



**FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS AND RELIGION
COURSE OUTLINE
Fall 2021**

COURSE NUMBER: RELS 333-01

COURSE NAME: Religious Perspectives of Death & Afterlife

CLASSROOM LOCATION: Lectures delivered online via Zoom

CLASS DAYS & TIMES: Tuesday and Thursday 2:00-3:15 via Zoom

INSTRUCTOR NAME AND CONTACT INCLUDING UCALGARY EMAIL & PHONE: Craig Ginn, PhD
cwcginn@ucalgary.ca

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday 11:00-12:00. The instructor will be available for individual online sessions by appointment, structured in 15-minute intervals. Please contact the instructor via email to request an appointment. For students that are not available during office hours, please contact the instructor via email to request an alternate time.

INSTRUCTOR EMAIL POLICY: Email must be sent through your U of C email account. Please do NOT send 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.

COURSE CALENDAR STATEMENT: An examination of various religious perspectives on the nature of death and life after death.

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.

Course content will be delivered through online lectures via Zoom, readings, U of C library-based resources, and web-based resources.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES: Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

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

LEARNING RESOURCES:

Beyond the Threshold: Afterlife Beliefs and Experiences in World Religions. Christopher M. Moreman. Lanham, Maryland: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., Second edition 2018. *Full text available through the U of C library

CLASS SCHEDULE: Posted on D2L

EXAMINATIONS: *There is no Registrar-scheduled final exam for this course.*

ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS:

Date	Assessment	Weight (%)
Access to Test 1 on D2L from 8:00 am October 19 until 8:00 pm October 20. October 19 (Based on material from Sept 9 to Oct 14).	Test 1	30%
Access to Test 2 on D2L from 8:00 am November 18 until 8:00 pm November 19. (Based on material from Oct 21 to Nov 16).	Test 2	20%
Students must submit their research paper as a word document in Dropbox between November 20 - 25.	Research Paper	35%
Access to Test 3 on D2L from 8:00 am December 9 until 8:00 pm December 10. (Based on material from Nov 23 to Dec 7).	Test 3	15%

TESTS: All tests for this course are completed online. Each test will be available for a 36-hour period (8:00 am until 8:00 pm the following day). Tests are timed, requiring students to complete the test within a specified time limit.

Tests are not “open book.” Students are not permitted to consult any course materials while completing any of the module tests. The use of course materials during a test constitutes academic misconduct. Students must complete on-line tests individually. Collaboration with other students in taking tests is not permitted and constitutes academic misconduct.

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. Students must submit their research paper as a word document in Dropbox between November 20 - 25. Do not email the research paper unless you have received permission to do so. 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 via zoom 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.

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. Only final grades are adjusted (individual tests are not rounded up).

EXTRA ASSIGNMENTS: There are no extra assignments for this course. Students will not be given an opportunity to submit extra work or retake tests to increase their grade.

WEIGHTING OF ASSESSMENT: The weighting for assessments is identified above. The weighting of assessments will not be changed to accommodate individual student requests.

REVIEWING TESTS: The online tests for this course display the student’s final score. Individual test answers are not displayed. For students interested in seeing individual test answers, please make an appointment with the instructor at the end of the term after all tests are completed. At that time, you can review all your test answers via zoom.

MISSED OR LATE ASSIGNMENTS: If a student misses an assessment due to illness or an emergency, except in the case of extenuating circumstances, the student must report the absence to the instructor within 48 hours of the absence. If a makeup assessment is approved by the instructor, the student must take the initiative to arrange a time to complete the assessment within one week from the date of the missed assessment.

GRADING: A numerical mark will be given for each course requirement. A letter grade will be assigned based 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

EXPECTATIONS FOR WRITING: All written assignments 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>

ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS: Please submit all assignments electronically in the dropbox in D2L. Please submit assignments as a word document. Assignments should have a file name as follows: “First Name Last Name Description of Assignment” (e.g., Alex Smith Research Assignment). Assignments must be submitted by 11:59 pm on their due date. It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted.

CONDUCT: Please be courteous during zoom sessions and in email correspondence. 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>

GUIDELINES FOR ZOOM SESSIONS: Lectures will be delivered via Zoom. Zoom will be used for office hours to meet individually with students also.

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 course material 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.

COURSE EVALUATIONS AND STUDENT FEEDBACK: Student feedback will be sought at the end of the course through the standard University Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) and Faculty course evaluation forms. Students are welcome to discuss the process and content of the course at any time with the instructor.

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 ACCOMMODATION: 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/.

RESEARCH ETHICS: not applicable

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:

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.

NOTE: Students are encouraged to type questions in the chat section of zoom.

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