HELP.

## **Course Summary:**

### **Module 1 (Weeks 1 & 2)**

#### Course Introduction

Wed Jan 12, 2022

[Introduce Yourself](#)

Fri Jan 14, 2022

[Syllabus Quiz](#)

### **Module 2 (Week 3)**

Fri Jan 21, 2022

[Discuss Hinduism](#)

### **Module 3 (Weeks 4 & 5)**

Fri Jan 28, 2022

[Discuss Buddhism](#)

Fri Feb 4, 2022

[Quiz 01](#)

### **Module 4 (Week 6)**

Fri Feb 11, 2022

[Discuss East Asian Traditions](#)

### **Module 5 (Weeks 7 & 8)**

Fri Feb 18, 2022

[Discuss Indigenous Traditions](#)

Fri Feb 25, 2022

Quiz 02

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Sat Feb 26, 2022

Reflection Paper 1

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**Module 6 (Week 9)**

Fri Mar 4, 2022

Discuss Christianity

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Sun Mar 6, 2022

Quiz 03

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**Spring Break (Week 10)**

Enjoy the break!

**Module 7 (Week 11)**

Fri Mar 18, 2022

Discuss Judaism

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**Module 8 (Week 12 and 13)**

Fri Mar 25, 2022

Discuss Islam

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Fri Apr 1, 2022

Quiz 04

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Sat Apr 2, 2022

Reflection Paper 2

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**Module 9 (Week 14)**

Fri Apr 8, 2022

Discuss Reincarnation

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**Module 10 (Weeks 15 & 16)**

Fri Apr 15, 2022

Discuss Contemporary Culture

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Fri Apr 22, 2022

Quiz 05

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Sun Apr 24, 2022

Extra Credit Quiz

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**Finals (Week 17)**

Wed Apr 27, 2022

Final

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