

The University of Calgary
Faculty of Arts
Department of Religious Studies

Religious Studies 205 L02
The Nature of Religion

Fall 2013
Times: TR 12:30-13:45
Place: ICT 121

Instructor
Office
Office Hours
Telephone
Email

Chris Daniels Ph.D.
SS 1304
T 14:00-15:00 or by appointment
403-220-5612 or 403-220-5886 (main office)
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Required Texts:

Peterson, Michael, et.al., *Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings, Fourth Edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Other articles will be used during the course, links to which will be posted on Blackboard during the semester.

Course Description:

This course will introduce students to diverse issues and questions in the academic study of religion. It will be structured thematically, privilege a global perspective, and include topics such as: Issues in cross-cultural definition and study of “religion;” Eastern and Western images of the Divine/Ultimate Reality; rational and non-rational arguments for the (non)existence of the Divine/Ultimate Reality; life after death and personal identity; the problem of evil and suffering; faith and rationality; and religious diversity. The course will be formatted in an interactive lecture style with opportunity for class discussion in which students will be encouraged to participate. The aim of the course is to give students a general awareness of the diverse nature of historic and contemporary religious concepts and issues through critical reflection.

Core Competencies:

Students in this class will have the opportunity to reflect on central issues in the philosophical and historical academic study of religion and in so doing gain critical reading and thinking skills. They will also begin to acquire abilities that contribute to clear and concise writing, research, and communication. Skills acquired in this course will have relevance in upper level courses in the Arts, as well as in wider academic, career, and social settings. Knowledge acquired in this course will help students reflect and converse more clearly and critically on the diverse nature of religion in society.

Course Requirements

There will be five assessments for this course:

Assessments	Date	Weight /100%
Short Quiz	10 (weekly as specified)	10 %
Response Assignment 1	Oct 17	10 %
Midterm In-class exam	Oct 22	25%
Writing Assignment 2	Nov 26	20%
Final Exam (Cumulative)	Registrar Scheduled	35%

Weekly Quiz:

There will be ten **open-book** multiple-choice quizzes of four questions each which will require students to engage in the readings and previous week's lecture for successful completion. Each quiz should not take more than 5 minutes to complete. They are designed to help students keep on top of the important topics in the course as well as illustrate areas which need further attention. They will typically require access to Blackboard "Assignments." The first quiz will be Sept 26.

Response Written Assignments:

These assignments will be short response essays on topics presented and discussed in class. No research apart from assigned readings and lectures will be necessary. They will require proper essay structure and citation as well as the critical thinking and reading expected throughout the course. A portion of the mark will be for following directions, grammar, sentence and paragraph structure, spelling, and citation. Format will be discussed and assigned in class. The first assignment will be approx. 600 words (about 2 pages) and the second will be 1200-1500 words.

The midterm and final exams will be cumulative.

Electronic Devices

Laptops are permitted only for the purpose of taking notes and for assignments. No electronics devices are allowed to be used in class for emailing, facebook, videos, texting, games, etc. Students that distract other students or the instructor with unauthorized use of electronic devices will be asked to leave the classroom.

Grading:

A numerical grade will be given for each course requirement with a letter grade awarded as the cumulative grade for the course. Below is the table approved by the Dept of Religious Studies:

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

NB. POLICY WITH REGARDING MISSED ASSESSMENTS

Test dates are firm. Without acceptable documentation (i.e. medical certificate, police report, bereavement notice, confirmation of religious observance, or court summons), missed assessments will be awarded a 0 (zero). Late written assignments will be assessed a 5%/day grade deduction.

This policy is intended to encourage diligence and integrity among students as well as to uphold principles of fairness and equality with respect to other students in the class.

Excuses other than those listed above will receive little attention.

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is not tolerated at the University of Calgary and has serious consequences. Your essays must be your own work and inadequate referencing may be seen as plagiarism. Please see the relevant sections on Academic Misconduct in the 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 FAQs 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/bbls_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 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 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. 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 (formerly the Undergraduate programs Office) at (403) 220-5881 or visit them on the 4th Floor of MacEwan Student Centre.
- 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 Student Ombuds Office 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 for more information.

The Students' Union Faculty of Arts representative can be reached at 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. 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.