

**UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY  
FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS AND RELIGION**

***RELS 201 L02 World Religions - Western***

**FALL 2014**

**Place and Time:** ICT 122, on Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30-10:45

**Instructor:** Dr. David A. Bergen, SS 540, 403-220-7063, [dabergen@ucalgary.ca](mailto:dabergen@ucalgary.ca)

**Office hours:** Between 11:00 and 12:00 on Tuesday

**Textbook:** *Religions of the West Today* (2012 second edition; Esposito, Fasching, Lewis; Oxford University Press). Draft notes from *The Naturalization of Western Religion* (Bergen) to be posted in Desire2Learn.

**Description and Objectives:**

The principal objectives of this RELS 201 course are twofold: a descriptive knowledge of the three principal western religions and an analytical understanding of the human being that has constructed (and continues to construct) such realities. The descriptive component of the course will rely on the *Religions of the West Today* textbook to provide students with a summary of the basics of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The analytical component, to be presented in class lectures, will position "western religion" (a scholarly construction inclusive of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) within a deep-time framework. This framework seeks to understand religious thought and behaviour as the outcome of 3.8 billion years of evolved adaptation. Students will realize just how intertwined are their day-to-day life activities with the lived experience of humans past and present, a vast web of human outpouring whose fundamental purpose has been (and still is) the competitive survival of naturally selected groups.<sup>1</sup>

**Course Assessments:**

This blended-learning course is structured in two parts, the first part involving self-directed learning from assigned portions of the textbook (40%) and the second part entailing in-class, lecture-based instruction (60%).

*Self-Directed Learning—Three Online Quizzes:* To gain a basic descriptive knowledge of the basics of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, students will read three major sections of the textbook and then write an online (D2L) quiz pertaining to each section. These three 50-minute quizzes (non-cumulative and equally weighted) will comprise 40% of the course grade.

- each of the three quizzes will consist of twenty-five questions (true/false and multiple-choice).
- each of the three quizzes will be accessible in Desire2Learn for a 48 hour period, starting at 12:00 noon on the following Tuesdays: September 30, Oct 21, and Nov 11. All quizzes

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<sup>1</sup> Such a realization can be an eye-opening intellectual experience well worth the eccentric nature of this particular course (as attested by students in previous offerings of this atypical approach where the subject of western religion is treated as the means to a further end: the bio-ecological analysis of all humans).

will be set for multiple, unlimited attempts. The highest grade achieved in any one attempt will be recorded as the official grade for that quiz. In the unlikely event that the university servers are incapacitated for more than four hours during the quizzing period, a commensurate extension of time will be applied to the affected quiz.

- given the online quizzing format (accessible anywhere, anytime, and available over an extended period), no concession for missed quizzes will be granted, except for cases of significant illness or domestic issue (adequately described, verifiable with proper medical documentation noting the significance of the illness, to be submitted electronically within 24 hours subsequent to the quiz period). Please note: travel, work schedule, weddings, funerals, sore throats, vehicle repairs, children’s soccer/ballet competitions, or computer/technical issues ... these and their equivalent are not permissible reasons for the granting of a make-up quiz.

*Lecture Analysis—Three Take-Home Tests:* The second component of the course will analyze “western religion” within a broad consilient (deep-time) framework to understand how religion functions for evolved and adapted *homo sapiens*. Assessment of lecture learning will take place in three take-home tests, two of which are weighted at 25% and one at 10% (combined total grade weight: 60%).

- the first two take-home tests will be comprised of ten short-answer questions. The last take-home test will involve four short-answer questions.
- the take-home tests will be made available in D2L two days before the due date. Students will be required to print out the take-home test and to *hand-write* their answers in the spaces provided on the test copy. The completed take-home test must then be stapled and submitted to the instructor or the department before 4:30pm of the scheduled due-date.
- the same qualifications for missed online quizzes applies for missed take-home tests (see note above regarding concessions).

**Grading Scale:**

|            |            |            |            |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| A+ 100-96  | B+ 84.9-80 | C+ 69.9-65 | D+ 54.9-53 |
| A 95.9-90  | B 79.9-75  | C 64.9-60  | D 52.9-50  |
| A- 89.9-85 | B- 74.9-70 | C- 59.9-55 | F under 50 |

**Student Responsibilities:**

Students should be aware that a blended course requires self-motivation and due diligence to stipulated details. The potential to succeed in this course is increased if students:

- *enter* in their personal calendar all deadlines pertinent to the assessments of this course (see schedule in D2L);
- *ensure* that their computer and internet provider are fully operational and stable. No exceptions will be made for technical glitches (e.g., server crash, browser freeze-up, battery drain, wi-fi dropout ... in short, anything between the university's system and the student's computer) other than significant outages in the University’s system. *It is therefore the responsibility of the student of an online electronic course to ensure that s/he possesses (or has access to) the proper equipment and secure signal necessary to complete all components of the course.*
- *read* thoroughly the assigned pages prior to the first writing of each quiz (see schedule posted in D2L, Course Information);

- *study* hard, allotting sufficient time prior to each quiz for rereading of textbook material;
- *write* each quiz early in the time-frame scheduled, to ensure adequate time to improve the grade achieved;
- *reread* vigilantly all vital information and documents pertinent to this course: outline, syllabus, schedule, email messages, announcements, theoretical overviews, publishable paragraphs, and so on
- *attend* (to) all the lectures.

### **Additional Important Details:**

Please note these important details:

- marks for the take-home tests will be posted in D2L's grade centre;
- a passing grade on any of the assessments is not essential for passing the course;
- no remedial assignments are available in this course;
- there is no registrar-scheduled final exam for this course;
- take-home tests submitted after 4:30pm on the due date will be penalized 5% for every day (or part thereof) overdue;
- the Calgary University Calendar states:  
 "It is the responsibility of students who have prolonged absences from class because of physical and/or emotional health problems to present to the faculty office offering the course a statement from a physician/counselor attesting to the physical or emotional health of the student."

### **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, librarian staff or the Chicago manual of style.

### **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.

### **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.

### **Gnosis**

Gnosis is the Religious Studies Student Club. For membership or more information please email: [gnosis@ucalgary.ca](mailto:gnosis@ucalgary.ca) or visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~gnosis>.

### **Classics Student Society**

Classics Student Society is the Greek and Roman Studies Student Club. For membership or more information please email: [classsoc@ucalgary.ca](mailto:classsoc@ucalgary.ca) or visit <http://grst.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate/classics-students-society>.

### **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](mailto: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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](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.