

**The University of Calgary**  
**Faculty of Arts**  
Department of Religious Studies

**Religious Studies 205 L01**  
**The Nature of Religion**

**Fall 2012**  
**Times: MWF 13:00-13:50**  
**Place: ENA 103**

**Instructor**

Chris Daniels

**Office**

SS 1304

**Office Hours**

M 14:00-15:00 or by appointment

**Telephone**

403-220-5612 or 403-220-5886 (Department office)

**Email**

chris.daniels@ucalgary.ca

**Required Texts:**

Peterson, Michael, et.al., *Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings, Fourth Edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Other articles may be used during the course, copies and/or links of which will be posted on Blackboard during the semester.

**Course Description:**

This course will introduce students to diverse issues and questions in the academic study of religion. It will be structured thematically, privilege a global perspective, and include topics such as: Issues in cross cultural definition and study of “religion;” Eastern and Western images of the Divine/Ultimate Reality; rational and non-rational arguments for the (non)existence of the Divine/Ultimate Reality; life after death and personal identity; the problem of evil and suffering; faith and rationality; and religious diversity. The course will be formatted in an interactive lecture style with opportunity for class discussion in which students will be encouraged to participate. The aim of the course is to give students a general awareness of the diverse nature of historic and contemporary religious concepts and issues through critical reflection.

**Core Competencies:**

Students in this class will have the opportunity to reflect on central issues in the philosophical and historical academic study of religion and in so doing gain critical reading and thinking skills. They will also begin to acquire abilities that contribute to clear and concise writing, research, and communication. Skills acquired in this course will have relevance in upper level courses in the Arts, as well as in wider academic, career, and social settings. Knowledge acquired in this course will help students reflect and converse more clearly and critically on the diverse nature of religion in society.

## Course Requirements

There will be four assessments for this course:

Assessments	Date	Weight /100%
Short Quiz	<b>10 (weekly as specified )</b>	10% total (1% each)
Midterm In-class exam	<b>October 19</b>	30%
Written Assignment	<b>November 23</b>	20%
Final Exam (Cumulative)	<b>Registrar Scheduled</b>	40%

### Weekly Quiz:

There will be ten weekly multiple choice quizzes of four or five questions each which will require students to engage in the readings and lectures for successful completion. Each quiz should not take more than 5 minutes to complete. The first quiz will be September 21, with the final one on November 30. There will be no quiz on October 19.

### Written Assignment:

This assignment will be a short (approx. 1000 words) response essay on one of a selection of general topics presented. Grading will focus on following directions, composition skills, content, and proper research citation, all of which will be addressed in class. Best grades will require the critical thinking and reading expected throughout the course. Format will be discussed and assigned in class.

The Midterm and Final exams will be cumulative.

### 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 Dept 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 and quiz 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 a 0 (zero). Late written assignments will be assessed a 5%/day grade deduction.**

**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/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/onlineservices/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/bbbs\\_r6\\_1\\_student/digital\\_drop\\_box.htm](http://library.blackboard.com/docs/r6/6_1/student/bbbs_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](mailto: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](mailto: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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds) for more information.

The Students' Union Faculty of Arts representative can be reached at [arts1@ucalgary.ca](mailto: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](http://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.