

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF ARTS, DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
Course Outline – Fall 2012

Course: RELS 201 L02 “World Religions - Western”

Time: TR 14:00 - 15:15

Room: ES 162

Professor: Dr. D. Shantz

Office Hours: Wednesday 11:00am-12:00pm or by appt.

Office: SS 1326

Telephone: 403-220-3283

e-mail: dshantz@ucalgary.ca

Textbooks

John L Esposito, Darrell J. Fasching, Todd Lewis. *Religions of the West Today*. Second Edition. New York: Oxford University, 2012.

Philip Novak. *The World’s Wisdom: Sacred Texts of the World’s Religions*. New York: HarperCollins, 1994.

The Qur’an. A New Translation. Oxford World’s Classics. Tr. M.A.S. Abdel Haleem. Oxford: Oxford University, 2005.

Course Description:

This course provides a general introduction to the study of world religions and to the major religions in the Western world: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Class time will be devoted to lectures and discussion of assigned readings.

Core Competencies

- 1) The student should gain knowledge of and appreciation for the teachings, scriptures, and way of life of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
- 2) The student will develop skills in critical thought, reading, writing, and oral expression of ideas.

Self-Directed Study

Students are responsible for independent learning from the assigned readings.

Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned reading.

Learning Assessment

1) Class members are expected to keep up with assigned reading and to participate in Thursday **class discussions**. Bring *The World’s Wisdom: Sacred Texts of the World’s Religions* to Thursday classes. The final exam covers material discussed in class.

2) Write a 1,500 word **Historical Analysis** of *The Qur’an* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2005) according to the *Guide* provided in this syllabus. Due in class: Thursday, Nov. 15, 2012. (30%)

3) Students should compile a “**Journal of Religion in the News.**” Ten weeks over the term, students should summarize one or two news stories from each week that deal with Judaism, Christianity, or Islam, or religion in general, and comment on the story. By December the journal should be about 1,500 words long. For each entry,

provide the heading, date, and source of the news story; a summary of the story; and a comment and/or critique in terms of what insight the story provides into religion. Journals should be submitted twice during the term: Tuesday, October 16 and Tuesday, December 4. (30%)

4) There will be a Registrar administered **Final Exam** based on the whole course. The exam will cover class lectures and assigned reading. (40%)

Late assignments or essays will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made or a valid medical certificate is submitted. Any incomplete assignment or essay will be awarded a mark of F for that component of the course.

Grading Scale

A numerical mark will be given for each course requirement. A letter grade will be assigned on the following number and letter grade scheme:

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.

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

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 403-220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than **fourteen (14) days** after the start of the course.

Blackboard Help

Go to <http://www.ucalgary.ca/computersupport/online/services/blackboard> for Student Help and FAQ's about Blackboard. Troubleshooting tips and a tutorial are available at <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/blackboard/students>. Instructions for using the Digital Drop Box are available here: http://library.blackboard.com/docs/r6/6_1/student/bbbs_r6_1_student/digital_drop_box.htm.

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>.

Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources

- Have a question, but not sure where to start? The Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (PIC) is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at SS110, call us at 403-220-3580 or email us at artsads@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 program planning and advice, contact the Student Success Centre at (403) 220-5881 or visit them on the 3rd floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library.
- 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 for more information.

The Students' Union Faculty of Arts representative can be reached at 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. 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.

Course Outline:

<i>Week</i>	<i>Assigned Reading and Class Content</i>
1 (Sept. 11 & 13)	<i>Religions of the West Today</i> , pp. 3-35; Novak, <i>The World's Wisdom</i> , pp. ix-xvi. Introduction to World Religions: reasons for studying world religions; defining religion; key elements of world religions; Religions east and west
2 (Sept. 18 & 20)	<i>Religions of the West Today</i> , pp. 83-101; Novak, <i>The World's Wisdom</i> , pp. 175-186, 213-218. History of early Judaism: the Israelite Religion of Moses & the Davidic Kingdom; Jewish Scriptures and the Talmud; Rabbinic Judaism
3 (Sept. 25 & 27)	<i>Religions of the West Today</i> , pp. 109-115 Maimonides; the Kabbalah; Jewish view of God and the world
4 (Oct. 2 & 4)	<i>Religions of the West Today</i> , pp. 101-109; Novak, <i>The World's Wisdom</i> , pp. 186-190, 201-213, 218-223. Jewish Worship & Liturgy; Jewish Festivals; Jewish community and ethics

- 5 (Oct. 9 & 11) *Religions of the West Today*, pp. 75-83, 115-144;
Novak, *The World's Wisdom*, pp. 223f.
Slides of Dachau
- The Modern Age: Reform, Orthodox, Conservative movements;
Zionism; the Holocaust; religion and politics in the state of Israel
- 6 (Oct. 16 & 18) *Religions of the West Today*, pp. 157-172, 180f;
Novak, *The World's Wisdom*, pp. 228-253, 259-262, 264-266
- The Christian Story: the N.T. and life of Jesus; Christian
Scriptures; Church Fathers; Early and Medieval Christianity;
Crusades
- 7 (Oct. 23 & 25) *Religions of the West Today*, pp. 172-180;
Novak, *The World's Wisdom*, pp. 262-264, 266-274, 276
- Christian Monasticism and Mysticism; St. Francis of Assisi (1182-
1226); the Sacraments; the Good Life; Creeds and Doctrines
- 8 (Oct. 30, Nov. 1) *Religions of the West Today*, pp. 182-209;
Novak, *The World's Wisdom*, pp. 277-279
- Christianity and Modernity; the Protestant Reformation; the
Enlightenment and Christian Liberalism; early Evangelicalism;
Christianity in America; Christianity in the Third World
- 9 (Nov. 6 & 8) *Religions of the West Today*, pp. 147-157, 209-212
- Christianity and religious Pluralism in the West; Pentecostalism
and Fundamentalism
- November 10-13: Reading Days**
- 10 (Nov. 15) *The Qur'an. A New Translation*. Tr. M.A.S. Abdel Haleem.
Class discussion of *The Qur'an*; Historical Analysis due
- Muslim Scriptures; the message of the Qur'an; study of the Qur'an
- 11 (Nov. 20 & 22) *Religions of the West Today*, pp. 224-238, 249-259;
Novak, *The World's Wisdom*, pp. 282-287, 312f, 322-329
- The Story of Islam: The Prophet (570-632 CE) and the Hijra; the
Spread of Islam; the Caliphate (632-1258); Sunnis & Shii; Sufis;
Crusades

- 12 (Nov. 27 & 29) *Religions of the West Today*, pp. 238-249;
Novak, *The World's Wisdom*, pp. 288-310, 318f

Muslim view of God and the world; Muslim Law; the Five Pillars of Islam; Muslim prayer; women in Islam;

- 13 (Dec. 4 & 6) *Religions of the West Today*, pp. 215-224; 259-293
Novak, *The World's Wisdom*, pp. 331f.

Islam and Modernity; Islamic Fundamentalism; Muslims in the West; Malcolm X (1925-1965)

Guide to Analysis of Historical Texts

To understand the document in its various contexts, ask the following questions:

I What are the Context and Social Matrix of the Document?

1. What individual or group produced the text? What social and theological perspective do they represent?
2. For what audience and social class was it written?

II What are the Obvious Features of the Document?

1. What are the literary genre and purpose of the text?
2. What subject and life-issues are addressed?
3. What main theme or idea is expressed? (Is there repetition of key thoughts?)
4. What program and vision does the treatise promote?

III What is the Contextual Significance of the Language and Ideas?

1. Are there difficulties of Language and Thought?
 - a) Determine the definition of key words or phrases used at the time.
 - b) Identify literary or personal references and allusions.
 - c) Provide explanations of difficult ideas and arguments.
 - d) Interpret literary images and figures of speech.
2. What were the Social Setting, Impact, and Role of the Document?
 - a) Consider the relation of the document's ideas to social-economic issues and trends at the time.
 - b) What social groups found these ideas attractive and promoted them?
 - c) What contemporary social interests (class, experience, role, gender, generation) does the document most obviously serve to reflect and to legitimate?
3. What other Contemporary Historical Relations bear upon the Document?
 - a) Consider the relation of the document to the author's life experience.
 - b) Consider the relation of the document's ideas to the rest of the author's views and writings.

c) Consider the document's relation to similar writings and programs at the time by other thinkers and leaders.

4. What Past Historical Relations bear upon the Document?

a) What past traditions have been influential? Are any past writings quoted? What religious books/passages are referred to most often?

b) Note "illuminating parallels" with similar documents from the past. How is this text similar? How is it unique?

c) Determine whether the document reveals new ideas, values or institutions. Does it provide new solutions to old problems, or raise new problems and questions?

IV What is the Future Significance of the Document?

1. What "social effects" have the treatise and its vision had upon later history? "Believing strongly in the divine revelation of one's own religion, one can still recognize that its beliefs and practices emerged in history as human efforts to give form and substance to that revelation. As human products, religious beliefs, practices, and institutions are always in need of critical scrutiny. Their *effects*, not merely their intentions, must be acknowledged and examined." M. Miles, "Becoming Answerable for What We See," 473

2. What value does the work have for us today? Does it offer "fruitful proposals for living a richly human life"? (Margaret Miles)

V Recommended Bibliography

Richard Marius. *A Short Guide to Writing about History*, 2nd ed. New York: HarperCollins, 1995.

Margaret Miles, "Becoming Answerable for What We See: 1999 AAR Presidential Address." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. 68:3 (Sept. 2000): 471-485.