



**FACULTY OF ARTS**  
**DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS AND RELIGION**  
**COURSE OUTLINE**  
Group Study Program May 2023

**COURSE NUMBER:** RELS 399

**COURSE NAME:** Religion in Popular Culture

**CLASSROOM LOCATION:** Group Study Program, Regions of Abruzzo and Lazio in Italy;  
Vatican City

**CLASS DAYS & TIMES:** 8-26 May

**INSTRUCTOR NAME AND CONTACT INCLUDING UCALGARY EMAIL & PHONE:**

George Ferzoco

Email: [george.ferzoco@ucalgary.ca](mailto:george.ferzoco@ucalgary.ca)

Phone, Off. Hours & Location TBA

**PRELIMINARY MEETING:** 12.04.2023

**INSTRUCTOR EMAIL POLICY:**

You may email me with queries related to the unit using your ucalgary email. I will normally respond to emails sent via your @ucalgary email within 48 hours during standard work hours (this excludes responding on weekends and holidays). You should check your University of Calgary email account once each weekday.

**COURSE CALENDAR STATEMENT:**

The intersection of religion with popular culture is explored through specific topics.

(<https://clare.ucalgary.ca/manageprofile/courses/w19/RELS399.13?destination=profiles%2F222-28028%2Fcourses>)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

We will focus on popular perceptions of popes, hermits, holy women, and spiritual healing. Abruzzo and Rome abound in resources regarding these topics, from the Middle Ages to the present. There are significant home-grown popes and saints; and there are Christian practices and sites in these areas that merge spiritual and medical healing. Many elements associated with hermits and magical/miraculous cures are unique to the landscapes of these regions and cities, showing the importance of the study of local/indigenous practices as a gateway to understanding larger questions of religion, belief, and culture.

**COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1. Acquired an understanding of popular culture and its relation to Christian religion from the medieval period to the present.
2. Acquired through site visits an excellent understanding of the material culture and its implications regarding Christianity and its relation popular culture.
3. Acquired through reasoned arguments based on evidence, an informed perception of how popular culture and religion complement one another.
4. Acquired skills through written assignments, site visits, presentations, and class discussion of how to reflect upon, present, analyse and evaluate complex ideas and arguments.

5. Acquired a more developed awareness of how knowledge shapes not only other cultures but oneself.

## LEARNING RESOURCES

There are no required textbooks. Rather, this unit will rely on a number of texts that are available online via the University of Calgary Library. Most of these are on D2L and include:

### General:

Clark, Terry Ray. “Introduction: What is Religion? What is Popular Culture? How are they related?” In *Understanding Religion and Popular Culture*, edited by Terry Ray Clark, and Dan W. Clayton, Taylor & Francis Group, 2012, pp. 1–12.

**Hermits** – Abruzzo hermits (e.g., Peter of the Morrone, Dominic of Sora) – background readings  
Brown, Peter. *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.

Brentano, Robert. “Sulmona Society and the Miracles of Peter of Morrone”, in Barbara H. Rosenwein and Sharon Farmer (eds), *Monks and Nuns, Saints and Outcasts: Religion in Medieval Society*. New York: Cornell University Press, 2000, pp.79–96.

Franklin, Carmela Viricillo. “The Restored Life and Miracles of St. Dominic of Sora by Alberic of Monte Cassino”. *Mediaeval Studies* 55 (1993) pp.285-345.

**Spiritual Healing** –incubation, relics, Manoppello, St John Lateran, Scala Sancta – background readings

Gilchrist, Roberta. *Sacred Heritage: Monastic Archaeology, Identities, Beliefs*. Cambridge University Press, 2020.

Watts, Fraser N., ed. *Spiritual Healing: Scientific and Religious Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

**Popes** – Celestine, Benedict XVI, and Francis

Coppa, Frank J. *The Papacy in the Modern World: A Political History*, Reaktion Books, Limited, 2014.

Ferzoco, George trans. “Autobiography of Peter of the Morrone”. In Head, T. (ed.), *Medieval Hagiography: An Anthology*. New York: Routledge, 2000, pp. 729-743.

Golan, Oren, and Michele Martini. “The Making of Contemporary Papacy: Manufactured Charisma and Instagram.” *Information, communication & society* 23, no. 9 (2020): 1368–1385.

Additional weekly readings, including peer-reviewed journal articles, will be posted on D2L.

## LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES AND REQUIREMENTS

There is a D2L site for this course which contains links to some required readings and other relevant class resources and materials (see [d2l.ucalgary.ca](https://d2l.ucalgary.ca)).

Although this is an in-person class, students should aim to have reliable access to technology in order to access D2L and to prepare and submit assignments.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

A detailed class schedule will be made available the first day of class.

**ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS**

There are three assessment components that all align to learning outcomes 1,2,3,4. These consist of a reflection piece, short essay or letter, and Zoom presentation. Criteria for assessment will be discussed in class and posted on D2L.

Date	Assessment	Weight (%)
12 May 2023 Submit via Dropbox a 300-word reflective piece.	Assignment 1: Write a 300-word reflective piece on your understanding of the relationship between popular culture and Christianity.	15%
22 May Submit via Dropbox a 500-word essay OR letter.	Assignment 2: Write a 500-word essay explaining the appeal of hermits to the wider world. (Why are hermits popular?) OR In a letter explain to a friend/relative why people engage in spiritual healing.	35%
2 June 2023. Submit via Dropbox 10-12 minute Zoom presentation.	Assignment 3: Each student will choose three items they have studied in the course and discuss their historical and religious significance. One of the items must relate to a particular pope or the papacy in general. Each student will record their presentation on Zoom and upload them onto D2L. Presentations between 10 to 12 minutes.	50%

**MISSED OR LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

If you miss a required component of the course, you must contact me in writing within 24 hours to discuss options to submit for that component. Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

**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.

See also <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-1.html>.

Your final grade for the course is the sum of the separate assignments. It is not necessary to pass each assignment separately in order to pass the course.

**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 written assignments must be properly documented. Please be sure to consult a manual of style for your written assignments. I am happy with whatever one you use, but you need to indicate to me which one you are using. If you need recommendations, the latest edition of any of the following would be fine: *The Chicago Manual of Style*; *MLA Handbook*; *Turabian: A Manual for Writers*.

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>.

**ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION EXPECTATIONS**

Students are expected to attend class, all site visits, and to be fully present and engaged in class activities and discussions. If students miss a class session that is included as a component of participation, they must contact the instructor within 24 hours to discuss options to make-up for that component.

**GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS**

All your assignments will be submitted via Dropbox in DTL. Please submit in either Word or PDF format. (**Word is preferred as it easier for me to write feedback on a Word document**). Assignments should have a file name as follows: “First Name Last Name Assignment Number” (e.g., Alex Smith Assignment 2). **Always number your pages**. 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**

Students, employees, and academic staff are also expected to demonstrate behaviour in class that promotes and maintains a positive and productive learning environment. 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>

**USE OF INTERNET AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES IN CLASS**

**The use of laptops or similar devices is acceptable when used in a manner appropriate to the course and classroom activities.** Do not access websites and resources distract you and/or other learners during class time. Students are responsible for being aware of the University's Internet and email use policy.

## **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 me.

## **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/](http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/).

### **INSTRUCTOR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

Course materials created by instructors 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 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 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 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