

**THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY  
FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES  
COURSE OUTLINE**

**RELS 349 L01: RELIGION AND POLITICS  
Fall Term 2012**

**Instructor:** Irving Hexham  
**Class time and room:** TR 2:00-3:15pm; Room MS 319  
**Office hours:** SS 1310 TR 12:30-1:00pm or by appointment  
**Telephone:** 403-220-3280 or 403-220-5886 (Department office)  
**E-mail:** [religion349@gmail.com](mailto:religion349@gmail.com)  
**Web site:** <http://people.ucalgary.ca/~uwr/>

**Textbooks:**

Herman Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People*. 2003  
Peter Longerich, *Heinrich Himmler: A Life*, 2011

**Course description and outline:**

Throughout history religion and politics are closely inter-twined. However, during the twentieth century this complex relationship was increasingly dismissed by the media and political scientists as a result of a confidence in the spread of secularization and the demise of religion. Since the turn of this century no one can doubt that a resurgence in the social role of religion is taking place. This course seeks to investigate the complex relationship between religion and politics and foster an appreciation of the dynamic interaction between religious and political beliefs and movements. At the end of the course students ought to be able to discuss questions relating to religion and politics in an intelligent manner.

**Organization of the course:**

The lectures will concentrate on Afrikaner Nationalism and German National Socialism. Students will be asked to research aspects of the interaction between religion and politics in other cultural settings.

**Teaching/Learning Style:**

This is a traditional university course that emphasizes reading and individual research by the student.

**Core competencies**

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

- a) appreciate the relationship between religion and politics
- b) understand why some scholars, like Eric Voegelin, Roger Griffin and Emilio Gentile, talk about “political religions.”
- c) think critically about religious and political arguments

- d) appreciate the importance of concepts like myth in the discussion of politics and religion
- e) make informed judgments about specific instances where religions impacts politics.

### **Course Requirements:**

#### **Assignment One:**

This is intended to engage you with a current issue related to religion and politics and to enable you to see the significance the study of religion in today's world.

The first part of this assignment involves writing the text for a Tweet that highlights a news story about religion and politics. The text must include a shortened url that takes the reader to the original news story.

To shorten the url that takes the reader to either a new report about a current issue or a discussion group use Bitly found at: <https://bitly.com/>.

Then you must write the text of a 250 word mini-blog that discusses the news story about religion and politics in terms of the issues studied in this course. The texts for both of these projects must be send as a Word document by email attachment to the email address: [religion349@gmail.com](mailto:religion349@gmail.com).

When we receive the text of your Tweet and mini-blog the Tweet will be posted to Twitter using the hashtag: #religion-politics

The mini-blog will also be posted to the Tumblr site "Religion and Politics" which you can find using the url: <http://religion-politics.tumblr.com/>.

This assignment may be submitted whenever you discover a good news story on the Internet that concerns religion, but must be received **by Sunday 14 October** at the latest. The assignment is worth 15 percent of your final grade. We will discuss the details in class.

#### **Assignment Two:**

The second assignment is like the first in that you must also write a tweet and mini-blog. But this time, instead of choosing a news story, comment on a section of Hermann Giliomee's *The Afrikaners* that you found enlightening. In the mini-blog, indicate how what he says helped you gain a better understanding of something like Afrikaner Nationalism, religion and politics, or the complexity of the South African situation. We will discuss this project in class.

These texts will also be posted as Tweets and mini-blogs.

The last date to submit your work is **Sunday 9 December**. This assignment is worth 15 percent of your final grade.

**N.B.** Remember when you write your Tweets and mini-blogs that they will be posted on the internet and are therefore public posts and can be read by anyone. Be respectful even when you raise questions or make critical comments.

At the end of the texts you write for your tweets and mini-blogs, identify yourself in some way. I suggest that you use your first name plus the first letter of your surname. For example, if I wrote one of these mini-blogs my identity would appear as “IrvingH.”

**Book review:** 20% of the final grade, due **Thursday 4 October**

Write a review of Peter Longerich’s *Heinrich Himmler: A Life* that concentrates on the relevance of this text to our understanding of the relationship between religion and politics. The review should be around 1,000 words.

Before beginning your work on this topic read: “How to write a book review” found on the web at: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~hexham/study/bookreview.html> Then go to the library and read some book reviews in both political science and religious studies journals and some literary journals. After you do these things, browse the *Times Literary Supplement* where you will find many excellent book reviews on various topics.

**Class presentation:** 15% of the final grade

For this you must make a ten minute oral presentation, without the use of Power Point or other visual aids, in which you discuss a controversial issue involving religion and politics.

**The date of your presentation will be arranged early in the term.** It will take place sometime between weeks seven and nine or weeks eleven and twelve. For the presentation you are asked to discuss a contemporary issue in religion and politics such as the growing rift between church and state in most Western countries.

**Comment on class presentations:** 10% of the final grade

Three days after the last presentation you must hand in a comment sheet in which you make brief comments on at least 40 presentations to which you assign points ranging from 0-15.

**Term paper:** 25% of the final grade, due **Thursday 6 December**

For the research paper you are asked to discuss a contemporary issue in religion and politics such as the growing rift between church and state in most Western countries. For this assignment, you may develop the issue you discussed in your class presentation or choose a different topic. The final assignment ought to be around 2,500 words in length.

Essays and presentations may be completed on any of the course topics or other topics suggested by the student and should be prepared after consultation with the instructor.

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 of necessity; i.e., if you are allowed to write the test at a later date, the penalty will be 10% for each day that passes between the original date of the exam and the date on which it is written.

**Notes:**

*\*There will be no Registrar scheduled final examination for this course.\*

**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

N.B. All written assignments will be graded with regard to both form and content.

**Power Point slides**

The power point slides will not be made available on Blackboard. It is your responsibility to pay attention and write down any relevant information or your own comments. This must be done during 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. In other words concentrate on your studies and do not disturb other students.

**MP3 Computers and other devices:** while attending class the wearing of earphones or similar devices is not permitted nor are 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.

**Recording of lectures:** 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. These restrictions are due to copyright issues and are strictly enforced.

**Academic honesty**

*Students should be familiar with the University regulations regarding academic honesty. See University Calendar, p. 48. See also: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~hexham/study/plag.html>*

**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 the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 403-220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre 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 FAQ's about Blackboard. Troubleshooting tips and a tutorial are available at <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/blackboard/students>.

### **Gnosis**

Gnosis is the Religious Studies Student Club. For membership or more information please email: [gnosis@ucalgary.ca](mailto: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](mailto: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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds) for more information.

The Students' Union Faculty of Arts representative can be reached at [arts1@ucalgary.ca](mailto: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](http://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.