

**UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY  
FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS AND RELIGION**

**COURSE OUTLINE – FALL 2014**

**Course** RELS 205 L01: Religion and the Good Life  
**Time** MWF - 2:00 p.m. - 2:50 p.m.  
**Instructor** Anne White, PhD.  
**Office Hours** MWF 11:00 a.m. – 11:50 a.m.  
**Office** SS 534  
**E-mail** [awhite@ucalgary.ca](mailto:awhite@ucalgary.ca)  
**Telephone** 403 220 3285

**Required Text(s):** White, Anne, *Religion and Reality*, Kendall-Hunt Publishers, 2013.

PLEASE NOTE: All royalties accrued from the sale of this textbook will be donated to the University of Calgary. This will be done to address conflict of interest issues.

**Optional Text(s):** Gilkey, Langdon, *Nature, Reality, and the Sacred*, Fortress Press (1993);  
Livingston, James, *Anatomy of the Sacred*, Prentice Hall (2001);  
Pals, Daniel L., *Seven theories of Religion*, Oxford University Press (1996);  
Radford Ruether, Rosemary, *Gaia and God*, Harper Collins (1992);  
Starke, Rodney, *Acts of Faith*, University of California Press (2000);  
Stewart, David, *Exploring the Philosophy of Religion*, Prentice Hall (2001).

**Course Description:** What is the ‘good life’? Historically, different cultures, separated by time, traditions and religions, have and still do, offer varying interpretations of this concept due to that fact that people seek or desire a ‘good life.’ The good life itself can vary in the context of material wealth and comfort linked with affluence and ease of existence, or even domination of others; or it can address the deeper meanings to existence and how we negotiate the acute and often painful realities in which find ourselves. Hence, the good life can offer challenges to cognition, artistic expression, codes of conduct and ways of seeking strength through facing suffering, injustice, and the loss of life or loved ones, and/or decline of the environment. Through the records of pre-history and into recorded written and artistic record, our species has gone to great lengths to create and record meanings and answers to life through their religious cosmologies (world views). Despite modern rejection of these historical enquiries and expressions, the reality is that many people still seek meaning or explanations simply because they need them spiritually and emotionally. From the study of religions what becomes clear is that at the root of a good life is a coping mechanism which incorporates some form of transcendence. This can be through renunciation and rejection of the material existence, escapism and denial, or through facing the undeniable realities of the world around us and living within.

This course will identify and analyze some of the issues and approaches to reality and what constitutes a ‘good life’. It will consider how we address reality through our cognitive abilities, how we seek to understand and/or explain injustice and society disparities, inferiorities, suffering, death, and our apparent inability to govern our conduct and influence on others and the world

around us. It will also consider how we develop the mechanisms by which we counter despair with hope and affirmative action based on knowledge and commitment. Course presentation will consist of lectures, assigned readings, films, and class discussion. As this is an introductory course, a detailed knowledge of Western and Eastern religions will not be required.

**Online elements for this course:** Course notes and web links

**Core Competencies:**

- Students will develop a number of the skills identified in the University of Calgary statement of learning outcomes. These include: communication, thinking, ethical reasoning, computer literacy, information retrieval, and group effectiveness.
- The assigned readings, lecture material and methodology within the course should develop a student’s ability to think critically (i.e. judge, reflect, and analyze); web notes will further provide dissemination of information and enhance computer skills; preparation for examinations should foster the development of information retrieval and writing competency.
- It is important to remember that the attainment of any learning endeavour requires that students regularly attend lectures, read the required material, and complete all course work.

**Course Requirements:**

Date	Assessment	Weight (%)	Required pass/fail
Oct. 3	Test	20	No
Oct. 22	Video Analysis	20	No
Nov. 17	Test	20	No
(registrar scheduled)	Examination	40	No

**Grading**

A numerical mark will be given for each course requirement. A letter grade will be assigned on the following number and letter grade scheme, standardized within the Department of Classics and Religion:

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

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

**Syllabus:**

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

**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](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, librarian staff or the Chicago manual of style.

### **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.

### **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.

### **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>.

### **Classics Student Society**

Classics Student Society is the Greek and Roman Studies Student Club. For membership or more information please email: [classsoc@ucalgary.ca](mailto:classsoc@ucalgary.ca) or visit <http://grst.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate/classics-students-society>.

### **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.