



Faculty of Arts
Dept. of Religious Studies
Course Outline

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Studies
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Religious Studies 681.12 L01
Specialized Studies in Western
Religions: Kabbalah & Jewish
Mysticism

Course Outline, Fall 2011
MW: 12:30 - 1:45 pm

Instructor:

Eliezer Segal

Office:

SS 1314

Office Hours:

Monday 1:45 p.m. or by appointment

Telephone:

(403) 220-3279 or (403) 220-5886 (Department office)

Internet:

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Course Web Site:

<http://people.ucalgary.ca/~elsegal/JewishMysticism/>

Textbook:

G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*

E. Wolfson, *Circle in the Square*

Sample primary texts in English will be distributed to the class periodically.

Course Description:

This seminar will explore the major forms of Jewish mysticism and esoteric doctrine, as expressed in writings from the Second Commonwealth until the present day. Emphasis will be placed on the subject of visual imaging of the divine as a feature of Jewish spirituality.

Among the topics to be dealt with in the classroom or in the students' research are the following:

- The mysticism of the Second Temple and Rabbinic eras: "The Work of the Chariot" and "The Work of Creation."
- Pre-Kabbalistic mystical writings: *Heikhalot*, *Shi'ur Qomah*, *Sefer Yesirah* and *Sefer Ha-Bahir*.
- German pietism (*Hasidut Ashkenaz*).
- Classical Kabbalah: the doctrine of the *Sefirot*, and the *Zohar*.
- Ecstatic Kabbalah, as in the teachings of Abraham Abulafia
- Lurianic Kabbalah and its offshoots (messianic movements, etc.)
- Eastern European Hasidism.
- Modern and contemporary Jewish mysticism.

Course Requirements:

Students will be required to submit two research papers of approximately 6,000 words (twenty printed pages) each. Topics should be chosen in consultation with the instructor. Students are encouraged to situate their topics within the broader methodological contexts of Religious Studies research questions.

In addition, each student will be expected to give a twenty-minute oral presentation on one of their paper topics. This presentation should not be a reading of their written work, but should be geared to the classroom situation.

Paper #1 (due November 14)	40% or 30% *
Paper #2 (due December 9 by e-mail or to the Religious Studies Department drop box, SS 1301)	40% or 30% *
Oral presentation (to be scheduled individually)	20%
Class participation	10%

*The paper with the highest grade will be counted for 40%.

**There will be no registrar scheduled final examination in this course.*

Grading:

A letter grade will be assigned to each component of the course according to the University's Graduate Studies Calendar 2011-2012:

A+ 4.0: Outstanding

A 4.0: Excellent – superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of the subject matter

A- 3.7: Very good performance

B+ 3.3: Good performance

B 3.0: Satisfactory performance Note: The grade point value (3.0) associated with this grade is the minimum acceptable average that a graduate student must maintain throughout the program as computed at the end of each registration anniversary year of the program.

B- 2.7: Minimum pass for students in the Faculty of Graduate Studies Note: A student who receives a B- or lower in two or more courses will be required to withdraw regardless of their grade point average unless the program recommends otherwise. Individual programs may require a higher minimum passing grade.

C+ 2.3

C 2.0

C- 1.7

D+ 1.3

D 1.0

F 0.0: All grades below B- are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted toward Faculty of Graduate Studies course requirements. A student who receives a grade of F will normally be required to withdraw unless the program recommends otherwise.

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.