

Course Title: REL 151 What Is Religion?

Term: Fall 2022

Instructor: TBA

Course Credit: 3

Mode of Instruction: Online

Course Description:

This course examines the nature, function, and definition of religion through the lens of a number of theoretical approaches. We will explore the complex ways in which issues in religion relate to topics such as spiritual beings, birth, death, ritual, the afterlife, ethics, and the good-life. Through a range of classical, modern, and ethnographic sources, students will gain an understanding of the ways in which scholars have sought to understand the social, political, economic, and cultural contexts in which various religious traditions are embedded.

Course Prerequisites:

N/A

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, the student should be able to:

- A. Acknowledge the importance of religion in understanding humans and their society, culture and history; Assess arguments for validity using truth tables and natural deduction;
- B. Understand religion as a cross-cultural phenomenon that can be studied and investigated critically and systematically in the field of Religious Studies;
- C. Assess critically diverse methodological perspectives and approaches employed in the history of the study of religion;
- D. Discern the importance of historical and comparative analysis in the study of religion for understanding religious themes and patterns and their variations in relation to a diversity of living religious traditions.

Course Material:

Michael Banton, *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, 2th Edition, Routledge, 2004.

Evaluation:

- 4 Quizzes [40%]
- Mid-term Exam [25%]
- Final Exam [35%]

Description of the Evaluation tasks:

Assignment/ Essay/ ... : During the term, students will be required to finish several evaluation tasks within due date. All the tasks are linked with specific course topics/outcomes and will adequately assess students' competence and learning outcomes. Students are encouraged to meet with instructor about these tasks at any point.

Mid-term/ Final Exams/ Quiz/... : There may be periodic quizzes given at the beginning of lecture sessions; the feedback from these quizzes will monitor the progress of the learners and help to set learning priorities. There will be mid-term exam/ final exam for the course. They are the basic criteria for the evaluation of students' learning outcomes and final grade.

Grading Policy:

Students are supposed to finish each online lecture. Prior to each class, students should finish the required readings. During the class time, students are encouraged to make use of all relevant online course resources and communicate with the instructor. Students' grades are accumulated based on the cumulative evaluations.

Students' letter grade will be assigned according to the following scale:

A+ 90-100	A 85-89	A- 80-84
B+ 77-79	B 73-76	B- 70-72
C+ 67-69	C 63-66	C- 60-62
D+ 57-59	D 53-56	D- 50-52
F < 50		

Academic Integrity:

Students must strictly adhere to the university's academic integrity rule; and all essays, exams and any other form of academic assignments must adhere to these rules. Any form of plagiarism, cheating, or misappropriation of materials will be considered a violation of academic integrity and will be punishable by the university.

Withdrawal from the Course(s):

Students will be able to apply for a transfer or withdrawal within 3 days of the starting date of the course. If a withdrawal is applied for within 3 working days, the tuition fee will be fully refunded. After 3 days, the tuition fee will not be refunded. If a withdrawal is applied for in the first two weeks, it will be recorded as W (Withdraw) on the course transcript. After this initial two-week period, the class will be recorded as F (Fail).

Tentative Schedule:

Week 1	
1	Religion as a cultural system
2	Establishing powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations
3	Formulating conceptions of a general order of existence
4	The moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic
5	Clothing those conceptions with such an aura of factuality Quiz#1

Week 2	
6	Colour Classification in Ndembu Ritual
7	Colour classification in African ritual
8	Colour classification in Ndembu life-crisis ritual
9	Colour classification in Ngonde life-crisis ritual Quiz#2
10	The Ndembu interpretation of the color triad
Week 3	
11	Colour classification and the high god in Central Africa
12	The Ndembu interpretation of the colour triad
13	Mid-term Exam
14	The white-black contrast
15	Some comparative data Quiz#3
Week 4	
16	The characteristics of the colors white and red
17	The three colors in archaeological literature
18	The significance of the basic colour triad
19	Religion; Problems of Definition and Explanation
20	A definition of 'religion' Quiz#4
Week 5	
21	The problem of definition in religion
22	Explanation in social anthropology
23	The 'truth' of religious belief
24	The practice of religious belief
25	Final Exam