

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY  
FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES  
FALL 2013

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RELIGIOUS STUDIES 205 L01  
THE NATURE OF RELIGION

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**INSTRUCTOR:** Anne White, Ph.D.  
**COURSE TIME AND DAYS:** MWF 11:00 –11:50  
**OFFICE:** SS 1322  
**OFFICE HOURS:** MWF 10:00 – 10:50  
**TELEPHONE:** 403-220-3285 or 403-220-5886 (main office)  
**E-MAIL ADDRESS:** [awhite@ucalgary.ca](mailto:awhite@ucalgary.ca)  
**WEBSITE ADDRESS:** Blackboard

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**Required Texts:**

Anne White, **Religion and Reality**, Kendall-Hunt Publishers, 2013.

**PLEASE NOTE: All royalties accrued from the sale of this textbook will be donated to the University of Calgary. This will be done to address conflict of interest issues.**

**Suggested Reading (not mandatory):**

Gilkey, Langdon, **Nature, Reality, and the Sacred**, Fortress Press (1993); Livingston, James, **Anatomy of the Sacred**, Prentice Hall (2001); Pals, Daniel L., **Seven theories of Religion** Oxford University Press (1996); Radford Ruether, Rosemary, **Gaia and God**, Harper Collins (1992); Starke, Rodney, **Acts of Faith**, University of California Press (2000); Stewart, David, **Exploring the Philosophy of Religion**, Prentice Hall (2001).

**Course Description:**

This course is designed to introduce students to the academic study of religion. It will present the practical and theoretical analysis of religion through examination of a broad range of religious issues and phenomena. Adopting this analytical approach, students will gain insight into critical thinking as they are introduced to many of the major questions, problems, and arguments that occupy both male and female theorists of religion. Examples from various major religious traditions will be used to demonstrate the nature of religion and its enduring, if somewhat controversial reality, as interpreted by both adherents and critics of religious beliefs in contemporary society. The overall result of this approach will be to equip students with a variety of perspectives in order to understand how societies have been, and continue to be, constructed through the influence of this phenomenon. The reality of religious perspectives will be analyzed to review pertinent issues, together with the status and function of the nature of religion in our present age.

Course presentation will consist of lectures, assigned readings, films, and class discussion. As this is an introductory course, a detailed knowledge of Western and Eastern religions will not be required.

**Learning Objectives:**

- Students will develop a number of the skills identified in the University of Calgary statement of learning outcomes. These include: communication, thinking, ethical reasoning, computer literacy, information retrieval, and group effectiveness.
- The assigned readings, lecture material and methodology within the course should develop a student’s ability to think critically (i.e. judge, reflect, and analyze); web notes will further provide dissemination of information and enhance computer skills; preparation for examinations should foster the development of information retrieval and writing competency.
- It is important to remember that the attainment of any learning endeavour requires that students **regularly attend lectures**, read the required material, and complete all course work.

**Course Requirements:**

<b>Oct. 4</b>	-	<b>Test</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Oct. 21</b>	-	<b>Video analysis (2,500 words)</b> <b>Directions posted on Blackboard under <i>Course Documents</i></b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Nov. 15</b>	-	<b>Test</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>TBA</b>	-	<b>Registrar scheduled final exam</b>	<b>40%</b>

**NOTE:** Missed examinations or assignments must be accompanied by a medical certificate, or in the case of domestic affliction, a note from a counsellor. The instructor must receive notification within 24 hours of the missed examination by telephone, e-mail, or by calling the Department of Religious Studies at 403-220-5886.

**Grading:**

A numerical mark will be given for each course requirement. A letter grade will be assigned on the following number and letter grade scheme:

A+	100 - 96	A	95 - 90	A-	89 - 85
B+	84 - 80	B	79 - 75	B-	74 - 70
C+	69 - 65	C	64 - 60	C-	59 - 55
D+	54 - 53	D	52-50	F	Under 50

N.B. All written assignments will be graded with regard to both form and content.

### **Academic Honesty**

Plagiarism is not tolerated at the University of Calgary and has serious consequences. Your essays/presentations must be your own work and inadequate referencing may be seen as plagiarism. Please see the relevant sections on Academic Misconduct in the current University Calendar. If you have questions about correct referencing, please consult your instructor.

### **Academic Accommodation**

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 403-220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than **fourteen (14) days** after the start of the course.

### **Blackboard Help**

Go to <http://www.ucalgary.ca/computersupport/onlineservices/blackboard> for Student Help and FAQ's about Blackboard. Troubleshooting tips and a tutorial are available at <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/blackboard/students>. Instructions for using the Digital Drop Box are available here: [http://library.blackboard.com/docs/r6/6\\_1/student/bbbs\\_r6\\_1\\_student/digital\\_drop\\_box.htm](http://library.blackboard.com/docs/r6/6_1/student/bbbs_r6_1_student/digital_drop_box.htm).

### **Gnosis**

Gnosis is the Religious Studies Student Club. For membership or more information please email: [gnosis@ucalgary.ca](mailto:gnosis@ucalgary.ca) or visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~gnosis>.

### **Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources**

- Have a question, but not sure where to start? The new Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (PIC) is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at SS110, call us at 403-220-3580 or email us at [artsads@ucalgary.ca](mailto:artsads@ucalgary.ca). You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate> which has detailed information on common academic concerns.
- For program planning and advice, contact the Student Success Centre at (403) 220-5881 or visit them on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library.
- For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at (403) 210-ROCK [7625] or visit them at the MacKimmie Library Block.

### **Student Ombudsperson and Students' Union Representative**

The Office of the Student Ombuds provides independent, impartial and confidential support for students who require assistance and advice in addressing issues and concerns related to their academic careers. See [www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds](http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds) for more information.

The Students' Union Faculty of Arts representative can be reached at [arts1@ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts1@ucalgary.ca).

### **Emergency Evacuation Assembly Point**

In case of an emergency evacuation during class, students must gather at the designated assembly point nearest to the classroom. The list of assembly points is found at [www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints](http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints). Please check this website and not the nearest assembly point for this course.

### **Safewalk**

The Safewalk program provides volunteers to walk students safely to their destination anywhere on campus (including McMahon Stadium, Health Sciences, Student Family Housing, the Alberta Children's Hospital and the University LRT station). This service is free and available to students, staff and campus visitors 24 hrs/day, 365 days a year. Call 403-220-5333 or use one of the Help phones located throughout campus to request a walk.

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

**NOTE: All subjects will be covered but scheduling may vary slightly due to class discussions.**

**SEPTEMBER**

**9, 11, 13** Introduction.  
**Chapter 1** Definition of religion  
**Webnotes**

**16, 18, 20** Human ingenuity and the creation of reality.  
**Chapter 1**

**23, 25, 27** Creation of codes of conduct.  
**Chapter 2**  
**Plus webnotes**

**30** **DOCUMENTARY #1**

**OCTOBER**

**2** **DOCUMENTARY #2**

**4** **IN CLASS TEST WORTH 20 POINTS**  
**50 MINUTES' DURATION**

**7, 9, 11** The evolution of religion and the typologies  
**Chapter 3**

**14 THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS**

**16, 18, 21** Transcendence and meaning  
**Chapter 4**

**DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS TO BE HANDED IN ON OCTOBER 21**

**23, 25, 28** Human creativity, transmission and archetypal mediums  
**Chapter 5**

**30** The dynamics of mysticism  
**Chapter 6**

**NOVEMBER**

**1, 4,** The dynamics of mysticism  
**Chapter 6**

**6, 8**  
**Chapter 7**                      Death and coping mechanisms

**11 – REMEMBRANCE DAY – NO CLASS**

**13**  
**Chapter 7**                      Death and coping mechanisms

**15**                              **IN CLASS TEST – 50 MINUTES' DURATION**  
   **WORTH 20 POINTS**

**18, 20, 22**  
**Chapter 8**                      The mechanisms behind evil and suffering

**25, 27, 29**  
**Chapter 9**                      The existence of women in religion

**DECEMBER**

**2, 4, 6**  
**Chapter 10**                      Religious and deep green environmental ethics  
   **DOCUMENTARY**