

**THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
RELS 205 L01 - THE NATURE OF RELIGION
WINTER TERM 2010**

Instructor:	Irving Hexham
Class time and room:	TR11:00am-12:15pm
Lecture room:	MFH 160
Office/office hours:	SS 1310 R12:30-1:30pm or by appointment.
Telephone:	403-220-5886 (main office)
E-mail:	Irving Hexham: hexham@ucalgary.ca
Web site:	http://www.ucalgary.ca/~hexham
Tutorial Assistant:	Joël Laforest
Assistant's e-mail:	joel.rels205@gmail.com

All questions are to be directed to the tutorial assistant before you contact Prof. Hexham.

Sample questions for all the tests will be posted on the web. DO NOT ask for the answers to the sample questions. You must work out the answers yourself. All tests will be based on the lectures and readings. The answers to most questions will be found in both the lectures and readings. If you attend all the lectures and read all the readings you will easily pass the course and ought to obtain a good grade.

Required texts

Hexham, Irving:	<i>Concise Dictionary of Religion</i>
Kaufmann, Walter	<i>Critique of Religion and Philosophy</i>
Hexham, Irving:	<i>The Christian Travelers Guide to Great Britain.</i>

(This last book is out of print – copies will be sold in class at the cost of \$20).

Other readings needed for the in-class tests will be posted on the Internet at:
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/~hexham/courses/>

About Rels 205:

This is a Religious Studies "Nature Stream" course with a "205" designation. That means it deals with the study of religion. It is not about Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, or any other major religious tradition. Rather, it is about the practical and theoretical study of religion. During the course examples will be used from major religious traditions, particularly Christianity, as well as less known ones. If you are looking for a course on Buddhism or Hinduism enrol in an "Eastern Stream" course with the course designation "203." If you want to take a course on Christianity, Islam or Judaism, then you need a "Western Stream" course with a designation "201" or "273". 200 level courses are designed as *introductory* courses intended to prepare students for more advanced study. If you are a fourth year student fulfilling a requirement you ought to have completed earlier in your career you must expect this course to be elementary.

Course description:

The University of Calgary Calendar provides the following general course description for Rels 205:

An introduction to the academic study of religion with particular emphasis on the nature of religion and the relationship of religion to contemporary thought and culture."

The emphasis in this particular section of Rels 205 is on "the study of religion." In this course various theoretical concepts related to the study of religion will be introduced and discussed in specific historic and geographic settings. The setting for this year's course is Great Britain – hence the travel guide.

An effort will be made to show how religious ideas relate to social and political life as well as practical pursuits such as modern tourism. The course is based on lectures and course readings. The course begins with a discussion of the nature of the university followed by various definitions of the term "religion" and an analysis of some key terms in the field of religious studies. The role of theory in the interpretation of religion will be examined through brief excerpts from the writings of Tom Paine, Ludwig Feuerbach and Karl Marx. Issues of academic scholarship, method and theory in the study of religion will be discussed. Weekly topics are listed on the course website.

Course requirements and grading:

Lectures begin on January 11 and end on April 16.

Reading Days are February 14-21.

All tests will be based on the readings and lectures.

First Test worth 35% of the final grade will be held on Tuesday 2 March.

Second Test worth 35% of the final grade will be held on Thursday 1 April.

Third Test worth 10% of the final grade will be held on Thursday 15 April.

Research assignment worth 20% of the final grade is due Thursday 15 April.

Details of the research assignment are given on the course website. Only hard copy papers will be accepted. Do not send them by email.

* Students must take the test on the assigned day or have a valid medical note.

* Late papers will lose 10 points per day.

***There will be no Registrar scheduled final exam for this course.**

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.

Recording of lectures: Recording any part of any lectures in any form, including through a computer, is not permitted due to copyright issues. Nor will the power point slides or lecture notes be posted on the web for the same reason.

Academic Honesty: Students should be familiar with University regulations regarding academic integrity; see relevant pages in the current University Calendar.

Class etiquette: remember you are not the only student in the class. Please make every effort to arrive on time and not to leave before the class ends. In other words concentrate on your studies and do not disturb other students.

MP3 Computers and other devices: while attending class you are expected to listen to the lectures however boring you may find them. Therefore, the wearing of earphones or similar devices is not permitted nor are computers to be used for watching videos or playing computer games.

Course competencies

At the end of this course students ought to be able to:

- a) appreciate the field of religious studies and some associated disciplines;
- b) understand the meaning of some key terms in religious studies such as myth and religion;
- c) think critically about religious arguments;
- d) appreciate the importance of using correct academic methods intelligently;
- e) be able to make informed judgment about the reliability of specific books and texts.

Academic honesty

Students should be familiar with the University regulations regarding academic honesty. See University Calendar, p. 49. See also:
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/~hexham/study/plag.html>

Academic accommodation

It is a student's responsibility to request academic accommodation. If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Center, please contact their office at 403-220-8237. Your academic accommodation letters should be provided to your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the commencement of this course. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Center are not eligible for formal academic accommodation.

(DRC web address is: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/Others/DRC/>)