

**Rutgers University Dept. of Religion (848-932-9641) Fall 2015**  
**840:101:01 Introduction to Religion: Social Patterns MW (3:55-5:15) RAB 206/DC**

**Instructor:** Dr. James Pavlin **Office:** Loree Bldg. 134/DC **Office Hours:** MW 7:15-7:45, or by appointment **Email:** jdpavlin@rci.rutgers.edu

**Course Description:** Overview of the academic study of religion, investigation into the nature of the sacred, and examination of various religious motifs, such as myth, ritual, evil, morality, and salvation, as developed and embodied in different cultures. (Only open to first-year students and sophomores.)

**Required Texts:** Cunningham, Lawrence S. and John Kelsay, *The Sacred Quest: An Invitation to the Study of Religion*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Pearson Education, Inc., 2013.  
ISBN 13:978-0-205-19131-4 and 10:0-205-19131-2

There will also be several articles available on Sakai:Resources. They are listed below in the Course Outline and Reading Assignments.

**Study and Research Resources:** The classroom experience will be enhanced through the use of Rutgers's web based interactive technology called Sakai. All students are required to know how to use Sakai. Although this course is not designed to be an online or hybrid course, Sakai will be our main means of communication outside the classroom. Any student who has difficulties accessing computers or the internet, or has any issues that might hinder the use of Sakai, must speak to me about possible alternatives for the Sakai based course work. The site will contain announcements, assignments, tests and quizzes, recommended resources, and gradebook (for estimated grade progress), among other things.

### **Course Requirements:**

**1) Attendance and Participation (10% of final grade):** Students are expected to attend each class on time and contribute to class discussions. Students are also expected to participate in all classroom activities such as small group discussions or projects. Attendance will be taken for each class. Any unexcused absences will result in a reduction of this part of the student's grade by ten points (on a scale of 100) per unexcused absence for the first 5 absences. For 6 or more absences, the student will lose all of the attendance portion of the grade. Students who encounter any extended problem with absences, for example, for medical, family emergency, or religious reasons, must inform me in writing (email acceptable) about the reason and duration of the absence. Decisions on excused absences will be made on a case-by-case basis. **Extended absences may require the student to do extra written assignments.**

### **Self-Reporting of Absences:**

In accordance with University policy, if you expect to miss a class, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me. **Please note that this does not necessarily mean that you will get an excused absence. That is based on my discretion.**

**Classroom Etiquette:** The use of lap tops and tablets are permitted only for purposes related to the course. All cell phones, iPods, and any other small hand held devices are strictly forbidden during class. Violation of this policy will result in your being requested to leave the class and receiving an unexcused absence.

**2) Quizzes (40% of final grade):** There will be nine multiple choice, true-false, and short answer quizzes corresponding to the nine chapters in the textbook. The quizzes will be made available on Sakai:Tests & Quizzes. Quizzes will be made available according to the Course Outline below. Once you begin the quiz, you will have a set time limit to complete it. Once you start the quiz, you must complete it in one sitting. You cannot save your answers and return at a later time to finish it. In case of unintended submission or any other problems taking the quizzes, students must contact me immediately. I will determine if you deserve to retake the quiz.

**3) Two Writing Assignments (30% of final grade, each essay is 15%):** The two essays will be based on documentary films that we watch in class. Due dates are given below in the Course Outline section. The essays must be submitted through Sakai:Assignments. Instructions and requirements for the essays are on the assignment page in Sakai.

**4) Final Exam (20% of final grade):** The final exam will be a multiple choice/true-false test based on all the key terms and concepts that were covered in the textbook. The questions will be drawn from the nine quizzes that were given throughout the semester.

**Grading Policy:** All final grades will be calculated according to the Rutgers' grading system: 4.0 = A (100-90), 3.5 = B+ (89-85), 3.0 = B (84-80), 2.5 = C+ (79-75), 2.0 = C (74-70), 1.0 = D (69-65), 0.0 = F (64 and below). An incomplete ("T" grade) for this course will not be given unless the student consults with me about the reason for not completing the course work on time. Grades that appear in the Sakai Gradebook are only close estimations of your grade. I reserve the right to adjust and override these grades as I deem necessary. All final grades are based on my assessment of your work.

**Office of Disability Services:**

Any student requiring special accommodations to participate in and successfully complete this course must contact the Office of Disability Services and ask to speak with a Coordinator (848-445-6800 or <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu>) to discuss accommodations.

## **Course Outline and Reading Assignments:**

9/2 Introduction: Review of Syllabus and overview of course content.

**9/7 RU closed-no class**

**9/8 Tues. RU follows a Mon. schedule-class cancelled**

9/9 9/14

Sacred Quest—Introduction

Phenomenology of Religion—article in Sakai:Resources:Required Reading

9/16 9/21

Sacred Quest—Chapter 1 Toward a Definition of Religion

Quiz 1 available on Sakai:Tests & Quizzes from 9/16 6:00 pm to 9/23 9:00 am.

9/23 9/28

Sacred Quest—Chapter 2 The Nature of the Sacred

The Sacred and the Profane—article in Sakai:Resources:Required Reading

Quiz 2 available on Sakai:Tests & Quizzes from 9/23 6:00 pm to 9/30 9:00 am.

9/30 10/5

Sacred Quest—Chapter 3 The Appearance of the Sacred

Quiz 3 available on Sakai:Tests & Quizzes from 9/30 6:00 pm to 10/7 9:00 am.

10/7 10/12 10/14

Sacred Quest—Chapter 4 The Language(s) of the Sacred

Myth—article in Sakai:Resources:Required Reading

Quiz 4 available on Sakai:Tests & Quizzes from 10/7 6:00 pm to 10/19 9:00 am.

10/19 10/21 10/26

Sacred Quest—Chapter 5 Ritual

Ritual, First Edition—article in Sakai:Resources:Required Reading

Ritual, Further Considerations—article in Sakai:Resources:Required Reading

Quiz 5 available on Sakai:Tests & Quizzes from 10/19 6:00 pm to 10/28 9:00 am.

**First writing assignment is due on 10/28. It must be submitted online through Sakai:Assignments.**

10/28 11/2 11/4

Sacred Quest—Chapter 6 Sacred Communities

Quiz 6 available on Sakai:Tests & Quizzes from 10/28 6:00 pm to 11/9 9:00 am.

11/9 11/11 11/16

Sacred Quest—Chapter 7 The Problem of Evil

Evil—article in Sakai:Resources:Required Reading

Quiz 7 available on Sakai:Tests & Quizzes from 11/9 6:00 pm to 11/18 9:00 am.

11/18 11/23 11/30 **(11/25 Wed. RU follows a Fri. schedule-no class)**

Sacred Quest—Chapter 8 Religion and Morality

Quiz 8 available on Sakai:Tests & Quizzes from 11/18 6:00 pm to 12/2 9:00 am.

12/2 12/7 12/9

Sacred Quest—Chapter 9 The Quest for Salvation

Soteriology—article in Sakai:Resources:Required Reading

Quiz 9 available on Sakai:Tests & and Quizzes from 12/2 6:00 pm to 12/10 9:00 am.

**Second writing assignment is due on 12/10. It must be submitted online through Sakai:Assignments.**

**Final Exam Tues. 12/22 12:00-3:00 pm**