

The University of Calgary  
Faculty of Arts  
Department of Religious Studies

RELIGIOUS STUDIES 309 L01: RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE  
Fall 2011 Course Outline

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**INSTRUCTOR:** David Bergen  
**COURSE DAYS AND TIME** MWF 10:00am – 10:50am  
**OFFICE:** SS 1308  
**OFFICE HOURS:** TR 11:00am – 12:00pm  
**TELEPHONE:** (403) 220-7063 or (403) 220-5886 (Department office)  
**E-MAIL ADDRESS:** [dabergen@ucalgary.ca](mailto:dabergen@ucalgary.ca)  
**WEBSITE ADDRESS:** Blackboard

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**REQUIRED READING:**

Daniel L. Pals, *Introducing Religion: Readings from the Classic Theorists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Webnotes as posted on Blackboard. NOTE: The John Hick material will be in the form of webnotes for salient points.

**SUGGESTED READING (NOT MANDATORY):**

John Hick, *The Fifth Dimension: An Exploration of the Spiritual Realm*, (London: Oneworld Publications, 2004).

James C. Livingston, *Anatomy of the Sacred: An Introduction to Religion*, (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2001).

Michael Peterson et al, *Reason and Religious Belief: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course will introduce the student to the study of religious experiences, which include ideas taken from philosophy, rituals, altered states of consciousness, mysticism, and belief in religious/supernatural encounters with the divine. This broad selection of material will provide insight and understanding into the power, complexity, function, and relevancy of religious experience. In addition to this, the grounds for belief, both subjective and objective, will be examined. From mystical deliberations, to the wide spectrum of religious experience within a socio-cultural context, this course will identify the nature and function of religion as a vehicle for human expression, comfort, and contact with someone/something greater outside of the physical world. Finally, an analysis of what theologian John Hick identifies as *The Fifth Dimension* will be utilized to provide a broad spectrum of approaches by which to understand the phenomenon of religious experience.

**CORE COMPETENCIES:**

Students will work on the following skills: critical appraisal of arguments and theories, application of theories and concepts presented in course readings and lectures, library research, essay organization and writing skills. The essay assignment will require students to select an explanation of a religious experience described within the textbook and critically apply one of the theories explored in the course. All essay topics must first be approved by the professor.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

<b>Oct. 12</b>	- In class test	<b>15%</b>
<b>Nov. 14</b>	- In class test	<b>15%</b>
<b>Dec. 7</b>	- <b>Essay: (2500 words) plus 1 page bibliography with a minimum of six sources – four textbook and two from academic journals. Double spaced with footnotes. CHICAGO STYLE FORMAT ONLY</b>	<b>30%</b>
	<b>Registrar scheduled Final Exam TBA</b>	<b>40%</b>

**Essay specifications:** 2500 words. Pages to be numbered. Chicago style format. Footnotes or endnotes. If you have extensive footnotes, factor that into the page count. Endnote page is not part of the page count. Separate bibliography - at least six sources, two academic/scholarly website sources permitted.

**GRADING:**

A numerical mark will be given for each course requirement. Following the final examination, a letter grade will be assigned on the following number and letter grade scheme:

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

**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. If you have questions about correct referencing, please consult your instructor.

**ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION:**

If you are a student with a disability who requires academic accommodation and you 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. Once registered, please 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](mailto: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](mailto: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 4<sup>th</sup> 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.

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**COURSE READING SCHEDULE**

**SEPTEMBER**

**12-16** Introduction. The religious experience. What is religion?  
Defining religions. John Hick's *Fifth Dimension*

**19-23** Overview of religious typologies – characteristics.  
Developmental evolution – Robert Bellar.  
Key terms

**26–30** Animism and the Origin of Religion.  
**Chap. 1** **E. P. Tylor**  
**Webnotes**

**OCTOBER**

**3 - 7** Magic and the Rise of Religion  
**Chap. 2** **James Frazer**  
**Webnotes**

**10** **THANKSGIVING DAY – NO CLASS**  
**12** **IN CLASS TEST – WORTH 15 POINTS – 50 MINUTES**

**14 - 19** Religion as Neurosis; The Testimony of Religious Experience  
**Chap.3** **Sigmund Freud**

**21 - 26** The Social as Sacred;  
**Chap. 4** **Emile Durkheim**

**28 - 31** Religion as Agent of Economic Oppression  
**Chap. 5** **Karl Marx et al.**

**NOVEMBER**

**2 – 4, 7**

**Chap. 6**

**Webnotes**

The Testimony of Religious Experience

**William James**

**9**

**11**

**14**

**Documentary – MATERIAL TO BE INCLUDED IN NOV. 14 TEST.**

**REMEMBRANCE DAY – NO CLASS**

**IN CLASS EXAM – WORTH 15 POINTS – 50 MINUTES**

**16 – 18, 21**

**Chap. 7**

**Webnotes**

Religion and the Sense of the “Numinous”

**Rudolf Otto**

**23 – 25, 28**

**Chap. 7**

**Webnotes**

Religion and Culture – the Puritan Work Ethic;

**Max Weber**

**30**

Religion as Response to the Sacred

**Mircea Eliade**

**DECEMBER**

**2 – 5**

Religion as Response to the Sacred

**Mircea Eliade**

**7**

**7 - 9**

**Chap.11**

**Webnotes**

**Research paper to be handed in.**

Religion as World View and Ethic

**Clifford Geertz**

**REGISTRAR SCHEDULED FINAL EXAM - TBA**