

The University of Calgary
Faculty of Arts
Department of Religious Studies

Religious Studies 205 L02
The Nature of Religion

Winter 2011
Times: MWF 13:00-13:50
Place: ST 132

Instructor	Chris Daniels
Office	SS 1330
Office Hours	M 14:00-15:00 or by appointment
Telephone	403-220-5612 or 403-220-5886 (main office)
Email	chris.daniels@ucalgary.ca

Required Texts:

Kessler, Gary E. *Philosophy of Religion: Toward a Global Perspective*. Boston: Wadsworth, 1999.

Other articles may be used during the course, copies of which will be posted on Blackboard during the semester.

Course Description:

This course will introduce students to diverse issues and questions in the academic study of religion. It will be structured thematically, privilege a global perspective, and include topics such as: Issues in cross cultural definition and study of “religion;” Eastern and Western images of the Divine/Ultimate Reality; rational and non-rational arguments for the (non)existence of the Divine/Ultimate Reality; life after death and personal identity; the problem of evil and suffering; religious diversity, truth, and theologies/philosophies of religions. The course will be formatted in lecture style with opportunity for general class discussion in which students will be encouraged to participate. The aim of the course is to give students a general awareness of the diverse nature of religious concepts and issues.

Core Competencies:

Students in this class will have the opportunity to reflect on central issues in the philosophical, academic study of religion and in so doing gain critical reading and thinking skills. They will also begin to acquire abilities that contribute to clear and concise writing, research, and communication. Skills acquired in this course will have relevance in upper level courses in the Arts, as well as in wider academic, career, and social settings. Knowledge acquired in this course will help students reflect and converse more clearly and critically on the diverse nature of religion in society.

Course Requirements

There will be five assessments for this course:

Assessments	Date	Weight /100%
Short Quiz	10 (weekly as specified)	10% total (1% each)
Reading Question Assignment	Feb 11	10 %
Midterm In-class exam	March 4	20%
Written Assignment	April 1	25%
Final Exam (Cumulative)	Registrar Scheduled	35%

Weekly Quiz:

There will be ten weekly multiple choice quizzes of four or five questions each which will require students to engage in the readings and lectures for successful completion. Each quiz should not take more than 5-8 minutes to complete.

Reading Question Assignment:

This assignment will be a two page essay (500- 600 words) addressing one of the reading questions presented in the textbook. The applicable chapters and questions will be assigned in class. Grading will focus on following directions, composition skills, content, and proper research citation, all of which will be addressed in class.

Written Assignment:

This assignment will be a short 1500 word essay on one of a selection of topics presented that will require further research than the class will present. It will utilize skills learned in the Reading Question Assignment for proper research and citation as well as the critical thinking and reading expected throughout the course. Format will be discussed and assigned in class.

The final exam will be cumulative.

Grading:

A numerical grade will be given for each course requirement with a letter grade awarded as the cumulative grade for the course. Below is the table approved by the Dept of Religious Studies:

A+ 96 –100%	A 90-95%	A- 85-89%
B+ 80-84%	B 75-79%	B- 70-74%
C+ 65-69%	C 60-64%	C- 55-59%
D+ 53-54%	D 50-52%	F < 50%

NB. POLICY WITH REGARDING MISSED ASSESSMENTS

Test and quiz 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 a 0 (zero). 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.

Academic Honesty:

Plagiarism is not tolerated at the University of Calgary and has serious consequences. Your essays must be your own work and inadequate referencing may be seen as plagiarism. Please see the relevant sections on Academic Misconduct in the University Calendar. If you have questions about correct referencing, please consult your instructor.

Academic Accommodation:

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

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.