

# HONORS RELIGION: THEORY, CULTURE & SOCIETY

Rel 3100  
Spring 2018  
TR 2-320pm  
SR XXX  
Three (3) credits

Professor: Byron R. McCane  
Office: SR 256  
Hours: MWF 11-12, TR 4-5,  
or by appt.  
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## Course Description

Religion is a universal, perhaps even a constitutive, element of human existence. This course is an introduction to characteristic forms of human religious expression and practice. Typical features of religion will be identified, specific rituals will be analyzed, and particular issues of religion and late modernity will be explored.

## Course Objective

In this course students will become conversant with the current state of scholarly discussion about religion, including (but not limited to): how religion is practiced and experienced in a variety of cultural settings, the typical characteristics shared by most religions, and current scholarly discussion of secularization and the future of religion.

## Course Requirements

Attendance at all class sessions is required. Since each class meeting will include discussion, students must *read the assignment before the class session and come to class prepared to discuss it intelligently*. In addition, three (3) film reviews, a midterm exam, and a final exam are also required. Students may revise and rewrite film reviews that are turned in on time, but **LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED**.

## Grading

Class Participation	15%
Film Reviews	15% each
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%

## Grading Scale

94-100	A.	89-87=B+	79-77=C+	67-66=D+
93-90	A-	86-83=B	76-73=C	66-63=D
		82-80=B-	72-70=C-	62-60= D-
				59 or lower = F.

## Textbooks

James C. Livingston, *Anatomy of the Sacred*.  
Hermann Hesse, *Siddhartha*.  
John Haught, *Science and Religion: From Conflict to Conversation*.  
David Hume, *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

Aug	21	Getting Started	
	23	Hermann Hesse, <i>Siddhartha</i>	
	28	What is Religion?	
	30	The Academic Study of Religion	
Sep	04	Forms of Religion:	Myth and Symbol
	06		Ritual
Sep	11	Forms of Religion:	Ritual (cont.)
	13		Sacred Texts
	18		Religious Communities
	20		Religious Communities (cont.)
	25	Discussion:	<b>“The Cider House Rules”</b>
	27	Review	
Oct	02	<b>Midterm Exam</b>	
	04	Components:	Deity
	09		Hume, <i>Dialogues concerning Natural Religion</i> .
	11		Cosmogony
	16		John Haught, <i>Science and Religion</i> .
	18		<i>Science and Religion</i> (cont.)
	23		Theological Anthropology
	25		Theodicy
	30		Soteriology
Nov	01		Eschatology
	06		Theological Ethics
	08	Discussion:	<b>“A River Runs Through It”</b>
	13	Religion and Secularization	
	15	Religious Pluralism	
	20-22	NO CLASS: PROF. McCANE @ASOR/SBL/Thanksgiving Holiday	
	27	The Future of Religion	
	29	Discussion:	<b>“Life is Beautiful”</b>
Dec	06-12	<b>Final Examination at day and time set by the College</b>	

**Note of Honors Distinction:** This course differs substantially from a non-Honors course. First, the writing component of the course will be much more demanding, and will prepare students for upper-division college writing and for work on the Honors Thesis. Students will be exposed to vocabulary of a specifically theoretical nature, and will be expected to comprehend these new concepts and to deploy these new terms in their own critical thinking and writing. In addition, we will begin professionalizing our own readings and analyses of these texts. Students will be expected to familiarize themselves with the history and the ongoing critical and scholarly conversation about these works, and will give in-class presentations about critical history and about the living scholars in the field as it now stands. Students will also engage with the theoretical tools used by today's reading community to study literature. Most importantly, this course will reflect the interdisciplinary nature of Honors education and will inculcate critical attitudes and skills that will teach you how to learn for yourself.

In compliance with the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**, students who require special accommodation due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and follow all SAS procedures. SAS has offices across three of FAU's campuses – Boca Raton, Davie and Jupiter – however disability services are available for students on all campuses.

**Code of Academic Integrity:** Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the university mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the university community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see University Regulation 4.001.

**Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center:** Life as a university student can be challenging physically, mentally and emotionally. Students who find stress negatively affecting their ability to achieve academic or personal goals may wish to consider utilizing FAU's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center. CAPS provides FAU students a range of services – individual counseling, support meetings, and psychiatric services, to name a few – offered to help improve and maintain emotional well-being. For more information, go to <http://www.fau.edu/counseling/>