

**THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
WEEKEND UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
FALL 2005**

05/08/16

**RELIGIOUS STUDIES 205 L98
THE NATURE OF RELIGION
SEPT. 17, 24; OCT. 1, 15, 22, NOV. 5, 19, 26
Final exam: Dec 10**

INSTRUCTOR:	Dr. Anne White, Ph.D.
COURSE TIME AND DAYS:	8:00-12:00 - Saturday
OFFICE:	SS 1322
OFFICE HOURS:	TR – 12:30-1:30 p.m.
TELEPHONE:	220-3285
E-MAIL ADDRESS:	awhite@ucalgary.ca
WEBSITE ADDRESS:	Blackboard

Required Text:

Robert C. Monk et al, **Exploring Religious Meaning**, 6th ed., Prentice Hall (2003).

Suggested Reading (not mandatory):

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:

This course is designed to introduce students to the academic study of religion. It will present the practical and theoretical analysis of religion through examination of a broad range of religious issues and phenomena. Adopting this analytical approach, students will gain insight into critical thinking as they are introduced to many of the major questions, problems, and arguments that occupy both male and female philosophers of religion. Examples from various major religious traditions will be used to demonstrate the nature of religion as interpreted by both adherent and critic of religious beliefs in contemporary society. The overall result of this approach will be to equip students with a variety of perspectives in order to understand the status, function, and issues pertaining to the nature of religion in our present age.

Course presentation will consist of lectures, assigned readings, documentaries, and class discussion. As this is an introductory course, a detailed knowledge of Western and Eastern religions will not be required.

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:

October 15	- Film review/analysis – five pages	15%
November 19	- In class test	15%
December 10	- Essay – 8 pages, plus 1 page bibliography	
	Double spaced	
	CHICAGO STYLE FORMAT ONLY	30%
December 10	- Final Exam	40%

NOTE: Failure to complete ANY of the above requirements could result in a grade of 'F' for the course. Missed examinations or assignments must be accompanied by a medical certificate, or in the case of domestic affliction, a note from a counsellor. The instructor must receive notification within 20 hours of the missed examination by telephone or e-mail.

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:

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.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

WEEK COMMENCING:

September 17

Chapters 1, 2

Introduction and definition of religion.
Religious traditions. General introduction to religious cosmologies
Group discussion.

September 24

Chapters 3, 4

Two short videos on religious traditions.
Overview of how to write a video/film review.
Guidelines posted on web
Experience and expression in religion
Knowledge, belief and cosmology.
Group discussion

October 1

Chapter 6

Authority in religion. Some positive and negative issues.
Cults, control mechanisms.

Additional material as per webnotes.

OCTOBER 15
Chapter 7

The Holy and the Other.
Mysticism in various religious traditions.
Video
Group discussion.

VIDEO REVIEW TO BE HANDED IN

OCTOBER 22
Chapters 9, 10

Perennial questions, self, and meaning.
The development of self within a religious cosmology.
Video.

NOVEMBER 5
Chapter 8, 10, 11

The concept of evil.
Sin and guilt. Are we really that free?
Human freedom versus hedonism. What is freedom?
Group discussion

NOVEMBER 19
Chapters 12, 13

IN CLASS TEST – 45 MINUTES

Death – is it the end or the beginning?
What does salvation mean?
Why do so many people feel the need for this?

NOVEMBER 26
Chapters 14 and 15
WEB NOTES

Relationships – personal and corporate expressions
of ethical conduct.
Religions, human conduct and Gaia (Earth)
Is it possible to “tread lightly on the earth”?

DECEMBER 10

RESEARCH PAPER TO BE HANDED IN
FINAL EXAM – TWO HOURS DURATION

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.

Withdrawing from courses:

Please note the information regarding withdrawals and fee refunds in the Academic Schedule of the current University Calendar.

Gnosis:

Gnosis is the Religious Studies Student Club. For membership or more information please email: gnosis@ucalgary.ca or visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~gnosis>.