

The University of Calgary
Faculty of Arts
Department of Religious Studies

Religious Studies 377 L01

Fall 2011

Research and Critical Inquiry in Religious Studies

Block Week: September 6-10 TWRFS 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Instructors:

Dr. Virginia Tumasz Office: SS 1302
Office hours during Fall term: W 12:00 – 13:00 or by appt.
Telephone: 403-220-3286 Email: tumasz@ucalgary.ca

Ms. Sandra Lipton Office: MLB 331B
Meetings by appointment
Telephone: 403-220-3793 Email: lipton@ucalgary.ca

Graduate Teaching Assistant:

Ms. Leslie Sawchenko Meetings by appointment
Telephone: 403-220-5886 Email: leslie@imperium.ca

Required Texts

REQUIRED READING FOR THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS:

William E. Paden. *Interpreting the Sacred: Ways of Viewing Religion.*

MLA Handbook

Course Workbook and other resources on *Blackboard*

Core Competencies

If you apply yourself conscientiously, by the end of this course you should be able to:

- read academic texts more effectively
- reflect critically on Religious Studies scholarship
- formulate interesting research questions
- design a research plan
- locate, assess, and document sources of information and scholarship
- avoid plagiarism
- write according to the conventions of academic prose
- edit and revise your writing to produce an acceptable, even excellent, academic essay.

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to acquaint students with the academic field of Religious Studies and give practical instruction in research methods and academic writing. You will be introduced to a small sampling of the variety of theories that are used in the academic study of religion and you will be asked to formulate a research question and carry through a research project of your own. By the end of the course, you should be able to conduct research effectively and write a respectable academic paper.

The course will concentrate on the development of skills and habits of mind that are important in the academic study of religion. Paden's text will give you an overview of the interdisciplinary field of Religious Studies. Dr. Tumasz will give instruction in effective reading, including identifying the thesis and argument of a text, and critical thinking, which means developing the habit of critically assessing the presuppositions, premises, arguments and conclusions of scholarship on religion. She also will provide instruction in the development of effective research questions and writing processes and familiarize you with the conventions of academic writing.

Ms. Lipton, a senior librarian, will acquaint students with the myriad of resources available to the Religious Studies student. She will provide intensive instruction in the tools and methods of scholarly research, helping students to develop the skills needed to effectively locate and evaluate information.

Course Requirements

These are broken down into pre-session, block week, and post-block week requirements.

1. Pre-session assignments

- 1) Read Paden's book carefully and take notes on it. There will be a quiz on the book on the first day of class. For tips on how to prepare for the quiz, look on Blackboard under "Pre-session Work." N.B. Bring your notes to class on the first day.
- 2) Write an essay on the way you have conducted research in the past and submit by September 6 at 9 a.m. via the Digital Drop Box under 'Tools' in Blackboard. For instructions regarding length and content, look for "Self-Assessment of Past Research Practice Essay" under "Pre-session Work" on Blackboard. This assignment is worth 1% of the course grade. To receive the 1% you must follow the instructions and submit the essay by the stated deadline.
- 3) Complete "Preliminary Research Skills Quiz" by September 6 at 9 a.m. You will find the quiz under "Pre-session Work" on Blackboard. The quiz is not graded. Completion by the stated deadline is worth 1% of your final grade.

2. Block Week assignments

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| 1) Paden quiz on first day of class | 10% |
| 2) Block Week assignment | 10% |
| 3) Graded research skills quiz on last day of class | 10% |
| 4) Research log due last day of class | 10% |
| 5) Research Methods Exercises | 3% |

3. Homework during Block Week

- There will be reading assignments each night to which you will need to devote about one hour.
- There will be one graded assignment due on Friday of Block Week (#2 above).
- You are required to complete Research Methods Exercises on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings. They will take a half-hour or less and will be available on Bb beginning Tuesday, September 6. Your answers are not marked but the completion of

each exercise is worth 1% of the course grade for a total of 3% for the three exercises. To receive the 1% you must complete each exercise by the given deadline.

3. Post-Block Week Assignments

- 1) Meet with Ms. Lipton to discuss your research assignment. A sign-up sheet will be circulated on the last day of class. Meeting times will be available from September 19 - 28. You will receive a grade of 0 for the assignment if you do not attend the scheduled meeting.
- 2) Meet with Dr. Tumaszk to go over a draft of the introduction to your research paper. Submit the introduction by email at least one full day prior to your scheduled meeting. Meetings will be scheduled between September 26 and October 7. Failure to meet this requirement will result in the loss of a full letter grade on your final paper.
- 3) Final research paper 45%
- 4) Research Log 10%

For guidelines regarding #3 and 4, look under "Post-Session Work" on Blackboard. Both the final research paper and the research log are due October 31 by noon. Submit two paper copies of each to the drop box in the Department of Religious Studies (SS 1301) and also submit electronically via the *Digital Drop Box* under "Tools" on Blackboard.

Summary of course requirements:

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| Preliminary Skills Quiz, due by Sept.6 | 1% |
| Past Research Practice essay, due by Sept. 6 | 1% |
| First day quiz on Paden | 10% |
| Block Week Exercises, 1% each | 3% |
| *Block Week Assignment | 10% |
| Last day quiz on Research Skills | 10% |
| *Research Assignment, due last day of class | 10% |
| *Research paper, due October 31 | 45% |
| *Research log, due October 31 | 10% |

* Unless a deferral has been obtained from Dr. Tumaszk or Ms. Lipton, late assignments will be assessed a penalty of 10% of the worth of the assignment per day, including weekends.

There will be no Registrar-scheduled Final Exam for this course.

Grading:

N. B. Please note that all written assignments will be assessed with regard to both form and content.

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| A+ | = 96 - 100 % | B | = 76 - 80 % | C- | = 55 - 60 % |
| A | = 91 - 95 % | B- | = 71 - 75 % | D+ | = 53 - 54 % |
| A- | = 86 - 90 % | C+ | = 66 - 70 % | D- | = 51 - 52 % |
| B+ | = 80 - 85 % | C | = 61 - 65 % | F | = under 51 % |

Block Week Course Regulations

- The last day to drop a Block Week course (without it appearing on the student's transcript) shall be the end of the first day of lectures.
- The last day to withdraw from a Block Week course shall be the final day of lectures during the Block Week.
- Final grades for Block Week courses may not be posted until the end of the term in which the course is offered.

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 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** prior to the start of the course.

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.