

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

**COURSE OUTLINE – Fall 2017**

**Course:** RELS 205-01 Religion and the Good Life  
**Time:** This is an online course that will be delivered through the Desire2Learn (D2L) learning management system.  
**Instructor:** Craig W. C. Ginn, PhD  
**Office Hours:** Monday 2:30-3:30 by appointment. Additional hours by appointment.  
**Office:** SS 516  
**E-mail:** cwcginn@ucalgary.ca  
**Telephone:** 220-5695

**Required Text(s):**

Online readings. Links will be provided on D2L.

**Course Description:**

What is the good life? How does religion weigh in on this question? How do individual religions seek to provide an answer? THE answer?

This course will provide an introduction to the study of religion, focusing on the functional nature of religion. In general, students will explore the definition(s) of religion, the dimensions of religion, and various approaches to the study of religion. In particular, students will consider truth-claims made by religions that purport to provide life meaning and sustain well-being. We will explore religion as an alleged source of revelation and truth, and how religious systems shape and define “the good life”. We are interested in influential texts and figures; we will consider critical concepts from the Hebrew Bible and the Vedas, as well the teachings of Jesus, Muhammad, Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha), and Confucius.

But religion is not without competition and beyond evaluative judgment. In the context of secular humanism religion is not considered the only source of meaning, and the teachings provided by religions are increasingly challenged as irrelevant and even harmful (rather than ‘good’). As a result, we will also consider some of the key opponents of religion and their arguments.

The course will be composed of four modules:

- Module 1 The nature and study of religion
- Module 2 The functional role of religion
- Module 3 Truth-claims and influential teachings
- Module 4 Evaluating the goodness of religion

Course content will be delivered through readings, audio files, and online documentaries available through the University of Calgary library (Films on Demand).

NOTE: Module content is NOT available on the day of a module test. Students need to ensure that they have completed preparation for the test before the day of the test.

## Online elements for this course:

Accessing online documentaries and video recordings. Links will be posted on D2L. Completing online tests.

Each module test will be available for a 14-hour period of time on the date assigned for the test. Module tests are timed, requiring students to complete the test within a specified time limit. It is important for students to take extra care to ensure that they have access to dependable power and internet service. Do not rely on your computer battery as your only power source when taking the exam. Plug in your computer power cord. “My battery died” will not be considered an acceptable reason for failing to complete the test. For students who experience interruption to internet service while taking the exam, please contact the instructor as soon as internet service is restored. In the meantime, document your location, and the date and time of the interruption to internet service. If a student cannot complete the exam during the 14-hour period of time on the dates assigned for the test due to interruption to internet service or computer malfunction, the student must notify the instructor of the interruption to internet service within 24 hours after the test period via email. Students that require a makeup test are required to arrange a time with the instructor. Normally makeup tests will not be online, but will be invigilated by the course instructor at the Department of Classics and Religion.

**NOTE:** Tests are NOT “open book”. Students are not permitted to consult any course materials while completing any of the module tests. The use of course materials during a test constitutes academic misconduct. Students must complete on-line tests individually. Collaboration with other students in taking tests is not permitted and constitutes academic misconduct.

## Core Competencies:

Upon completion of this course, students will become familiar with:

- approaches and obstacles to the study of religion
- key terms and concepts in the study of religion
- dimensional analysis of religion
- interdisciplinary understandings of religion
- reductionist and non-reductionist understandings of religion
- the nature of revelation in religion
- religious texts and approaches to interpretation
- the main teachings of key religious figures
- the new atheist critique of religion

## Course Requirements:

Assessment	Date	Weight (%)
Module 1 Test: Includes all Module 1 course material	Tuesday, October 3	25%
Module 2 Test: Includes all Module 2 course material	Tuesday, October 24	25%
Module 3 Test: Includes all Module 3 course material	Tuesday, November 14	25%
Final Exam: Includes all Module 4 course material. The final exam is <u>not</u> comprehensive.	To be scheduled by the Registrar’s Office during the examination period (December 11-22)	25%

## Final Examination Period:

The final exam will be scheduled by the Registrar. Students must be available to write the final exam on the day set by the Registrar's Office, up to the last day of the examination period as specified in the Academic Schedule. The dates of the final exam period are December 11-21. A final exam cannot be deferred for misreading the final examination schedule or accommodating travel plans or work schedules. Valid reasons include illness or personal emergency, religious observance, or domestic affliction. Students with three exams in 24 hours may defer one of their exams to the deferred final examination period. For further information see Deferred Exams <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred-exams>

## 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, usually used 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.

## Adjusted Grades:

The instructor will implement .5% as a standard measure of adjustment for grades. For example, a final grade of 64.5% (C) will be rounded up to 65% (C+). Please do not send email inquiries asking the instructor to increase or 'round up' your final grade.

## Weighting of Module Tests:

The weighting for module tests is identified above. The weighting of test will not be changed to accommodate student requests.

## Reviewing Tests:

The online tests for this course display the student's final score. Test answers are not displayed. For students interested in seeing individual test answers, please make an appointment with the instructor at the end of the term after all tests are completed. At that time, you can review all of your test answers.

## Extra Assignments:

There are no extra assignments for this course. Students will not be given an opportunity to submit extra work or retake tests to increase their grade.

**Policy with regard to missed assignments/assessments:**

If a student misses a test, the student must provide the instructor with supporting documentation (note from doctor, counselor, accident report, etc.) within 48 hours of the absence. If documentation is not provided within 48 hours, the student will not be provided an opportunity to make up the test and will receive a numerical mark of zero. There are of course many reasons for missing the test that are not considered to be valid, including but not limited to: work schedules that conflict with the day of the test, family functions that conflict with the day of the test, forgetting about the test, traffic congestion on the day of the test, and having no internet connection on the day of the test.

**Expectations for email correspondence in this course:**

Email must be sent from a U of C email account. Please do NOT send from other accounts, such as Gmail or Hotmail.

Please include the subject of your email and clearly identify yourself by name and the course you are registered in. Please do not send email inquiries related to dates and deadlines. Students shall refer to the university calendar, course outline, and final exam schedule for schedule information. Inquiries related to exams or assignments must be sent no less than 24 hours before a deadline.

The instructor will reply to emails on business days.

**Office hours:**

Office hours are structured in 15-minute appointments. Sign-up sheets for the semester are posted on the instructor's door at SS 516. For students that are not on the U of C campus during the term, please make appointment requests via email. If a student is not able to meet with the instructor during office hours, the student may request to meet at an alternative time during department hours. If a student requires an extended meeting, the student must make an appointment outside of the instructor's scheduled office hours during department hours. Generally extended meetings will not exceed 30 minutes and will be scheduled on a weekly basis according to the instructor's availability. Appointments for extended meetings must include the list of items the student would like to discuss. Note: The instructor will not be available for office hours on October 5 (statutory holiday), November 13 (midterm break), or November 20 (Annual Meeting American Academy of Religion).

**Syllabus:**

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

**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:**

The student accommodation policy can be found at: [ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy](http://ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy).

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities [ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy](http://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy).

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor.

## **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](mailto: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.

## **Freedom of Information and Privacy:**

This course is conducted in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPP): <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act indicates that assignments given by you to your course instructor will remain confidential unless otherwise stated before submission. The assignment cannot be returned to anyone else without your express permission. Similarly, any information about yourself that you share with your course instructor will not be given to anyone else without your permission. As one consequence, students should identify themselves on all written work by placing their name on the front page and their ID number on each subsequent page.

## **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/emergency-plan/assemblypoints](http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergency-plan/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.