

**UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY  
FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS AND RELIGION**

**COURSE OUTLINE – SPRING 2015**

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>Course</b>       | RELS 205 L01: Religion and the Good Life   |
| <b>Time</b>         | This is an online course that will be delivered through the Desire2Learn (D2L) learning management system. |
| <b>Instructor</b>   | Craig W. C. Ginn, PhD  |
| <b>Office Hours</b> | Tuesday/Thursday 9:00-10:00 by appointment   |
| <b>Office</b>       | SS 502   |
| <b>E-mail</b>       | <a href="mailto:cwcginn@ucalgary.ca">cwcginn@ucalgary.ca</a>   |
| <b>Telephone</b>    | 403-220-5612   |

**Required Text(s):** Online readings. Links will be provided on D2L.

**Course Description:** What is the good life? How does religion weigh in on this question? How do individual religions seek to provide an answer? The answer?

This course will provide an introduction to the study of religion, focusing on the functional nature of religion. In general, students will explore the definition(s) of religion, the dimensions of religion, and various approaches to the study of religion. In particular, students will consider truth-claims made by religions that purport to provide life meaning and sustain well-being. We will explore religion as an alleged source of revelation and truth, and how religious systems shape and define “the good life”. We are interested in influential texts and leaders; we will consider critical concepts from the Hebrew Bible and the Vedas, as well the teachings of Jesus, Muhammad, the Buddha and Confucius.

But religion is not without competition and beyond evaluative judgment. In the context of secular humanism religion is not considered the only source of meaning, and the teachings provided by religions are increasingly challenged as irrelevant and even harmful. As a result, we will also consider some of the key opponents of religion and their arguments.

The course will be composed of four modules:

- Module 1 The nature and study of religion
- Module 2 The functional role of religion
- Module 3 Truth-claims and influential teachings
- Module 4 Evaluating the goodness of religion

Course content will be delivered through readings, audio files, and online documentaries available through the University of Calgary library (Films on Demand).

**Online elements for this course:** Accessing online texts, articles and book sections. Links will be posted on D2L. Accessing online documentaries and video recordings. Completing online tests.

NOTE: All tests for this course, including the final exam, are completed online. Module tests will be available for a 12-hour period of time on the day assigned for the test. Every student in the course is expected to take the test within that period of time. Module tests are timed, requiring students to complete the test within a specified time limit. It is important for students to take extra care to ensure that they have access to dependable power and internet service. Do not rely on your computer battery as your only power source when taking the exam. “My battery died” will not be considered an acceptable reason for failing to complete the test. For students who experience interruption to internet service while taking the exam, please contact the instructor as soon as internet service is restored. In the meantime, document your location, and the date and time of the interruption to internet service. If a student cannot complete the exam during the 12-hour period of time on the day assigned for the test due to “technical difficulties”, such as interruption to internet service or computer malfunction, the student must notify the instructor within 24 hours via email.

**Course Requirements:**

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| Assessment   | Date   | Weight (%) |
|--|--|------------|
| Orientation Quiz: Includes course information  | Friday, May 15   | 5%         |
| Module 1 Test: Includes all module 1 course material                                       | Thursday, May 28   | 20%        |
| Module 2 Test: Includes all module 2 course material                                       | Monday, June 8   | 25%        |
| Module 3 Test: Includes all module 3 course material                                       | Thursday, June 18  | 25%        |
| Final Exam: Includes all module 4 course material. The final exam is <u>not</u> cumulative | To be scheduled by the Registrar’s Office during the examination period (June 27, 29-30) | 25%        |

**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 Classics and Religion:

|    |          |   |         |    |          |
|----|----------|---|---------|----|----------|
| 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.

**Adjusted Grades:** The instructor will implement a standard measure of adjustment for grades. Please do not send email inquiries asking the instructor to increase or ‘round up’ your final grade.

**Policy with regard to missed assessments:** If a student misses a test, the student must provide the instructor with supporting documentation (note from doctor, counselor, accident report, etc.) within 48 hours of the absence. If documentation is not provided within 48 hours, the student will not be provided an opportunity to make up the test and will receive a numerical mark of zero. There are of course many reasons for missing a test that are not considered to be valid, including but not limited to: work schedules that conflict with the day of the test, family functions that conflict with the day of the test, forgetting about the test, traffic congestion on the day of the test, and having no internet connection on the day of the test.

**Email:** Please identify the subject of your email and clearly identify yourself by name and the course you are registered in. Please do not send email inquiries related to dates and deadlines. Students shall refer to the university calendar, course outline, and final exam schedule for schedule information. Inquiries related to exams or assignments must be sent no less than 24 hours before a deadline.

**Syllabus:** A complete syllabus will be made available the first week of class.

**Extra Assignments:** There are no extra assignments for this course. Students will not be given an opportunity to submit extra work or retake tests to increase their grade.

**Weighting of Module Tests:** The weighting for module tests is identified above. The weighting of tests will not be changed to accommodate student requests.

**Reviewing Tests:** The online tests for this course display the student’s final score. Test answers are not displayed. For students interested in seeing individual test answers, please make an appointment with the instructor at the end of the term after all tests are completed. At that time you can review all of your test answers.

### **References and Bibliography:**

The Department of Classics and Religion uses the most recent edition of the Chicago Manual of Style and requires references and bibliographies to adhere to the Chicago citation system. You can find a quick guide here: [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html). Alternatively please consult with the library staff for help and advice using the Chicago citation style.

### **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 (section K, which can be found here: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>). If you have questions about correct referencing, please consult your instructor, or librarian staff.

### **Academic Accommodation**

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodation. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with Student Accessibility Services, please contact their office at 403-220-8237. Students who have not registered with Student Accessibility Services 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.

### **Desire 2 Learn (D2L) Help**

Go to <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students> for Student Help and FAQ's about D2L. Troubleshooting tips and a tutorial are also available on this website.

### **Gnosis**

Gnosis is the Religious Studies Student Club. For membership or more information please email: [gnosis@ucalgary.ca](mailto:gnosis@ucalgary.ca) or visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~gnosis>.

### **Classics Student Society**

Classics Student Society is the Greek and Roman Studies Student Club. For membership or more information please email: [classsoc@ucalgary.ca](mailto:classsoc@ucalgary.ca) or visit <http://grst.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate/classics-students-society>.

### **Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources**

- Have a question, but not sure where to start? The Faculty of Arts Students' Centre (ASC) is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at SS102, call us at 403-220-3580 or email us at [ascarts@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ascarts@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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds) for more information.

The Students' Union Faculty of Arts representative can be reached at [arts1@ucalgary.ca](mailto: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](http://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.