

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

COURSE OUTLINE - WINTER TERM 2016

**Rels 341 L01 New Religious Movements
(Blended Learning Course)**

Instructor: Irving Hexham
Class time: MWF 3:00 – 3:50 pm
Office/office hours: SS 538, M 11.30-12.30, or by appointment.
Telephone: 403-220-3280
E-mail: religions341@gmail.com
Web site: <http://www.understandingworldreligions.com/>

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.

Course 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

Textbooks:

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

This book is available for free as a pdf download from my website:

<http://understandingworldreligions.com/books.html>

Olav Hammer and Mikael Rothstein, eds., *Cambridge Companion to New Religious Movements*

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 *NovaReligio*.

Other readings

In addition to reading all the textbooks students are encouraged to read as widely as possible. A list of lecture topics and additional readings will be provided at the beginning of

the course.

Course Requirements:

Date	Assessment	Weight (%)
Mini-Blogs		
31 January	First mini-Blog due	15%
28 February	Second mini-Blog due	15%
27 March	Third mini-Blog due	15%
24 February	First Test	25%
30 March	Second Test	25%
Class participation		5%

Tests:

There are two multiple choice tests in this course. Both are based on the lectures and course readings. The first test is worth 25% of the final grade. The second test is worth 25% of the final grade. This makes the tests worth 50% of the final grade.

Assignment mini-Blogs:

For this course you must write three mini-blogs. Each blog is worth 15% of the final grade making the blogs worth 45% of the final grade.

The object of this assignment is to engage you with a current issue related to the study of religion and the criticism of religion as well as enabling you to see the significance the study of religion is in today's world. For this you must write three mini-Blogs according to the following format. Instructions for writing the blogs will be discussed in class and posted on D2L. These blogs will be posted anonymously on the course blogsite at:

<https://uwreligions.wordpress.com/>

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

N.B. All written assignments will be graded with regard to both form and content according to the rubric posed on D2L.

Policy with regard to assignments: students must take tests on the assigned day, have a valid medical note, or prove exceptional circumstances. Late papers are accepted, but will be automatically deducted 10% per day that they are overdue. This

rule also applies to anyone who requests to sit the test on a different date without a doctor's note or other external evidence to show that this is necessary.

Expectations for student conduct in this course:

Attendance: students are expected to attend most lectures.

Class etiquette: remember you are not the only student in the class. Please make every effort to arrive on time and not to leave before the class ends. You are expected to pay attention to the lecture and not distract other students.

Computers and other devices: while attending class the wearing of earphones or similar devices is not permitted nor can computers be used for watching videos or playing computer games. Cell phones must be turned off and not taken out in class for texting or any other purposes.

Recording lectures: for copyright reasons recording any part of any lectures in any form, including through a computer, is not permitted. Nor will the power point slides or lecture notes be posted on the web for the same reason. Photographing power point lectures with a cell phone or other device is not permitted. All of these restrictions are due to copyright issues and are strictly enforced. Some power point slides, i.e. those that do not include limited use materials, will be posted to D2L. It is your responsibility to pay attention and make your own lecture notes.

Syllabus: a complete syllabus will be made available on the course website during the first week of term.

Final examination: there will be no Registrar scheduled final examination.

Electronic Device Policy: recent evidence shows that students who use computers in class learn significantly less than those who write their own notes. You are encouraged to write your own notes. The wearing of earphones or similar devices is not permitted nor can computers to be used for watching videos or playing computer games. Cell phones must be turned off and not taken out in class for texting or any other purposes.

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/. 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.

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. 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.

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 for more information.

The Students' Union Faculty of Arts representative can be reached at 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. Please check this website and not the nearest assembly point for this course.