

The University of Calgary
Faculty of Arts
Department of Religious Studies

Religious Studies 377 L01

Fall 2012

Research and Critical Inquiry in Religious Studies

Block Week: September 4-8 TWRFS 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Instructors:

Dr. Virginia Tumasz Office: SS 1302
Office hours during Fall term: TBA
Telephone: 403-220-3286 Email: tumasz@ucalgary.ca

Ms. Sandra Lipton Office: MLB 331B
Meetings by appointment
Telephone: 403-220-3793 Email: lipton@ucalgary.ca

Required Texts

READ FOR THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS: William E. Paden. *Interpreting the Sacred: Ways of Viewing Religion* (available from University Bookstore)

MLA Handbook (available from University Bookstore)

Course Workbook and Readings (on *Blackboard*)

Core Competencies

If you apply yourself conscientiously, by the end of the course you should be able to:

- reflect critically on Religious Studies scholarship
- read academic texts more effectively
- formulate interesting research questions
- design a research plan
- locate, assess, and document sources of information and scholarship
- write according to the conventions of academic prose
- edit and revise your writing to produce an acceptable or even excellent essay
- avoid plagiarism

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to acquaint you with the academic field of Religious Studies and offer practical instruction in research methods and academic writing. You will be introduced to a small sampling of the variety of theories used in the academic study of religion and you will be asked to formulate a research question and carry through a research project of your own. By the end of the course, you will have a better appreciation of the nature of academic scholarship and be able to conduct research effectively and write a respectable academic paper.

The course will concentrate on the development of skills and habits of mind that are important in the academic study of religion. Paden's text will give you an overview of the interdisciplinary field of Religious Studies. Dr. Tumasz will give instruction in effective reading, including identifying the thesis and argument of a text, and critical thinking, including the habit of critically assessing the premises and presuppositions of scholarship on religion. She also will provide instruction in the development of effective research questions and writing processes and familiarize you with the conventions of academic writing.

Ms. Lipton, the University's senior librarian of Religious Studies, will acquaint students with the myriad of resources available to Religious Studies students. She will provide intensive instruction in the tools and methods of scholarly research, helping students to develop the skills needed to effectively locate and evaluate information.

Course Requirements

N.B. These are broken down into pre-session, block week, and post-block week requirements.

1. Pre-session assignments

- 1) Read Paden's book carefully and take notes on it. There will be a quiz on the book on the **first day of class**. For tips on how to prepare for the quiz, look on Blackboard under "Pre-session Work." N.B. Bring your notes to class on the first day.
- 2) Complete Information Seeking Behaviour Survey by **September 4 at 9 a.m.** You will find the survey under "Pre-session Work" on Blackboard. Completion of this survey by the stated deadline is worth 1% of your final grade.
- 3) Complete "Preliminary Research Skills Quiz" by **September 4 at 9 a.m.** You will find the quiz under "Pre-session Work" on Blackboard. The quiz is not graded. Completion by the stated deadline is worth 1% of your final grade.

2. Block Week Assignments

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| 1) Paden quiz on first day of class | 10% |
| 2) Research Methods Exercises | 3% |
| 3) Book Review Assignment | 10% |
| 4) Graded research skills quiz on last day of class | 10% |
| 5) Research Assignment, due September 14 by noon | 10% |

Homework during Block Week:

- There will be reading assignments each night to which you will need to devote about one hour.
- The Book Review Assignment (#3) is due on Friday of Block Week.
- You are required to complete Research Methods Exercises on Blackboard on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings. They will take a half-hour or less and will be available on Blackboard beginning Tuesday, September 4. Your answers are not marked but the completion of each exercise is worth 1% of the course grade for a total of 3% for the three exercises. To receive the 1% you must complete each exercise by the given deadline.

3. Post-Block Week Assignments

- 1) Meet with Ms. Lipton to discuss your research assignment. A sign-up sheet will be circulated on the last day of class. Meeting times will be available from September 20 – October 5. You will receive a grade of 0 for the research assignment if you do not attend the scheduled meeting.
- 2) Meet with Dr. Tumaszk to go over a draft of the introduction to your research paper. Submit the introduction by email at least one full day prior to your scheduled meeting. You can schedule a meeting by email for anytime after your meeting with Ms. Lipton and between September 27 and October 19. Failure to meet this requirement will result in the loss of a full letter grade on your final paper.

- 3) Final research paper 45%
- 4) Research Log 10%

For guidelines regarding the above two items, look under “Post-Session Work” on Blackboard.

Both the final research paper and the research log are due November 5. Submit two paper copies of each to the Department of Religious Studies drop box in SS 1301 and electronically via the *Digital Drop Box* under “Tools” on Blackboard by noon on November 5.

Summary of graded course requirements:

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| Preliminary Skills Quiz, due by Sept. 4 | 1% |
| Information Seeking Behavior Survey, due by Sept. 4 | 1% |
| First day quiz on Paden | 10% |
| Block Week Exercises, 1% each | 3% |
| *Block Week Assignment | 10% |
| Last day quiz on Research Skills | 10% |
| *Research Assignment, due September 14 | 10% |
| *Research paper, due November 5 | 45% |
| *Research log, due November 5 | 10% |

There will be no Registrar-scheduled Final Exam for this course.

*Unless a deferral has been obtained from Dr. Tumasz or Ms. Lipton, late submission will result in a penalty of 10% of the worth of the assignment per day, including weekends.

Grading:

N. B. Please note that all written assignments will be assessed with regard to both form and content.

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| A+ = 96 - 100 % | B = 76 - 80 % | C- = 55 - 60 % |
| A = 91 - 95 % | B- = 71 - 75 % | D+ = 53 - 54 % |
| A- = 86 - 90 % | C+ = 66 - 70 % | D- = 51 - 52 % |
| B+ = 80 - 85 % | C = 61 - 65 % | F = under 51 % |

Block Week course regulations

- The last day to drop a Block Week course (without it appearing on the student’s transcript) shall be the end of the first day of lectures.
- The last day to withdraw from a Block Week course shall be the final day of lectures during the Block Week.
- Final grades for Block Week courses will not be posted until the end of the term in which the course is offered.

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/online/services/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/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 at (403) 220-5881 or visit them on the 3rd 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 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.