

**UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

COURSE OUTLINE – Spring 2021

Course	Religious Studies 373.01 – Topics in Religious Studies: ‘Truth’, pluralism and Intercultural dialogue
Time	Alternate Thursday 14:00-16:45 on Zoom
Instructor	Dr. Tinu Ruparell
TA(s)	n/a
Office	SS 530
Office Hours	Thurs 13:00 - 14:00 or by appointment
E-mail	ruparell@ucalgary.ca
Telephone	403 220 7069

Communication Policy:

Please note that all course communication must occur through your @ucalgary.ca email. I respond to emails during normal business hours only.

Required Text(s)

Readings will be posted on D2L

Course Description

This course introduces students to issues in the academic study of religion as well as some of its central questions. We will be concerned with questions such as What is Religion? How should it be defined? What are the differences between subjective/objective perspectives in religion?, and How might we compare religions? Additionally, we will consider a few of the central questions and problems which have more recently exercised philosophers of religion both in the ‘west’ and ‘east.’ These include questions arising from religious experience and language, the problem of evil and religious diversity and truth. The course will proceed thematically and philosophically, rather than historically. The aim of the course is to give students an understanding of the problematic nature of religion and its study.

**Online elements for this course; learning technologies and requirements:
(PLEASE READ CAREFULLY)**

This course is taught as a **BLENDED online class, that is, some sessions will be synchronous on zoom while the rest will be asynchronous.** As such, students are expected to be present and participate fully for any Zoom classes (dates as posted on the syllabus) while being **self-directed for all other aspects of the course.** Students will thus need to read the assigned material as well as to independent research and learn any background material needed to understand the readings and lectures.

In order to successfully engage in their learning experiences at the University of Calgary, students taking online, remote and blended courses are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security, and malware updates;
- A current and updated web browser;
- Webcam (built-in or external);

- Microphone and speaker (built-in or external), or headset with microphone;
- Current antivirus and/or firewall software enabled;
- Broadband internet connection.

NB: As an online class, students are entirely responsible for their own methods of getting on-line. I will not accept ‘bad internet connections’, ‘computer problems’ or any other technical issues as excuses for failing to complete assignments or tests. **Timed, online assessments/exams will be available for a strictly set period of time and will not be available at other periods. Once you begin the online assessments, you must finish them. You cannot pause or re-take these assessments, and failure to complete the assessments will result in a zero awarded for that assessment. Students are urged to make sure that their connection the internet and to the D2L site is robust and stable during the online assessments.** I will not accept any excuses along the lines of: ‘my internet went down during the test’, or ‘my computer crashed during the test’ for failure to complete the assessments. **It is essential, and YOUR responsibility to ensure you have adequate IT resources to take this course.** This policy is meant to maintain equity for all students as it is virtually impossible for me to validate or help you deal with technical issues you may face.

While emailed questions may be sent, I will respond only to questions specifically referring to the content of the course readings and lectures. So questions which, in the opinion of the instructor (or teaching assistant if there is one), can be answered through simple reference to the outline, syllabus, lectures or readings, will not be answered. If you have a question which is *genuinely philosophical or critical in nature, deals with the content of the readings or lectures, or are focused on your research*, may be replied to or deferred to the next on-line zoom session

If you have questions or issues with the format of the course, or difficulties accessing materials or access to research, please attend to these before the beginning of the class.

Core Competencies

Dedicated students in this course will learn how the notions of truth, dialogue, secularity and multiculturalism are understood in current religious and philosophical contexts. Students will gain an understanding of philosophical issues arising from historical and contemporary diversity from religious and non-religious perspectives. Students will gain an awareness of the complex negotiations arising from intersectionality and the legacy of colonialism.

Course Requirements

There will be three components to the grade for this course:

Date	Assessment	Weight (%)
June 3, 2021	Mid-term online exam	35%
June 18, 2021	Final Research Project/essay	45%
	Course participation	20%
	There is NO registrar scheduled exam 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 - 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

Additionally, please see the University grading system here:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-1-1.html> wherein satisfactory performance is graded at a C level.

Please submit all assignments electronically the dropbox in D2L. Assignments may be submitted in Word or PDF format. Assignments should have a file name as follows: "First Name Last Name , Student ID number; Assignment Number" (e.g., Alex Smith; 021345; Assignment 2). Assignments must be submitted by 11:59pm on their due date. It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted

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

Policy with regard to missed assignments/assessments

You are expected to be in attendance and participate in all in-class sessions. Failure to attend and participate in all sessions may result in reductions in your course participation grades.

LATE SUBMISSION OF FINAL PAPERS WILL BE PENALISED 5%/DAY. LATE COMPLETION OF EXAMS, WITHOUT PRIOR AGREEMENT FROM THE INSTRUCTOR, WILL RESULT IN A ZERO ON THAT ASSIGNMENT.

Syllabus

A complete syllabus will be made available the first week of class.

Note regarding ZOOM:

To help ensure Zoom sessions are private, do not share the Zoom link or password with others, or on any social media platforms. Zoom links and passwords are only intended for students registered in the course. **Zoom recordings and materials presented in Zoom, including any teaching materials, must NOT be shared, distributed or published without the instructor's prior written permission.**

The use of video conferencing programs relies on participants to act ethically, honestly and with integrity; and in accordance with the principles of fairness, good faith, and respect (as per the [Code of Conduct](#)). When entering Zoom or other video conferencing sessions, you play a role in helping create an effective, safe and respectful learning environment. Please be mindful of how your behaviour in these sessions may affect others. Participants are required to use names officially associated with their UCID (legal or

preferred names listed in the Student Centre) when engaging in these activities. Instructors/moderators can remove those whose names do not appear on class rosters. Non-compliance may be investigated under relevant University of Calgary conduct policies (e.g. [Student Non-Academic Misconduct Policy](#)). If participants have difficulties complying with this requirement, they should email the instructor of the class explaining why, so the instructor may consider whether to grant an exception, and on what terms. For more information on how to get the most out of your zoom sessions visit: <https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/guidelines-for-zoom/>.

The instructor reserves the right to record online Zoom class sessions for the purposes of supporting student learning in this class. Students will be advised before the instructor initiates a recording of a Zoom session. These recordings will be used to support student learning only and will not be shared or used for any other purpose.

Extra Assignments:

There are no extra assignments for this course. Students will not be given an opportunity to submit extra work or retake tests to increase their grade.

Weighting of Tests:

The weighting for tests identified above will not be changed to accommodate student requests. In accordance with the U of C Academic Regulations E.1 (e) Course Outlines, “Weighting may not be changed during the term or at the time of grade reporting.”

Reviewing Tests:

The online tests for this course display the student’s final score. Individual test answers are not displayed. For students interested in seeing individual test answers, please email your request with the instructor at the end of the term after all tests are completed. At that time, you can review all your test answers.

Expectations for student conduct in this course

- This is an online **BLENDED** course which requires students to both be present for all ZOOM classes and participate fully, as well as be responsible for learning the material independently.
- ZOOM sessions will assume that you have read the material for the week and be ready to ask informed and relevant questions.
- Unless otherwise stipulated, ZOOM sessions will NOT be recorded. Please adjust your schedule so as to be present and participate in all ZOOM sessions
- All participants in this class are expected to demonstrate behaviour in class that promotes and maintains a positive and productive learning environment. As members of the University community, students, employees, and academic staff are expected to demonstrate conduct that is consistent with the University of Calgary Calendar, the Code of Conduct and Non-Academic Misconduct policy and procedures, which can be found at: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Internet and Electronic Communication Device Policy

Recent studies have clearly shown that use of laptops, phones and other electronic tools for notes and in-class work results in poorer learning outcomes and consequently worse grades. (Mueller, *Psychological Studies Online* First May 22, 2014) I **strongly urge you not to use them at all in class**. For an online class, and during zoom sessions, it has been shown that writing notes with a pen and paper significantly improves learning and recall. (https://theconversation.com/note-taking-by-hand-a-powerful-tool-to-support-memory-144049?utm_source=halifaxtoday.ca&utm_campaign=halifaxtoday.ca&utm_medium=referral). For in person courses, if students use phones or laptops in class for non-academic purposes in class, they will be asked to leave that class, possibly forfeiting some grades. Texting in class is prohibited. If students persist in texting, surfing the web or other activities not directly relevant to the course, they will be asked to leave that class and/or to leave their devices at the front of class until its conclusion. Please respect your fellow students and me by avoiding distracting use of these devices.

No recordings are to be made of lectures or class sessions without written, advance permission. If recordings are made and published in any form, during or after the course, you may be charged with academic misconduct and/or be awarded an F in the course.

References and Bibliography

The Department of Religious Studies uses the most recent edition of the Chicago Manual of Style and requires references and bibliographies to adhere to the **Chicago citation system**. You can find a quick guide here: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html. Alternatively please consult with the library staff for help and advice using the Chicago citation style.

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.

Supporting Documentation and the Use of a Statutory Declaration

Students who are absent from class assessments (tests, participation activities, or other assignments) should inform their instructors as soon as possible. Instructors may request that evidence in the form of documentation be provided and the student should provide the documentation they feel best supports their case. For information on possible forms of documentation, including statutory declarations, please see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>.

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 <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/> 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 Block.

Freedom of Information and Privacy

This course is conducted in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPP):

https://www.ucalgary.ca/hr/freedom_of_information_and_protection_of_privacy

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act indicates that assignments given by you to your course instructor will remain confidential unless otherwise stated before submission. The assignment cannot be returned to anyone else without your express permission. Similarly, any information about yourself that you share with your course instructor will not be given to anyone else without your permission. As one consequence, students should identify themselves on all written work by placing their name on the front page and their ID number on each subsequent page.

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 <https://www.ucalgary.ca/ombuds/> for more information.

The Students' Union Faculty of Arts representative can be reached at arts1@su.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.

Health and Wellness

There are services available to students to help with physical and mental health, including the SU Wellness Centre: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/>.