

**UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS AND RELIGION  
REVISED COURSE OUTLINE  
Winter 2020**

<b>Course</b>	RELS 447.01 Theories of Religion
<b>Time</b>	W 15:00 - 17:45
<b>Seminar Location</b>	SS 527
<b>Instructor</b>	Irving Hexham
<b>Guest Instructors</b>	Durga Kale and Jeremy Hexham
<b>Office Hours</b>	W 13:00 - 14:00
<b>Office</b>	SS 1310
<b>E-mail</b>	<a href="mailto:hexham@ucalgary.ca">hexham@ucalgary.ca</a>
<b>Telephone</b>	403-220-3280

**Required Texts:**

Waardenburg, Jacques. *Classical Approaches to the Study of Religion: Aims, Methods and Theories of Research*. De Gruyter, 1999. This book provides a background to the course and is available to read online or to download to your computer from the Library of the University of Calgary.

Alternative sources of the basic information given by Waardenburg are available from various online encyclopedias of religion which you can find at:

[http://understandingworldreligions.com/dictionaries\\_encyclopedias.html](http://understandingworldreligions.com/dictionaries_encyclopedias.html)

The following is available in pdf format on my website and D2L:

Hexham, Irving, [Concise Dictionary of Religion](#)

A list of readings used in the seminar can be found on D2L in the folder "Course Readings." These are either things I have from academic journal articles in pdf format will be placed on D2L.

You are encouraged to explore the Internet Archive where many primary sources are freely available in pdf format. It can be found at: <https://archive.org/details/texts>

**Primary Sources:**

Various texts written by classic theorists of religion, and some more modern writers, are in the public domain and can be found on the Internet Archive at: <https://archive.org/details/texts>

Because the Internet Archive is so large sometimes these classic works are not easy to find. Therefore, copies can be found on my website at:

<http://understandingworldreligions.com/classicstudiesofworldreligions.html>

You are not expected to read all of these texts, but you are expected to read selected passages and use them for both class discussions and as the source of you blog assignment, presentation, and essay. The reason for providing complete books is because textbooks that introduce these writers through excerpts often provide readings that reflect the concerns of the editor rather than the complexity of the original writer's arguments.

Reading original texts may seem like a lot of work, but books of extracts are far more expensive than downloading the originals and reading select passages, or the entire book. Therefore, the main books used in this course are all in the public domain and available from the Internet Archive at no cost to you. A list of these books and authors is provided on D2L under the heading "Content" and sub-heading "Course Readings Texts."

**Seminar texts:**

In addition to using classic works as the basis for discussions and your assignments students are expected to read a variety of articles all of which are available in pdf format. A list of these articles and when they need to be read can be found in the "Course Schedule and Weekly" readings document found on D2L under "Content" in the sub-folder "Course Outline and Schedule." You need to read this carefully to follow the seminar lectures and discussions.

**Course Description:**

This is an experimental seminar involving weekly discussion held each Wednesday plus online blended learning sessions as appropriate. If possible, audio-visual discussions linking students and faculty with fellow students and faculty at other universities in Africa, Europe and North America will be organized. This was done in the past, but for a variety of reasons is not always possible. The course will concentrate classical theories of religion. Prior to the discussion of classical theories, the seminar will discuss the relationship between research methods and theories.

**Online elements for this course:**

These will be introduced during the seminars and posted on D2L

**Core Competencies:**

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

- a) participate in seminar discussions;
- b) discuss various theoretical explanations of religion;
- c) think critically about valid ways to study religion;
- d) appreciate the importance of using reliable academic methods;
- e) make informed judgment about the reliability of specific books and texts.
- f) analyse, evaluate, and apply scholarly theories and arguments
- g) Make effective presentations.

**Course Requirements:**

This is a fourteen week course including one reading week. It has the equivalent of 3 hours of participation/contact per week. For each hour of participation time you are expected to allow at least four hours for reading, research, and writing.

Practically this means you ought to plan for 10 hours of reading and research each week plus 2 hours of writing. Assuming an average reading speed of 20 pages per hour then the normal expectation is that you read 200 pages per week or a total of 3000 pages throughout the course. Given that the average academic book has between 250 and 350 pages then you ought to expect to read at least ten academic books during this course.

Date	Assessment	Weight (%)	Notes
13 January Week 1	Seminars begin		
To be scheduled	Class presentation	30%	In class
12 February	Blog t due	15%	Due by midnight
16-22 Feb. Week 6	Mid-Term Break		
18 March Week 10	Response to a Blog	15	Due by midnight
12 April Week 14	Final Essay	30%	Due by midnight
Participation		10%	
15 April	End of Seminars		

### 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, 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

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

### Policy with regard to missed assignments/assessments:

Students must provide appropriate documentation showing why they missed a test or the deadline for the written assignment.

### Expectations for student conduct in this course:

Talking during a lecture is unacceptable.

Leaving a class during a lecture disrupts the class for everyone. Therefore, you are expected to remain for the complete lecture whether or not you like it and only leave at the end. Not staying in a lecture because it deals with a person or subject you dislike, for example Mahatma Gandhi or slavery, is not a good reason to leave a lecture. If you know you must leave a lecture before it ends for an important reason, e.g. a medical appointment, you must sit close to a door and send an email explaining why you left the class.

### Electronic Device Policy:

Students must not use cell phones in the classroom.

### Syllabus:

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

### 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/](http://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](http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf).

### **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](mailto: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](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](mailto: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/emergency-plan/assemblypoints](http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergency-plan/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/>.

Learn more about the Campus Mental Health Strategy here: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth/>.

### **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>.