



University of Calgary  
Faculty of Arts  
Department of Classics and Religion

Course Outline – Winter 2023

**RELS 205:  
RELIGION AND THE GOOD LIFE**

<b>Course</b>	Religion and the Good Life		
<b>Time</b>	Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00 am – 12:15 pm MT		
<b>Room</b>	ICT 121 <i>Classes are in person, unless university or provincial health protocols require us to meet online, in which case we will hold class by Zoom</i>		
<b>Instructor</b>	<b>Office Hours</b>	<b>Office</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
Dr. Joy Palacios	Thursday, 3:30-5:30 pm MT (in person or via Zoom)	SS 534	E: <a href="mailto:joy.palacios@ucalgary.ca">joy.palacios@ucalgary.ca</a>
<b>Dr. Palacios' Office Hour Zoom Link:</b>			
Please see D2L shell			
<b>Teaching Assistant</b>	<b>Office Hours</b>	<b>Office</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
TBD			E:
<b>Teaching Assistant's Office Hours Zoom Link:</b>			
<i>Coming soon</i>			

**INSTRUCTOR EMAIL POLICY:**

I will do my best to respond to emails sent via students' @ucalgary emails within 48 hours. Please note that course communications will be sent to your @ucalgary email.

**COURSE CALENDAR STATEMENT:**

An introduction to the academic study of religion with particular emphasis on the nature of religion, its role as a response to existential questions, and the relationship of religion to contemporary thought and culture.

**Course Hours:** 3 units; (3-0)

**Antirequisite(s):** Credit for [Religious Studies 205](#) and 350 will not be allowed.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course examines the way religious beliefs and practices in a range of traditions propose conceptual and practical solutions to what John Milton Yinger has called "the ultimate problems of human life." How do religions model different versions of the good life and what kinds of attitudes and actions do they associate with human thriving? After a brief introduction to the problem of defining religion, we will consider religious understandings of the self or its absence, ideas regarding salvation and enlightenment, strategies for fending off evil, and methods for connecting with the divine or ultimate

reality. Reformulated as questions, these topics concern issues such as: Who are we and why are we here? What is happiness and how do we attain it? Why do bad things happen and what can we do about it? And how is human existence related to some sort of transcendent reality? Religious traditions studied will include African traditional religions, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. An ability to analyze primary sources – which include, among other things, images, symbols, religious objects, and rituals – is fundamental to the academic study of religion. In order to develop this skill, each session will use primary sources to explore the way religious traditions represent human thriving and its obstacles.

### **COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

*Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:*

Knowledge:

- Compare and apply academic definitions of religion
- Identify the understandings of self, salvation/enlightenment, evil, and divine connection associated with each of the six religious traditions covered by the course
- Recognize and interpret important texts, images, symbols, and performances from each of the traditions covered

Skills:

- Apply basic methods of textual and visual analysis important in the study of religion
- Analyze the way an excerpt of scripture, image, symbol, or ritual performance expresses a religious tradition's conception of human thriving

### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Hexham, Irving. *Understanding World Religions: An Interdisciplinary Approach*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.

Additional weekly readings will be posted to D2L.

### **ONLINE ELEMENTS FOR THIS COURSE:**

Except for our required textbook, all our course materials will be posted to D2L. This includes readings you will do on your own, assignment handouts, the PowerPoints for our class sessions, and occasionally pre-recorded lectures that you download and watch. You will also submit your assignments via D2L.

I will hold my office hours via Zoom, with an in-person option.

If COVID-19 protocols change and we need to move online, we will use a hybrid format, which means we will continue to meet via Zoom during our scheduled class times on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

### **LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES AND REQUIREMENTS**

To access the course readings on D2L and submit assignments, you will need to use a computer with internet access. During class, we will use TopHat as one mode of participation. To participate via TopHat you will need a device with a web browser and an internet connection. If COVID-19 protocols move our class to Zoom, you will need access to a computer that has the following:

- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security, and malware updates;
- A current and updated web browser;
- Webcam (built-in or external);
- Microphone and speaker (built-in or external), or headset with microphone;
- Current antivirus and/or firewall software enabled;
- Broadband internet connection.

### **CLASS SCHEDULE**

A course schedule will be made available the first week of class and course components will be posted in D2L each week in list format so that you can follow along and see what you need to do.

### **EXAMINATIONS**

This course will have a registrar-scheduled final exam. The exam will be non-cumulative. As soon as the final exam schedule is made available by the university, I will post the date to D2L.

### **ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS**

Your learning in this course will be assessed in the following ways:

1. Class participation (5%)

Your engagement with the course material and your contribution to our class sessions is crucial to your success in the course, as well as to the learning of your peers. For more information about how participation will be evaluated, please see the Participation handout in D2L.

2. Thesis statement (5%)

To help you prepare for the primary source analysis paper, you will submit a thesis statement two weeks before the paper is due.

3. Midterm exam (35%)

We will conduct our midterm exam on Tuesday, February 28<sup>th</sup>. The exam will likely consist of a combination of multiple-choice questions, short answer questions, and essay questions. I will provide more information closer to the date.

4. Primary source analysis paper (20%)

To practice using the analysis strategies we will use in class discussions and to hone your writing skills, you will write a paper in which you analyze a primary source. You will receive a detailed handout in class explaining the primary source analysis assignment. In brief, you will select a primary source from a list of options provided on D2L. These will include the types of sources we will have discussed during in-class lectures, such as excerpts of scripture, images, symbols, or video recordings of performances. Then you will write a 750–1000-word paper analyzing the way the primary source expresses some aspect of the “good life” as conceived by the religious tradition from which the source is drawn.

## 5. Final exam (35%)

Our final exam will be scheduled by the registrar. It will be non-cumulative and will likely consist of a combination of multiple-choice questions, short answer questions, and essay questions. I will provide more information closer to the date.

Date	Assessment	Weight (%)	Required pass/fail
Ongoing	Participation	5%	N
28 February	Midterm exam	35%	N
9 March	Thesis statement	5%	N
23 March	Primary source analysis	20%	N
Registrar scheduled final exam	Final exam	35%	N

**MISSED OR LATE ASSIGNMENTS\***

Assignments will be marked down by 1/3 of a letter grade for each day they are late (e.g.: A- to B+). I want you to succeed in this course. If health or family crises emerge that impact your ability to meet course deadlines and the above options are not sufficient, please email me so that we can work together to find a solution.

**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.

**ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION****EXPECTATIONS FOR WRITING**

I will provide a handout and rubric for each written assignment. All written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented. If you need help with your writing, you may use the writing support services in the Learning Commons. For further information, please refer to the official online University of Calgary Calendar, Academic Regulations, E. Course Information, E.2: Writing Across the Curriculum:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>.

## **ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION EXPECTATIONS**

Students are expected to attend class regularly and to be fully present and engaged in class activities and discussions. These are part of the participation grade, as outlined in the assessment components section above. Class participation marks cannot be made up. However, each student gets one free unexcused absence. Please see the participation handout for more information.

## **CONDUCT**

During class discussions and activities, I expect each member of the course to help me create a positive learning environment by listening respectfully to each other, using transitions (“As Julia said, I think...”, “I agree/disagree with Mohad because...”, “I want to build on that idea...”), and by refraining from statements that signal judgment. We will be discussing material that can be sensitive and about which members of the course may have strong feelings. For this reason, all members of the class will be asked to use vocabulary that signals observation, description, analysis, scholarly argument, and hypothesis formation.

Students, employees, and academic staff are also expected to demonstrate behaviour in class that promotes and maintains a positive and productive learning environment. As members of the University community, students, employees, and academic staff are expected to demonstrate conduct that is consistent with the University of Calgary Calendar, the Code of Conduct and Non-Academic Misconduct policy and procedures, which can be found at: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

## **USE OF INTERNET AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES IN CLASS**

Electronic devices are allowed in this course and will sometimes be used for in-class activities. (I, too, after all, will have my laptop with me to provide PowerPoint presentations and my phone so I can use its timer to keep our activities on track.) I do, however, expect that all members of the class show respect to their fellow students and the instructor(s) by not wearing headphones, answering phone calls, playing music, or watching their own videos. If a student’s use of electronic devices disrupts others, he/she may be asked to leave the room.

Recording any part of the lectures or class sessions in any form must first be approved by the instructor in writing and is for individual private study only.

## **GUIDELINES FOR ZOOM SESSIONS**

If health protocols require us to hold class virtually, we will use Zoom. Zoom is a video conferencing program that will allow us to meet at specific times for a “live” video conference, so that we can have the opportunity to meet each other virtually and discuss relevant course topics as a learning community.

To help ensure Zoom sessions are private, do not share the Zoom link or password with others, or on any social media platforms. Zoom links and passwords are only intended for students registered in the course. Zoom recordings and materials presented in Zoom, including any teaching materials, must not be shared, distributed, or published without the instructor’s permission.

The use of video conferencing programs relies on participants to act ethically, honestly and with integrity; and in accordance with the principles of fairness, good faith, and respect (as per the Code of Conduct). When entering Zoom or other video conferencing sessions (such as MS Teams), you play a

role in helping create an effective, safe and respectful learning environment. Please be mindful of how your behaviour in these sessions may affect others. Participants are required to use names officially associated with their UCID (legal or preferred names listed in the Student Centre) when engaging in these activities. Instructors/moderators can remove those whose names do not appear on class rosters. Non-compliance may be investigated under relevant University of Calgary conduct policies (e.g Student Non-Academic Misconduct Policy). If participants have difficulties complying with this requirement, they should email the instructor of the class explaining why, so the instructor may consider whether to grant an exception, and on what terms. For more information on how to get the most out of your zoom sessions visit: <https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/guidelines-for-zoom/> .

If you are unable to attend a Zoom session, please contact your instructor to arrange an alternative activity for the missed session (e.g., to review a recorded session). Please be prepared, as best as you are able, to join class in a quiet space that will allow you to be fully present and engaged in Zoom sessions. Students will be advised by their instructor when they are expected to turn on their webcam (for group work, presentations, etc.).

The instructor may record online Zoom class sessions for the purposes of supporting student learning in this class – such as making the recording available for review of the session or for students who miss a session. Students will be advised before the instructor initiates a recording of a Zoom session. These recordings will be used to support student learning only and will not be shared or used for any other purpose.

## **UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY POLICIES AND SUPPORTS**

### **ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

Academic Misconduct refers to student behavior which compromises proper assessment of a student's academic activities and includes: cheating; fabrication; falsification; plagiarism; unauthorized assistance; failure to comply with an instructor's expectations regarding conduct required of students completing academic assessments in their courses; and failure to comply with exam regulations applied by the Registrar.

For information on the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure please visit:

<https://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-academic-misconduct-policy.pdf>

<https://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-academic-misconduct-procedure.pdf>

Additional information is available on the Academic Integrity Website at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/learning/academic-integrity>.

### **ACADEMIC ACCOMODATION**

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations according to the University policies and procedures listed below. The Student Accommodations policy is available at

<https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/access/prospective-students/academic-accommodations>.

Students needing an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/procedure-for-accommodations-for->

[students-with-disabilities.pdf](#) ). Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than Disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor.

SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit [www.ucalgary.ca/access/](http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/) .

### **INSTRUCTOR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

Course materials created by instructors (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

### **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY**

Student information will be collected in accordance with typical (or usual) classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary.

### **COPYRIGHT LEGISLATION**

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright-policy.pdf>) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorised sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>.

### **MEDIA RECORDING (if applicable)**

Please refer to the following statement on media recording of students: [https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Media-Recording-in-Learning-Environments-OSP\\_FINAL.pdf](https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Media-Recording-in-Learning-Environments-OSP_FINAL.pdf)

#### ***\*Media recording for lesson capture***

The instructor may use media recordings to capture the delivery of a lecture. These recordings are intended to be used for lecture capture only and will not be used for any other purpose. Although the recording device will be fixed on the Instructor, in the event that incidental student participation is recorded, the instructor will ensure that any identifiable content (video or audio) is masked, or will seek consent to include the identifiable student content to making the content available on University approved platforms.

#### ***\*Media recording for self-assessment of teaching practices***

The instructor may use media recordings as a tool for self-assessment of their teaching practices. Although the recording device will be fixed on the instructor, it is possible that student participation in

the course may be inadvertently captured. These recordings will be used for instructor self-assessment only and will not be used for any other purpose.

**\*Media recording for the assessment of student learning**

The instructor may use media recordings as part of the assessment of students. This may include but is not limited to classroom discussions, presentations, clinical practice, or skills testing that occur during the course. These recordings will be used for student assessment purposes only and will not be shared or used for any other purpose.

**SEXUAL VIOLENCE POLICY**

The University recognizes that all members of the University Community should be able to learn, work, teach and live in an environment where they are free from harassment, discrimination, and violence.

The University of Calgary's sexual violence policy guides us in how we respond to incidents of sexual violence, including supports available to those who have experienced or witnessed sexual violence, or those who are alleged to have committed sexual violence. It provides clear response procedures and timelines, defines complex concepts, and addresses incidents that occur off-campus in certain circumstances. Please see the policy available at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/sexual-violence-policy.pdf>

**OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

Please visit the Registrar's website at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for additional important information on the following:

- Wellness and Mental Health Resources
- Student Success
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Information
- Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points
- Safewalk