

**The University of Calgary
Faculty of Arts
Department of Religious Studies
Spring 2010
RELIGIOUS STUDIES 309 L20
RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE**

INSTRUCTOR: Anne White, Ph.D.
COURSE DAYS AND TIME MW 10:00-12:45
OFFICE: SS 1322
OFFICE HOURS: MW 13:00-13:50
TELEPHONE: (403) 220-3285 or (403) 220-5886 (main office)
E-MAIL ADDRESS: awhite@ucalgary.ca
WEBSITE ADDRESS: Blackboard

REQUIRED READING:

Daniel L. Pals, *Introducing Religion: Readings from the Classic Theorists*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Webnotes as posted on Blackboard. NOTE: The John Hick's material will be in the form of handout and webnotes for salient points.

Suggested reading (not mandatory):

James C. Livingston, *Anatomy of the Sacred: An Introduction to Religion*, (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2001);
Michael Peterson et al. *Reason and Religious Belief: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will introduce the student to the study of religious experiences which include ideas taken from philosophy, social structures, rituals, altered states of consciousness, mysticism, and belief in religious/supernatural encounters with the divine. This broad selection of material will provide insight and understanding into the power, complexity, function, and relevance of religious experience. In addition to this, the grounds for belief, both subjective and objective, will be examined. From mystical deliberations, to the wide spectrum of religious experience within a socio-cultural context, this course will identify the nature and function of religion as a vehicle for human expression, comfort, and contact with someone/something greater outside of the physical world. Finally, an analysis of what theologian John Hick identifies as *The Fifth Dimension*, will be utilized to provide a broad spectrum of approaches by which to understand the

phenomenon of religious experience.

CORE COMPETENCIES:

Students will work on the following skills: critical appraisal of arguments and theories, application of theories and concepts presented in course readings and lectures, library research, essay organization and writing skills. The essay assignment will require students to select an explanation of a religious experience described within the textbook and critically apply one of the theories explored in the course. All essay topics must first be approved by the professor.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

May 31	- Section Test	30%
June 14	- Section Test	30%

June 25	- Essay	40%
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Essay Specifications: (2500 words) plus 1 page bibliography with a minimum of six sources – four textbook and two from academic journals.

Pages to be numbered.

Chicago style format.

Footnotes or endnotes. If you have extensive footnotes, do not include this in your page count. You must have 2500 words of essay text separate from footnotes.

Endnote page is not part of the page count.

Two academic/scholarly website sources permitted.

Essay Methodology:

(i) Choose one or two of the scholars from the course lecture material from May to June 9th – either as a comparison or contrast for discussion.

(ii) Then identify and incorporate these ideas into relevant themes/arguments as found in either Weber, Eliade or Geertz.

EXAMPLE: Similarities between the arguments of Freud, Marx and Geertz.

NOTE: You are required to submit your paper electronically via the Blackboard digital drop box.

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

GRADING:

A numerical mark will be given for each course requirement. Following the final examination, a letter grade will be assigned on the following number and letter grade scheme: percentage grades are calculated as follows:

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 Under 50

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 (403) 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation.

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>.

Course Reading Schedule:

MAY

17	Introduction. The religious experience. What is religion? Defining religions. Overview of religious typologies – characteristics, developmental stages, key terms.
19 Chap. 1 Webnotes	Animism and the Origin of Religion. Magic and the Rise of Religion. E. P. Tylor
24	VICTORIA DAY – NO CLASS
26 Chap. 2 Webnotes	Magic and the Rise of Religion. James Frazer

- 31**
Chap. 5, 6
Webnotes
- Section Test – worth 30 points**
Time allowed: 75 minutes.
Class resumes at 11:30
Religion as Neurosis; The Testimony of Religious Experience. **Sigmund Freud**
Religion as Agent of Economic Oppression.
Karl Marx et al.
- JUNE**
- 2**
Chap. 4
Webnotes
- The Social as Sacred.
Emile Durkheim
- 7**
Chap. 6
Webnotes
- The Testimony of Religious Experience.
William James
- 9**
Chap. 7
- Religion and the Sense of the “Numinous”;
Response to the Sacred.
Rudolf Otto
- 14**
- Section Test – worth 30 points**
Time allowed: 75 minutes.
Class resumes at 11:30
- Chap. 7**
Webnotes
- Religion and Culture – the Puritan Work Ethic.
Max Weber
- 16**
Chap. 7
Webnotes
- Religion and Culture – the Puritan Work Ethic.
Max Weber
- 21**
Webnotes
- Religion as Response to the Sacred.
Mircea Eliade
- 23**
Chap.11
Webnotes
- Religion as World View and Ethic.
Clifford Geertz
- 25**
- Paper to be submitted.**
You are required to submit your paper electronically via
the Blackboard digital drop box.