

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS & RELIGION

RELS 201 L01: *Jews, Christians, and Muslims*

Course Outline - Spring 2016

Place and Time: Electronic Online Course – All course information (assigned readings, schedule, etc.) and assessments to be accessed in University of Calgary's D2L course management system.

Instructor: Dr. David A. Bergen, 403-220-7063, dabergen@ucalgary.ca

Online office hours: Monday-Friday, 9:00-10:00

Textbook: *Religions of the West Today* (2015 third edition; Esposito, Fasching, Lewis; Oxford University Press). (Links to any relevant electronic notes, articles, video clips, blogs, etc. will also be posted in D2L.)

Description and Objectives:

This course describes and analyzes at an introductory level the religious behaviours and thoughts of Jews, Christians, and Muslims, as constructed in academic scholarship. The course is divided into six sections, following the layout of the textbook. Students are advised to pre-read the textbook Introduction (pp. 3-35) prior to the start of the term, since the first test (based on the Introduction chapter) is scheduled for the first week of the spring term (May 11-13).

Assessments:

This particular online offering of RELS 201 offers students a choice of two options. Option A involves only a startup quiz and six online tests. Option B adds to these tests an additional assessment component, five modules of group discussion and composition. If students choose Option A, the highest grade they will achieve in this course is a B+ (84.9%). If students choose Option B, the highest grade that students can achieve is A+ (100%).

Students must decide by Saturday, May 14 (noon) which option they wish to take. *Note:* Since Option B involves considerably more work and time than Option A, students should consider carefully their spring schedules when making their decision. *Once the decision is made, no re-consideration will be permitted.*

Upon successful completion of Option A, students will be able to describe in some detail and with some sophistication the primary thought structures and behavioural patterns of Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Students who successfully complete Option B will in addition become familiar with:

- the humanly-imagined and contested discourses of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, differing in detail yet similar in structure when viewed comparatively;
- the purpose of religion as a mechanism for social cohesion, ultimately concerned with matters of continuity and discontinuity;
- the elementary difference between truth and truth claims.

OPTION A (grade ceiling B+)

Start-Up Quiz – up to 5% Course Bonus (Deadline: May 13th, midnight)

In the first week of the term, a basic start-up quiz will test the student's knowledge of the basic logistics of the course and the layout of the D2L. This quiz will also give students an opportunity to detect and rectify any computer and server problems before they begin the course proper. Unlike the six regular tests on the textbook, students *will be given multiple attempts to complete the quiz, making it theoretically possible to achieve a 100% score in the start-up quiz.* (NOTE: The start-up quiz will be available on May 9.)

Each week of the spring term will unfold in stages:

1. Weekend: Option A reading of assigned textbook sections and preparation for the online test. Schedule of readings to be posted in D2L. (The first week of the term is exceptional in that the reading of the Introduction should be completed prior to the start of the term.)
2. Monday-Wednesday: Option A testing of descriptive knowledge of assigned readings in online tests. (Again, as stated above, the first week is an exception; the first regular test will be written Wednesday-Friday.)
3. Wednesday-Friday: Option B assessment of analytical understanding of assigned readings, to be engaged in electronic group discussion projects. (There will be no groupwork in the first week.)

Six Weekly Online Tests - 85%

The online tests will assess the student's reading knowledge of the textbook's description of "western religion." Each test will have multiple-choice or true/false questions--all tests are equally-weighted and non-cumulative.

PLEASE NOTE:

- Each test will be comprised of approximately 25 multiple-choice or true/false questions. The time to complete the exam will be 50 minutes. If a student goes over the time limit stipulated for a test, a penalty of one mark per minute (or portion of a minute) exceeding the time limit will be imposed on the score achieved.
- The tests will be available over a period of 48 hours, starting at 12:00 noon on Monday (excepting the first test, which will start at noon on the first Wednesday of the term.)
- Students will be given two attempts to write each test. However, a student attempting a second writing will likely not see an identical test as in the first attempt. *A second attempt can only be initiated if a student received a minimum of 50% in the first attempt.* If for some reason the student experiences a computer, wi-fi, or internet problem in the first attempt before reaching a 50% score, or if similar problems should arise before completion of the second attempt, then the student will have to write a corresponding make-up test in person (i.e., not electronically) in the Department of Classics & Religion, during the spring-term final exam period (July 2-4). Please note: *all make-tests will be closed-book exams comprised of short-answer questions, rather than the multiple-choice questions featured in the online tests.*
- Each test is set to "forced completion," which means that a student cannot save and exit the test, then come back later and pick up where s/he left off. Once the test is engaged, it must be completed to the end, regardless if it is the first attempt or the second attempt.

OPTION B (grade ceiling: A+)

In addition to the Option A requirements of the startup quiz and five online tests, students selecting Option B will engage in five weekly group-work assignments.

Five Weekly Group-Work Assignments - 15%

Each student opting for Option B will be assigned randomly to a small D2L discussion group, to discuss a particular question requiring a directed analysis of the week's readings. The discussion of the assigned question will culminate in a collectively written formal paragraph (200 words maximum) that is concisely written, thoroughly edited, succinctly articulated, grammatically correct, and academically sound. If deemed publishable, the group's paragraph will then be posted to the general class so that all students can compare and learn from the shared outcomes of their peers. (Students will have 48 hours to discuss their assigned group question and to write/polish their paragraph response.)

Each collectively-written paragraph will be assigned a mark, to be applied uniformly to all students in that particular group. Group membership will be periodically shuffled as less engaged students are weeded out and/or replaced.

Given that this an online course (accessible anywhere, anytime), and, given that the group discussions and the writing of tests take place over two-day periods, no concession or remedial assignments for either discussions or tests will be granted, except for cases of significant illness (adequately described, verifiable with proper medical documentation, and submitted electronically within 24 hours). Travel, work schedule, weddings, funerals, or computer/technical issues are not excusable.

Student Responsibilities:

Students should remember that spring-term courses are condensed versions of a regular term; it is very easy to lag behind the scheduled pace. Also, students should also be aware that an online course brings added responsibilities--students must be self-motivated in their efforts and self-diligent in their attention to detail. To succeed, students should:

- *enter* in their personal calendar all deadlines pertinent to the assessments of this course (see schedule in D2L);
- *ensure* that their computer and server are fully operational. No exceptions will be made for technical glitches (e.g., server crash, browser freeze-up, wi-fi dropout ... in short, anything between the university's system and the student's computer) other than those problems for which the University is responsible. *It is therefore the student's responsibility as an enrollee in an online electronic course to ensure that they possess (or have access to) the stable equipment and secure signal necessary to complete the course.*
 - for information on supported browsers and operating systems most compatible with D2L, please check this webpage:
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/it/home/getting-started-students>
 - in the event of a university related server issue, students must contact [Information Technologies](#) to confirm that the university system encountered a glitch while the test was in session. This confirmation must then be forwarded to the instructor, who will be able to reset the test for a final attempt.
- *read* thoroughly the assigned pages prior to each weekly test (see schedule posted in D2L, Course Information);
- *check* regularly and frequently for email messages and the D2L site for updates, changes, and announcements;
- *study* hard, allotting sufficient time prior to each test for rereading of textbook material.

Additional Important Details:

Please note these important details:

- marks for the tests and group assignments will be posted in D2L within a few days of their completion;
- a passing grade on any of the regular tests or group assignments is not essential for passing the course;
- no external aids (e.g., student notes or textbook) are permitted during the written make-up tests.

Grading Scale:

A+ 100-96	B+ 84.9-80	C+ 69.9-65	D+ 54.9-53
A 95.9-90	B 79.9-75	C 64.9-60	D 52.9-50
A- 89.9-85	B- 74.9-70	C- 59.9-55	F under 50

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

References and Bibliography:

The Department of Classics and Religion uses the most recent edition of the Chicago Manual of Style and requires references and bibliographies to adhere to the Chicago citation system. You can find a quick guide here: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html. Alternatively please consult with the library staff for help and advice using the Chicago citation style.

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 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.