

**THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
FALL 2004**

04/09/03

RELIGIOUS STUDIES 205 L01
THE NATURE OF RELIGION

INSTRUCTOR:	Anne White, Ph.D.
COURSE TIME AND DAYS:	10:00-10:50 MWF
OFFICE:	SS 1322
OFFICE HOURS:	MW 11:00-12 noon
TELEPHONE:	220-3285
E-MAIL ADDRESS:	awhite@ucalgary.ca
WEBSITE ADDRESS:	www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~awhite/

Required Texts:

Robert C. Monk et al, *Exploring Religious Meaning*, 6th ed., Prentice Hall (2003).

Suggested Reading (not mandatory):

Gilkey, Langdon, *Nature, Reality, and the Sacred*, Fortress Press (1993).
 Livingston, James, *Anatomy of the Sacred*, Prentice Hall (2001).
 Pals, Daniel L., *Seven theories of Religion*, Oxford University Press (1996)
 Radford Ruether, Rosemary, *Gaia and God*, Harper Collins (1992).
 Starke, Rodney, *Acts of Faith*, University of California Press (2000).
 Stewart, David, *Exploring the Philosophy of Religion*, Prentice Hall (2001).

Course Description:

This course is designed to introduce students to the academic study of religion. It will present the practical and theoretical analysis of religion through examination of a broad range of religious issues and phenomena. Adopting this analytical approach, students will gain insight into critical thinking as they are introduced to many of the major questions, problems, and arguments that occupy both male and female philosophers of religion. Examples from various major religious traditions will be used to demonstrate the nature of religion as interpreted by both adherent and critic of religious beliefs in contemporary society. The overall result of this approach will be to equip students with a variety of perspectives in order to understand the status, function, and issues pertaining to the nature of religion in our present age.

Course presentation will consist of lectures, assigned readings, films, and class discussion. As this is an introductory course, a detailed knowledge of Western and Eastern religions will not be required.

Core Competencies:

Students will develop a number of the skills identified in the University of Calgary statement of learning outcomes. These include: communication, thinking, ethical reasoning, computer literacy, information retrieval, and group effectiveness.

The assigned readings, lecture material and methodology within the course should develop a student's ability to think critically (i.e. judge, reflect, and analyze); web notes will further provide dissemination of information and enhance computer skills; preparation for examinations should foster the development of information retrieval and writing competency.

It is important to remember that the attainment of any learning endeavour requires that students regularly attend lectures, read the required material, and complete all course work.

Course Requirements:

September 29	-	Film review/analysis – five pages	15%
October 25	-	In class test	15%
November 19	-	Essay – 8 pages, plus 1 page bibliography Double spaced CHICAGO STYLE FORMAT ONLY	30%
	-	Registrar’s Office scheduled final exam	40%

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

Recording of lectures:

Recording any part of any lectures in any form must first approved be by the instructor in writing and is for individual private study only. See current Calendar, Tape recording of Lectures.

Academic Honesty:

Students should be familiar with University regulations regarding academic integrity; see relevant pages in the current University Calendar.

Academic Accommodation:

If you are a student with a disability who requires academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. Once registered, please discuss any upcoming tests/examinations with the instructor two weeks before the scheduled date.

Withdrawing from courses:

Please note the information regarding withdrawals and fee refunds in the Academic Schedule of the current University Calendar.

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>.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK COMMENCING:

SEPTEMBER 8

Chapters 1 and 2

Introduction and definition of religion.
Group discussion.

SEPTEMBER 13

Chapter 2

Religious traditions. General introduction to religious cosmologies

SEPTEMBER 20

Two short videos on religious traditions.
Overview of how to write a video/film review.
Guidelines posted on web.
Group discussion.

SEPTEMBER 27

Chapters 3 and 4

Experience and expression in religion
Knowledge, belief and cosmology.
Group discussion.
FILM REVIEW DUE.ON SEP.29

OCTOBER 4

Chapter 5

The meaning of human religious expression through art and ritual.

OCTOBER 13

Chapter 6

Authority in religion. Its positive use and some of its abuses.
Additional material as per webnotes.

OCTOBER 18

Chapter 7

The Holy and the Other.
Mysticism in various religious traditions.
Group discussion.

OCTOBER 25

IN CLASS TEST – 45 MINUTES

OCTOBER 27-29

Chapter 8

The concept of evil.

NOVEMBER 1

Chapters 9 and 10

Perennial questions, self, and meaning.
The development of self within a religious cosmology.
Video.

NOVEMBER 8**Chapter 11**

Sin and guilt. Are we really that free?
Human freedom versus hedonism. What is freedom?
Group discussion.

NOVEMBER 15**Chapter 12**

Death – is it the end or the beginning?

PAPER TO BE HANDED IN ON THE 19TH.**NOVEMBER 22****Chapter 13**

What does salvation mean?
Why do so many people feel the need for this?

NOVEMBER 29**Chapters 14 and 15**

Relationships – personal and corporate expressions
of ethical conduct.
Group discussion.

DECEMBER 6**WEB NOTES**

Continuation of last week's analysis.
Religions, human conduct and Gaia (Earth)
Is it possible to "tread lightly on the earth"?.