

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

**COURSE OUTLINE – FALL 2016**

<b>Course</b>	RELS 333-01 Religious Perspectives on Death & Afterlife
<b>Time</b>	Tuesday 3:30-6:15
<b>Instructor</b>	Craig W. C. Ginn, PhD
<b>Office hours</b>	Thursday 3:45-4:45 or by appointment
<b>Office</b>	SS 502
<b>E-mail</b>	cwcginn@ucalgary.ca
<b>Telephone</b>	(403) 220-5612

**Required Text(s):**

*Beyond the Threshold: Afterlife Beliefs and Experiences in World Religions.* Christopher M. Moreman. Lanham, Maryland: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., First paperback edition 2010.

**Course Description:**

What is death? Is there an Afterlife existence? Why do religious traditions make truth-claims about the Afterlife? Is there a realm of spiritual beings? Are near-death experiences real? What is the spirituality of death? Do humans fear death? Do humans deny death?

This course will explore religious perspectives on death and the Afterlife. Course material will explore ancient conceptions of death and the Afterlife held by the Mesopotamians, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans, as well as the Afterlife beliefs represented in the major world religions including Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Other religious traditions may be considered including Indigenous traditions, Jainism, and Sikhism. Course material will provide historical context of beliefs, texts, and rituals. Various beliefs/doctrines will be explored including beliefs of the human condition, the soul, sacrifice, martyrdom, the intermediate state, heaven(s) and hell(s). This course will also consider the spirituality of death in the broader cultural context of North America and may consider various topics, including mysticism, near death experiences, commodification, and secularization. Students will be introduced to various methodological approaches.

**Online elements for this course:**

Online Readings and Resources to be posted on D2L.

**Core Competencies:**

Upon completion of this course, students will become familiar with:

- approaches and obstacles to the study of religion and the Afterlife
- key terms and concepts in the study of religion, death, and the Afterlife
- dimensional and comparative analysis of religion and views of death and the Afterlife

- views of death and the Afterlife represented by various religions
- religious beliefs and practices in response to death
- cultural constructions of funerary rites
- reductionist and non-reductionist views
- various methodological approaches in the study of death and the Afterlife

**Course Requirements:**

Assessment	Date	Weight (%)
Midterm Exam	November 1	30%
Research Paper	Due December 6	40%
Final Exam	To be scheduled by the Registrar	30%

**Final Examination Period:** The final exam will be scheduled by the Registrar. Students must be available to write the final exam on the day and time set by the Registrar’s Office, up to the last day of the examination period as specified in the Academic Schedule. The dates of the final exam period are December 12-22. A final exam cannot be deferred for misreading the final examination schedule or accommodating travel plans or work schedules. Valid reasons include illness or personal emergency, religious observance, or domestic affliction. Students with three exams in 24 hours may defer one of their exams to the deferred final examination period. For further information see Deferred Exams <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred-exams>

**Research Paper:**

Students will choose from a list of topics provided by the instructor. Essay information and a marking rubric will be posted on D2L. Due at the beginning of class (3:30) on December 6. Length:1800-2000 words. Do not exceed 2000 words. Assignments that exceed 2000 words will be deducted 5% per 100 excess words.

**Writing Assistance:**

The instructor will not read through or evaluate a student’s research paper in advance of the due date. If a student would like to present a rough draft of an assignment to the instructor in advance of the due date, the student may bring the rough draft to the instructor during office hours or arranged appointment. The instructor will read select sections of the draft and advise the student according to the marking rubric. Do not email the rough draft to the instructor. For assistance in writing, students are advised to consult Writing and Learning Services.

**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

**Adjusted Grades:** The instructor will implement .5% as a standard measure of adjustment for grades. For example, a final grade of 64.5% (C) will be rounded up to 65% (C+). 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 the midterm exam, 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 exam and will receive a numerical mark of zero.

**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.

**Expectations for student conduct in this course:**

Please be courteous toward other students in the course. For students who raise questions during class, please contribute to the resourceful use of classroom time by limiting the number of questions you ask in each class. While evaluative inquiries are permitted, students are encouraged to steer their inquiries toward objective investigation rather than confessional or adversarial agendas.

**Expectations for email correspondence in this course:**

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.

**Electronic Device Policy:**

Laptops are permitted during class if used for the purpose of taking lecture notes. Do not use laptops during class for email, Facebook, or other nonacademic activities. Cell phones must be turned off during the entire class time. Texting during class is not permitted. Taking pictures in the classroom is not permitted. Picture-taking of data projector images and slides is not permitted. Students that distract the instructor or other students due to the misuse of electronic devices during class will be requested to leave the classroom.

Recording of lectures is prohibited without the consent of the instructor. According to Academic Regulations E.6, "With the permission of the instructor, students may tape record lectures, provided that the student and instructor sign a Release form available from departmental and faculty offices. A copy of the Release form shall be retained by the instructor and by the department in which the course is offered."

**Syllabus:**

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

### **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.

### **Student Accommodations**

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit [www.ucalgary.ca/access/](http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/).

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available

at [http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy\\_0.pdf](http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf).

### **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.

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

- For program planning and advice, students in the Faculty of Arts will contact The Arts Students' Centre (ASC). Drop in at SS102, call at 403-220-3580 or email 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 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.

### **Freedom of Information and Privacy**

This course is conducted in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPP): <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act indicates that assignments given by you to your course instructor will remain confidential unless otherwise stated before submission. The assignment cannot be returned to anyone else without your express permission. Similarly, any information about yourself that you share with your course instructor will not be given to anyone

else without your permission. As one consequence, students should identify themselves on all written work by placing their name on the front page and their ID number on each subsequent page.

### **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.