

Global Religions in the United States

Course: REL 3136

Term: Spring 2024

Times: M/W/F (12:50 PM - 1:40 PM)

General Education: International (N) and Humanities (H)

Writing Requirement (WR): 2 Level (2,000 words)

Location: MAT 102

Instructor: Dr. Jeyoul Choi

Email Address: jeyoul@ufl.edu

Office: 107F Anderson Hall

Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

The United States has become an increasingly diverse nation with the arrival of non-European migrants/immigrants after it revised the immigration law in 1965. With a special focus on religion, this course helps students comprehend how the U.S. religious landscape has been globalized through both Christian and non-Christian religions practiced by various racial and ethnic groups in the past few decades. In particular, the course explores how Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism in the U.S. context are shaped by different migrants/immigrants throughout history. Thematically, special attentions are given to race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and generation of their religious groups. Using Gainesville as a larger site for fieldwork, the course, methodologically, employs ethnography in which students explore different religious communities to make sense of how their religious experience, interacting with the aforementioned themes, is reconstructed in the new context. Putting all these parts together, the course helps students learn more about global religious traditions in the U.S. and their roles in accommodating or resisting the larger, dominant society, as well as answering the question about “what it means to be American in the 21st century United States” through the lens of religion.

Course Objectives

Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Identify doctrinal and ritualistic differences among global religions in the U.S.
- Identify how each religion as a lived practice helps migrants/immigrants navigate their lives in the U.S.
- Examine race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and generation as significant themes that shape the lives of religious migrants/immigrants in the U.S.
- Analyze and navigate the gap between the knowledge and information learned in the classroom and fieldwork for a better understanding of lived religions in the U.S.

Humanities Credit

Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and analyze the key elements, biases, and influences that shape through. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives.

International Credit

International courses promote the development of students' global and intercultural awareness. Students examine the cultural, economic, geographic, historical, political, and/or social experiences and processes that characterize the contemporary world, and thereby comprehend the trends, challenges, and opportunities that affect communities around the world. Students analyze and reflect on the ways in which cultural, economic, political, and/or social systems and beliefs mediate their own and other people's understanding of an increasingly connected world.

Required Reading Materials

For Purchase:

No Reading for Purchase

All Required and Supplementary Readings Marked with (*) will be available on Canvas

Assignments:

1. Keyword Reading Responses (25%)

Starting in the third week of the class, students will complete a 10-set of reading responses throughout the semester. This assignment helps students with their reading comprehension and in-class discussion each week. For this assignment, students will ***provide at least two keywords*** after they complete the reading assignment and ***write a 2-3 paragraph-long response (200-300 words)*** that explains how the keywords they provided explain the details of each week's reading materials. At the end of their responses, ***students will pose their own questions*** (at least one) related to the reading materials. The assignment is due every Sunday.

2. Oral Fieldwork Report (15%)

In the first half of the semester (before the midterm week), students will conduct fieldwork on one of the Christian churches (Latino, Asian, and African congregations) in Gainesville. Students will deliver a short presentation (20-25 minutes) about their visit in class and submit a report (**three to four pages double-spaced**) by each due date. The report is worth ten percent of the final grade while five percent is assigned to the presentation. A detailed handout will be provided in the second week of the semester.

Extra Credit Opportunities: Upon request, students can participate in this assignment multiple times by visiting both Christian and non-Christian congregations to make up the keyword reading responses they missed submitting.

3. Ethnography (20%)

In the second half of the semester (after the midterm week), students will conduct fieldwork on a non-Christian religious congregation (Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism) in Gainesville. Students will deliver a short presentation about their visit in class and submit an in-depth ethnographic paper (seven to eight pages double-spaced) about the congregation they visit. The report is worth fifteen percent of the final grade while five percent is assigned to the presentation. Additionally, students will do a peer review (April 15) on their first draft of ethnography before the final submission (April 22). A detailed handout will be provided in the second week of the semester.

4. First Take-Home Exam Essay (Midterm Exam, 15%)

Students will write a take-home exam essay in the eighth week of the semester (the length of the essay should be four to five double-spaced pages, 1,200-1,500 words). The instructor will provide students with several keywords discussed in each unit covered in the first half of the class. Students will have the freedom to organize their essays to discuss the keywords by drawing from the reading materials. The purpose of the assignment is to evaluate student's ability to discuss different concepts and case studies on global religions in the U.S. in-depth and to weave them into a coherent thesis. This assignment is due March 1.

5. Second Take-Home Essay (Final Exam, 15%)

Students will write a take-home exam essay in the last week of the semester (the length of the essay should be four to five double-spaced pages, 1,200-1,500 words). The instructor will provide students with several keywords discussed in each unit covered in the second half of the class. Students will have the freedom to organize their essays to discuss the keywords by drawing from the reading materials. The purpose of the assignment is to evaluate student's ability to discuss different concepts and case studies on global religions in the U.S. in-depth and to weave them into a coherent thesis. This assignment is due April 26.

6. Attendance & Class Participation (10%)

Attendance (5%)

Students are expected to attend all classes throughout the semester. Absence of each class will be tracked via Canvas Rollcall check-ins. Absence will be exempted only with documentation of a hardship affecting performance in the classroom such as sickness, family issues, or deployment. Acceptable reasons for absence from or failure to engage in class include illness; Title IX-related situations; special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences); military obligation; severe weather conditions that prevent class participation; religious holidays; participation in official university activities (e.g., music performances, athletic competitions, debate); and court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena). Other reasons (e.g., a job interview or club activity) may be deemed acceptable if approved by the instructor.

Students shall be permitted to a reasonable amount of time to make up the material or activities covered during absence from class or inability to engage in class activities because of the reasons

outlined above. If possible, please request prior approval from the instructor. If that is not possible, please contact the instructor as soon as possible to arrange 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.

Class Participation (5%)

Although it is the instructor's responsibility to lead each class with lectures or discussions, students are expected to engage in each class by asking and answering questions concerning the relevant topics. Because immigration can be a controversial topic, students must act and speak respectfully. Comments should be thoughtful and based on information in the readings. Personal opinions based on emotional, gut feelings should be avoided. Consistent high-quality class participation—in large and small groups—is expected. "High-quality" in this case means:

- informed (i.e., shows evidence of having done assigned work),
- thoughtful (i.e., shows evidence of having understood and considered issues raised in readings and other discussions), and
- considerate (e.g., takes the perspectives of others into account).

If you have personal issues that prohibit you from joining freely in class discussion, e.g., shyness, language barriers, etc., see the instructors as soon as possible to discuss alternative modes of participation.

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 60 to 70 pages of reading.

Grading

Keywords Reading Responses (25%)
Oral Fieldwork Report (15%)
Ethnography (20%)
First-Take-Home Essay Exam (15%)
Second-Take-Home Essay Exam (15%)
Attendance (5%)
Class Participation (5%)

Grade Scale

94 and up	A
90-93.9	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	E

Policies, Rules, and Resources

1. Late or Make-Up Assignments: Acceptable reasons for absence from or failure to engage in class include illness; Title IX-related situations; serious accidents or emergencies affecting the student, their roommates, or their family; special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences); military obligation; severe weather conditions that prevent class participation; religious holidays; participation in official university activities (e.g., music performances, athletic competitions, debate); and court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena). Other reasons (e.g., a job interview or club activity) may be deemed acceptable if approved by the instructor.

Students shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the material or activities covered during absence from class or inability to engage in class activities because of the reasons outlined above. 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 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, or 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 professionally and respectfully 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 violate 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 assignment.
- 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.

8. Course grades have two components. The papers are graded both with a numerical points grade and a Satisfactory (S) or Unsatisfactory (N) grade. Students who receive an unsatisfactory on a paper will have one additional opportunity to revise and resubmit. ***To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.***

Writing Assessment Rubric

	SATISFACTORY (Y)	UNSATISFACTORY (N)
CONTENT	Papers exhibit at least some evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide at least an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off- topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.
ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE	Documents and paragraphs exhibit at least some identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement but may require readers to work to follow progression of ideas.	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.

ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT	Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.
STYLE	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical sentence structure. At a minimum, documents will display a less precise use of vocabulary and an uneven use of sentence structure or a writing style that occasionally veers away from word choice or tone appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline.	Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.
MECHANICS	Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, papers may contain some spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive, so they do not muddy the paper's argument or points.	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.

Schedule of Classes

Week 1: Course Introduction & Understanding Religion

Monday (01/08): Course Introduction

Unit I: Theoretical Considerations

Wednesday: (01/10): (*) Esposito, et al. Chapter 1—Introduction: Understanding World Religions in Global Perspective

Friday (01/12): (*) Robert Orsi— “Everyday Miracles: The Study of Lived Religion”

Supplementary Readings:

(*) Smith, Jonathan Z. “Map is Not Territory.” In *Map Is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religion*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1978

(*) Smith, Jonathan Z. “Religion, Religions, and Religious.” In *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004

Week 2: Globalization

Monday (01/15): No Class (Martin Luther King Jr. Day)

Wednesday (01/17): (*) Pieterse, Chapter 2 “Globalization and Human Integration: We are All Migrants”

Friday (01/18): (*) Pieterse, Chapter 4 “Globalization as Hybridization”

Supplementary Reading: (*) Pieterse, Chapter 1 “Globalization: Consensus and Controversies”

Week 3: Race, Ethnicity, and Religion

Monday (01/22): (*) Eck, “Chapter One: Introduction to A New America”

Wednesday (01/24): (*) Kim, “Religion and Ethnicity: Theoretical Connections”

Friday (01/26): (*) Sarna, “From Immigrants to Ethnics: Toward a New Theory of ‘Ethnicization’”

Unit II: Christianity

Week 4: Early European Protestantism

Monday (01/29): (*) Chidester, “American Zion”

Supplementary Reading: (*) Esposito, et al., “Christian Diversity and the Road to Modernity” (pp. 125-166)

Wednesday (01/31): (*) Hackett, “The Social Origins of Nationalism: Albany, New York 1754-1835

Friday (02/2): Discussion

Week 5: European and Latino Catholicism

Monday (02/05): (*) Orsi, The Religious Boundaries of an Inbetween People: Street Feste and the Problem of the Dark-Skinned Other in Italian Harlem, 1920-1990

Wednesday (02/07): (*) McAlister, “The Madonna of 115th Street Revisited: Vodou and Haitian Catholicism in the Age of Transnationalism”

Friday (02/09): (*) Marti, “Latino Protestants and Their Congregations: Establishing an Agenda for Sociological Research”

Week 6: Asian Christianity

Monday (02/12): (*) Choi, “‘Westernization’ or ‘Indigenization’?: The Paradoxical Role of Korean Protestantism Toward Modernity” (Unpublished Manuscript)

Supplementary Reading: (*) Esposito, et al., “East Asian Religions: Confucianism, Daoism, Shinto, Buddhism” (pp. 413-452)

Wednesday (02/14): (*) Yang, “Tenacious Unity in a Contentious Community: Cultural and Religious Dynamics in a Chinese Christian Church”

Friday (02/16): Discussion

Unit III: African Religions

Week 7: African Indigenous Religions and Christian Experience

Monday (02/19): (*) Brodd, et al., “Indigenous Religions of Africa”

Wednesday (02/21): (*) Butler, “Slavery and the African Spiritual Holocaust”

Friday (02/23): Discussion

Week 8: Midterm Week

Monday (02/26): Review/Essay Prompt

Wednesday (02/28): No Class

Friday (03/01): No Class

First Take-Home Exam Essay due on March 3

Unit IV: Islam

Week 9: African and Arabic Muslims

Monday (03/04): (*) “A brief history of Islam in America”

www.vox.com/2015/12/22/10645956/islam-in-america

(*) Pew Forum, Muslims in America

www.pewresearch.org/religion/2018/04/14/muslims-in-america-immigrants-and-those-born-in-u-s-see-life-differently-in-many-ways/

Supplementary Reading: (*) Esposito, et al., “Islam: The Many Faces of the Muslim Experience” (pp. 183-249)

Wednesday (03/06): (*) Abusharaf, “Structural Adaptations in an Immigrant Muslim Congregation in New York”

Friday (03/08): Discussion

Week 10: Spring Break

Monday (03/11): No Class

Wednesday (03/13): No Class

Friday (03/15): No Class

Unit V: Hinduism and Buddhism

Week 11: Hinduism

Monday (03/18): (*) Narayanan, “Hinduism in America”

Supplementary Reading:

(*) Esposito, et al., “Hinduism, Jainism, and Sikhism: South Asian Religions” (pp. 261-300)

Wednesday (03/20): (*) Jacob and Thaku, “Jyothi Hindu Temple: One Religion, Many Practices”

Friday (03/22): Discussion

Week 12: Buddhism

Monday (03/25): (*) Cadge, “New Organizations: Wat Mongkoltepmunee and the Cambridge Insight Meditation Center”

Wednesday (03/27): (*) Chen, “Becoming Buddhist: From Embedded Religion to Explicit Religion”

Friday (03/29): Discussion

Supplementary Reading: (*) Esposito, Chapter 6 “South Asian Religions: Hinduism, Jainism, and Sikhism” (p. 266-285)

Unit VI: Gender, Generation, and Sexuality

Week 13: Gender

Monday (04/01): (*) Min, “Severe Underrepresentation of Women in Church Leadership in the Korean Immigrant Community in the United States”

Wednesday (04/03): (*) Read and Bartkowski, “To Veil or Not to Veil? A Case Study of Identity Negotiation among Muslim Women in Austin, Texas”

Friday (04/05): Discussion

Supplementary Reading: (*) Keith and Yamane, “Religion and Gender (pp. 243-265)

Week 14: Generation and Sexuality

Monday (04/08): (*) Peek, “Becoming Muslim: The Development of a Religious Identity”

Wednesday (04/10): (*) Marti, “The Diversity-Affirming Latino: Ethnic Options and the Ethnic Transcendent Expression of American Latino Religious Identity”

Friday (04/12): (*) Thomsen, “Coming-Out in the Intersections: Examining Relationality in How Korean Gay Men in Seattle Navigate Church, Culture and Family through a Pacific Lens”

Supplementary Reading: (*) Roberts and Yamane, “Religion and Sexualities”

Week 15: Peer Review

Monday (04/15): Peer Review

Bring a Hard Copy of Ethnography Assignment to Class

Wednesday (04/17): Peer Review

Friday (04/19): Peer Review

Week 16: Final Exam Week

Monday (04/22): No Class

Final Submission of Ethnography Assignment Due April 22

Wednesday (04/24): No Class

Second Take-Home Exam Essay Due April 26

