

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY  
FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS AND RELIGION

COURSE OUTLINE – WINTER TERM 2016

RELS 200 L01: RELIGIOUS MYTHS AND WORLDVIEWS  
(Blended Learning Course)

<b>Instructor:</b>	Irving Hexham
<b>Teaching Assistant:</b>	Kevin Shopf
<b>Class time and room:</b>	MWF; 13.00-13.50
<b>Office hours:</b>	SS 538, M 2-3, or by appointment.
<b>Telephone:</b>	<b>403-220-3280</b>
<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:religions200@gmail.com">religions200@gmail.com</a>
<b>Web site:</b>	<a href="http://www.understandingworldreligions.com/">http://www.understandingworldreligions.com/</a>

**Course description:**

This course addresses the issue of religious and secular worldviews beginning with a discussion of the theory and practice of worldview analysis. It illustrates specific religious worldviews using translated texts from major religious traditions in the context of the history and development of world religions. Recurring themes such as narrative frameworks, cosmology; existential values, goals; the destiny of humans, the world, and the cosmos, form a focus for this discussion.

**Teaching/Learning Style:**

This is a traditional university course that emphasizes reading and individual research by the student.

**Core competencies**

At the end of this course students ought to be able to:

- a) Understand the term "worldview" and its growing use in discussions of religion and politics.
- b) Think critically about worldviews and what is implied for society.
- c) Gain an appreciation of the importance of using different academic methods and theories
- d) Be able to make informed judgments about religious and secular worldviews and the reliability of specific books and texts.

**Required Readings:**

Textbook: Hexham, Irving. 2011. *Understanding World Religions: An Interdisciplinary Approach*. Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan.

Additional readings in the form of academic articles will be listed on D2L. These will be available for download from the University of Calgary Library or online.

**Online elements for this course:**

The website [www.understandingworldreligions.com](http://www.understandingworldreligions.com) provides extensive supporting materials for this course. Importantly it also contains various required texts in pdf format found under the heading of "Courses"

**Course Requirements:**

Date	Assessment	Weight (%)	Required
<b>Blogs</b>			
31 January	First mini-Blog	15%	
28 February	Second mini-Blog	15%	
27 March	Third mini-Blog	15%	
<b>Tests</b>			
24 February	First test	25%	
30 March	Second test	25%	
	Class participation	5%	
<b>No final exam</b>			

**Tests:**

There are two multiple choice tests in this course. Both are based on the lectures and course readings. The first test is worth 25% of the final grade. The second test is worth 25% of the final grade. This makes the tests worth 50% of the final grade. The tests will be available through D2L.

**Assignment mini-Blogs:**

For this course you must write three mini-blogs. Each blog is worth 15% of the final grade making the blogs worth 45% of the final grade.

N.B. Please submit your blogs to the course email address at:

[religions200@gmail.com](mailto:religions200@gmail.com)

In doing so write the subject line of your email as follows:

Your Surname-Blog number 1, 2, or 3; e.g. Jones-Blog-1

The object of this assignment is to engage you with a current issue related to the study of religion and the criticism of religion as well as enabling you to see the significance the study of religion in today's world. For this you must write three mini-Blogs according to the following format. Instructions for writing the blogs will be discussed in class and posted on D2L. These blogs will be posted anonymously on the course blogsite at:

<https://uwreligions.wordpress.com/>

**Grading:**

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. ritten assignments will be graded with regard to both form and content according to the rubric posed on D2L.

**Policy with regard to assignments:** students must take tests on the assigned day, have a valid medical note, or prove exceptional circumstances. Late papers are accepted, but will be automatically deducted 10% per day that they are overdue. This rule also applies to anyone who requests to sit the test on a different date without a doctor's note or other external evidence to show that this is necessary.

**Expectations for student conduct in this course:**

**Attendance:** students are expected to attend most lectures.

**Class etiquette:** remember you are not the only student in the class. Please make every effort to arrive on time and not to leave before the class ends. You are expected to pay attention to the lecture and not distract other students.

**Computers and other devices:** while attending class the wearing of earphones or similar devices is not permitted nor can computers be used for watching videos or playing computer games. Cell phones must be turned off and not taken out in class for texting or any other purposes.

**Recording lectures:** for copyright reasons recording any part of any lectures in any form, including through a computer, is not permitted. Nor will the power point slides or lecture notes be posted on the web for the same reason. Photographing power point lectures with a cell phone or other device is not permitted. All of these restrictions are due to copyright issues and are strictly enforced. Some power point slides, i.e. those that do not include limited use materials, will be posted to D2L. It is your responsibility to pay attention and make your own lecture notes.

**Syllabus:** a complete syllabus will be made available on the course website during the first week of term.

**Final examination:** there will be no Registrar scheduled final examination.

**Electronic Device Policy:** recent evidence shows that students who use computers in class learn significantly less than those who write their own notes. You are encouraged to write your own notes. The wearing of earphones or similar devices is not permitted nor can computers to be used

for watching videos or playing computer games. Cell phones must be turned off and not taken out in class for texting or any other purposes.

### **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/](http://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](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](mailto:ascarts@ucalgary.ca). You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate> 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 Library Block.

### **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 [www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds](http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds) for more information.

The Students' Union Faculty of Arts representative can be reached at [arts1@ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts1@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](http://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.