

**THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
FALL 2006**

August 18, 2006

**RELIGIOUS STUDIES 345 L01
GOD AND TRANSCENDENCE**

INSTRUCTOR:	Anne White, Ph.D
COURSE TIME AND DAYS:	TR 9:30 - 10:45 a.m.
OFFICE:	SS 1322
OFFICE HOURS:	TR 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.
TELEPHONE:	220-3285
E-MAIL ADDRESS:	awhite@ucalgary.ca
WEBSITE ADDRESS:	Blackboard

REQUIRED TEXTS: T. J. Mawson, *Belief in God: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005).

Suggested reading:

Eugene d'Aquili, *The Mystical Mind*, Fortress Press, 1999;
 John Hick, *The Fifth Dimension*, Oneworld Publishing, 1999;
 David Shulman, et al. eds., *Self and Self-Transformation in the History of Religions*, Oxford, 2002.
 Keith Ward, *Concepts of God: Images of the Divine in Five Religious Traditions*, Oxford: One World Publications, 1998.

Course Description:

This course will examine various philosophical and theological ideas pertaining to what constitutes transcendence and how it is realized. We will discuss concepts such as the nature of God and the perceived 'relationship' with this entity who is absolute Being and essentially personal. The identity of God, and belief in God's existence, will be examined from the perspectives of the transcendent, immanent, omnipotent, omniscient, eternal, perfectly free and perfectly good. The course will address why these attributes are essential to human transcendence from a theistic perspective. This path is one of religious awareness, sought with and through cognitive freedom, using highly selective and subjective methods of perception and interpretation. The course will address issues such as: everlasting life, faith, idolatry, laws of nature, miracles, the metaphysical and the physical. To illustrate these concepts, examples will be taken from great philosophers such as Sankara, Ramanuja, Augustine,

Maimonides, Al Ghazali , Aquinas, Pascale, Otto, Buber, and Kierkegaard. The intent of this directed study is to present to the student a wide variety of ways in which to understand God and transcendence. .

Course Requirements:

Oct. 10 th	- Midterm	20 points
Nov. 21 st	- Film Review –1000 words	10 points
Dec. 5 th	- Research essay – eight pages (2500 words)	30 points

REGISTRAR’S OFFICE SCHEDULED FINAL EXAM TBA 40 points

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 annotated bibliography. Bibliography - at least six sources Two academic/scholarly website sources permitted.

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- 85-8
B+ 80-84	B 75-79	B- 70-78
C+ 65-69	C 60-64	C- 55-59
D+ 50-54	D 45-49	F 44 or less

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 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 or visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~gnosis>.

Course Schedule:

Week Commencing:

SEPTEMBER

Section 1 The Concept of God

12 – 14 Who or what is God?
 Chap 1, 2 The nature of God
 Webnotes The impersonal versus the personal

19 – 21 God's characteristics
 Chap 3,4 Perceptions of the 'holy'
 Webnotes The source of all values

26 – 28 Redeemer
 Chap 5 Soteriology/salvation/eternal life
 Webnotes The offer of transcendence

OCTOBER

Section 2 The Existence of God

3 – 5 Proof of the existence of God
 Chap 6 Arguments for and against the existence of God.
 Webnotes Faith versus skepticism

10 **MIDTERM – 75 minutes**
 12 The ontological argument.
 Chap 7 "I think, therefore I am."
 Webnotes Logic as proof

17 - 19 The argument to design
 Chap 8 Laws or chance
 Webnotes

24 – 26 The cosmological argument.
 Chap 9 Existence as proof – the Principle of Sufficient Reason

31 – Religious experience
 The subjective versus the detached

NOVEMBER

2 Cognition as proof of experience
 Chap 10 Ecstatic experiences
 Webnotes **Video documentary for video review**

7 – 9 The argument from apparent miracles
 Chap 11 Revivalism and change
 Webnotes

14 – 16 **VIDEO REVIEW TO BE HANDED IN**
 Chap 12 The Problem of evil
 Webnotes Theodicy versus anthropodicy
 Suffering, despair, helplessness

21 – 23 What is faith and transcendence?
 Webnotes Sankara, Ramanuja, Augustine, Maimonides, Al Ghazali, Aquinas,

28 – 30 What is faith and transcendence?
 Webnotes Pascale, Otto, Buber, and Kierkegaard

DECEMBER

5 – 7 **ESSAY DUE – worth 30 points**
 Webnotes Ways of thinking about God

REGISTRAR'S OFFICE SCHEDULED FINAL EXAM - TBA