

**THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
RELS 205 L01 - THE NATURE OF RELIGION
FALL TERM 2011**

Instructor: Irving Hexham
Class time and days: TR 11:00-12:15pm
Lecture room: ST 135
Office/office hours: SS 1310, R12:30 -1:30pm or by appointment.
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Web site: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~hexham>

Tutorial Assistant: Jenna Ferrey
Assistant's e-mail: jafferrey@ucalgary.ca

Required texts

Hexham, Irving, *Understanding World Religions*, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2011
Hexham, Irving, *Concise Dictionary of Religion*, Vancouver, Regent College – optional.
Hexham, Irving, *The Christian Travelers Guide to Great Britain* –this book is now out of print. Therefore it was a special order and will be made available in the class for \$20. You can also find used copies in the student bookstore.

About RELS 205:

This is a Religious Studies "Nature Stream" course with a "205" designation. That means it deals with the study of religion and concentrates on practical and theoretical issues. During the course examples will be used from major religious traditions. But, if you are looking for a course specifically on Buddhism or Hinduism enrol in an "Eastern Stream" course with the course designation "203." If you want to take a course that concentrates on Christianity, Islam or Judaism, then you need a "Western Stream" course with a designation "201." It is also important to remember that all 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.

Course description:

The University of Calgary Calendar provides the following general course description for RELS 205:

“An introduction to the academic study of religion with particular emphasis on the nature of religion and the relationship of religion 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 lectures and course readings. The first week of the course discusses the nature of the university. This is followed by various definitions of the term "religion" and 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. Weekly topics are listed in the lecture outline below.

Course competencies

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

- a) appreciate the field of religious studies and some associated disciplines;
- b) understand the meaning of some key terms in religious studies such as myth and religion;
- c) 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.

Course requirements and grading:

Lectures for this course begin on Tuesday, September 13, 2011

Reading Days are 10-13 November 2011

The last day of lectures for this course is Thursday, December 8, 2011

All tests will be based on the readings and lectures.

There will be two parts to each test 1) a multiple choice section; and 2) a short written section.

First Test worth 35% of the final grade will be held in week 6 on October 20

Second Test worth 35% of the final grade will be held in week 11 on November 24

Third Test worth 10% of the final grade will be held week 13 on December 8

The final research assignment worth 20% of the final grade is due in class on December 8

Details of the research assignment are given at the end of this outline.

Only hard copy papers will be accepted. Do not send them by email.

* Students must take the test on the assigned day or have a valid medical note.

* Late papers will lose 10 points per day.

**There will be no Registrar scheduled final exam for this course.*

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 - 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.

Practical Issues

All questions are to be directed to the tutorial assistant, Jenna Ferrey before you contact Prof. Hexham. Do not waste her time by asking questions that are answered in this course outline or were discussed at length in class. A study guide and a few sample questions for the tests will be posted on Blackboard. DO NOT ask for the answers to the sample questions. You must work out the answers yourself. All tests will be based on the lectures and readings. The answers to most questions will be found in both the lectures and readings. If you attend the lectures and read all the readings you should pass the course and ought to obtain a good grade.

Power Point slides

The power point slides will not be made available on Blackboard. It is your responsibility to pay attention and write down any relevant information or your own comments. This must be done during lectures.

Class etiquette

Remember that you are not the only student in the class. Please make every effort to arrive on time and not to leave before the class ends. You are expected to pay attention to the lecture and not distract other students. In other words, concentrate on your studies and do not disturb other students.

MP3 Computers and other devices

While attending class the wearing of earphones or similar devices is not permitted, nor are computers to be used for watching videos or playing computer games. Cell phones must be turned off and not taken out in class for texting or any other purposes.

Recording of lectures

Recording any part of any lectures in any form, including through a computer, is not permitted. Nor will the power point slides or lecture notes be posted on the web. Photographing power point lectures with a cell phone or other device is not permitted. These restrictions are due to copyright issues and are strictly enforced.

Academic honesty

Students should be familiar with the University regulations regarding academic honesty. See University Calendar, p. 49. See also:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/~hexham/study/plag.html>

Academic accommodation

It is a student's responsibility to request academic accommodation. If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Center, please contact their office at 403-220-8237. Your academic accommodation letters should be provided to your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the commencement of this course. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Center are not eligible for formal academic accommodation.

(DRC web address is: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/Others/DRC/>)

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 new 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 (formerly the Undergraduate programs Office) at (403) 220-5881 or visit them on the 4th Floor of MacEwan Student Centre.
- 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.

RELS 205- RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT

Demonstrate what you have learnt in this course by illustrating key themes, religious traditions, concepts and figures studied in this course, for example myth, ritual, the meaning of religion, the work of Martin Luther, Karl Marx, or Ninian Smart in relation to places mentioned in *The Christian Travelers Guide* used in this course. All of your information and materials discussed are to be based on the readings used in this course. Do not use outside readings or Internet sites like Wikipedia.

To write the assignment imagine that you are a professor of Religious Studies, a travel agent, or tour company publicist, planning a month long educational tour of Great Britain for students taking an introductory Religious Studies course. In your assignment describe the places you intend to visit and explain how and why they are important for understanding the issues discussed in the course.

Here is an example of what you are expected to do. This illustration describes a visit to Germany:

Worms is the town where Martin Luther was called before an Imperial Diet in 1521. An Imperial Diet was ...

According to legend the Emperor Charles the V commanded him to recant his views about the Biblical teaching of justification by faith. Refusing to recant Luther declared: "Here I stand, I can do no other." Whether this story is historically true or not it illustrates a powerful myth that shaped Protestant thought for four centuries.

A myth is defined as ...

In religious studies myths are often closely connected to rituals. Rituals are ...

In completing this assignment write no more than five single-spaced, typed pages suitable for use as an advertising brochure. It is also important to ensure that your planned trip progresses in a realistic manner that takes into account the geographic locations of the places visited.

To gain some idea of how to write this assignment visit a travel agent and obtain a couple of brochures outlining European tours and go online to see how educational tours are organized by various universities.