

**UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS AND RELIGION**

COURSE OUTLINE – Fall 2019

Course: RELS 333-01 Religious Perspectives on Death & Afterlife
Time: Tuesday 3:30-6:15
Instructor: Craig W. C. Ginn, PhD
Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00-2:00 by appointment (alternate hours by appointment)
Office: SS 516
E-mail: cwcginn@ucalgary.ca
Telephone: 220-5695

Required Text(s):

Beyond the Threshold: Afterlife Beliefs and Experiences in World Religions. Christopher M. Moreman. Lanham, Maryland: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., Second edition 2018.

Note: The textbook is required as listed above. If a student acquires an older edition of the text book in any format and intends to use the older edition rather than the required edition, it is the responsibility of the student to compare the older edition with the newer edition to determine the material that may be different between the editions. If a student has access to an online version that is without page numbers, it is the responsibility of the student to synchronize the readings with the required textbook.

Course Description:

What is death? Is there an Afterlife existence? Why do religious figures and traditions make truth-claims about the Afterlife and what is the reception? How did religious founders die and what were their final utterances? When facing death, do followers look to religious leaders as exemplars? Why do humans sacralize places and artifacts associated with death? What are near-death experiences (NDEs). Do humans fear or deny death?

This course will explore religious perspectives on death and the Afterlife. Course material will explore ancient conceptions of death and the Afterlife, as well as the Afterlife beliefs represented in the major world religions including Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity (including Mormonism), and Islam. Other religious traditions may be considered including Jainism, Sikhism, and the Inuit tradition. Course material will provide historical context of beliefs, texts, and rituals, and explore the evolution of belief and practice over time. Where applicable unique features of individual religions will be emphasized, such as mourning practices in Judaism, resurrection and the Shroud of Turin in Christianity, Muhammad's Night Journey and the concept of martyrdom in Islam, Mormonism and baptism for the dead, cremation and reincarnation in Hinduism, and the Tibetan Book of the Dead in Buddhism.

Various beliefs/doctrines will be explored including beliefs of the human condition, the soul/the self, sacrifice, martyrdom, the intermediate state, heaven(s), and hell(s), and judgment. This course will also consider the spirituality of death in the broader cultural context of North America and may consider various topics, such as near-death experiences, death and the Afterlife in song lyrics, the role of chaplaincy, and the secularization of funerals. Students will be introduced to various methodological approaches.

Online elements for this course:

As required, additional readings and resources will be posted on D2L.

Core Competencies:

Upon completion of this course, students will become familiar with:

- key terms and concepts in the study of religion, death, and the Afterlife
- dimensional and comparative analysis of religion related to death and the Afterlife
- various methodological approaches in the study of death and the Afterlife
- reductionist and non-reductionist views in the discussion of religion and the Afterlife
- views of death and the Afterlife represented by various religions and traditions
- the relationship between religious experience, revelatory authority, and epistemological approaches to Afterlife beliefs
- the importance of symbols, objects, relics, and artifacts associated with death and the Afterlife
- description and prescription concerning death and the Afterlife in authoritative texts
- the religious importance attached to disposal of the body and funerary rites
- the interest in paranormal phenomena, including NDEs, mediums, and exorcisms

Course Requirements:

Date	Assessment	Weight (%)
October 29 (3:30-4:45)	Midterm Exam	35%
Due December 3 (3:30)	Research Paper	30%
To be scheduled by the Registrar’s Office during the examination period (December 9-19)	Final Exam	35%

Final Examination Period: The final exam will be scheduled by the Registrar. Students must be available to write the final exam on the day and time set by the Registrar’s Office, up to the last day of the examination period as specified in the Academic Schedule. The dates of the final exam period are December 9-19. A final exam cannot be deferred for misreading the final examination schedule or accommodating travel plans or work schedules. Valid reasons include illness or personal emergency, religious observance, or domestic affliction. Students with three exams in 24 hours may defer one of their exams to the deferred final examination period. For further information see Deferred Exams <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred-exams>

Research Paper:

Each student is required to write a research paper on a topic relevant to death and the Afterlife. A list of research topics will be provided by the instructor. A hard copy of the research paper must be submitted at the beginning of class (3:30 pm) on December 3. Late submissions of the research paper will be deducted 12% per day and .5% per hour. Do not email the research paper unless you have received permission to do so. Papers that are emailed without prior permission will not be marked and will accumulate late penalties. Length: 1800-2000 words. All assignments must include a word count. Do not exceed 2000 words. Assignments that exceed 2000 words will be deducted 5% per 100 excess words. Works cited and appendices are not included in the word count. Chicago Citation Style 17th edition is required for the research paper.

Writing Assistance:

The instructor will not read a student’s research assignment in advance of the due date. The instructor is available to meet with students to assist with their research design, introductory paragraph identifying task, method(s), and thesis, and to evaluate sources required. For assistance in writing, students are advised to consult Writing and Learning Services.

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.

Adjusted Final Grades:

The instructor will implement a standard measure of adjustment (.5%) for final grades. For example, a final grade of 64.5% (C) will be rounded up to 65% (C+). Please do not send email inquiries asking the instructor to increase or ‘round up’ your final grade.

Extra Assignments:

There are no extra assignments for this course. Students will not be given an opportunity to submit extra work or retake the midterm exam to increase their grade.

Weighting of Coursework:

The weighting for coursework is identified above. The weighting of coursework cannot be changed per the University Calendar - *E.1 Course Outlines*.

Policy with regard to missed assessments:

If a student misses the midterm exam due to illness or an emergency, the student must provide the instructor with supporting documentation (U of C Statutory Declaration completed form required) within 72 hours of the absence. Except in cases of extenuating circumstances, if documentation is not provided within 72 hours the student will not be provided an opportunity to make up the midterm exam and will receive a numerical mark of zero.

If a makeup exam is approved by the instructor, the student must take the initiative to arrange a time to complete the exam within one week from the date of the missed exam. If a student is unable to complete the exam within a week, an extension will be provided if a student provides documentation. NOTE: If a student cancels or fails to show up for the makeup exam, another U of C Statutory Declaration completed form will be required to account for the missed makeup exam.

Reviewing Exams:

Exams for this course will not be returned. Students are encouraged to make an appointment with the instructor or TA to review their exam results.

Midterm Exam Deferral:

To accommodate students that have scheduling conflicts between the RELS 333 midterm exam and tests or exams from other U of C courses, the instructor's policy is as follows: A student may request to write the RELS 333 midterm exam on an alternate date if the student has two or more other tests/exams scheduled on the SAME day that are each worth more than 25% of their final grade. The RELS 333 midterm exam will not be rescheduled to accommodate an assignment deadline in another course. The instructor must receive the deferral request at least two weeks before the scheduled date of the RELS 333 midterm exam. Please request accommodation in writing (email).

Expectations for student conduct in this course:

In general, please be courteous toward other students in the course. Be respectful of class time. For students who raise questions during class, please contribute to the resourceful use of classroom time by limiting the number of questions you ask in each class. Be respectful of class space. Be considerate of the shared learning environment. Avoid distracting behavior and activities. Focus on objective inquiry. While critical evaluation is permitted in this course, students are encouraged to steer inquiries toward objective investigation rather than confessional or adversarial agendas.

Policy on Inviting Guests:

Seating in the course is reserved for students registered in the course. Guests are permitted to attend a lecture if seats are available. Students wishing to invite guests to attend a lecture must obtain the permission of the instructor in advance. NOTE: Guests will not be permitted to ask questions or participate in class discussion.

Expectations for email correspondence in this course:

All email correspondence from students must be sent from a U of C email account. Please do NOT send emails from other accounts, such as Gmail or Hotmail. Please include the subject of your email and clearly identify yourself by name and the course you are registered in. Please do not send email inquiries related to dates and deadlines. Students shall refer to the university calendar, course outline, and final exam schedule for schedule information. Inquiries related to exams or assignments must be sent no less than 24 hours before a deadline. The instructor will reply to emails on business days.

Electronic Device Policy:

Laptops are permitted during class if used for the purpose of taking lecture notes. Do not use laptops during class for email, Facebook, or other social or recreational activities. Cell phones must be turned off during the entire class time. Texting during class is not permitted. Taking pictures in the classroom is not permitted, including picture-taking of data projector images and slides. Students that distract the instructor or other students due to the misuse of electronic devices during class will be asked to leave the classroom for the duration of the lecture.

Recording of lectures is prohibited without the consent of the instructor. According to Academic Regulations E.6, "With the permission of the instructor, students may tape record lectures, provided that the student and instructor sign a Release form available from departmental and faculty offices. A copy of the Release form shall be retained by the instructor and by the department in which the course is offered." Regulation E.6 includes the notification to students, **"Any use other than that described above constitutes academic misconduct and may result in suspension or expulsion."**

Office hours:

Office hours are structured in 15-minute appointments. Sign-up sheets for appointments are posted on the instructor's door at SS 516. If a student is not able to meet with the instructor during office hours, the student may request to meet at an alternative time during department hours. If a student requires an extended meeting, the student must make an appointment outside of the instructor's scheduled office hours during department hours. Generally extended meetings will not exceed 30 minutes and will be scheduled on a weekly basis according to the instructor's availability. Students wishing to schedule an extended appointment must provide rationale in their request, e.g. a list of specific items requiring attention.

Note: The instructor will not be available for office hours after 4:00 pm on weekdays, at any time during the weekends, or during the Term Break (November 10-16).

Syllabus:

A complete syllabus will be made available 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 (section K, which can be found here:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>). If you have questions about correct referencing, please consult your instructor, or librarian staff.

Student Accommodations:

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; 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/.

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.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at

http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf.

Desire 2 Learn (D2L) Help:

Go to <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students> for Student Help and FAQ's about D2L. Troubleshooting tips and a tutorial are also available on this website.

Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources:

- For program planning and advice, students in the Faculty of Arts will contact The Arts Students' Centre (ASC). Drop in at SS102, call at 403-220-3580 or email at ascarts@ucalgary.ca. You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/> which has detailed information on common academic concerns.
- 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 Block.

Freedom of Information and Privacy:

This course is conducted in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPP): https://www.ucalgary.ca/hr/freedom_of_information_and_protection_of_privacy

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act indicates that assignments given by you to your course instructor will remain confidential unless otherwise stated before submission. The assignment cannot be returned to anyone else without your express permission. Similarly, any information about yourself that you share with your course instructor will not be given to anyone else without your permission. As one consequence, students should identify themselves on all

written work by placing their name on the front page and their ID number on each subsequent page.

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 <https://www.ucalgary.ca/ombuds/> for more information.

The Students' Union Faculty of Arts representative can be reached at arts1@su.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.

Health and Wellness:

There are services available to students to help with physical and mental health, including the SU Wellness Centre: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/>.

Learn more about the Campus Mental Health Strategy here: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth/>.

Supporting Documentation and the Use of a Statutory Declaration:

Students who are absent from class assessments (tests, participation activities, or other assignments) should inform their instructors as soon as possible. Instructors may request that evidence in the form of documentation be provided and the student should provide the documentation they feel best supports their case. For information on possible forms of documentation, including statutory declarations, please see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>.