

**The University of Calgary
Faculty of Arts
Department of Religious Studies
Fall 2010
RELIGIOUS STUDIES 309 L01
RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE**

INSTRUCTOR: Anne White, Ph.D.
COURSE DAYS AND TIME MWF 10:00 – 10:50
OFFICE: SS 1322
OFFICE HOURS: WF 1:00-2:00 p.m.
TELEPHONE: (403) 220-3285 or (403) 220-5886 (main office)
E-MAIL ADDRESS: awhite@ucalgary.ca
WEBSITE ADDRESS: Blackboard

REQUIRED READING:

Daniel L. Pals, *Introducing Religion: Readings from the Classic Theorists*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Web notes as posted on Blackboard. NOTE: The John Hick material will be in the form of web notes for salient points.

Suggested reading (not mandatory):

John Hick *The Fifth Dimension: An Exploration of the Spiritual Realm*, (London: Oneworld Publications, 2004).

James C. Livingston, *Anatomy of the Sacred: An Introduction to Religion*, (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2001).

Michael Peterson et al. *Reason and Religious Belief: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will introduce the student to the study of religious experiences which include ideas taken from philosophy, rituals, altered states of consciousness, mysticism, and belief in religious/supernatural encounters with the divine. This broad selection of material will provide insight and understanding into the power, complexity, function, and relevance of religious experience. In addition to this, the grounds for belief, both subjective and objective, will be examined. From mystical deliberations, to the wide spectrum of religious experience within a socio-cultural context, this course will identify the nature and function of religion as a vehicle for human expression, comfort, and contact with someone/something greater outside of the physical world. Finally, an analysis of what theologian John Hick identifies as *The Fifth Dimension* will be utilized to provide a broad spectrum of approaches by which to understand the phenomenon of religious experience.

CORE COMPETENCIES:

Students will work on the following skills: critical appraisal of arguments and theories, application of theories and concepts presented in course readings and lectures, library research, essay organization and writing skills. The essay assignment will require students to select an explanation of a religious experience described within the textbook and critically apply one of the theories explored in the course. All essay topics must first be approved by the professor.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Oct. 1	- Test	15%
Oct. 22	- Test	15%
Nov. 22	- Essay	30%
Registrar scheduled Final Exam TBA		40%

Essay specifications: 2,500 words. Pages are to be numbered, double spaced and in Chicago style format with footnotes or endnotes. If you have extensive footnotes, factor that into the page count. Endnote page is not part of the page count. Separate, 1 page bibliography: sources cited must contain at least six separate texts. The sources may consist of academic journals and textbooks. No Wikipedia is permitted.

GRADING:

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

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 Under 50

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:

If you are a student with a disability who requires academic accommodation and you 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. Once registered, please discuss any upcoming tests/examinations with the instructor two weeks before the scheduled date.

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>.

Course Reading Schedule

SEPTEMBER

13-17 Introduction. The religious experience. What is religion?
Defining religions. John Hick's Fifth Dimension

20-24 Overview of religious typologies – characteristics.
Developmental evolution – Robert Bellar.
Key terms

27-29 Animism and the Origin of Religion.
Chap. 1 **E. P. Tylor**
Web notes

OCTOBER

1 **IN CLASS TEST – 50 MINUTES**

4-8 Magic and the Rise of Religion
Chap. 2 **James Frazer**
Web notes

THANKSGIVING – OCTOBER 11 – NO CLASS

13-15 Primitive Religion and Modern Theories
Chap. 10 **E. E. Evans-Pritchard**
Web notes

18-20 Religion as Neurosis; the Testimony of Religious Experience
Chap. 3 **Sigmund Freud**

22 **IN CLASS TEST – 50 MINUTES**

25-29 The Social as Sacred
Chap. 4 **Emile Durkheim**

NOVEMBER

1-5 Religion as Agent of Economic Oppression
Chap. 5 **Karl Marx et al. Plus Documentary**

8-10
Chap. 6
Web notes

The Testimony of Religious Experience
William James

READING DAYS
11-14

NO CLASS ON NOVEMBER 12

15-19
Chap. 7
Web notes

Religion and the Sense of the “Numinous”
Rudolf Otto

22
22-26
Chap. 8
Web notes

RESEARCH PAPER TO BE HANDED IN.
Religion and Culture – the Puritan Work Ethic
Max Weber

29
Chap. 9
Web notes

Religion as Response to the Sacred
Mircea Eliade

DECEMBER
1-3

Religion as Response to the Sacred
Mircea Eliade

6 -10
Chap.11
Web notes

Religion as World View and Ethic
Clifford Geertz

REGISTRAR SCHEDULED FINAL EXAM - TBA