



**FRFACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS AND RELIGION  
COURSE OUTLINE  
Fall 2020**

**COURSE NUMBER:** RELS 399.13

**COURSE NAME:** Religion in Popular Culture: Religion in Popular Music

**PRE/CO-REQUISITES:** None

**CLASSROOM LOCATION:** Online

**OFFICE HOURS:** Tuesday 11:00-12:00. The instructor will be available for individual online sessions by appointment, structured in 15-minute intervals. Please contact the instructor via email to request an appointment. For students that are not available during office hours, please contact the instructor via email to request an alternate time.

**CLASS DAYS & TIMES:** This is an online course that will be delivered through the Desire2Learn (D2L) learning management system. Lectures will be delivered via Zoom sessions during scheduled class time every Monday September 14 to December 7 from 3:00-5:45. There will be no lectures on October 12 (statutory holiday) or November 9 (term break).

**INSTRUCTOR NAME AND CONTACT INCLUDING UCALGARY EMAIL & PHONE:** Craig Ginn, PhD  
[cwcginn@ucalgary.ca](mailto:cwcginn@ucalgary.ca)

**INSTRUCTOR EMAIL POLICY:** Email must be sent through your U of C email account. Please do NOT send from other accounts, such as gmail or hotmail. Please include the subject of your email and clearly identify yourself by name and the course you are registered in. Please do not send email inquiries related to dates and deadlines. Students shall refer to the university calendar, course outline, and final exam schedule for schedule information. Inquiries related to exams or assignments must be sent no less than 24 hours before a deadline. The instructor will reply to emails on business days.

**COURSE CALENDAR STATEMENT:** The intersection of religion with popular culture is explored through specific topics.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Music, fundamental to many religious traditions, has served an important role in worship, ritual, ceremony, expression, and religious experience. From the earliest musical traditions to contemporary genres, texted music has been a critical part of how people have experienced and shape their worlds, including how they have understood their existence, experiences, feelings, relationships, and religious piety. From the Vedic hymns to the

songs of Hare Krishna devotees or the psalms of David to U2 rock anthems music has been a deliberate means of expressing belief in the Transcendent and, arguably, constructing religion.

What is the role of music in popular culture? Is music a critical part of how people experience and shape their worlds. Do songwriters use music as a deliberate means of expressing religiosity or spirituality such as belief, worship, confession, and prayer? Are musicians venerated or deified? Can they rise to the status of prophet, priestess, god, or goddess? Does music reinforce religion? Reject religion? Is music a religion?

This course will examine religion and music, with a focus on popular music in North American culture. Musicians and songs will be explored in their context for religious and anti-religious references derived from both eastern and western religions, though students can expect the majority of songs to reflect Judeo-Christian influence. Various lenses will be used to investigate religion and music, including philosophical (nature of music, metaphysics, aesthetics, ethics), musicological (history of music, role of music and musician, music as industry), doxological (expression of veneration, praise, and devotion), theological (doctrinal expression in lyrics), and phenomenological (music and spiritual experience, confession, conversion, and enlightenment).

Some course material will be synchronous, i.e. it will be offered at a specific time. Synchronous material will consist of lectures and discussions scheduled for Mondays from 3:00-5:45. If a student is unable to attend a synchronous session, it is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor within 24 hours of the session. Some course material will be asynchronous, i.e. it will be not be scheduled at a specific time. Asynchronous material will consist of videos, audio files, documentaries, textbook readings, viewing websites, etc. These materials and/or links will be made available through the course D2L website.

**COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- identify key terms and methods in the study of religion and music
- explore the intersection of religion and music
- analyze religion and music using the dimensions of religion
- evaluate the (non)distinction between secular and sacred music
- recognize the use of religious themes in popular music
- evaluate scriptural and liturgical sources used in lyrics
- use a range of hermeneutical approaches to interpret lyrics
- research individual artist or group, investigating their (anti)religious background
- prepare and communicate research related to an individual artist or group in a research paper and presentation

**LEARNING RESOURCES:** *Gods and Guitars*. Michael J. Gilmour. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2009. Available at the UCalgary Bookstore online shopping:

[https://www.calgarybookstore.ca/shop\\_main.asp](https://www.calgarybookstore.ca/shop_main.asp)

The textbook is also available in an electronic version on Amazon.

<https://www.amazon.ca/Gods-Guitars-Seeking-Post-1960s-Popular/dp/1602581398>

Additional readings will be posted on D2L

**LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES AND REQUIREMENTS:** There is a D2L site for this course which contains required readings and other relevant class resources and materials (see [d2L.ucalgary.ca](https://d2l.ucalgary.ca)).

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.

Most current laptops will have a built-in webcam, speaker and microphone.

**CLASS SCHEDULE:** Posted on D2L

**EXAMINATIONS:** *There is no Registrar-scheduled final exam for this course.*

**ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS:**

Assessment	Date	Weight (%)
Test 1: Includes course material September 14 – October 5	Access to Test 1 on D2L from 8:00 am October 15 until 8:00 pm October 16	20%
Research Paper	Students must submit their research paper in Dropbox between November 6 and December 7. Note: If a student would like their research paper marked before their class presentation, the paper must be submitted to the instructor at least 10 days in advance of the student's class presentation date.	40%

Test 2: Includes course material October 19 – November 16	Access to Test 1 on D2L from 8:00 am November 19 until 8:00 pm November 20	25%
Class Presentation	November 23, 30, December 7 Each student will prepare a 7-8 minute presentation. Class presentations will be presented to the class via zoom. The order of presentations will be determined during the zoom session on October 6. Students must submit a copy of their class presentation in Dropbox between November 6 and December 7.	15%

**TESTS:** All tests for this course are completed online. Each test will be available for a 36-hour period (8:00 am until 8:00 pm the following day). Tests are timed, requiring students to complete the test within a specified time limit.

Tests are not “open book.” Students are not permitted to consult any course materials while completing any of the module tests. The use of course materials during a test constitutes academic misconduct. Students must complete on-line tests individually. Collaboration with other students in taking tests is not permitted and constitutes academic misconduct.

**ADJUSTED FINAL GRADES:** The instructor will implement a standard measure of adjustment (.5%) for final grades. For example, a final grade of 64.5% (C) will be rounded up to 65% (C+). Please do not send email inquiries asking the instructor to increase or ‘round up’ your final grade. Only final grades are adjusted (individual tests are not rounded up).

**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 is identified above. The weighting of tests will not be changed to accommodate individual student requests.

**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 make an appointment with the instructor at the end of the term after all tests are completed. At that time, you can review all your test answers via zoom.

**MISSED OR LATE ASSIGNMENTS:** If a student misses an assessment due to illness or an emergency, except in the case of extenuating circumstances, the student must report the absence to the instructor within 48 hours of the absence. If a makeup assessment is approved by the instructor, the student must take the initiative to arrange a time to complete the assessment within one week from the date of the missed assessment.

**GRADING:** A numerical mark will be given for each course requirement. A letter grade will be assigned based on the following number and letter grade scheme, usually used within the Department of Classics and Religion:

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

**EXPECTATIONS FOR WRITING:** All written assignments will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented. If you need help with your writing, you may use the writing support services in the Learning Commons. For further information, please refer to the official online University of Calgary Calendar, Academic Regulations, E. Course Information, E.2: Writing Across the Curriculum: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>

**RESEARCH PAPER:** Students will select three songs (recorded and performed by one artist/group) and analyze the lyrical content. The analysis must include the following:

1. Background information on the artist
2. Religious and cultural influences
3. Genre and its correlation with religious themes
4. Analysis of the songs using specified methods provided in class materials
5. Assessment of the artist in the discussion of music as religion

The analysis must be based on information gained through research of academic and music industry sources, e.g. biographical information (artist's official website), publications from the music/entertainment industry (reviews and interviews), videotaped interviews and, where possible, academic sources (e.g. musicology, documentaries). The assessment of the artist in the discussion of music as religion is not based on the student's opinion but requires substantiation using credible and authoritative sources. Length: 1800-2000 words. Do not exceed 2000 words. Assignments that exceed 2000 words will be deducted 5% per 100 excess words. A marking rubric will be posted on D2L.

**CLASS PRESENTATION:** Each student is required to present a 7-8 minute summary of their research paper in a Zoom session. Following the presentation please be prepared to field questions related to your presentation (2-3 minutes). Each student is required to submit a file of their presentation in Dropbox, either pdf or PowerPoint.

## **ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION**

**GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS:** Please submit all assignments electronically in the dropbox in D2L. Please submit assignments as a word document. Assignments should have a file name as follows: “First Name Last Name Description of Assignment” (e.g., Alex Smith Research Assignment). Assignments must be submitted by 11:59 pm 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.

**CONDUCT:** Please be courteous during zoom sessions and in email correspondence. 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>

**GUIDELINES FOR ZOOM SESSIONS:** Zoom sessions will be recorded. Zoom will be used for office hours to meet individually with students also.

Zoom is a video conferencing program that will allow us to meet at specific times for a “live” video conference, so that we can have the opportunity to meet each other virtually and discuss course material as a learning community.

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 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 (such as MS Teams), 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/> .

If you are unable to attend a Zoom session, please contact your instructor to arrange an alternative activity for the missed session (e.g., to review a recorded session). Please be prepared, as best as you are able, to join class in a quiet space that will allow you to be fully

present and engaged in Zoom sessions. Students will be advised by their instructor when they are expected to turn on their webcam (for group work, presentations, etc.).

The instructor may record online Zoom class sessions for the purposes of supporting student learning in this class – such as making the recording available for review of the session or for students who miss a session. 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.

**COURSE EVALUATIONS AND STUDENT FEEDBACK:** Student feedback will be sought at the end of the course through the standard University Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) and Faculty course evaluation forms. Students are welcome to discuss the process and content of the course at any time with the instructor.

### **UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY POLICIES AND SUPPORTS**

**ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:** Academic Misconduct refers to student behavior which compromises proper assessment of a student's academic activities and includes: cheating; fabrication; falsification; plagiarism; unauthorized assistance; failure to comply with an instructor's expectations regarding conduct required of students completing academic assessments in their courses; and failure to comply with exam regulations applied by the Registrar.

For information on the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure please visit:

<https://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-academic-misconduct-policy.pdf>

<https://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-academic-misconduct-procedure.pdf>

Additional information is available on the Academic Integrity Website at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/learning/academic-integrity>.

**ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION:** It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations according to the University policies and procedures listed below. The Student Accommodations policy is available at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/access/prospective-students/academic-accommodations>.

Students needing an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/procedure-for-accommodations-for-students-with-disabilities.pdf>). 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.

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/](http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/).

**RESEARCH ETHICS:** not applicable

**INSTRUCTOR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY:** Course materials created by instructors (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY:** Student information will be collected in accordance with typical (or usual) classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary.

**COPYRIGHT LEGISLATION:** All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright-policy.pdf>) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorised sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>.

**MEDIA RECORDING:**

**Media recording for lesson capture** - The instructor may use media recordings to capture the delivery of a lecture. These recordings are intended to be used for lecture capture only and will not be used for any other purpose. Although the recording device will be fixed on the Instructor, in the event that incidental student participation is recorded, the instructor will ensure that any identifiable content (video or audio) is masked, or will seek consent to include the identifiable student content to making the content available on University approved platforms.

NOTE: Students are encouraged to type questions in the chat section of zoom.

**Media recording for self-assessment of teaching practices** - The instructor may use media recordings as a tool for self-assessment of their teaching practices. Although the recording device will be fixed on the instructor, it is possible that student participation in the course may



be inadvertently captured. These recordings will be used for instructor self-assessment only and will not be used for any other purpose.

**Media recording for the assessment of student learning** - The instructor may use media recordings as part of the assessment of students. This may include but is not limited to classroom discussions, presentations, clinical practice, or skills testing that occur during the course. These recordings will be used for student assessment purposes only and will not be shared or used for any other purpose.

**SEXUAL VIOLENCE POLICY:** The University recognizes that all members of the University Community should be able to learn, work, teach and live in an environment where they are free from harassment, discrimination, and violence. The University of Calgary's sexual violence policy guides us in how we respond to incidents of sexual violence, including supports available to those who have experienced or witnessed sexual violence, or those who are alleged to have committed sexual violence. It provides clear response procedures and timelines, defines complex concepts, and addresses incidents that occur off-campus in certain circumstances. Please see the policy available at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/sexual-violence-policy.pdf>

**OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION:** Please visit the Registrar's website at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for additional important information on the following:

- Wellness and Mental Health Resources
- Student Success
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Information
- Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points
- Safewalk