

**The University of Calgary  
Faculty of Humanities  
Department of Religious Studies**

04/08/16

**Religious Studies 377**

**Fall 2004, Block Week**

**Researching, Writing and Thinking about Religion**

**Location** 157 Scurfield Hall

**Instructors**

Dr. Virginia Tumasz      Office: SS 1304  
Office hours during Fall term: Wednesday 9:00 - 11:00  
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Ms. Sandra Lipton      Office: MLB 331B  
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**Graduate Teaching Assistant**

Ms. Agnieszka Wolska      Meetings by appointment  
Telephone: 220-5886      Email: [awolska@nucleus.com](mailto:awolska@nucleus.com)

**Required Texts**

William E. Paden. Interpreting the Sacred: Ways of Viewing Religion. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992. (Available at the University Bookstore.)

Joseph Gibaldi. MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. NY: The Modern Language Association of America, 2003. (Available at the University Bookstore.)

RELS 377 Course Reader, available for purchase at the Students' Union Copy Centre at the end of August.

**Recommended Text**

William B. Badke. *Research Strategies: Finding Your Way Through the Information Fog*. Lincoln, NE: Writers Club Press/iUniverse.com, 2004. Available at the bookstore and online at (<http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/preface.htm>).

**Blackboard**

Resources include links to research guides and a course workbook, which provides detailed information on material covered in class and interactive quizzes to test your progress.

To access course materials in *Blackboard*, use Internet Explorer and login at <http://blackboard.ucalgary.ca>. You will need a University IT account. Your email password is the password that will grant you access to Blackboard. If you log onto

Blackboard and RELS 377 does not appear as a course in which you are enrolled, please contact V. Tumasz for help.

## **Course Description**

The purpose of this course is to acquaint students with the academic field of Religious Studies and to give practical instruction in research methods and academic writing. Students will be introduced to a small sampling of the variety of theories that are used in the academic study of religion will be asked to formulate a research question and carry through a research project of their own.

The course will concentrate on the development of skills and certain habits of mind that are important in the academic study of religion. Paden's text will guide students through an overview of the field of Religious Studies. Dr. Tumasz will give instruction in reading, identifying the thesis and argument of a text, and foster the habit of critically assessing the premises and presuppositions of scholarship on religion. She also will provide instruction in the effective development of interesting research questions and in effective writing processes and the conventions of academic writing.

Ms. Lipton, a senior librarian, will acquaint students with the myriad of resources available to the Religious Studies scholar. She also will provide intensive instruction in the tools and methods of scholarly research, helping students to develop the skills needed to effectively locate and evaluate information.

## **Core Competencies**

Students can expect to develop the following skills in completing the work for this course:

- careful and critical reading of texts
- critical analysis of ideas, theories, and methodologies in Religious Studies
- formulating interesting research questions
- making a research plan
- locating and documenting sources of information and scholarship
- assessing the value of sources
- written communication according to the conventions of academic prose
- textual editing and revision

## **Course Requirements**

These are broken down into pre-session, block week, and post-block week sections.

### **1. Pre-session assignments:**

- Read Paden's book. (There will be a quiz on the book on the first day of class.)
- Past research practice essay, to be submitted at the beginning of the first class. For instructions, look under "Pre-session assignments" on Blackboard. This assignment is ungraded; however, a penalty of lowering the course grade by one letter-grade will apply if it is not completed and submitted on time.
- Research skills quiz, to be completed by August 26. The quiz is found under "Pre-session assignments" on Blackboard. This quiz is ungraded; however, a

penalty of lowering the course grade by one letter-grade will apply if it is not completed by the deadline.

## 2. Block Week Assignments

### In class:

- Paden quiz on first day 10%
- Research quiz on last day 10%

### Homework:

- Reading of approximately one article each night. Reading assignments will be made on the first day of class.
- Blackboard Exercises: These exercises are ungraded; however, a penalty of lowering the course grade by one letter-grade will apply if one is not completed on time. The exercises for each unit should take less than a half-hour.

Unit 2 exercises must be completed by Wednesday, September 1, at midnight.

Unit 3 exercises must be completed by Thursday, September 2, at midnight.

Unit 4 exercises must be completed by Friday, September 3, at midnight.

## 3. Post-Block Week Assignments:

- Statement of research topic and question by **Sept. 17**. For instructions, see under "Post-Block Week Assignments" on Blackboard. Your research must address an issue in method and theory in Religious Studies. Approval of your topic is required, which means that your final submission may not be accepted if you do not submit the topic for approval as indicated. A penalty of lowering the course grade by one letter-grade applies if your statement is not submitted on time.
- *Blackboard* Research Assignment, due **Sept. 22**. For instructions, see under "Post-Block Week Assignments" on Blackboard. This is a graded assignment that is worth 15%.
- Meeting with librarian, S. Lipton, to discuss Research Assignment. Sign up sheet will be available in class. Meeting dates will be from **September 23 to October 1**. A penalty of lowering the course grade by one letter-grade will be assessed if you do not attend the meeting to discuss your research assignment.
- Draft of research paper, due on **the Monday (or in the case of a holiday, the Tuesday) before the week of your meeting with TA** (see next paragraph); **the earliest due date will be October 12**. Drafts will be submitted in paper form to the Department office. The draft will be worth 10% of your final grade. Information on the manner of assessment of the draft will be posted on Blackboard in due time.
- Meeting with the teaching assistant, Agnieszka Wolska, to discuss draft. Meetings will be scheduled in **the last two weeks of October and the first two weeks of November**. A penalty of lowering the course grade by one letter-grade will be assessed if you do not fulfil this requirement.

- Research paper, worth 40%, due **two weeks after your meeting to discuss the draft**. The essay should be approximately 3,000 words (10 - 12 printed pages). Your paper must use at least seven sources, carefully selected using the tools to which you will be introduced in this course. Since a significant amount of time in the course will be devoted to research and writing instruction, it is expected that your essay will be exceptionally polished in terms of organization, argument, clear expression, quality of prose, and selection, documentation, and use of relevant sources.
- Bibliographic Essay, to be submitted along with essay, worth 15%. For instructions, see under "Post-Block Week Assignments" on Blackboard.

**Summary of graded quizzes and assignments:**

First day quiz on Paden	10%
Last day quiz on Research Skills	10%
<i>Blackboard</i> Research Assignment, due Sept. 22*	15%
Draft of research paper*	10%
Research paper*	40%
Bibliographic essay*	15%

\*Late assignments will be assessed a penalty of one letter-grade per day late, unless a deferral has been obtained from Dr. Tumaszk or Ms. Lipton.

**Grading:**

All graded assignments will be given a letter grade according to the Undergraduate Grading System established by the University. Please consult the University Calendar (p. 43).

N. B. Please note that all written assignments will be assessed with regard to both form and content.

The two quizzes will be graded according to the following numerical scale:

A+	= 96 - 100 %	B	= 76 - 80 %	C-	= 55 - 60 %
A	= 91 - 95 %	B-	= 71 - 75 %	D+	= 53 - 54 %
A-	= 86 - 90 %	C+	= 66 - 70 %	D-	= 51 - 52 %
B+	= 80 - 85 %	C	= 61 - 65 %	F	= under 51 %

**Intellectual Honesty:**

Students should be familiar with and follow the University regulations regarding academic integrity (*University Calendar*, p. 53-55).