

The College of the Humanities (Religion)
Nature and the Category of the Sacred
Seminar RELI 4850A/5850F

Thursdays 11:35 – 2:25 PA 2A46

Professor Noel Salmond

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Office Hours: Thursdays 3:00 – 4:30 pm (or by appointment)

It is now widely accepted that humanity has entered a new epoch, the Anthropocene, where human activity has radically altered the planetary landscape and the very chemistry of the atmosphere. Warnings of possible environmental catastrophe have moved from the periphery to near the centre of public and political discourse. Some skeptical critics have dismissed this as a return of religious apocalypticism. Other voices have taken the opposite view: that what is in fact needed at this historical juncture *is* a return of religion, at least in the form of reverence for nature and the re-enchantment of the world through recovery of the category of the sacred. This seminar investigates what is meant when humans invoke the term “sacred.” In particular, what does it mean, both theologically and legally, to declare a geographical location a sacred site? How does the secular state respond to claims of sacrality? How are we to adjudicate differing visions of how to create an “ecological civilization”? The seminar engages these questions by focusing on a local and contemporary instantiation of environmental debate: the contestation over the development of the Chaudière Falls and its islands (regarded as an Indigenous sacred site) here in Ottawa at the heart of the national capital.

The course is in two parts divided by the Fall Break. In the first we read theory of the sacred and its loss through disenchantment in the dominant culture. In the second part we turn to the place of the sacred in Canadian Indigenous cultures and our local Ottawa case study.

READINGS

These are available on the cuLearn site and the ARES library platform. They include the readings given in the schedule below as well as links to a variety of websites, primary source documents, and blog posts related to the local Chaudière Falls controversy.

EVALUATION

Reading Responses for 10 weeks = 15%

Each week you are to post a paragraph length reflection on an idea in one or more of the readings for that week. You are also to post a paragraph on either your potential essay topic, or, once that has been decided, on an insight or development in your research for your paper. Responses may include a question you would like to see addressed by the group. These response/reflections are to be posted on the cuLearn site by Wednesday, i.e., *the day before* our weekly meeting. They will be visible to all in the seminar and will allow me to offer my own feedback. These responses are to promote informed engagement at the weekly meeting which is the *sine qua non* of success in this seminar. They are also intended to keep you oriented and attentive to your research endeavour.

Seminar Presentation and Participation 25%

Each student will be responsible for presenting on the readings for the week once in the semester. This, along with brief oral presentation of your final paper, will be worth approximately 10% and will be added to the assessment of your overall engagement with the course material as reflected in your participation (15%) in the seminar. Note: *to miss more than three of the weekly meetings (which would mean, in effect, you had missed a third of the class) is to forfeit credit for the course*

Essay Proposal 10%

Suggested topics will be provided. The proposal indicates your choice from among the topics. It is to consist of a working title, a working bibliography, and a preliminary abstract that details a preliminary thesis statement. The tentative thesis statement should indicate how you intend to focus the chosen topic and the argument to be developed. **Due Oct. 20.** Note: This proposal is an absolutely essential feature of the course. Decisions have to be made early regarding your topic as your research essay may necessitate using inter-library loan and other research avenues that necessitate being well underway by mid semester.

Editorial Exercise 10%

600 -700 words following the genre required for submission of an opinion piece to a newspaper. This is an exercise in concision, cogency, and communicative style. **Due by Dec. 2.**

Research Essay 40%

A research essay on the order of 15 -20, double-spaced pages. [M.A. students 20- 25 pages] Topics must be approved by the instructor. Essays must have a clearly articulated thesis. *Essays must also include an abstract.* **Due Dec. 8.** Note: late papers (except with medical documentation) are docked 4 percentage points per day.

Note: All course requirements listed above must be fulfilled to gain credit for this course

SCHEDULE

Note: This schedule is malleable and may be affected by the availability of guest speakers

Part I

1. Thurs. Sept. 8

Introduction to the course.

Reading: on the concept of the Anthropocene (selected resources)

2. Thurs. Sept. 15

Classical theorists of the Sacred

Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, Oxford: OUP, 1979. pp. 1-24.

Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, New York: Harcourt, 1957.

Introduction, pp. 8-18; ch. 1, “Sacred Space and Making the World Sacred,” pp. 20-65.

3. Thurs. Sept. 22

Eliade cont., and critical appraisal

Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, ch. 3 “The Sacredness of Nature and Cosmic Religion,” pp. 116-159.

Veikko Anttonen “Sacred.” In *Guide to the Study of Religion*, ed. Willi Braun and Russell McCutcheon, London: Cassell, 2000. pp. 271-282.

4. Thurs. Sept. 29

Disenchantment I

Max Weber, “Science as a Vocation”

Lynn White Jr., “The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis.” *Science*, New Series, 155, no. 3767 (March 1967): 1203-1207.

5. Thurs. Oct. 6

Disenchantment II

Bronislaw Szerszynski, *Nature, Technology and the Sacred*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2005. Part I Modernity, Nature and the Sacred, ch. 1 “The Disenchantment of the World,” pp. 3- 9; ch. 2, “Nature, Secularization and the Transformation of the Sacred,” pp. 20-27; Part II, Nature and Technology, ch. 3 “Nature, Science and the Death of Pan,” pp. 31-50

6. Thurs. Oct. 13

Reactions to Disenchantment I

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Religion and the Order of Nature*, New York: OUP, 1996. ch. 8, “Religion and the Resacralization of Nature,” pp. 270-292.

7. Thurs. Oct. 20

Reactions to Disenchantment II

Arne Naess, “The shallow and the deep, long-range ecology movement. A summary.” *Inquiry* 16.1 (1973): 95-100

Thomas Berry, “The Universe Story.” In *Liberating Faith: Religious Voices for Justice, Peace, and Ecological Wisdom*, ed. Roger S. Gottlieb. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003.

8. Thurs. Oct. 27 **FALL BREAK**

Part II

9. Thurs. Nov. 3

An Ottawa story

Samuel de Champlain, *Journal*, 1613

Philemon Wright, “An account of the first settlement of the Township of Hull, on the Ottawa River, Lower Canada.” *The Canadian Magazine and Literary Repository*, Volume 3, no. 15 (September, 1824): 234-246

Jean-Luc Pilon and Randy Boswell, “Below the Falls: An Ancient Cultural Landscape in the Centre of (Canada’s Capital Region) Gatineau.” *Canadian Journal of Archaeology* 39 (2015): 257-293.

10. Thurs. Nov. 5

Indigenous Lifeways

Irving Hallowell, “Ojibwa ontology, behavior, and world view.” In *Readings in Indigenous Religions*, ed. Graham Harvey, London: Continuum, 2002.

Peter Nabokov, *Where the Lightning Strikes: The Lives of American Indian Sacred Places*, ch. 2, “Naming the Spirits – Ojibwa,” pp. 20-34.

11. Thurs. Nov. 10

Indigenous Sacred

Bryan Cummings and Kirby Whiteduck, “Towards a Model for the Identification and Recognition of Sacred Sites” (pp 3-24); Leroy Little Bear, “Aboriginal Relationships to the Land and Resources” (pp. 15-20); Peter Kulchynski, “Bush/Lands: Some Problems in Defining the Sacred” (pp. 21-24). In *Sacred Lands: Aboriginal World Views, Claims and Conflicts*, eds. Jill Oakes et al. Edmonton: Canadian Circumpolar Institute, 1998.

12. Thurs. Nov. 17

Sacred in the Courts I

Darlene Johnston, "Respecting and Protecting the Sacred." A Report for the Ipperwash Inquiry (2006) pp. 1-37.

13. Thurs. Nov. 24

Sacred in the Courts II

Michael Lee Ross, *First Nations Sacred Sites in Canada's Courts*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005. Introduction, pp.1-6; ch. 1, "The Outlines of a General Theory of Sacred Sites," pp.7-11.

Marc Fonda, "Are they like us yet? Some thoughts on why religious freedom remains elusive for Aboriginals in North America." *The International Indigenous Policy Journal*. 2.4.4 (2011): 1-14.

14. Thurs. Dec. 1

Settler and Indigenous Imagination

Ter Ellingson, *The Myth of the Noble Savage*, Berkeley: University of California Press, ch. 21, "The Ecologically Noble Savage," pp. 342-358.

Byron Plant, "Secret, Powerful, and the Stuff of Legends: Revisiting Theories of Invented Tradition." *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies*. 28.1 (2008): 175-194

15. Thurs. Dec. 8

Symposium

Fifteen minute oral presentations of research papers

Religion and Public Life and Carleton University Policies (2016-17)

Assignments:

Unless specifically told otherwise by their instructors, students:

- must not use a plastic or cardboard cover or paper clips
- must staple the paper (there is a stapler on the essay box)
- must include the following:
 - Student name; Student number;
 - Course number & section; Instructor's name
- No assignments will be accepted after the last day for handing in term work – see dates in next column.
- For assignments left in the Drop Box just inside 2A Paterson Hall beside 2A39, the box will be emptied every day at 8:30 a.m., assignments taken out at that time will be date-stamped with the previous day's date, after 8:30 a.m. the current date will be used.
- Students are required to keep copies of their assignments. If your paper is lost at any point, you will be considered not to have submitted it if you cannot produce a copy immediately on request.

Grading System:

Item #10 in the Graduate Calendar – General Regulations
<http://calendar.carleton.ca/grad/gradregulations/>

Deferrals for Term Work:

If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a final assignment by the due date because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply for a deferral of examination/assignment. For deferred examinations, you must apply within 5 working days after the scheduled date of your exam. To apply for deferral of a final assignment, you must apply within 5 working days of the last scheduled day of classes. Visit the Registrar's Office for more information.

Plagiarism:

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the meaning of 'plagiarism' as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. (Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations, section 14.3, or <http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/acadregsuniv14/>

Academic Accommodation:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website:

<http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Religious obligation: write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website:

<http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The **Paul Menton Centre** for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your **Letter of Accommodation** at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure

accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*) at <http://www2.carleton.ca/PMC/new-and-current-students/dates-and-deadlines/>

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Important Dates:

Sept. 7	Classes start.
Sept. 20	Last day for registration and course changes in Fall and Fall/Winter courses.
Sept. 30	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from Fall term or two-term courses.
Oct. 10	Thanksgiving Day – University closed.
Oct. 24-28	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 25	Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000-level before the Final Examination period.
Dec. 9	Last day of classes, Fall term. Classes follow a Monday schedule.
Dec. 9	Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for Fall term courses.
Dec. 9	Last day to withdraw from Fall term courses (academic purposes only).
Dec. 10-22	Final examinations for Fall courses, mid-terms for Fall/Winter courses. Exams are normally held all seven days of the week.
Dec. 22	Take-home exams are due.
Jan. 5	Winter term classes begin.
Jan. 18	Last day for registration and course changes in Winter term classes.
Jan. 31	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter courses or winter portion of two-term courses.
Feb. 20	Family Day – University closed.
Feb. 20-24	Winter Break, no classes.
Mar. 24	Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000-level before the Final Examination period.
Apr. 7	Last day of Fall/Winter and Winter term classes. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for Fall/Winter and Winter term courses.
Apr. 7	Last day to withdraw from Fall/Winter and Winter term courses (academic purposes only).
Apr. 10-25	Final Examinations. Exams are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 14	Good Friday – University closed.
Apr. 25	Take-home exams are due.

Addresses:

Religion:	2A39 Paterson Hall www.carleton.ca/religion
Registrar's Office:	520-2100 300 Tory www.carleton.ca/registrar 520-3500
Student Academic & Career Development Services:	302 Tory www.carleton.ca/sasc 520-7850
Writing Tutorial Service:	4 th Floor, Library http://www1.carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service/ 520-6632
MacOdrum Library	http://www.library.carleton.ca/ 520-2735