



Religious Studies 2200f/g (570)
Approaches to the Study of Religion
Fall/ Winter 2026-2027

Instructor: M. Tourage

Email: mtourage@uwo.ca

Course Information

Calendar Description:

Religions, like well-cut jewels, are multifaceted and can be viewed from a number of unique angles. This course examines religion through a variety of scholarly lenses and academic disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, psychology, philosophy, phenomenology, theology and feminism.

Extra Information: 3 hours.

Course Weight: 0.50

Breadth: Category B

Subject Code: RELSTUD

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

King's University College
Approaches to the Study of Religion
Fall 2026
RS 2200F (570)

Instructor: Dr. Mahdi Tourage mtourage@uwo.ca

Office Hours: Mondays 1:30-2:30, Tuesdays 2:30-3:30

Office location will be announced in class

Course Description

This course will introduce students to the historical and current methodologies and varieties of scholarly approaches to the study of religion such as: anthropology, sociology, philosophy, phenomenology, psychology, feminism, critical race theory, post-colonial, and postmodern theories. By reading and discussing major figures from these theoretical approaches to the study of religion, we aim to develop analytical skills in understanding religious phenomena in its broadest sense. We will be covering the ways in which the study of religion impacts and is impacted by colonialism, cultural and geographical differences, postmodernity, cross-disciplinary studies, and the intersections of power, politics and pop-culture.

Course Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, the students should expect the following learning outcome:

1. A foundational knowledge and understanding of leading scholars and influential approaches to the study of religion
2. A substantial knowledge of the key issues and debates in the study of religion (such as racial and gender critical approaches, postcoloniality, and postmodernism)
3. To evaluate critically the various interpretations and definitions of “religion”
4. Having written a detailed analysis of “religious” phenomena from at least three theoretical approaches to the study of religion

Mode of Instruction:

- In person

Course Textbooks/Material

- No textbook to purchase for this course.

Method of Evaluation:

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| 10% | Class attendance plus active and informed participation |
| 10% | 10 Weekly reading responses with your question(s) submitted the night before each class. See instructions below.* |
| 5% | One Presentation (10 minutes) |
| 20% | First Take-Home writing Assignment (about 1000-1500 words) Due Oct. 9, 2026 |
| 20% | Second Take-Home writing Assignment (about 1000-1500 words) Due Oct. 30, 2026 |
| 35% | Term Paper (3000 words due last class Dec. 8, 2026) |

Academic Considerations:

This course begins on the day announced by the University and continues until the last class, honouring all important dates derived from University approved guidelines and academic policies

(<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/academic-dates-and-events/>).

- Each unexcused missed class/assignment will result in a deduction of 2% of your participation mark.
- Students are responsible for seeking consideration as noted in the Western University Calendar: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/courseoutlines.pdf
- Students submitting work for which Academic Consideration has been granted must submit their missed work (on OWL) within 2 days after the end of the period for which the student received Academic Consideration.
- Late penalties for work that is overdue is 5% per day late, papers that are more than a week late receive 0%.
- I know so many things happen in our lives that could prevent us from attending the class. And I am sympathetic to students' predicaments, but sending me an email about your car problem or sudden illness or accident and death in the family will not excuse an absence (because absences are verified and authorized by your academic counselor, not me.)
- Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation, or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor.
- All assignments must be your own writing.

*You must post a weekly reading response the night before our class. Your response will be a summary of the main points of the reading. What is it that the author is trying to say? Also, include a question or two you will have about the reading.

- There is no specific format for your reading responses; they could be a couple of paragraphs or a page or two, in full sentences or point form. These are your reactions to the material (readings and films assigned), points you find interesting or confusing, or disagree with.

Post your responses and takeaways on OWL Brightspace > COMMUNICATIONS>GROUPS. **UPLOAD THESE AS PDF ONLY PLEASE< MAKES IT EASIER FOR ME TO OPEN**, Thank you!

- Please post reading responses *the night before each class. This will help me to see where you are at and what to discuss more or less in class.
- The purpose of weekly entries is first for me to take a look at and see if there is anything the student wants to say, add, or is not clear about, and second to show that you have done the readings. Write in full sentences; doodling, cartoons, memes, etc., are also acceptable. Have any questions about the reading or class discussions, or the previous class? Post it there.
- Your entries are worth 10% of your overall grade, so they must be on time (the night before our class). They are not individually marked but receive an overall mark for all entries (with marks deducted for late or no entries).

Academic Integrity / Remote Proctoring:

- Link to Western Scholastic Discipline policy: https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf
 - Course policy on use of generative AI, including translation/grammar aids to follow
- This course uses Turnitin

A note from your Instructor:

I am honored that you have trusted me with your education, a responsibility that I do not take lightly. I am committed to your intellectual development and enthusiastic about your varied responses to the course material. Of course, I expect as much commitment from you to this course as well. Please call on me early and often for help with the complex nature of the texts we study, issues we discuss that you find compelling or confusing, or the challenges of academic work and its relevance to practical concerns. I welcome questions and conversations about your writing and thinking, as well as your plans for the future. I am available after class, for lunch, dinner, coffee, and of course, during scheduled office hours or by appointment. In this course we will try to create an organic community of learning, an open and inviting classroom in which we can exercise democracy and education as a practice of freedom. This would be a classroom that reflects an ideal vision of the world we would like to live in. We will learn from each other, teach others, love and respect each other, honor everyone's unique soul and journey in life, appreciate what each one of us brings to this class and what we give and take from each other. We will listen to each other carefully, ask for clarification, critique each other's ideas intelligently and respectfully, and sharpen our thought processes and arguments. We hope to create transformative moments in ourselves, in the learning community that we create every time we meet, and hopefully in the larger world around us.

Accessibility, Inclusion, and Disability Accommodations:

All are welcome in my class. Come as you are! Really. If the design of this course creates obstacles to your full participation, please notify me to discuss adjustments. This is true for those who have a formally documented disability with the university and those who do not (this includes folks with invisible impairments and/or those who pass/compensate).

Talk to me early on in the course, please. Requests for accommodation should be made as early as possible, but there is no expiration date on inclusivity. It is never too late to discuss issues regarding access – this is true for ALL of your classes, not just mine. I also encourage you to register with University's disability services if you are able.

Schedule of Readings –

(No Textbooks to buy for this course)

Schedule of Readings TBA

**KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
GENERAL COURSE POLICIES
2026-27**

1. Academic Accommodations (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found at [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

2. Academic Consideration for Student Absences

Students must be approved to write a makeup exam or for an extension of the assignment deadline. If you need to miss an exam or the deadline for the assignment, please follow these instructions.

There are two ways to seek academic consideration:

(i) Academic consideration based on medical or compassionate grounds

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate grounds), they should contact the Academic Advising Office. As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration.

For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is the appropriate documentation. The SMC is available at <https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/pdfs/student-medical-certificate.pdf>

- King's students: The Academic Advising Office website is located in DLH 104. The Academic Advising website is <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising>.
- If your home faculty is Huron or at Western, please submit your documentation to your faculty's academic counselling office.
- Requests must be made as soon as possible, and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

You may submit requests for academic consideration through the **Student Absence Portal**, linked on this website: <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising/academic-consideration-requests-and-student-absence-portal>.

(ii) Academic consideration through an undocumented absence

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per half-course (0.5) weight.

- Note that instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline to confirm this which assessment has been designated as requiring documentation for consideration (that is, exempt from undocumented absences).
- Undocumented absences can not be used as the basis for academic consideration for December or April exams.

If an instructor has built flexibility into their assessments (e.g., “complete 8 of 10 quizzes”), this flexibility will already address consideration needs and thus academic consideration may be denied.

For further information on the academic consideration policy, please see

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

c) Absences from Final Exams

If you miss the Final Exam, **contact your Academic Advising Office** as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the “Special Examination” (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a multiple exam situation (i.e., you are scheduled to write more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

d) Religious Accommodations

Students should consult the University’s list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and their Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

3. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King's University College:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/accessibility-services>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/campus-life/student-supports/>

Good2talk is an online and phone resource for students, available 24/7, with services in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options on how to obtain help:

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental-health/index.html>

Academic Support Services at King's University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/academics/academic-supports/>

4. Statement on Gender-Based Sexual Violence

King's and Western are committed to reducing incidents of gender-based sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: [Mental Health and Wellness at King's](#).

You can reach supports at King's by emailing care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a Social Worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by email (health@uwo.ca) or by calling 519-661-3568. Additional support services can be found <https://www.uwo.ca/health/gbsv/support/index.html>

5. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see https://kings.uwo.ca/sites/2025/assets/files/campus/Kings_Code_of_Student_Conduct.pdf

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

6. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.pdf

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. **Check with you instructor to check which tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in each course.** Note that although some courses may permit the use of such tools, it does not mean use of such tools is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality_Reports_-_TurnItIn.html.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

7. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

8. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

9. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.