

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS AND RELIGION

RELS 205: RELIGION AND THE GOOD LIFE
COURSE OUTLINE – Fall 2018

Course	Religious Experience		
Time	Monday/Wednesday/Friday 11:00-11:50 AM		
Room	MFH 160		
Instructor	Office Hours	Office	Contact Information
Dr. Joy Palacios	Mon. and Fri., 1:30-2:30 PM	SS 534	E: joy.palacios@ucalgary.ca T: 403-220-3285

Required Text(s):

Hexam, Irving. *Understanding World Religions: An Interdisciplinary Approach*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.

Optional Text(s): None

Course Description:

This course examines the way religious beliefs and practices in a range of traditions propose conceptual and practical solutions to what John Milton Yinger has called “the ultimate problems of human life.” How, that is, do religions model different versions of the good life and what kinds of attitudes and actions do they associate with human thriving? After a brief introduction to the problem of defining religion, we will consider religious understandings of the self or its absence, ideas regarding salvation and enlightenment, strategies for fending off evil, and methods for connecting with the divine or ultimate reality. Reformulated as questions, these topics concern issues such as: Who are we and why are we here? What is happiness and how do we attain it? Why do bad things happen and what can we do about it? And how is human existence related to some sort of transcendent reality? Religious traditions studied will include African religions, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In-class lectures will use primary sources such as excerpts from scriptures, images, symbols, religious objects, and performances to explore the above themes, in conjunction with assigned readings from *Understanding World Religions*, which will provide necessary background information on each tradition.

Online elements for this course:

The primary sources used in lectures as well as additional readings, resources, announcements, and grades will be posted to D2L. It is the student’s responsibility to stay up to date by checking the course’s D2L page.

Class attendance is crucial for success in this course. The textbook and PowerPoint slides will *not* provide a comprehensive account of the material covered in class (they only account for

50-60% of the course content). The PowerPoint slides will periodically be posted to D2L as a study reference for students but are not a replacement for attending lectures.

Core Competencies:

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

Knowledge:

- Compare and apply academic definitions of religion
- Identify the understandings of self, salvation/enlightenment, evil, and divine connection associated with each of the six religious traditions covered by the course
- Recognize and interpret important texts, images, symbols, and performances from each of the traditions covered

Skills:

- Apply basic methods of textual and visual analysis important in the study of religion
- Analyze the way an excerpt of scripture, image, symbol, or performance expresses a religious tradition's conception of human thriving

Course Requirements:

This course will involve two types of assessments/assignments:

1. Exams = 80%
 - a. Exam #1 (40%)
 - b. Exam #2 (40%)

The exams will cover all the material presented in lectures and in required readings. I will provide more detailed information about the types of questions on each exam closer to the date so that you can prepare. Exam #1 will most likely be an in-class exam. Exam #2 will be a take-home exam.

2. Analysis of Primary Source = 20%

You will receive a detailed handout in class explaining the primary source analysis assignment. In brief, you will select a primary source from a list of options provided on D2L. These will include the types of sources we will have discussed during in-class lectures, such as excerpts of scripture, images, symbols, or video recordings of performances. Then you will write a 750-1000 word paper analyzing the way the primary source expresses some aspect of the "good life" as conceived by the religious tradition from which the source is drawn.

Summary of dates and weights:

Date	Assessment	Weight (%)	Required pass/fail
17 October 2018	Exam #1	40	
9 November 2018	Primary source analysis	20	
7 December 2018	Exam #2 (take-home)	40	

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, usually used within the Department of Classics and Religion:

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.

Policy with regard to missed assignments/assessments:

In accordance with university policy, deferred examinations are permitted only in exceptional circumstances such as serious illness (only with official 'Physician/Counsellor Statement' form), religious observance, or domestic affliction (death in the family, unanticipated and unavoidable demands in caring for dependents, etc.). For further details see http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred_final. Deferred exams will not be permitted for circumstances such as vacation, travel, employment, common cold/not feeling well, or exams that are only a few hours apart.

The Primary Source Analysis will be marked down by one third of a grade (A to A-) for each day they are submitted late, unless a previous arrangement for an extension has been made with me in advance.

Policy with regards to missed classes:

At the beginning of the semester, I will ask you to exchange contact information with two other students in the class. These will be your study buddies and they will be an important resource for you if you miss a class.

If you cannot attend class, then please follow these steps:

1. Check D2L for the PowerPoint and any handouts from the missed day
2. Check with your study buddies for further missed information (class notes, etc.)
3. Do the assigned readings and review the PowerPoint slides
4. If you have questions about the **course content**, then contact the instructor or TA or come to office hours

Please do not skip to step #4 without performing steps #1-3. In other words, do not contact the professor or TA to ask what you missed without first checking with your study buddies, doing the assigned reading, and reviewing the PowerPoint slides.

Expectations for student conduct in this course:

You will get the most out of this course if you complete the readings scheduled for each day before the class session begins, attend class regularly, and take careful notes on the lectures. In order to facilitate active learning and reflection, I may occasionally break the class into small groups or pairs to discuss course-related topics. Please come to class ready to think and share.

During class discussions and activities, I expect each member of the course to help me create a positive learning environment by listening respectfully to each other, using transitions (“As Julia said, I think...”, “I agree/disagree with Mohad because...”, “I want to build on that idea...”), and by refraining from statements that signal judgment. We will be discussing material that can be sensitive and about which members of the course may have strong feelings. For this reason, all members of the class will be asked to use vocabulary that signals observation, description, analysis, scholarly argument, and hypothesis formation.

Electronic Device Policy:

Electronic devices are allowed in this course and will sometimes be used for in-class activities. (I, too, after all, will have my laptop with me to provide PowerPoint presentations and my phone so I can use its timer to keep our activities on track.) I do, however, expect that all members of the class show respect to their fellow students and the instructor(s) by not wearing headphones, answering phone calls, playing music, or watching their own videos. If a student’s use of electronic devices disrupts others, he/she may be asked to leave the room.

Recording any part of the lectures or class sessions in any form must first be approved by the instructor in writing and used for individual private study only.

Syllabus:

A complete syllabus will be made available on D2L the first week of class.

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 (section K, which can be found here: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>). If you have questions about correct referencing, please consult your instructor, or librarian staff.

Student Accommodations

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf.

Desire 2 Learn (D2L) Help

Go to <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students> for Student Help and FAQ's about D2L. Troubleshooting tips and a tutorial are also available on this website.

Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources

- For program planning and advice, students in the Faculty of Arts will contact The Arts Students' Centre (ASC). Drop in at SS102, call at 403-220-3580 or email at ascarts@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 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.

Freedom of Information and Privacy

This course is conducted in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPP): <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act indicates that assignments given by you to your course instructor will remain confidential unless otherwise stated before submission. The assignment cannot be returned to anyone else without your express permission. Similarly, any information about yourself that you share with your course instructor will not be given to anyone else without your permission. As one consequence, students should identify themselves on all written work by placing their name on the front page and their ID number on each subsequent page.

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 note 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.

Health and Wellness

There are services available to students to help with physical and mental health, including the SU Wellness Centre: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/>.

Learn more about the Campus Mental Health Strategy here: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth/>.

