

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY  
FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES  
Spring 2012

---

RELIGIOUS STUDIES 333 L21  
RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVES ON DEATH AND AFTERLIFE

---

INSTRUCTOR: Anne White, Ph.D.  
COURSE TIME AND DAYS: TR 15:00 – 17:45  
OFFICE: SS 1322  
OFFICE HOURS: T 10:30 – 11:30  
TELEPHONE: 403-220-3285 or 403-220-5886 (main office)  
E-MAIL ADDRESS: [awhite@ucalgary.ca](mailto:awhite@ucalgary.ca)  
WEBSITE ADDRESS: Blackboard

---

**REQUIRED TEXT:** Chidester, David. *Patterns of Transcendence: Religion Death, and Dying.*

**SUGGESTED READINGS:**

Airies, Philippe.	<i>The Hour of our Death</i>
-----	<i>Western Attitudes to Death</i>
Bailey, Lloyd R.	<i>Biblical Perspectives on Death</i>
Coward, Harold.	<i>Life After Death in World Religions</i>
Johnson, Christopher, ed.	<i>How Different Religions View Death and Afterlife</i>
Kubler-Ross, Elisabeth.	<i>On Death and Dying</i>
Kea, Michael C.	<i>Endings: A Sociology of Death and Dying</i>
Lewis, James R., ed.	<i>Encyclopedia of Afterlife Beliefs and Phenomena</i>
Obayashi, Hiroshi, ed.	<i>Death and Afterlife: Perspectives of World Religions</i>
Reynolds, Frank E. et al. eds.	<i>Religious Encounters with Death: Insights from the History and Anthropology of Religions.</i>

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course will study the issues surrounding the finality of death and the hope of an afterlife as expressed within diverse religious traditions throughout the ages. These studies will take us from the cosmological (religious world view) belief systems of primitive man, through to modern religious thought expressed within secular society. The religions studied will provide perspectives within historical and cultural contexts in order for the student to gain a working knowledge of the complexity and sophistication that has evolved over millennia concerning these issues.

In addition to utilizing a lecture based format, there will also be class discussion as we review video documentaries pertinent to course content. We will consider how people use religious beliefs in order to negotiate the five basic steps in the human recognition of death: (i) denial and isolation; (ii) anger; (iii) bargaining; (iv) depression; (v) acceptance. We will then consider how the variety of religious beliefs are incorporated to provide those suffering and sorrowing with courage, hope, and often great assurance.

**COURSE OBJECTIVE:**

To enable students to organize, evaluate, and understand various religious approaches to the reality of physical mortality.

**CORE COMPETENCIES:**

- Students will develop a number of the skills identified in the University of Calgary statement of learning outcomes. These include communication, critical thinking, ethical reasoning, computer literacy, writing competency, information retrieval, and group interaction. .

N.B. It is important to note that the attainment of any learning endeavour requires that students regularly attend classes, read the required material, and complete all course work.

**SELF DIRECTED STUDY:**

Students are encouraged to read web notes and the assigned pages of text before each lecture, and come prepared to ask questions.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

May 31	Test	30%
June 21	Paper Eight pages, double spaced, one inch margins, plus one page bibliography Topics to be discussed in class CHICAGO STYLE FOR PAPER (MANDATORY) Bibliography: not more than two websites, six text or academic journal sources, Cover page: name, student ID, course number, title	30%
Registrar Scheduled Final Exam (TBA)		40%

---

**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:

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.

**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**

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.

### **Blackboard Help**

Go to <http://www.ucalgary.ca/computersupport/online-services/blackboard> for Student Help and FAQ's about Blackboard. Troubleshooting tips and a tutorial are available at <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/blackboard/students>. Instructions for using the Digital Drop Box are available here: [http://library.blackboard.com/docs/r6/6\\_1/student/bbbs\\_r6\\_1\\_student/digital\\_drop\\_box.htm](http://library.blackboard.com/docs/r6/6_1/student/bbbs_r6_1_student/digital_drop_box.htm).

### **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 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 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 Office of the Student Ombuds 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.

---

## **COURSE SCHEDULE:**

PLEASE NOTE: SCHEDULE MAY VARY SLIGHTLY DUE TO CLASS DISCUSSIONS AND TIME CONSTRAINTS.

### **MAY**

**10**

Chapter 1 Religion, death, and dying – plus video.  
Various concepts of transcendence.

**15**

Chapter 2 Indigenous beliefs -. (Tribal typology: Australian, N. American, African)

**17, 22**

Introduction to eastern ideas.

- Chapter 3                   The India Tree (Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism)  
                                  - reincarnation and salvation/liberation.
- Chapter 4                   The Tibetan Book of the Dead  
                                  - plus documentary
- 24, 29**                   South East Asian Tree (Chinese and Japanese traditions)  
Chapter 3 +               Ancestral transcendence, the Dao, karma, reincarnation, the Kami.  
Webnotes               Plus documentary

**31                   MIDTERM TEST (90 MINUTES) WORTH 30 POINTS**

**Documentary (an exam question will be taken from this)**

**JUNE**

- 5**                       Zoroastrianism  
Webnotes +  
Chapter 5

- 7**                       Judaism  
Webnotes +  
Chapter 5

- 12**                    Christianity  
Webnotes +  
Chapter 5

- 14**                    Islam  
Webnotes +  
Chapter 5

- 19**                    Concepts of Hells

- 21**                    **RESEARCH PAPER TO BE HANDED IN DURING CLASS**  
Chapter 7               The Near Death Experience  
Webnotes               Elizabeth Kubler Ross – the Five Stages of Grieving in approaching death.  
                                  Grieving and mediating grief, growing beyond mortality  
                                  Video