

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES - DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
COURSE OUTLINE FALL TERM 2004
RELS 205 L02 - THE NATURE OF RELIGION

04/09/03

INSTRUCTOR	Irving Hexham
GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT	Chang Han Kim
CLASS TIME	TR 9.30-10.45
OFFICE	SS 1310
OFFICE HOURS	R 11:00 – noon or by appointment
TELEPHONE	220-3280
E-MAIL	hexham@ucalgary.ca and ucckim@hotmail.com
WEB SITE	http://www.ucalgary.ca/~hexham

REQUIRED TEXTS

The following books that are available from the University of Calgary Bookstore are required reading:

Williams, Paul, *The Unexpected Way*
Hexham, Irving, *Concise Dictionary of Religion*

The following book is also required reading, but because it is going out of print it is not available from the University of Calgary Bookstore. A special consignment was ordered. Details about purchasing it, at \$20 per copy, will be given out in class: Hexham, Irving, *The Christian Travelers Guide to Great Britain*

The supplementary readings needed for the in-class tests will be posted on the Internet at:
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/~hexham/courses/rels-205.html>

ABOUT RELS 205

This is a Religious Studies "Nature Stream" course with a "205" designation. That means it deals with the study of religion. It is not about Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, or any other major religious tradition. Rather it is about the practical and theoretical study of religion. During the course examples will be used from major religious traditions, particularly Christianity, as well as less known ones. But, if you are looking for a course on Buddhism or Hinduism enrol in an "Eastern Stream" course with the course designation "203." If you want to take a course on Christianity, Islam or Judaism, then you need a "Western Stream" course with a designation "201." 200 level courses are designed as introductory courses intended to prepare students for more advanced study. If you are a fourth year student fulfilling a requirement you ought to have completed earlier in your career you must expect this course to be elementary. You must also be prepared to hear lectures about the use of the University Library, the correct mode of referencing, the use of the Internet, and similar topics that you already understand.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The University of Calgary Calendar provides the following general course description for Rels 205: "An introduction to the study of religion that relates religious traditions to contemporary thought and culture."

The emphasis in this particular section of RELS 205 is on "the study of religion." In this course various theoretical concepts related to the study of religion will be introduced and discussed in

specific historic and geographic settings. The setting for this year's course is Great Britain – hence the travel guide.

An effort will be made to show how religious ideas relate to social and political life as well as practical pursuits such as modern tourism. The course is based on the lectures, seminars, and course readings. A number of films will be shown during the course to illustrate various topics discussed in the lectures.

The course begins with a discussion of various definitions of the term "religion" followed by an analysis of some key terms in the field of religious studies. The role of theory in the interpretation of religion will be examined through brief excerpts from the writings of Tom Paine, Ludwig Feuerbach and Karl Marx. Issues of academic scholarship, method and theory in the study of religion will be discussed. For a list of the weekly topics see the lecture outline which will be posted on the Web at the beginning of term.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Lectures begin on September 8th and end on December 9th. November 11th is Remembrance Day and the University is closed for mid-term break from November 11th-14th. On October 21st there will be a film as Prof. Hexham and Mr. Kim will be attending the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion's annual conference.

All tests will be based on the readings and lectures. The weighting for these course components is as follows:

First Test	Thursday 14 October – for this test you need to have read the assigned passages in the <i>Concise Dictionary</i> and <i>The Unexpected Way</i> 40%
Second Test	Thursday 18 November – for this test you need to have read the assigned passages in the <i>Concise Dictionary</i> and the <i>Christian Travelers Guide to Great Britain</i> 40%
Final Assignment	Thursday 9 December 10%
Class participation	for attending a one hour tutorial with Chang-Han Kim. The time will be arranged in class. 10%

For help with the tests visit the “doomsday” section on my course materials website.

A letter grade will be assigned for the course on the basis of 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.

CORE COMPETENCIES

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

- appreciate the field of religious studies and some associated disciplines;
- understand the meaning of some key terms in religious studies such as myth and religion;
- think critically about religious arguments;

- d) appreciate the importance of using correct academic methods intelligently;
- e) be able to make informed judgment about the reliability of specific books and texts.

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.

Safewalk Program :

"You don't have to walk alone...." Call 220-5333 and a member of the Safewalk Team will walk you to your car, the LRT, or any destination on campus. Safewalk is available to all students, staff and faculty any time of the day or night. Look for the Campus Security Help Phones located throughout the University. Please don't hesitate to call!

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>.