

**The University of Calgary
Faculty of Arts
Department of Religious Studies**

**Religious Studies 205 L02: The Nature of Religion
Course Outline**

Fall 2011 **T 6:00 – 8:45pm**

Instructor: Morny Joy
Office: SS 1318
Office Hours: T 3:30 – 4:30pm or by appointment
Telephone: 403-220-7995 or 403-220-5886 (Department office)
E-mail: mjoy@ucalgary.ca

Graduate Teaching Assistants: Leslie Sawchenko: leslie@imperium.ca
Matt Koczku: mjkoczku@ucalgary.ca
Office Hours: By appointment

Textbooks:

Mallory Nye *Religion: The Basics*
Mariatu Kamara *The Bite of the Mango*
Sid Brown *The Journey of One Buddhist Nun*
RELS 205 Course Reader (available from Bookstore)

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to the academic study of religion. The first objective of the course is to introduce the diverse definitions of religion and the different approaches to the study of religion. The second objective is to explore some of the phenomena associated with religion as a human activity (religious experience, ritual, responses to suffering and death). The third objective is to examine a few of the contemporary issues and challenges that impact on traditional religious faiths (postcolonialism, feminist criticism, psychoanalysis, pluralism). Examples that illustrate the ideas being discussed will be drawn from various religions.

Course Format:

The course will include lectures, class discussion of both small groups and entire class. Each week certain students will be asked to prepare questions for small group discussion. I do recommend, however, that as you read the assigned material, you would all write down questions and comments to bring to class. If you are shy about talking in class, please send your questions or comments to me via email and I will introduce them in class so that all can benefit from the discussion.

Blackboard:

The blackboard system will be used for communication, reporting grades on tests and exams, and posting notes and announcements.

Core Competencies:

Students will work on the following skills: critical appraisal of arguments and theories; practical application of theories and concepts presented in course readings and lectures; and clear expression of ideas in both written assignments and oral presentations.

Course Requirements:

Five response papers @ 10% each		50%
	Dates due: Oct 4; Oct. 18; Oct. 25, Nov. 8, Nov. 22	
Midterm Exam	November 1	25%
One book report	November 29	15%
Final in-class Exam	December 6	10%

Reading Response Papers – These five papers will be a reflection on Course material and class discussions. They should be approximately 1,500 words.

Your book report should be approximately 2,000 words.

Please submit your papers via the Digital Dropbox (under Tools) on Blackboard.

In no case will a paper be accepted after the due date.

Exams - The midterm and final exams will include short answer questions (requiring answers of one or two paragraphs) and short essay questions (requiring answers of one to two pages). Your answers will be graded on form (proper grammar, effective organization of ideas, clear writing style) as well as content (accuracy, completeness, strength of analysis).

NB. POLICY REGARDING MISSED EXAMINATIONS

Exam dates are firm. Without acceptable documentation (i.e. medical certificate, police report, bereavement notice, confirmation of religious observance, or court summons), missed assessments will be awarded an ‘F’. PLEASE CONSIDER THIS IN YOUR DECISION TO CONTINUE WITH THIS COURSE.

This policy is intended to encourage diligence and integrity among students as well as to uphold principles of fairness and equality with respect to other students in the class. Excuses other than those listed above will receive little attention.

Deferral of the final exam requires the approval of the Associate Dean, Student Affairs, of the Faculty of Arts.

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, standardized within the Department of Religious Studies:

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.

Recording of Lectures:

Recording any part of any lecture in any form must first be approved by me in writing. Any recordings are 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. I will investigate and prosecute any suspected case of plagiarizing in this course to the fullest extent.

Academic Accommodation:

If you are a student with a disability who requires academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, contact their office at 403-220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. Once registered, discuss any upcoming tests/examinations with the instructor **two weeks** before the scheduled date.

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.

COURSE READINGS

Week		
1.	Introduction	Textbook (<i>Religion</i> by Malory Nye), chap. 1.
2.	Myth and Symbol	M. Moojan: <i>Archetype, Myth and Symbol</i> M. Eliade: <i>Sacred and Profane, Introduction</i> D. Gellner: <i>Anthropological Approaches</i>
3.	Ritual	R. Segal: <i>Myth and Ritual</i> W. Paden: <i>Ritual</i> Textbook: <i>Ritual</i>, chap. 6.
4.	Experience	T. Fitzgerald: <i>Experience</i> Black Elk: <i>Black Elk's Vision</i> H. Zimmer: <i>The Way of the Bodhisattva</i> F. Streng: <i>Attaining Freedom</i> P. Connolly: <i>Psychological Approaches</i>
5.	Culture	F. Streng <i>Creating Community</i> Textbook, chap. 2.
6.	Gender	Textbook, chap. 4. M. Moojan: <i>Religion and Gender</i> M.S. Copeland: <i>Representation and Black Rel. Discourse</i> R.R. Ruether: <i>Feminism and World Religions</i>
7.	Interpretation	D. Jasper: <i>Texts and Readers; Varieties of Postmodern</i> H. Penner: <i>Interpretation</i> Also read assigned book: <i>The Journey of One Buddhist Nun</i>
8.	Shamanism	C. Castenada: <i>Instructions in Self Discovery</i> Margaret Stutley: <i>Shamanism</i>

9.	Critique	
		S. Freud: <i>Religion as a Psychological Weakness</i>
		K. Marx: <i>Opium of the People</i>
		Textbook, chap. 3
10.	Evil	
		M. Moojan: <i>Suffering, Sacrifice and Salvation</i>
		A.J. Heschel: <i>The Problem of Evil</i>
		Also read assigned book <i>The Bite of the Mango</i>
11.	Orientalism and Postcolonialism	
		J. J. Clarke: <i>Orientalisms; Orientalism</i>
		D. Chidester :<i>Colonialism</i>
		Kwok, Pui-Lan: <i>Unbinding Our Feet</i>
12.	Pluralism	
		J. Hick: <i>The Christian View of Other Faiths</i>
		N. Smart: <i>Exploring Religions</i>
		W. Cantwell Smith: <i>Religious Life as Participation in Process</i>
13.	Exam	