

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

**Religious Studies 709.05 L01  
Critical Discourses in the Study of Religion:  
The Study of Narrative & the Study of Religion**

**Fall 2013  
T 14:00-16:45  
SS 1332**

Instructor: Elizabeth Rohlman  
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 1-2 and by appointment

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***Required Textbooks (listed in order they will be read):***

*The Mahābhārata*. John D. Smith, translator. Penguin Classics, 2009. ISBN 978-0140446814

Rabindranath Tagore (1915). *The Home and the World*. Surendranath Tagore, translator.  
Penguin Classics, 2005. ISBN 978-0140449860

Raja Rao. *Kanthapura* (1938). Oxford University Press, 2011. ISBN 978-0195624373

U.R. Anantha Murthy. *Samskara: A Rite for a Dead Man* (1965). A.K. Ramanujan, translator.  
Oxford University Press, 1979. ISBN 978-0195610796

Salman Rushdie. *Midnight's Children* (1980). Random House, 2006. ISBN 978-0812976533

Arundhati Roy. *The God of Small Things* (1997). Harper Perennial, 1998. ISBN 978-0060977498

***Recommended text:***

Jhumpa Lahiri. *Interpreter of Maladies*. Mariner Books, 1999. ISBN 978-0395927205

In addition to these books, articles and other readings will be posted on Blackboard each week.

***Course Description:***

This is a graduate level seminar in critical discourses in the study of religion addressing the theme of narrative. Each week, we will discuss a primary narrative text as a “case study” and one or two articles addressing the study of narrative from a theoretical perspective. The primary texts are thematically linked in that all of them come from the classical and contemporary literary canons of India. The theoretical articles will reflect both the enormous interest that scholars of many humanities and social science disciplines have taken in narrative in recent decades and the interdisciplinary nature of the field of religious studies. Given the interdisciplinary nature of our field, an understanding of the role of narrative studies in the study of religion will require students to consider issues of historiography, archaeology, ethnography, philosophy, linguistics, and literary analysis, among other topics. Secondary scholarship covered in this course may include, but is by no means limited to, the work of Hayden White, Benedict Anderson, Martha

Nussbaum, Alisdair MacIntyre, Robert Alter, A. K. Ramnujan, Kirin Narayan, Sheldon Pollock, and Umberto Eco.

**Course Goals:**

In addition to the content goals of this course, students should also approach this class as a course in academic professionalism. As graduate students, you are now aspiring scholars in your own right and should conduct yourself as such. All students should commit themselves to improving their abilities in writing, researching, speaking, and critical reading and thinking. Throughout the course, we will regularly discuss these skills and their importance throughout one's academic career.

**Course Requirements:**

*Mid-term Papers:* Students will write two mid-term papers. Mid-term papers are meant to be reflective analyses and arguments relating to the readings assigned in class. They will not require additional research. Mid-term papers should be 12 double-spaced pages. Mid-term papers are due on **Friday, October 11** and **Friday, November 15** by **4pm**.

*Research Paper:* Students will write a research paper (25-30 double-spaced pages) on a topic of their choice. Students are encouraged to consult with the instructor about their topics. Research papers are due on **Tuesday, December 10** by **4pm**.

*Participation:* Obviously, careful and thorough reading of assigned texts and active participation in class are essential to a successful seminar. In addition to regular required participation, students will take turns leading seminar discussion on the assigned readings. In case of poor participation and/or failure to complete assigned readings, I reserve the right to institute weekly written reading critiques.

*There will be no registrar-scheduled exam for this class*

**Grading:**

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

Mid-term Papers:	20% each (40% combined)
Participation:	20%
Research Paper:	40%

**Grading :**

A letter grade will be assigned to each component of the course according to the University's Graduate Studies Calendar 2013-2014:

- 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.

***Syllabus:***

A full syllabus will be distributed on the first day of class.