

**The University of Calgary
Faculty of Arts
Department of Religious Studies**

Religious Studies 377

L01

Winter 2011

Research and Critical Inquiry in Religious Studies

Block Week: January 3 - 7 MTWRF 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Instructors:

Dr. Virginia Tumasz Office: SS 1302
Office hours during Winter term: W 10:00 – 11:30 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

READ FOR THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS: William E. Paden. *Interpreting the Sacred: Ways of Viewing Religion.*

Margot Northey and Joan McKibbin. *Making Sense: A Student's Guide to Research and Writing.*

Course Workbook and Readings, accessible on *Blackboard*.

Blackboard

This course uses Blackboard to make resources and course materials available to you (including the Course Workbook) and to facilitate communication. Students can use the email function to communicate with instructors and course members.

Core Competencies

If you do the work for this course conscientiously, by the end of the 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 or even excellent 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 includes developing the habit of critically assessing the premises and presuppositions 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 to **submit at the beginning of the first class**. For instructions regarding length and content, look for "Self-Assessment of Past Research Practice Essay" under "Pre-session Work" on Blackboard. This assignment will not be graded; however, if it is not completed and submitted on time, your final course grade will be lowered by 5%.
- 3) Complete "Preliminary Research Skills Quiz" by **January 3 at 9 a.m.** You will find the quiz under "Pre-session Work" on Blackboard. This quiz will not count toward your grade; however, if it is not completed by the deadline, your final course grade will be lowered by 5%.

2. Block Week Assignments

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| 1) Paden quiz on first day of class | 10% |
| 2) Block Week assignment on article from <i>Method and Theory</i> | 10% |
| 3) Graded research skills quiz on last day of class | 10% |
| 4) Research assignment, due last day of class | 10% |

Homework during Block Week:

- There will be reading assignments each night to which you will need to devote about two hours.
- There will be one graded assignment due during Block Week (#2 above), the details of which will be announced in class.
- You will be asked to do Research Methods Exercises on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evenings, which should take a half-hour or less and will be available on Blackboard beginning Monday, January 3. These exercises are ungraded but there will be a penalty of 5% deducted from the final course grade for each instance of non-completion by the 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 January 18 to January 28. You will receive a grade of 0 for the assignment if you do not attend the scheduled meeting.
- 2) Meet with Dr. Tumasz 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 January 27 and February 10. Failure to meet this requirement will result in the loss of a full letter grade on your final paper.
- 3) Final research paper 50%
- 4) Bibliographic essay 10%

For guidelines regarding the above two items, look under “Post-Session Work” on Blackboard. **Both essays are due February 28. Submit two paper copies of each essay to the Department of Religious Studies drop box in SS 1301 and electronically via the *Digital Drop Box* under “Tools” on Blackboard by noon on February 28.**

- 5) Nongraded research skills quiz: complete on Blackboard between **February 28 and March 4**. This quiz is ungraded but there is a penalty of 5% for non-completion.
- 6)

Summary of graded course requirements:

First day quiz on Paden	10%
*Block Week Assignment	10%
Last day quiz on Research Skills	10%
*Research Assignment, due last day of class	10%
*Research paper, due February 28	50%
*Bibliographic essay, due February 28	10%

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

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

Grading:

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

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 %

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** after 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.

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 will not be required until the end of the term in which the course is offered.