

**UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

COURSE OUTLINE – WINTER 2015

Course	RELS 205 LEC 1 – Religion and The Good Life
Time	Monday, Wednesday, and Friday: 13:00-13:50
Instructor	Jonathan Napier
Office	SS 502
Office Hours	M 14:00 – 15:00
E-mail	janapier@ucalgary.ca
Telephone	403-220-5612

Required Text(s)

- *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel. Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2002.
- *Religion: the Basics* (Second Edition) by Malory Rye. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Additional Readings may be posted on D2L

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the study of religion. We will approach this through stories in film, literature, as well as narratives depicted in other media. The course is structured thematically to analyze a variety of questions which arise when we ask ourselves: *what is religion?* Alongside: *What is the good life?* Defining and explaining religion is a difficult and complex task; therefore, we will critically analyze major theoretical problems and contemporary challenges for religious traditions. We will study various religions from around the world in order to appreciate the broadness and diversity of practices and beliefs in the world today. The aim of this course is to give students a strong awareness of the complex nature of religion, an appreciation for the variety of constructions within religious traditions, and an understanding of some of the important challenges to religions today.

Online elements for this course

Announcements and marks will be posted online.

Core Competencies

Students in this class will have the opportunity to reflect on central issues in the academic study of religion. Students will be expected to develop skills in critical reading, thinking and class discussions. They will also have the opportunity to pursue clear and concise writing, research, and communication abilities. This course will enhance students' analytic skills and help them to get to the core of an issue. Knowledge acquired in this course will help students reflect and converse more clearly and critically on the diverse nature of religion in society. Ultimately, this course will promote research, writing, and critical thinking.

Course Requirements

Assessment:	Percentage:	Date:	Required to Pass Course:
Test 1	15%	January 30	No
Test 2	15%	February 13	No
Reading Response	25%	March 27	No
Final Exam	30%	Registrar scheduled	No
Participation	15%	Ongoing	No

Participation

Students will be expected to come to class having completed the assigned reading for that day, prepared to discuss the material. Students are expected to engage the course material on a regular basis.

Test 1&2

Both tests will be designed to discern the student's knowledge of course materials, lectures and discussions. They will be composed of short answer questions, each concerning a film shown in class and relevant course lectures and readings. Answers will be graded on content and form.

Reading Response

For this assignment students will analyze a novel, *Life of Pi*. They will consider how religion is depicted in the story, and how such depictions inform our understanding of religion. This assignment should be approximately 1250-1500 words in length. Grading will be based on content and form. Further details will be provided in class. The students are expected to hand in a hard copy in class. Late papers will lose 5% a day.

Final Exam

Final Exam will be designed to test the student's knowledge of course materials, lectures and discussions. They will be composed of short answer and/or long answer questions. Answers will be graded on content and form.

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 – 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.

Policy with regard to missed assignments/assessments

Exam and assignment dates are firm. Missed examinations or assignments must be accompanied by proper documentation (a medical certificate, police report, bereavement notice, confirmation of religious observance, or court summons) and prior arrangement with the instructor. In case of a missed assignment or exam due to an unforeseeable emergency, students must notify the professor within 24 hours or as quickly as possible. Late Assignments will lose 5% a day. Otherwise, missed exams and assignments will be awarded an 'F'.

Expectations for student conduct in this course

Students are expected to arrive to class on time for each class. Students are expected to be prepared to fully participate in discussions on course material in a respectful manner. Finally, students should familiarize themselves with the university's Academic Honesty policy and complete all assignments as presented in the Course Outline.

Internet and Electronic Communication Device Policy

Laptops are permitted only for the purpose of taking notes and for assignments. No electronics devices are allowed to be used in class for emailing, facebook, videos, texting, games, etc. Students that distract other students or the instructor with unauthorized use of electronic devices will be asked to leave the classroom.

Syllabus

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

References and Bibliography

The Department of Religious Studies 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. 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, librarian staff or the Chicago manual of style.

Writing Support

The Student Success Centre offers both online and workshop writing support for U of C students. <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

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 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 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. 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 3rd 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 for more information.

The Students' Union Faculty of Arts representative can be reached at 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. 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.