

RELIGION 100.001
“INTRODUCTION TO RELIGIOUS STUDIES”

SPRING, 2006

TUESDAY & THURSDAY, 12:30 PM. – 1:45 P.M.

30 ten Hour

PREREQUISITES: None

INSTRUCTOR

**Dr. Steven Leonard Jacobs, D.H.L., D.D. (h.c.)
Aaron Aronov Endowed Chair of Judaic Studies
Associate Professor of Religious Studies
201 Manly Hall
Box 870264
348-0473
Fax 348-6621
sjacobs@bama.ua.edu**

OFFICE HOURS

**Tuesday & Thursday 2:30-4:00
& By Appointment**

COURSE ASSISTANT

**Ms. Karissa Rinas
Reldesk2@bama.ua.edu**

(NOTE: Remember to write “REL 100.001” in Subject Line)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

“Examines the function of religion *in* culture; as a Core Humanities course, the goal is for all students to learn to define, describe, and compare in a non-evaluative manner so as to discover similarities and differences in various forms of human behavior.”

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The main learning objectives revolve around the geographic and historical breadth of the material covered and the intellectual skills that will be required in higher level courses – whether within or outside the Department of Religious Studies. Hence:

1. To learn to demarcate a specific area of culture as religion, thereby understanding how to define a subject area for purposes of intellectual inquiry.
2. To learn how the academic study of religion intersects with, benefits from, and contributes to the work carried out in other areas of the human sciences.
3. To learn to describe the beliefs, behaviors, and institutions of two or more religions from different cultural regions and historical periods, in this case “Judaism” and “Christianity.”
4. To learn the descriptive vocabulary and major historical developments relevant to each religion being studied.
5. To learn empathy to describe differing cultural materials in a non-normative manner.
6. To learn initial skills required to compare the descriptive materials by juxtaposing them in novel ways to find unanticipated similarities and differences.
7. To learn a technical, comparative vocabulary, such that a collection of taxonomic markers are acquired and understood and used to group together descriptive material specific to each religion.
8. To learn initial skills required to analyze cross-cultural similarities and differences, offering either an interpretive or explanatory account of the results of the comparative work.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Seth D. Kunin (2003). *Religion: The Modern Theories*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press. ISBN 0-8018-7728-8

Seth D. Kunin (Ed.) (2006). *Theories of Religion: A Reader*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. ISBN 0-8135-3965-X

