

The University of Calgary
Faculty of Arts
Department of Religious Studies

Religious Studies 205 L01
The Nature of Religion

Winter 2013
MWF 12:00-12:50
ST 135

Instructor
Office
Office Hours
Telephone
Email

Dr. Tinu Ruparell
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M 13:00-14:00 or by appointment
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Teaching Assistant:

Jenna Ferrey
jaferrey@ucalgary.ca

Required Texts:

Kessler, Gary E., *Philosophy of Religion: Toward a Global Perspective* (Belmont, Ca: Wadsworth, 1999)

Please note, this course will be using Tophat Monocle and will require students to bring their own electronic device such as: an SMS capable mobile phone; a Tablet such as an iPad, Android pad; a wifi capable laptop.

A student quickstart guide for Tophat Monocle can be found here:

[https://s3.amazonaws.com/thm-corporate/Support/Guides/Student+Quick+Start+Guide+\(M\).pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/thm-corporate/Support/Guides/Student+Quick+Start+Guide+(M).pdf)

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

Course Description:

This course introduces students to issues in the academic study of religion as well as some of its central questions. We will be concerned with questions concerning the definition of, subjective/objective perspectives on and comparison in religion. Additionally, we will consider a few of the central questions and problems which have more recently exercised philosophers of religion both in the 'west' and 'east.' These include questions arising from religious experience and language, the problem of evil and religious diversity and truth. The course will proceed thematically and philosophically, rather than historically, and students will be encouraged to engage with the readings and their fellow students through regular Friday smaller group sessions. The aim of the course is to give students an understanding of the problematic nature of religion and its study.

Core Competencies:

Committed students in this class will have the opportunity to reflect on central issues in the academic study of religion and in so doing gain critical reading and analytic skills. Some of these skills will be put to use during Friday smaller group sessions. Additionally, students will begin to acquire abilities in forming clear, concise and cogent arguments, develop their writing and communications skills and broaden their perspectives on the place of religion in contemporary societies. Skills acquired in this course will have relevance in upper level courses in the humanities as well as in wider social settings. Knowledge acquired in this course will help students reflect more clearly and critically on the nature of religion in society and their own religious narratives.

Course Requirements

There will be three assessments for this course:

Assessments	Date	Weight /100%
Midterm In-class exam (cumulative)	Friday March 1st	30%
Friday smaller group session response assignments	10% : complete submission; 10% quiz 1; 10 % quiz 2	30%
Registrar scheduled Final Exam (Cumulative)		40%

Weekly responses:

A significant part of this course will be the Friday sessions where students will be given some opportunity to discuss and engage with the material and their fellow students. The class will be divided into groups and each student will be expected to participate fully in the discussions.

Weekly, typed responses are required to assigned questions and are due at the end of class, each Friday as indicated on the syllabus. No emailed responses will be accepted. Questions will be assigned 1 week before their due date.

The response element will be graded as follows:

10% for submitting **ALL** of the required responses – no partial grades will be given.

There will be two quizzes, each worth 10% of your final grade which will be non- cumulatively based on your readings and Friday discussions. Preparation for these quizzes will necessitate your attendance and participation in Friday discussions, the weekly questions for which are intended to help you improve your comprehension of the issues we are considering,

argumentation relevant to all sides of these issues and articulation of a coherent and reflective position with regard to these arguments.

The quizzes will not be cumulative, but the midterm and final exams will be.

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 REGARDING MISSED ASSESSMENTS

Test 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 an ‘F’. PLEASE CONSIDER THIS IN YOUR DECISION TO CONTINUE WITH THIS COURSE.

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.

Syllabus:

A complete syllabus will be made available in 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. 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/bbls_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 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. 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 3rd 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 for more information.

The Students' Union Faculty of Arts representative can be reached at 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. 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.