

University of Calgary
Faculty of Arts
Department of Religious Studies

RELS 201 L20 - Introduction to Western Religions

Instructor: Oren Steinitz
 Class day & time: TR 9:00-11:45am
 Office: SS 1330
 Office hours: T 1:00-2:00pm
 Email: oren.z.steinitz@ucalgary.ca
 Phone: 403-220-5612 or 403-220-5886 (main office)

Textbooks:

- Theodore M. Ludwig, *The Sacred Paths of the West* (Third Edition)
- Additional material will be posted online

Description:

This course will provide an introductory review of three Western faith traditions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – focusing on their historical development, key concepts, and the diversity within them. Special emphasis will be placed on modern developments and the ways practitioners of these traditions balance their religious observance with the secular world surrounding them. Several specific communities will be investigated as case studies in order to disprove the common perception of religions as monoliths.

The course aims to provide students with the basic knowledge and skills necessary for the academic study of religion. Students are expected to follow the academic schedule and fulfill their reading assignments. Class lectures do not repeat the contents of the textbooks but will supplement them and provide an opportunity to discuss and focus on specific issues.

Course requirements:

- **Three exams – 25% Each**
 - **First midterm (Judaism): May 24th**
 - **Second midterm (Christianity): June 7th**
 - **Final exam (Islam): Registrar scheduled**

The exams will include multiple choice questions, fill-in-the-blank, true/false and short answer questions.

- **One critical essay – 25%**
 In this which students will be expected to demonstrate knowledge and skills acquired throughout the entire course. Due on the last day of class.

Penalties:

Unapproved late submissions of the critical essay will be penalized by 5% of the paper grade. An additional 2% will be deducted for every additional day of tardiness.

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:

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

N.B. All written assignments will be graded with regard to both form and content.

Course Outline:

- What is Religion? An academic approach
- Judaism
 - A Historical Review
 - Biblical Times (pp. 95-103)
 - Second Temple Judaism (103-106)
 - Rabbinic Thought, ritual and practice (115-141)
 - Medieval Times up to the modern era (106-114)
 - Modern Judaism (Material will be posted on line)
 - American Judaism
 - Israeli Judaism
- Christianity
 - A Historical Review
 - Jesus and the Gospels (143-150)
 - Evolution of Christian Theology (150-157)
 - Medieval Christianity (157-160)
 - The Protestant Reformation (160-165)
 - Ritual and practice (167-193)
 - Modern Christianity (165-166 plus on line postings)
 - Evangelism
 - Liberal Christianity
 - The state of the Catholic Church today
- Islam
 - A Historical Review
 - Muhammad and the Caliphate (196-205)
 - Medieval Islam (204-209)
 - Sunnah, Shi'a and Sufism (209-213)
 - Islamic Law and theology (220-245)
 - Islam and the Modern World (Material will posted on line)
 - Ahmadiyya
 - Traditionalism
 - Modernism
 - Fundamentalism

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/onlineservices/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/bbls_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.