



Faculty of Arts Dept. of Religious Studies Course Outline

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Religious Studies 347 L01

Scripture & Religions

Instructor:

Office:

Office Hours:

Telephone:

email:

Course Outline, Fall 2013

TR 9:30 – 10:45 a.m.

Eliezer Segal

SS 1314

T 10:45 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

or by appointment

(403) 220-3279 or Main office (403) 220-5886

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Textbooks:

W. C. Smith, *What is Scripture?: A Comparative Approach*

R. E. Van Voorst, *Anthology of World Scriptures*.

Course Description:

Comparative study of selected scriptures in Eastern and Western religions to identify how scripture functions in a range of religious settings and to establish a basis for theoretical analysis of the nature of scripture.

This course will focus on the diverse roles of “scripture” texts that are considered sacred and pivotal to major religious traditions. What do these scriptures actually say? What defines their special status for the followers of the respective religions? What impact to they have on the lives of their communities? These and other questions will be explored with respect to the individual religions and in general.

Classes will be devoted both to reading and discussing scriptural sample passages in translation (from the Van Voorst text book, usually on the Thursday sessions), and to the defining of methodological approaches (based on the Smith book, usually at the Tuesday sessions).

Course Requirements:

	Item	Date Due	% Weight
1	Eight responses to scriptural readings.	To be submitted at the beginning of the relevant classes, or in advance.	25%
2	One-page research outline. Should include: topic, research question and preliminary bibliography.	November 19 [Feel free to submit it earlier!]	10%

	Item	Date Due	% Weight
4	Discussion question: Each student will come prepared to lead a ten-minute discussion on a chapter from W. C. Smith, <i>What Is Scripture?</i>	[Students will be assigned their dates during the first two weeks of classes]	15%
3	Research essay, approximately 2,000 words (seven double-spaced pages).	December 6	50%

There will be **no** Registrar's office scheduled final examination in this course.

Responses to scriptural readings

Students are expected to compose a brief (100-150 words) personal response to eight of the assigned readings from the Van Voorst book (as listed in the schedule below)—to be submitted in advance of the designated class. This is **not** a research assignment, but rather an opportunity to describe aspects of the readings that you found interesting, illuminating, puzzling, problematic, etc.

Research Essay

An original research essay on a topic related to religious scriptures.

The essay must deal with primary texts (in translation), and make use of secondary scholarship from reputable (peer-reviewed) publications, organized in an acceptable academic format. Your work will be evaluated based on the thoroughness of the research (the gathering of the information), the cogency of your analysis and judgment, and the quality of the presentation.

Your essay should deal with at least one Eastern and one Western religion. More detailed instructions and guidelines will be provided at a later date.

Suggested topics include:

- Canonization
- Scriptures as sources of authority
- Scripture in the life of the community
- Written and oral scriptures
- Scripture and [sacred?] language
- The Scripture as an object (scroll, book, etc.)
- Interpretation of Scriptures (literal, homiletical, etc.)
- The supernatural dimensions of Scripture
- Traditional and academic-critical understandings of Scriptures
- Scriptures compared with non-scriptural “classics”

Note that due to time constraints, we will not be able to devote classes to all the religions whose scriptures are represented in the Van Voorst text book. Students may however choose to do their research on one of those other traditions in consultation with the instructor.

Grading System:

A numerical mark will be given for each course requirement. At the conclusion of the course, a

letter grade will be assigned on the following number and letter grade scheme (standardized within the Department of Religious Studies).

A+	96-100	A	90-95	A-	85-89
B+	80-84	B	75-79	B-	70-74
C+	65-69	C	60-64	C-	55-59
D+	53-54	D	50-52	F	Less than 50

Tentative Class Schedule:

Dates	Topic	Readings in Van Voorst	Readings in Smith
Sept. 10, Sept. 12	Introduction	Chapter One (1-16)	Chapters 1, 3
Sept. 17	Hinduism		Chapter 6 (124-136)
Sept. 19	Hinduism: the gods	Chapter Two (28-34)	
Sept. 24	Hinduism		Chapter 6 (136-145)
Sept. 26	Hinduism: practice and ethics	Chapter Two (35-60)	
Oct. 1	Buddhism		Chapter 7 (146-161)
Oct. 3	Buddhism: life and teachings of the Buddha	Chapter Three (72-89)	
Oct. 8	Buddhism		Chapter 7 (161-175)
Oct. 10	Buddhism: practice and ethics	Chapter Three (89-102)	
Oct. 15	Confucianism	Chapter Six (145-159)	
Oct. 17	Daoism	Chapter Seven (170-184)	
Oct. 22	Judaism		Chapter 5 (92-106)
Oct. 24	Hebrew Bible: history and teachings	Chapter Ten (222-234)	
Oct. 29	Judaism		Chapter 5 (106-123)
Oct. 31	Hebrew Bible: practice and ethics	Chapter Ten (235-250)	
Nov. 5	Christianity (New Testament): history and teachings	Chapter Eleven (267-280)	
Nov. 7	Guide to Research		
Nov. 14	New Testament: ethic and practice	Chapter Eleven 282-298)	
Nov. 19	Islam		Chapter 4 (65-77)
Nov. 21	Islam (Qur'an): life of the prophet, teachings	Chapter Twelve (307-323)	
Nov. 26	Islam		Chapter 4 (77-91)
Nov. 28	Qur'an: ethics and practices	Chapter Twelve (323-333)	
Dec. 3-Dec. 5	Summary and Review		Chapter 10

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 Student Accessibility Services, please contact their office at 403-220-8237. Students who have not registered with Student Accessibility Services 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/onlineservices/blackboard> for Student Help and FAQs 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.

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 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 at (403) 220-5881 or visit them on the 3rd 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 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.

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.