

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES - DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
COURSE OUTLINE FALL TERM 2003
RELS 341 L01 – NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

04/09/15

INSTRUCTOR	Irving Hexham
GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT	Chang Han Kim
CLASS TIME	T 2–4.45 p.m.
OFFICE/OFFICE HOURS	SS 1310 / R 11:00 – noon or by appointment
TELEPHONE	220-3280
E-MAIL	hexham@ucalgary.ca ucchkim@hotmail.com
WEB SITE	http://www.ucalgary.ca/~hexham

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course examines the intellectual background and social background to the rise of the new religious movements (cults) and attempts to gain an understanding of their appeal to their members. It attempts to place the beliefs of new religions within the context of the great religious traditions and examines the mythologies which give rise to new religions.

TEXTBOOKS:

Irving Hexham and Karla Poewe, *Understanding Cults and New Religions*.

Although this book was written at the request of a Christian publisher it is being used in this course because it is published in Canada and the equivalent secular alternative costs \$20 more. If anyone thinks this book is “too Christian” the other two books correct the balance. They are:

Tom Paine, *The Age of Reason*.

Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*.

JOURNALS

Many journals carry articles on the new religions. In particular you should look at - *Sociological Analysis/Sociology of Religion* and *The Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, and *Update*.

OTHER READINGS

In addition to reading all the textbooks students are encouraged to read as widely as possible. Below each lecture topic are a few suggestions for extra reading. These readings are intended to help students when they write their assignments. They are *not* book which everyone must read each week.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

All tests will be based on the lectures plus the readings. The weighting for these course components is as follows:

Alternative One:

First Test	Tuesday 19 October – you need to read the assigned sections of Tom Paine and Ludwig Feuerbach before this test.	40%
Second Test	Tuesday 23 November – you need to read Hexham and Poewe before this test.	40%
Research assignment	Thursday 9 December	20%

The research assignment will not be returned to students unless there is a dispute about the grading.

Alternative Two:

Not for the fainthearted. With the permission of Dr. Hexham you may, if you wish, submit one major research assignment upon which your entire grade will depend. This option is not generally recommended but is available for people who have a clear topic in mind and can prove their writing skills. Prior discussion with Dr. Hexham is mandatory.

A letter grade will be assigned for the course on the basis of 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.

Grades will be posted on a Blackboard account.

CORE COMPETENCIES

At the end of this course students ought to be able to:

- a) Discuss in an informed manner cults, sects and new religions.
- b) Critically evaluate books on cults and new religions
- c) think critically about religious arguments;
- d) appreciate the importance of using correct academic methods intelligently;
- e) be able to make informed judgment about the reliability of specific books and texts

Recording of lectures:

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

Academic Honesty:

Students should be familiar with University regulations regarding academic integrity; see relevant pages in the current University Calendar.

Academic Accommodation:

If you are a student with a disability who requires academic accommodation and 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.

Safewalk Program :

"You don't have to walk alone...." Call 220-5333 and a member of the Safewalk Team will walk you to your car, the LRT, or any destination on campus. Safewalk is available to all students, staff and faculty any time of the day or night. Look for the Campus Security Help Phones located throughout the University. Please don't hesitate to call!

Withdrawing from courses:

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

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>.