

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
FALL 2011

RELIGIOUS STUDIES 345 L01: GOD AND TRANSCENDENCE

INSTRUCTOR: Chris Morrison
COURSE TIME AND DAYS: MWF 1:00-1:50pm
OFFICE: SS 1330
OFFICE HOURS: F 3:00-4:00pm
TELEPHONE: (403) 220-5612 or (403) 220-5886 (Department office)
E-MAIL ADDRESS: cdmorrison@ucalgary.ca
WEBSITE ADDRESS: Blackboard

Required Texts:

Keith Ward, *Concepts of God: Images of the Divine in Five Religious Traditions*, One World Publications, 1998.

Harold Westphal, *Transcendence and Self-Transcendence*, Indiana University Press, 2004.

Suggested reading:

Eugene d'Aquili, *The Mystical Mind*, Fortress Press, 1999;
John Hick, *The Fifth Dimension*, Oneworld Publishing, 1999;
David Shulman, et al. eds., *Self and Self-Transformation in the History of Religions*, Oxford, 2002.
Keith Ward, *Concepts of God: Images of the Divine in Five Religious Traditions*, Oxford: One World Publications, 1998.

Course Description:

This course will examine various philosophical and theological ideas pertaining to what constitutes transcendence and how it is realized. We will discuss concepts such as the nature of God and the perceived 'relationship' with an entity who is absolute Being and essentially personal. The identity of God, and the belief in God's existence, will be examined with reference to the attributes of God as transcendent, immanent, omnipotent, omniscient, eternal, perfectly free and perfectly good. The course will address why these attributes are considered to be essential to human transcendence from a broad theistic perspective. The course will also address issues such as: everlasting life, faith, idolatry, laws of nature, miracles, the metaphysical and the physical. To illustrate these concepts, examples will be taken from great philosophers such as Sankara, Ramanuja, Buddhaghosa, Augustine, Pseudo Dionysus, Maimonides, Al Ghazali, Aquinas, Pascale, Barth, Levinas, Otto, Buber, and Kierkegaard. The intent of this directed study is to present to the student a wide variety of ways in which to understand the concepts of God and transcendence in its various forms.

Course Requirements:

Oct. 12 th	- Test	15 points
Nov. 14 th	- Test	15 points
Dec. 5 th	- Research essay – eight pages (2500 words)	30 points

REGISTRAR’S OFFICE SCHEDULED FINAL EXAM TBA 40 points

Essay specifications:

2500 words. Pages to be numbered. Chicago style format. Footnotes or endnotes. If you have extensive footnotes, do not incorporate that into the page count. Endnote page is also not part of the page count. Separate bibliography. Bibliography - at least six sources Two academic/scholarly website sources permitted. Each course textbook is accepted as a source.

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 Religious Studies:

A+	100 - 96	A	95.9 - 90	A-	89.9 - 85
B+	84.9 - 80	B	79.9 - 75	B-	74.9 - 70
C+	69.9 - 65	C	64.9 - 60	C-	59.9 - 55
D+	54.9 - 53	D	52.9-50	F	Under 50

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.

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>.

Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources:

- Have a question, but not sure where to start? The new 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. 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 (formerly the Undergraduate programs Office) at (403) 220-5881 or visit them on the 4th Floor of MacEwan Student Centre.
 - 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.
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Course Schedule

SEPTEMBER

Section 1 Concepts of God and Transcendence

12 – 16 Intro and Overview to basic issues.
Who or what is God?
The nature of God;
Webnotes Transcendence and self-transcendence.
Salvation and liberation.
What is *transcendence*?

19 - 23 **Concepts of God – the Ward text**
Chaps. 1- 2 Sankara – Vedantic Philosophy..
Ramanuja – Non-Dualism.

26 - 30 Buddhist Analogues to God
Chap. 3 Pure Land and Salvation.
Webnotes Concepts of the Bodhisattvas.

OCTOBER

3 - 7
Chap.4 Hebrew Bible and its images of God.
Webnotes

10 THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS

12 IN CLASS TEST – 50 minutes

14, 17 - 19
Chap. 5 Maimonides – concepts of the unknowable God.
Webnotes The Thirteen Principles.

21 – 24, 26 Al-Ghazzali – God as unveiled light – the “Niche for Lights.”
Chap. 6
Webnotes

28 - 31 Aquinas – Subsistent Being – Aristotelian Philosophy and Thomistic
Chap. 7 perspectives.
Webnotes

NOVEMBER

2 - 4 The Gospel of John – God as Transcendent yet Immanent.
Chap. 7 The Logos. Concepts from “Dark Night of the Soul” - St. John of Webnotes
the Cross.

7 - 9 The “Arguments”:
Webnotes The ontological, design, and cosmological arguments.
The argument from religious experience

11 **REMEMBRANCE DAY – NO CLASS.**

Section 2

14 **IN CLASS TEST – 50 minutes**

16 – 18 **Transcendence and Self-Transcendence – the Westphal text**
Chap. 1 Martin Heidegger.
Chap. 2 Baruch Spinoza.

21 - 25
Chap. 3 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.
Chap. 4 Augustine and Pseudo-Dionysius.

28 – 30
Chap. 6 Karl Barth.
Webnotes Blaise Pascale – the mystic

DECEMBER

2
Chap. 6 (Continuation) of Karl Barth and
Webnotes Blaise Pascale – the mystic

5 ESSAY DUE – worth 30 points

5 – 9
Chap. 7 Emmanuel Levinas
Chap. 8 Soren Kierkegaard.
Webnotes

REGISTRAR SCHEDULED FINAL EXAM - TBA