

**The University of Calgary  
Faculty of Humanities  
Department of Religious Studies  
Summer 2009  
RELIGIOUS STUDIES 309 L60  
RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE**

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

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**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).

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course will introduce the student to the study of religious experiences which include ideas taken from philosophy, 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 relevancy 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.

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**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.

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**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

<b>Aug. 4</b>	<b>- Midterm Exam</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Aug. 11</b>	<b>- Essay: (2500 words) plus 1 page bibliography with a minimum of six sources – four textbook and two from academic journals. Double spaced with footnotes. CHICAGO STYLE FORMAT ONLY</b>	<b>30%</b>
	<b>Registrar scheduled Final Exam TBA</b>	<b>40%</b>

**Essay specifications:** 2500 words. Pages to be numbered. Chicago style format. Footnotes or endnotes. If you have extensive footnotes, factor that in to the page count. Endnote page is not part of the page count. Separate bibliography - at least six sources Two academic/scholarly website sources permitted.

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**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:

<b>A+</b> 96-100	<b>A</b> 90-95	<b>A-</b> 85-89
<b>B+</b> 80-84	<b>B</b> 75-79	<b>B-</b> 70-74
<b>C+</b> 65-69	<b>C</b> 60-64	<b>C-</b> 55-59
<b>D+</b> 53-54	<b>D</b> 50-52	<b>F</b> 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. Once registered, please discuss any upcoming tests/examinations with the instructor two weeks before the scheduled date.

**Gnosis:**

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

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**Course Reading Schedule.**

**JULY**

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|-------------------|---|
| <b>2</b>          | Introduction. The religious experience. What is religion?<br>Defining religions. Overview of religious typologies – characteristics. Key terms. |
| <b>7-9</b>        | Animism and the Origin of Religion.   |
| <b>Chap. 1-2</b>  | Magic and the Rise of Religion.   |
| <b>Webnotes</b>   |   |
| <b>14-16</b>      | <b>DOCUMENTARY –</b>  |
| <b>Chap. 3, 6</b> | Religion as Neurosis; The Testimony of Religious Experience.  |
| <b>Webnotes</b>   |   |

**21** The Social as Sacred; Religion as Agent of Economic  
**Chap. 4 - 5** Oppression  
Webnotes

**23** **READING DAY**

**28 -30** Religion and the Sense of the “Numinous”;  
**Chap. 7 - 9** Response to the Sacred.

## **AUGUST**

**4** **MIDTERM EXAM – WORTH 30 POINTS (90 MINUTES) (Based  
on lectures given from July 2-16)**

**4 - 6**

**Chap. 8, 11** Religion and Culture Interwoven; Religion as World View and  
**Webnotes** Ethic.

**11** **RESEARCH PAPER TO BE HANDED IN.**

**11 - 13** Religious experience and religious belief. *The Fifth Dimension* –  
Webnotes The perspectives of John Hick. Humankind’s encounter with the  
sacred. Reductionism or irrational subjectivity; Understanding  
without understanding.

**REGISTRAR SCHEDULED FINAL EXAM - TBA**