

**University of Calgary**  
**Faculty of Humanities**  
**Department of Religious Studies**  
**Rels 201 L04, Winter 2010**  
*Introduction to World Religions, Western*

**Time:** R 18:00-20:50  
**Instructor:** Jennifer K. Wees  
**Office Hours:** Room 1330; F 14:00-15:00  
**Telephone:** 403-220-5612  
**Email:** jwees@ucalgary.ca

**Textbooks:**

Oxtoby, Willard G., *World Religions: Western Traditions*, Oxford University Press, 2002

**Course Description:**

In the course of history, religion has been a motivating factor for deeds and accomplishments, an explanation for incidents and phenomena, or both. All cultures contain religions, beliefs, or philosophies, all of which create, perpetuate, and define cultural norms, none of which exist in a vacuum. All cultures eventually encounter other traditions, and they can reject, assimilate, or accommodate these traditions, which can change the customs of all involved. When religions grow out of, or are, at the very least, inspired by each other, the tension between the desire for recognition and the desire for partition can create conflict or cooperation. This has been particularly true of the so-called "Western" religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

This course will examine each of these three major faiths (as well as some examination of Zoroastrianism and atheism), from an historical perspective, with regards to scripture, traditions, authority, politics, ritual, mores, morals, manners of worship, mysticism, inspirations, similarities, differences, influences on each other, competition with each other, concerns, ideologies, doctrine, expression, and faith.

**Core Competencies:**

Students should acquire and develop skills in critical analysis of both primary and secondary literature, concise and organized expression of ideas, a "feel" for the history and cultures examined, and an avoidance of anachronism.

**Course Requirements:**

Essay critique (1500-2000 words)	15%	February 7, 2010
Article synthesis (2500-3000 words)	25%	April 4, 2010
2 midterms	25% each	February 11; April 1, 2010
Final quiz	10%	April 15, 2010

\*There will be no Registrar scheduled final exam for this course.

Articles for the essay critique and the article synthesis will be provided by the instructor.

All due dates must be honoured, barring genuine, unforeseen circumstances, such as death, significant illness, or domestic affliction (corroborated by a valid note from a physician or counselor) and the instructor must be contacted within 24 hours of the missed deadline. Work handed in late that does not fall into these categories will be penalized by the loss of one grade level (eg: A becomes A-) per day of the total grade of the work in question.

All work is to be emailed to me by the due date. All work must be saved in the .rtf format to avoid conflicts between operating systems and word processing programs. All work will be graded for grammar and spelling, as well as content. Paper copies will not be accepted.

Word counts *do not* include bibliographies.

Reading assignments will be posted and/or emailed regularly, so please ensure that a valid email address has been provided.

**Grading:**

A numerical mark will be assigned to each course requirement. A letter grade will be assigned according to the following table:

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

**Important Dates:**

Please see the current University of Calgary Calendar, Academic Schedule, for dates concerning course withdrawal and fee refunds.

**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 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](mailto:gnosis@ucalgary.ca) or visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~gnosis>.