

**THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY  
FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES  
FALL TERM 2011**

**RELS 439 L01: ADVANCED STUDIES IN NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS**  
*Method & Theories in the Study of New Religions*

**Instructor:** Irving Hexham

**Class time and room:** R 14:00-16:45; A167

**Office:** SS 1310

**Office hours:** R 13:00 – 13:45 or by appointment

**Telephone:** (403) 220-3280

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**Web Site:** <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~hexham>

**Objectives of the Course:**

This seminar will introduce students to the study of new religious movements with a particular emphasis on research methods and theories used to understand them. It involves a weekly seminar discussion of assigned texts.

**Course competencies**

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

- a) use a variety of methods for the study of new religions and religious movements;
- b) discuss various theoretical explanations for the rise of religious movements;
- c) think critically about the appropriate way to study new religions;
- d) appreciate the importance of using correct academic methods intelligently;
- e) be able to make informed judgments about the reliability of specific books and texts.

**Course Details:**

The course will proceed as a senior seminar in which participants will present papers and book reviews on different aspects of the study of new religions and religious movements and discuss various theories for the interpretation of such groups. Members of the seminar are expected to participate in the weekly discussions.

**Required reading:**

Irving Hexham and Karla Poewe *Understanding Cults and New Age Religions*, Vancouver, Regent College Press, ISBN/Product ID: 1573831212

Heschel, Sussannah, *The Aryan Jesus: Christian theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, ISBN-13: 978-0691148052. Paperback

Lucas, Phillip Charles and Thomas Robbins, *New Religious Movements in the Twenty-First Century: Legal, Political, and Social Challenges in Global Perspective*, ISBN-13: 978-0415965774. Paperback.

In addition to these three books you will be given a “research methods crib” at the beginning of the course plus some works that are in the public domain and available in electronic format. Throughout the course various other books on research methods will be discussed in class. Here is a preliminary list. Do not let the length of the list bother you. All will come clear in the class:

- Bernard, H. Russell , *Research methods in anthropology [electronic resource] : qualitative and quantitative approaches*
- Glaser, Barney G. *The Discovery of grounded theory : strategies for qualitative research*
- Strauss, Anselm L., *Basics of qualitative research : techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*
- Charmaz, Kathy , *Constructing grounded theory : a practical guide through qualitative analysis*
- Grounded theory review (Online)*
- Fontana, Andrea, *The interview [electronic resource] : from formal to postmodern*
- Stacks, Don W., *An integrated approach to communication theory and research [electronic resource]*
- Goulding, Christina, *Grounded theory [electronic resource] : a practical guide for management, business and market researchers*
- Barnard, Alan, *Routledge encyclopedia of social and cultural anthropology [electronic resource]*
- Evans, Richard J., *In Defence of History*
- Evans, Richard J., *Lying About Hitler*
- Vincent, John *An Intelligent Person's Guide to History*
- Gottschalk, Louis, *Understanding History*
- Iggers, Georg G., *Leopold von Ranke and the shaping of the historical discipline*
- Ranke, Leopold von, *The Secret of world history : selected writings on the arts and science of history*
- Ranke, Leopold von, *The Theory and practice of history*

### **Important Dates**

Lectures begin on September 12 and end on December 9.  
Reading week is November 10-13.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

- 1) Write an academic paper of 3,000 words and discuss in class an agreed topic relating to one of the methods used in the study of new religious movements. The date of the presentation/discussion will be arranged in class. Paper worth 40% of the final grade. The final paper is due on Thursday 8 December.
- 2) Lead a class discussion of an issue in the study of NRMs presentation/discussion worth 10% of the final grade.
- 3) Write an academic style and a dictionary style article of 1,500 words on an aspect of the study of new religious movements. Worth 20% of the final grade. Due Thursday 20 October
- 4) Write a short book review of 1,500 words evaluating two of the assigned textbooks. Worth 20% of the final grade. Due Thursday 10 November.
- 5) Attendance and participation worth 10% of the final grade.

*\*There will be no Registrar scheduled Final 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	95.9 - 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.

**Academic honesty**

*Students should be familiar with the University regulations regarding academic honesty. See the University Calendar for regulations. See also:*

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/~hexham/study/plag.html>

**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 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](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.