THE NATURE OF RELIGION: AN INTRODUCTION
TERM Y SECTION A
Course Director: Dr. Jason C. Robinson
Fall/Winter 2013-2014

Office: 126 Founders College
Office Hours:
Mondays and Tuesdays by appointment

Email: jasonro@yorku.ca

Class Time: Tuesday 4:30-6:30

Classroom: TEL 0016
# Tutorial Leaders and Times

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Start Time</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Tutorial Leader</th>
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<tr>
<td>LECT 01</td>
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<td>TEL 0016</td>
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<tr>
<td>TUTR 01</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>19:00</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>VC 105</td>
<td>J. Robinson, <a href="mailto:jasonro@yorku.ca">jasonro@yorku.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUTR 02</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>19:00</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>R S104</td>
<td>Maxa Sawyer, <a href="mailto:maxa@yorku.ca">maxa@yorku.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUTR 03</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>19:00</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>VH 1020</td>
<td>Daniel Renton, <a href="mailto:drenton@yorku.ca">drenton@yorku.ca</a></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Daniel Renton, <a href="mailto:drenton@yorku.ca">drenton@yorku.ca</a></td>
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<td>60</td>
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<td>Janet Melo-Thaiss, <a href="mailto:janetmt@yorku.ca">janetmt@yorku.ca</a></td>
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<td>Maxa Sawyer, <a href="mailto:maxa@yorku.ca">maxa@yorku.ca</a></td>
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## Course Calendar Description

Explores the nature of religious faith, religious language (myth and symbol) and clusters of religious beliefs through an examination of the primary texts of several major world religions. Methodologies for the study of religion will also be examined.

## Course Overview

This course is a critical study, based on classical and contemporary readings, of such issues as: the basis of religious claims, the meaning of religious discourse, the relationship between faith and reason, the nature and existence of God, the nature of religious experience, and the problems of evil and human destiny.

We will critically examine the nature and various expressions of religious questions about human life, death, suffering, and the afterlife. One of our main goals is to better appreciate religion as it exists in a modern global society. We will examine many different views and ideas in this course. What is sacred? What role do myth, ritual, and scripture play in people’s lives today? Should we (I) care about the transcendent?

Note: by training and discipline your course instructor is a philosopher and theologian. You should expect this course to feel very philosophical in nature, i.e., it will ask big questions and focus on argumentation, critical thinking, and reflective (personal) analysis. While we will discover many facts in class, thereby generating a great deal of knowledge about religion, you should expect a lot of thought-provoking discussion and controversy that asks you to think philosophically (radically/deeply).

## Learning Objectives

- The purpose of this course is to provide students with a sense of the main topics and questions in the philosophy (study) of religion.
- Students will examine and analyze important topics and questions about the philosophy of religion as they relate to their own lives.
- We will be asking both specific and broad questions, such as, What is religion? What is truth? In what ways are these things relevant to my own life?
- This is a “big questions” course meant to encourage your reflection and personal involvement with continuing problems and questions.

## Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:
• identify many of the key questions that have occupied scholars of religion throughout the centuries,
• better articulate and recognize persistent questions you may (or may already) have to work through in your own life,
• appreciate the general historical and social context for the study of religion,
• and engage in dialogue as an informed and conscientious citizen.

Performance Expectations
Students are expected to:
• attend class on a regular basis and engage in critical dialogue on the issues relevant to the given week;
• come prepared for discussions having read the relevant materials and thought about the issues;
• learn how to identify parts of arguments and critically examine arguments;
• defend their own views and consider the views of others in light of ongoing class discussions;
• show that they have thoroughly read and considered all of material covered in the course by fulfilling the course terms of evaluation (exams, essay).

Students are therefore responsible for:
• knowing the material presented in lectures, readings, and online notes;
• participating in course discussions and developing critical-rational skills necessary for academic thinking and dialogue.

Required Texts
There are two texts for this course:

This text has a companion website that will be of significant use:
http://www.religion.wadsworth.com/ricther
[Warning: Google Chrome (and perhaps other select browsers) may not fully support this page. I recommend using Internet Explorer. If you can select different chapters on the site then it is probably working.]
  • It is expected that you will do the online exercises. While there is no grade associated with the exercises they are designed to help you perfect your academic skills such as research and critical inquiry.

***Please DO NOT email me your answers to the online exercises. These exercises are for you to determine whether or not you are able to answer academic questions. If you are struggling in any particular area (based on the online exercises) it is recommended that you follow-up in your tutorial with relevant questions on how to better your performance.


Looking for the course texts? Consider some of these sources:
Hick text: $94.00 (used from $26.00) http://www.amazon.ca/Classical-Contemporary-Readings-Philosophy-Religion/dp/0131369040
Richter text:
$132.00 (new) http://www.amazon.ca/Understanding-Religion-Global-Society-Richter/dp/0534559956

**Note:** Students have reported getting one and/or both of these texts for as little as $1 and/or $2 at places like abebooks.com.

### About the Readings
- We shall be reading challenging literature that considers big questions. This means that some, perhaps most, of the material will be difficult to understand. Readings will require extra time and effort on your part to interpret “before” class.
  I shall do my best to explain the material but **if you do not read it before class my explanations will be virtually useless**, for you will have no basis for reflection, correction, relation, etc.
- **Again, readings are to be done “before” class. The quality of course learning relies heavily upon this basic agreement.**

### Moodle
- Moodle [http://moodle.yorku.ca/](http://moodle.yorku.ca/) will be used for the online exam, the posting of grades, and course lecture materials.
- The materials stored on Moodle are for your eyes only.
  None of the material on Moodle should be reproduced or shared with others outside of this class, whether in an online format or otherwise, without your instructor’s permission.
  The materials on Moodle should be considered copyrighted—as either intellectual property of your instructor or that of the relevant copyright holders noted.
- Having trouble with Moodle? Start here: [http://moodle.yorku.ca/students/index.htm](http://moodle.yorku.ca/students/index.htm)

### Evaluation

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tutorial Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Regular participation is mandatory. Merely being present in tutorials does not constitute earning a grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Online” Exam One</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Covers all course materials to this point. Available online <strong>Oct. 22nd at 6pm</strong> for 24hrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay Assignment ONE</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td><strong>Nov. 12th or Nov. 26th.</strong> If you hand your project in on either date you will receive a mark without late penalty. However, if you hand your paper in after the first due date, you will not receive any comments on your essay. Note: If you hand your paper in on the second date it will not be returned, for there will be no comments on it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“In Class” Exam Two</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Covers all course materials to this point. Unlike the first exam, this one will be <strong>written during regular classroom hours on Feb. 11th.</strong></td>
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| Essay Assignment TWO     | 20%    | **Due at the beginning of the last class,** April 1st, handed in personally “and” uploaded to Moodle’s dropbox. The “beginning of class” means the first 15 minutes of class.
  **NOTE:** These papers are NOT handed in during tutorials. These are accepted in our lecture class only. No exceptions, no extensions.
  ***This project will not be returned.*** |
• Assignments not submitted properly will be considered late may be rejected unless accompanied by adequate justification.
• Notification of lateness must be given to your course director before the due date.

Performance Expectations
Students are expected to:
• attend class on a regular basis and engage in critical dialogue on the issues relevant to the given week;
• come prepared for discussions having read the relevant materials and thought about the issues;
• learn how to identify parts of arguments and critically examine arguments;
• defend their own views and consider the views of others in light of ongoing class discussions;
• show that they have thoroughly read and considered all of material covered in the course by fulfilling the course terms of evaluation (exams, essay).

Students are therefore responsible for:
• knowing the material presented in lectures, readings, and online notes;
• participating in course discussions and developing critical-rational skills necessary for academic thinking and dialogue.

Dual Character of Course
• Each class will typically have a large lecture component as well as an open discussion component.
  ▪ The readings (course text, online notes, etc.) are only part of the whole-course experience.
  ▪ Class discussion and dialogue make the course readings relevant, connected, and living.
    ▪ Ignoring either side of the course will significantly reduce the benefits of your university education.
• Discussion and debate is an essential part of the course so students should expect a great deal of both.
  ▪ Sometimes discussion will lead off into areas that may not seem on topic.
  ▪ Generally speaking such sidetracks are important and related to the issues at hand.
  ▪ If the connections are not clear, please ask.
  ▪ Also, students will be given plenty of time to express their own views and beliefs.
    Patience and understanding on behalf of others is important.
  ▪ Mutual respect is expected of all participants in this course.

Tutorials
• You will meet in groups of 25 with your tutorial leader once a week.
• In tutorials you may ask questions about the lectures, discuss the course readings, seek clarification about the assignments, receive feedback on your assignments, and develop the critical skills necessary to succeed in the university.
• To do well in this course, you need to take full advantage of your tutorials which means coming to class well-prepared.
• It is your responsibility to do the readings ahead of time and bring questions; read over your lecture notes and identify issues you would like to clarify and explore; and to identify questions about the assignments.

Tutorial Participation
• Tutorial participation is required and graded (at the end of the year).
  ▪ You will be graded on your participation in tutorials (not merely attendance).

Tutorial leaders are making qualitative judgements of your performance based on key criteria:
  - Are you informed of the relevant course content?
  - Are you able to critically discuss materials presented in that day’s class?
  - Have you done the readings? Can you respond to questions about the readings?
  - Do you offer discussion and critical evaluation of concepts and ideas (from the text and class lecture)?
  - Do you contributemeaningfully and consistently to tutorial conversations?
  - Are you able to help others understand difficult ideas (this requires advanced understanding on your part)?

Participation involves far more than mere attendance. However, as a general guideline, no student will earn full participation marks unless they have met the following “minimum” attendance criteria:

If you miss:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 class</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>9</th>
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<tr>
<td>A+(10%)</td>
<td>A(8%)</td>
<td>B(6%)</td>
<td>C(4%)</td>
<td>D(2%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>A(9%)</td>
<td>B+(7%)</td>
<td>C+(5%)</td>
<td>D+(3%)</td>
<td>E/F(0%)</td>
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Note: merely being present in (every) tutorial does NOT guarantee you an “A” grade.

▪ Being present is merely a preamble or precondition for your participation (contribution) that may earn you an “A” grade.
▪ It is possible to be present at every tutorial and yet fail your participation grade.
▪ In summary, you must be present “and” you must contribute in a sustained and meaningful manner throughout the year.

• The time in tutorials is limited so you should not expect a “re-teaching” of lectures.
• Tutorials are meant to clarify difficult concepts and to delve deeper into the material.
• If you miss a class it is your responsibility to seek out missed information from fellow students, but not during tutorial. While there may be time set aside to review a lecture in tutorial, a comprehensive review of a missed lecture would be impractical (and unfair to other students). In short, tutorials are not meant to be “make-up” lectures.
• Attendance will be taken at the beginning (within first three minutes) of each tutorial.
  ▪ If you are more than 3 minutes late or if you leave early, you will be marked as absent.
• If a student misses a tutorial s/he will be marked as absent. While such an absence may be for various reasons it is the course policy NOT to negotiate about absences.
  (the exceptions being hospitalization, a death in the family or documented critical illness)
• If a tutorial is missed the grade cannot be earned another way.
  
  - Do NOT ask your TA/tutorial leader to switch your tutorial groups or to re-grade your paper/exams. Please consult your course director regarding such matters.

Why Tutorials and Tutorial Participation?
• The large lecture format has many positive elements but it is not ideal in certain respects. To compensate for the large lecture format tutorial groups provide a very important opportunity for your individual learning.
• Tutorials offer students the opportunity to create and sustain personal conversation and dialogue about important ideas and questions. Moreover, the group benefits from the contributions of the individual. Making a commitment to attend tutorials will support your own learning experience as well as benefit the group.
• Tutorials are opportunities to explore elements and ideas of the course that we cannot fully engage in the lecture, thereby making tutorials essential.

Essays
• You are expected to write two, 2300-3000 word essays (excluding endnotes) for this course.
• Remember that the success of an essay is often proportional to the amount of work and effort you put into it, not merely by the amount that you write. What matters is the quality and care of your writing and the thought behind it.

Note: As a general rule, students want more direction/instruction on writing papers than I will give.
  
  - At no time will you be told “exactly” how to write a paper.
• You are given ample instruction on the core requirements of a paper, but a paper is considered an “independent” project for which “you” determine the best materials, presentation style, approach, tone, content, etc.
  
  - My expectations are clearly outlined here, e.g., an expectations of research and argumentation, but no absolutes or specifics on how these will be executed—that’s your job (I realize it isn’t an easy one).
• Be sure to plan ahead so that you may ask questions in class about how to do the paper before it is due.

Submission
• You must submit papers to me (i.e., your tutorial leader) in person, as well as to the MOODLE “dropbox.”
• Your paper will only be considered received when the hard copy is in my personal possession (or your tutorial leader’s possession) and has been submitted to MOODLE.
• You may submit one file only, so be sure it is the right file.
• Make sure the file is in Microsoft Word format (doc. or docx.) or Rich Text Format (RTF).
• The purpose of uploading your paper to MOODLE is to check for potential issues of academic misconduct. MOODLE matches your paper against all of those in this course as well as countless other papers.
• Students are presumed innocent of academic misconduct unless there are indications otherwise. Matching software is utilized by instructional staff only “after” such indications become evident, not before.
**Format**
Failure to follow any of these will result in a lower grade.

- Make sure you describe your topic at the beginning of the essay, so that we know what to expect.
  (Have a thesis statement. If you don’t know what that is, make an appointment with the writing and resources centre to get some help with such matters. They are very helpful and welcoming people.)
- Create a title for your essay.
- Every idea, argument or fact that is not your own, i.e. derived from another source must be correctly referenced using APA or MLA or Chicago style.

**Resources to Assist in Writing Style**
Chicago and MLA styles are the most common styles in Liberal Arts/Humanities courses.
Chicago [http://www.libs.uga.edu/ref/chicago.html](http://www.libs.uga.edu/ref/chicago.html)
APA [http://www.libs.uga.edu/ref/apastyle.pdf](http://www.libs.uga.edu/ref/apastyle.pdf)
- MLA is typically best. Getting the MLA Handbook is a good idea.
- You may use the personal pronoun “I” but avoid “you” and “we” (too general).
- Avoid contractions, e.g. “don’t” or “can’t”. Use “do not” or “cannot”.
- **Give the word count at the end of the paper.**
- Use standard-size (8 ½x 11) paper,
  1" margins on all sides (“normal” setting in MS Word 2007 and newer),
  page numbers (whenever), and
  Times New Roman font - 12 pt.
  Double-space your paper (not spacing of 1.8, 2.2, etc., I can tell), with your name and student I.D. somewhere obvious. Do not put extra spaces between paragraphs.
- A title page is necessary. The style is up to you but it should have your name, student ID, date of submission, and title of paper. Use only your legal name as it appears on university documents, i.e., do not use short-form or abbreviated names.
- Print on one side of the page only.
- Submit only typed papers using only black ink or toner (no coloured text).
- Do not use ringed binders or other booklet like covers.
- I cannot accept unstapled papers (and I do not bring a stapler to class).
- You do NOT need a Works Cited or Bibliography page.
- Always keep a copy of your paper!
- Use endnotes rather than footnotes. Google “how to make endnotes” or try here [http://www.douglas.bc.ca/__shared/assets/WR7_60_How_to_Make_Footnotes_or_Endnotes45957.pdf](http://www.douglas.bc.ca/__shared/assets/WR7_60_How_to_Make_Footnotes_or_Endnotes45957.pdf)
or [http://facstaff.bloomu.edu/hickey/ENDNOTE%20FORM.htm#How to Make numbers](http://facstaff.bloomu.edu/hickey/ENDNOTE%20FORM.htm#How to Make numbers)or [http://www.aresearchguide.com/7footnot.html](http://www.aresearchguide.com/7footnot.html)
- Compiling extra material (bibliographic, comments, etc.) at the end of a paper makes it easier to calculate the total number of pages used. Endnotes “do not” count as part of the total page limit. Only the main body of your essay counts.

**The Role of Quotations in Essays**
• Avoid quotes (large or small) unless central to your discussion.
• If you quote something, discuss it at length.
• Avoid using quotes to deliver basic ideas or arguments that you could easily say yourself, in your own words.
• Quotes should NOT do the talking for you. You are the writer (the speaker), it is your voice the reader is hearing.

Essential elements that should be present in all papers:
(a) a sustained treatment of the major issues (rather than sporadic comments on minor issues),
(b) an argument for or against a specific view (including a counterargument to whatever position is taken),
(c) clear evidence of research (e.g., journal articles, book reviews),
(d) some connection between the material researched and a contemporary problem or issue it addresses (e.g., potentially solves), and
(e) clear evidence of your own views and opinions being challenged (i.e., stating what you think, and then producing questions that challenge your views—in short, show that you are interacting with and thinking about the material sincerely).

• These are not merely opinion papers but research and critical discussion papers. Supply evidence for every claim you make.
• Avoid all online materials unless found through a library’s subscription to online content.
• Avoid using lecture notes.

Essay Topics
• Your two essays may be written on any two of the topics listed below.
• Beyond the topics listed below, students are free to write on any topic directly related to the course (after gaining approval from the relevant tutorial leader), so long as they offer these essential elements that should be present in all papers:

(a) a sustained treatment of the major issues (rather than sporadic comments on minor issues),
(b) an argument for or against a specific view (including a counterargument to whatever position is taken),
(c) clear evidence of research (e.g., journal articles, book reviews),
(d) some connection between the material researched and a contemporary problem or issue it addresses (e.g., potentially solves), and
(e) clear evidence of your own views and opinions being challenged (i.e., stating what you think, and then producing questions that challenge your views—in short, show that you are interacting with and thinking about the material sincerely).

• These are not merely opinion papers but research and critical discussion papers.

Topics
#1 Explain the Problem of Evil.
Why is this perceived to be a serious problem for theism?
Are there solutions to the problem?
What are the implications if we can or cannot solve the problem?
Be creative in your response.
• You need to explain clearly what the problem of evil is and why it is a problem.
  • This question involves explaining the main tenets of theism with a focus on one particular form (e.g. Christian or Muslim theism).
Consider how theists may attempt to resolve the problem (e.g. Hick’s version of the Irenaen Theodicy) and assess whether the attempt is successful.

Go beyond the class lectures and text to research other options that you find more persuasive.

Be critical, clear, and argumentative (giving reasons or “whys” for your position).

Do not merely repeat what you have learned in class but find out more on your own.

#2 Write on “nothing.”

How is the concept or notion of “nothing” important to philosophy in general and the philosophy of religion in particular?

Does “nothing” serve a discernable role that we should take seriously? E.g., of what significance is it for Aquinas? Hint: You may want to begin by looking online at things such as this: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nothing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nothing)

Suggested starting strategy: offer a brief etymological background for the term and its various uses throughout history; compare and contrast closely related concepts; explain what you find interesting, annoying, shallow, deep, etc., about “nothing”; respond to the claim that it is merely a “mental game” to keep philosophers and theologians employed and does not have any meaningful use at all.

You are free to interact with the material as creatively as you see fit, but do so with clarity and precision.

Note: while it is helpful to consider specific philosophers (e.g., Martin Heidegger, who is well-known for having lectured and published on “nothing”), be sure to include your own thoughts and reasons on the matter.

#3 Write a “critical” review that challenges some of the major assumptions in Bill Maher’s movie “Religulous.”

This is not merely an opinion piece but a well thought out, critical, and researched work.

You are not merely picking ideas out of the sky, but researching them and backing them up with clear reasoning and argumentation.

Where does Maher make mistakes? Is his reasoning clear or flawed? In what ways?

Does he accomplish what he sets out to do? If so, in what ways?

Are there inconsistencies, errors, fallacies of reasoning in Maher’s approach that you can fix? If so do so.

#4 Faith is crucial both in Kierkegaard’s and Tillich’s views. **What does each mean by ‘faith’, and what role do they assign to faith?**

Explicate relevant passages from each and compare and contrast them.

Critically examine each depiction of ‘faith’ to determine whether either is problematic.

It will be helpful to read more about their notions of ‘faith.’

- E.g. look up Kierkegaard’s account of the Abraham story in his *Fear and Trembling*

Note: whether you are religious or not you need to adopt a critical stance.

#5 Write on the “absurd.” Is the concept or notion of the “absurd” important to philosophy in general and the philosophy of religion in particular?

Does the “absurd” serve a discernable role that we should take seriously? Why or why not?

After you consider the notion in general, focus on one or two particular uses of it (e.g. “absurdism” in Kierkegaard) and tell me what it says about life and truth. Do you agree? Tell me why it is right or wrong.
• Suggested starting strategy: offer a brief etymological background for the term and its various uses; compare and contrast closely related concepts; explain what you find interesting, annoying, shallow, deep, etc., about the “absurd”; respond to the claim that it is absurd to appeal to the absurd as a basis for our life-decisions.

#6 Freud distinguishes between religious illusion and delusion. James discusses religious experience and postulates specific criteria for recognizing genuine mystical experience. Is it really possible to distinguish religious experience from religious delusion?

- Explicate the relevant passages from each
- Critically examine the implications of claims to religious experiences in light of James’ and Freud’s views
- A current example(s) or case relating claims to religious experience will greatly help to examine implications
- Note: whether you are religious or not you need to adopt a critical stance.

A Few General Points on the Essay Topics:

- Sub-questions and themes considered might include, but are not limited to: What sort of major questions are raised (even if you don’t answer them)?
- You will have to be very selective in what you discuss in your papers, so pick out important ideas. Part of thinking critically is learning how to see what is relevant and important, and what is not.
- Do not simply repeat course materials but draw clear connections between course materials and what is most important (to you).
- This is a creative exercise and one that will require a great deal of time and, of course, personal reflection.

Basic Essay Structure

- **Introduction**: state what will happen in this essay
  - What the topic is about
  - E.g. what the author argues
  - What you intend to persuade/convince the reader of
  - The thesis you will argue for and the main points of how you will arrive at that

- **Main Body of the essay**: division into clear paragraphs
  - Each paragraph should address a specific argument that is made by the author, or examined, or provided by you with the help of your research
  - There need to be clear transitions of thought between paragraphs
  - The main body of the essay needs to have a logical build up or structure that leads the reader to the main conclusion that proves the thesis
  - Obvious objections to one’s argument must be considered and answered

- **Conclusion**: the concluding section needs to prove the thesis to be correct. This is not a mere restatement, but a pulling together of all main points argued in the essay.

What is a Research Paper?

A research paper offers your reader the concise (focused, narrowed) results of your lengthy research. More than merely a “presentation” of stuff you’ve found elsewhere, however, it will also offer at least one clear argument (minimum), i.e., providing reasons for why your reader should be persuaded that what you are saying is true, probable, good, well-considered, etc. A research paper will take your reader on a journey. When that journey is over, hopefully he or she will agree with what you think.
A research paper brings together the information and ideas you have discovered through research as well as your own ideas and beliefs—thereby creating a new product that is more than merely a parroting back of another person’s work. The stuff you find needs to be processed, considered, thought through, debated (all by you), and then creatively and forcefully delivered through your writing. By doing so you will demonstrate that you understand the concepts and ideas at hand. The more sources you read and explore the better your own ideas and reflections will be, for you will be better informed and more thorough in your treatment. Research alone is insufficient. Personal opinion is insufficient. Reasoning and argumentation without either research or personal opinion are also insufficient. Woven together well, these elements are the backbone of a research paper.

Why Write a Research Paper?

(1) To increase your awareness and knowledge about a particular topic;
(2) to challenge your preconceptions and beliefs regarding a particular topic and its relationship to other important issues;
(3) to allow you the opportunity to gain valuable experience expressing your ideas and thoughts through a written medium (one of the most important mediums human beings may experience);
(4) to encourage the development of researching skills, i.e., the ability to find relevant concepts and arguments;
(5) to help you learn how to (a) arrive at your own educated and reasoned conclusion (one not forced upon you, but one you create/arrive at) and (b) communicate effectively by first organizing and structuring your ideas in a well-considered manner.

Plagiarism

- Your instructor has a zero tolerance policy on plagiarism.
- In cases of confirmed academic misconduct the assignment or test in question will receive a 0%. There are no make-up assignments or tests in this case. No alternative forms of grade improvement will be made available.
- Additionally, in confirmed cases of academic misconduct formal charges of said conduct will be filed with the school.
- Academic misconduct may result in a failing grade in the course. Other penalties may be applied by the student’s home faculty.

ONLINE EXAM

- **Note:** A lengthy review of the course materials relevant to the exam will not be given. Instead students must come to class prepared with questions of interest/concern. A complete (or half) course review beyond only a most superficial level would prove impossible, thereby making any such attempt frustrating at best.
  - In short, if students would like a review in some form I will expect any outstanding questions to be presented to me in class so that I might answer them (which I’m very happy to do, even if it takes a whole class). This approach will offer a much more focussed and in-depth review.
- The exam will be accessible through Moodle for a **24 hour period**, after that the window is closed and it will not be re-opened. The exam will become available to you at **6pm** on the day indicated.
Please pay careful attention to the schedule. **If you miss the exam, only extreme and documented emergencies will qualify you for alternate consideration.**

Given that you have a 24 hour period in which to complete the exam—which can be done almost anywhere in the world—technical problems will not be accepted as grounds for re-consideration.

**Do the exam earlier rather than later.** Most technical problems can be fixed in a few hours, so doing your quiz when it is first available is the most rational course of action—just in case there are glitches on your system.

The exam will be timed. Once the time limit has been reached you will be unable to change your answers or answer more questions. **The time limit will make the exam very challenging,** so you must prepare for the exam thoroughly.

You can expect true/false, multiple choice, and perhaps other kinds of questions.

Questions will reflect course lectures and text readings covered up to that point.

Exam questions are randomly generated by a database of questions, so no two quizzes are the same.

(Even I do not know what the questions will be)

I recommend becoming familiar with Moodle prior to your first exam.

The instructor reserves the right to request students rewrite (the same or similar) online exams or online quizzes in person, in hard copy, if academic misconduct is suspected.

If a student takes longer to write an exam than is allowed, 10% of the grade will be reduced for every 5 minutes in excess of the allotted time (beginning at 1 minute over).

**Technical Problems:**

- Please do not email your course director for help with technical issues.
  You must resolve those on your own.
- If you experience a technical problem it is most likely your browser.
  Try a different browser or update your current one.
- It is recommended that you become familiar with Moodle prior to your first quiz.

**Note:**

- The wording on exams will be in modern English, as well as formal and academic in tone.
- If you are unfamiliar with the academic tone please be sure to familiarize yourself with academic sources in order to better prepare for the kind of wording you will experience on the quizzes/exam(s), i.e., the formal rather than merely the vernacular (ordinary).
- There will be no verbal tricks such as double-negatives on the exams. However, there may be challenging phrasing that requires a process of elimination, i.e., Which of the following is NOT a major theory attributed to Aristotle?

**Alternative Assignments**

- There are no alternative assignments or make-up assignments for this course.
- Only extreme and documented sickness may justify alternative arrangements.
- **If you fail to notify your course director before the assignment due date you will nullify any claim to alternative considerations.**
- The exception to this rule is extreme illness that prevents you from being reasonably expected to contact your instructor, i.e., hospitalization.

**Other Course Related Information**
I Late Penalties, Missed Assignments, Etc.

***There is a gap in my office door for late submissions. These submissions are counted as received only when I have personally seen them. If you miss an assignment or exam—you’ve missed the assignment or exam. You will need to support an extraordinary circumstance by which to justify an alternative assignment.

- For all submitted coursework that is late there will be a 10% per day reduction in grade.

Final Papers/Assignments
- Assignments are to be handed in at the beginning of class.
  - The “beginning” of class means the first 15 minutes.
- No assignment/paper will be accepted before the due date.
- Assignments will be accepted at the beginning of class only. Failure to arrive on time will count as late or incomplete on the assignment.

II Important Dates
Important University Sessional Dates (you will find classes and exams start/end dates, reading/curricular week, add/drop deadlines, holidays, University closings and more.
http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/enrol/dates/index.htm

III Students with Special Needs
York University is committed to making reasonable accommodations and adaptations in order to make equitable the educational experience of students with special needs and to promote their full integration into the campus community. Please alert the course instructor as soon as possible should you require special accommodations.
See Counselling and Disability Services here; http://www.yorku.ca/cds/

IV Academic and Research Misconduct
Students are expected to be aware of and abide by University regulations and policies. Academic misconduct is an act by a student, or by students working on a team project, which may result in a false evaluation of the student(s), or which represents a deliberate attempt to unfairly gain an academic advantage.

Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form and have it checked for plagiarism.

The University takes academic integrity very seriously: in addition to the strategies presented on this site, please visit an overview of Academic Integrity at York University from the Office of the Vice-President Academic. http://vpacademic.yorku.ca/academicintegrity/index.php

V Turnitin
This course employs turnitin as a means of matching text. Instructors requiring the use of text-matching software in a course are obligated to provide alternative methods for assessing the authenticity of a student’s work for students who elect not to use the text matching service software. The university recommends the following alternative methods:
- Submitting multiple drafts
- Submitting a detailed annotated bibliography
- Submitting photocopies of source documents
- Taking an oral examination directed at issues of originality
• Responding in writing to questions directed at issues of originality
• Providing a written report concerning the process of completing the work
• More than one of the above
• An alternative system for verifying authenticity, approved by the Departmental Chair or Dean of a Faculty

- Should a student wish to opt out of submitting work to turnitin he or she must advise the instructor at the beginning of the term so that alternative methods may be employed in a timely manner.

Why Turnitin?
There are many reasons to use turnitin such as its level of sophistication, speed, and scope of comparison. Most students that accept the use of turnitin (at other institutions using turnitin) seem to do so because it ensures a level playing field in determining grades for their work and it helps support the perceived quality of their degree, i.e., it helps maintain the status and social recognition of your degree. This is a complex argument with some problems but the basic reasoning is popular—the more uniform and thorough the hunt for academic misconduct is, the more reputable the degree and institution will be, thereby benefitting the student and the university.

VI Email
Please use email sparingly if/when possible. Most questions may easily be answered by looking at the course syllabus.

- Having said that, it is important that you email your course director whenever you experience a problem or if you have a question for which you cannot find the answer! Do not hesitate to get in touch. **When in doubt, email!**

Only use your official university email account to send me emails. This is the only reliable platform from which to send emails. Hotmail, Google, etc., should not be used for university business.
Also, just so that no one thinks I am avoiding his or her email, **I do not check email on weekends.**

Class Cancellations
It is important to check your email (the one registered with the university, and therefore with Moodle) before class. **If there is a class cancellation due to instructor illness, etc., you will be notified by email.**

VII MISC
The Senate Academic Standards, Curriculum and Pedagogy (ASCP) provides a **Student Information Sheet** that includes:

- [York's Academic Honesty Policy](#) and Procedures / [Academic Integrity Web site](#)
- [Access/Disability](#)
- [Ethics Review Process](#) for Research Involving Human Participants
- [Religious Observance Accommodation](#)
- [Student Code of Conduct](#)

Additional information:

- [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Alternate Exam and Test Scheduling](#)

Services for Mature and Part-time Students
The Atkinson Centre for Mature and Part-time Students (ACMAPS) maintains and strengthens York University’s ongoing commitment to welcome and to serve the needs of mature and part-time students. For further information and assistance visit: [http://www.yorku.ca/acmaps](http://www.yorku.ca/acmaps)