

The University of Calgary
Faculty of Arts
Department of Religious Studies

Religious Studies 205 L02
The Nature of Religion

Fall 2010
MWF 11:00 – 11:50
ES 162

Instructor
Office
Office Hours
Telephone
Email

Dr. Tinu Ruparell
SS1320
M 15:00-16:00 or by appointment
403-220-5886 (main office)
ruparell@ucalgary.ca

Required Texts:

Kessler, Gary ed. *Philosophy of Religion: Toward a Global Perspective*. (Belmont Ca:Wadsworth, 1998)

Other articles may be used during the course, copies of which will be made available at student expense during the semester.

Course Description:

This course introduces students to issues in the academic study of religion as well as some of its central questions. We will be concerned with questions regarding the definition of, subjective/objective perspectives on and comparison in religion. Additionally, we will consider a few of the central questions and problems which have more recently exercised philosophers of religion both in the 'west' and 'east.' These include questions arising over religious experience and language, the problem of evil, and religious diversity and truth. The course will proceed thematically rather than historically, and students will be encouraged to engage with the readings and their fellow students through regular Friday smaller group sessions. The aim of the course is to give students an understanding of the problematic nature of religion and its study.

Core Competencies:

Committed students in this class will have the opportunity to reflect on central issues in the academic study of religion and in so doing, gain critical reading and analytic skills. Some of these skills will be put to use during Friday smaller group sessions. Additionally, students will begin to acquire abilities in forming clear, concise and cogent arguments, develop their writing and communications skills and broaden their perspectives on the place of religion in contemporary societies. Skills acquired in this course will have

relevance in upper level courses in the humanities as well as well as in wider social settings. Knowledge acquired in this course will help students reflect more clearly and critically on the nature of religion in society and their own religious narratives.

Course Requirements

There will be three assessments for this course:

Assessments	Date	Weight /100%
Midterm In-class exam	TBA – see syllabus first week of class	30%
Friday smaller group session response assignments	10% - complete submission, 10% - Quiz 1, Due Oct 15 2010, 10% - Quiz 2 Due Dec 3 2010	30%
Final Exam (Cumulative)	Registrar Scheduled	40%

Weekly responses:

A significant part of this course will be the Friday sessions where students will be given some opportunity to discuss and engage with the material and their fellow students. The class will be divided into groups and each student will be expected to participate fully in their group discussions.

Weekly 1 page, typed responses are required to assigned questions and are due at the end of class, each Friday small group session, as indicated on the syllabus. No emailed responses will be accepted. Questions will be assigned one week in advance of their due date.

The response element will be graded as follows:

10% for submitting **ALL** of the required responses – no partial grades will be given.

There will be two quizzes, each worth 10% of your final grade which will be non-cumulatively based on your readings and Friday discussions. Preparation for these quizzes will necessitate your attendance and participation in Friday discussions, the weekly questions for which are intended to help you improve your comprehension of the issues we are considering, argumentation relevant to all sides of these issues and articulation of a coherent and reflective position with regard to these arguments.

The quizzes will not be cumulative, but the midterm and final exams will be.

Grading:

A numerical grade will be given for each course requirement with a letter grade awarded as the cumulative grade for the course. Below is the table approved by the Department of Religious Studies:

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 < 50%

NB. POLICY WITH REGARDING MISSED ASSESSMENTS

Test dates are firm. Without acceptable documentation (i.e. medical certificate, police report, bereavement notice, confirmation of religious observance, or court summons), missed assessments will be awarded an ‘F’. PLEASE CONSIDER THIS IN YOUR DECISION TO CONTINUE WITH THIS COURSE.

This policy is intended to encourage diligence and integrity among students as well as to uphold principles of fairness and equality with respect to other students in the class. Excuses other than those listed above will receive little attention.

Academic Honesty:

Plagiarism is not tolerated at the University of Calgary and has serious consequences. Your essays must be your own work and inadequate referencing may be seen as plagiarism. Please see the relevant sections on Academic Misconduct in the University Calendar. If you have questions about correct referencing, please consult your instructor.

Syllabus:

A complete syllabus will be made available in the first week of class