

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
 FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
 DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
 WINTER SEMESTER, 2006

06/01/05

RELIGIOUS STUDIES 333 L02
 RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVES ON DEATH AND AFTERLIFE

INSTRUCTOR: Anne White, Ph.D.
 COURSE TIME AND DAYS: MWF - 12:00 – 12:50 p.m.
 OFFICE: SS 1322
 OFFICE HOURS: MW – 1-2 p.m.
 TELEPHONE: 220-3285 or 220-5886 (main office)
 E-MAIL ADDRESS: awhite@ucalgary.ca
 WEBSITE ADDRESS: Blackboard

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

Suggested Readings:

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

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.

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.

COURSE OBJECTIVE:

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

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

Jan 30	- Test	10%
Mar. 3	- Test	20%
Apr. 3	- Paper - Eight pages, plus one page bibliography Topics to be discussed in class CHICAGO STYLE FOR PAPER (see: http://www.efwr.ucalgary.ca/content/view/137/65) Eight pages, double spaced, one inch margins. Bibliography – not more than two websites, six text sources, cover page (name, student ID, course number, title)	30%
	Registrar scheduled 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:

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 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.

Withdrawing from courses:

Please note the information regarding withdrawals and fee refunds in the Academic Schedule of the current University Calendar.

Recording of lectures:

Recording any part of any lectures in any form must be first approved by the instructor in writing and is for individual private study only. See current Calendar, Tape recording of Lectures.

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>.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

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

JANUARY

9-13

- Chapter 1 - Religion, death, and dying.
Ancient belief prototypes.
Various concepts of transcendence.
Video.

16-20

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

23-27

- Class handout - Indigenous beliefs (cont'd) – case studies.
Video

30

- **TEST (50 minutes) worth 10 points**

FEBRUARY

Feb. 1-3

- Chapter 3 - Asian beliefs, karma and reincarnation

6-10

Introduction to the India Tree (Hinduism,
Buddhism, Jainism)

13-17

- Chapter 4 - Tibetan Book of the Dead, the three Bardos – plus video.

READING DAYS

27

- Webnotes - S. E. Asian (Chinese, Japanese) beliefs in transcendence.

MARCH

Mar. 1

- Webnotes - S.E. Asian (Chinese, Japanese) beliefs in transcendence.

3

- **TEST (50 minutes) worth 20 points**

6-10

- Chapter 5 - Introduction to the monotheistic belief systems – antecedents and Zoroastrianism.
(The Abrahamic Tree - Judaism, Christianity, Islam).

13-16

- Judaism

20-24

- Christianity

27-31

- Islam

APRIL

3-6

Chapter 6

RESEARCH PAPER TO BE HANDED IN.

- Hell, purgatory, heaven.
Plus video

10-12

Chapter 7

- The concepts of near death experiences, religious questions raised.
Grief, and mediating grief, growing beyond mortality.
Video in summation.