

The College of Humanities: Religion
RELI 5780W: Research Methods Seminar

Professor A. Geissinger
Office Hours: Tuesdays 9:30-11:30 am,
or by appointment

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Office phone: (613) 520-2600, ext. 3108
Email: Aisha_Geissinger@carleton.ca

Class meetings: Mondays 11:35 am-2:25 pm (PA 2A46)

Course Description

This seminar is a workshop, which guides students in the Religion MA program through the process of producing a major paper proposal and the initial stages of writing the major research essay (MRE).

Course Objectives and Evaluation

The mark you receive will be based on whether and to what extent you meet the course objectives:

- (1) To engage fully and to actively participate each and every week;
- (2) To perform at a high level in the course exercises;
- (3) To offer high quality interaction (detailed questions, comments, critiques, support) with the work of your peers;
- (4) To submit a high quality 20 page written section of your MRE plus bibliography on or before April 15, 2015.

In this course, class participation and interaction with your peers work together, and are measured together when determining whether you have met the objectives of the course. The “quality” of your interaction with your peers in class is determined using the following questions: Were you helpful and did you ask useful questions? Were you fully engaged? The “quality” of your workshop exercises (bibliography, editing exercises, etc) is measured according to the results: Is your bibliography set up correctly, and error-free? Did your editing improve the work?

The graduate student grade-range most prominent in North America is A+ to B-, where a B- is the equivalent to an F, and a B is equivalent to a D. It is *generally* the case that graduate grades in the B range mean you will not be going on to doctoral level work. Take grades in the B-range extremely seriously.

- B+ indicates that you barely met the objectives;
- A- indicates that you met the objectives but only adequately;
- A indicates that you met the objectives really well (this is the most common grade);
- A+ indicates that you went well beyond the objectives; your work was exceptional.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (Jan. 5)—Writing long papers; how we do research; how we publish

Week 2 (Jan. 12)—Bibliography software

Week 3 (Jan. 19)—In-class presentation of MA essay outlines (BC, AC, KE, KM, SP) *

Week 4 (Jan. 26)—In-class presentation of MA essay outlines (JS, MT, KW, MW)

Week 5 (Feb. 2)—Discussion of editing exercises

Week 6 (Feb. 9)—Student-led seminar (BC, AC, KE)

Week 7—Winter Break (no class)

Week 8 (Feb. 23)—Student-led seminar (KM, SP)

Week 9 (March 2)—Student-led seminar (JS, MT)

Week 10 (March 9)—Student-led seminar (KW, MW)

Week 11 (March 16)—Preparation (day off)

Week 12 (March 23)—Discussion of MA essay proposals (BC, AC, KE)

Week 13 (March 30)—Discussion of MA essay proposals (KM, SP, JS)

Week 14 (April 6)—Discussion of MA essay proposals (MT, KW, MW)

*Please note that the order of presenters is in alphabetical order by last name. You are free to arrange with a classmate to exchange dates if you wish, but you must let me know before class. Otherwise, I will assume that this order still stands.

Course Exercises

Write an Academic Agenda (Jan 5)

Due electronically on Jan 5, at the end of class.

Chart an academic agenda for yourself. What do you have to do to finish on time? How are you going to do it? What are your weaknesses as a scholar?

- Is it your writing? Systematic research? Synthesizing material?
- More importantly: how are you going to address your weaknesses? Being a scholar is about being self-critical, self-aware.

Editing Workshop (Jan 5-Feb 2):

- **Step One:** On Jan 12, submit (original electronic file, not the marked up copy) to me a document you wrote for any university course in the past.
- **Step Two:** On Jan 12, I will give you a book review which contains errors. Edit it. Hand it in at the start of class on Jan 19.
- **Step Three:** On Jan 19, I will give you 2-3 pages of your own work for you to edit. Edit it by hand, return it to me at the start of class on Jan 26. I will make copies of your edited page during the break and distribute it to everyone. The objective here is to learn to become ruthless editors of your own writing
- **Step Four:** On Feb. 2, we will have an editing workshop and discussion, in which we will peer-review everyone's *self-editing*.
- **Step Five:** Write a brief reflection piece on how you might become better editors of your work. Due at the start of class Feb 9.

In-Class Presentation of MA Essay Outlines (Jan 19 and 26)

- Students will present a 2-3 page outline (point form is fine, with some prose, but it should be fairly detailed) of what they think their MA Essay will look like.

Annotated Bibliography (Feb 9)

- On Feb 16, you will “share” with me your annotated Bibliography. By this point your bibliography should be very nearly full, but I do not need to see the whole thing. I only need to see 20 items with annotations from your bibliography.
- Annotation means you have read the work, can say a few words by way of summary, and offer a few critical thoughts on what it contributes to your work.
- Having this deadline forces you to make sure your work is advancing, and it helps me know your work better.

Student-led Seminars (Feb 9-Mar 9)

- Students assign one article or chapter each (not whole books please) that:
 1. got them thinking about their research topic; or
 2. represent the key issues or questions in their research topic; or
 3. were foundational in setting the boundaries of their research topic.
- Each student leads a one-hour seminar discussion of the article assigned. Others should come having read the piece, and be prepared to discuss, ask questions, challenge, etc. You are also encouraged to think how, if possible, the work you're reading might intersect in any way with your own project. It might be a good idea to avoid spending all week talking about the article among yourselves, lest you deplete your conversation before I get to hear (and assess) it.
- The key here is that your peers learn more about your topic, beyond just the title/description, but also about the questions, issues, theories, ideas, etc. This will enable them to be better interlocutors when they are engaging critically with your proposal.
- Readings must be distributed to us all one week before your session.

Abstract Writing (Feb 2-Mar 9)

- It is an important skill to be able to write an abstract. It will also be the only thing most people will read of your major research paper. So, in preparation of that, I will lead a brief discussion on Feb 2 about how to write an abstract.
- After that, each of you will write a 150 word abstract (word limit strictly enforced) for all 6 readings that are assigned (e.g., that includes your own). The abstracts are due the same day the article is being discussed in class.

Peer-Review of MRP Section (March 23 – April 6)

- Papers must be distributed one week before they are being discussed in class. Papers can either be sent to each other, or to me for distribution.
- Students will read the works closely, and come to class prepared to engage rigorously and to assist in improving the works. These works will not be read or presented in class, since everyone will have read them already. Class time will be devoted exclusively to discussing each others' work.
- What is submitted for review should be 20 pages. This is not finished work, but the more finished the section is, the more useful the feedback you can hope to receive.

Final Submission of MA Research Essay Proposal

- Due April 15, 2015.
- 20 double-spaced pages including notes. There should be a full bibliography (not merely a works cited list) but this does not count towards the page-count.
- Bibliography and notes should follow Chicago Style (quick guide is available here: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html; please follow the “Notes and Bibliography” option, not “Author-Date”).
- The content of the proposals will vary according to the type of work being undertaken. I will trust you to consult with your advisor to establish the best form for you. Remember, the goal is to end up with a solid section that jump-starts you on your summer MRE project, and that sets you up to complete it on time.
- Please submit them electronically.
- I will glance at them, but I will not mark them. If I am not your advisor, it is not my role to do a close analysis of your project.
- I strongly encourage you to maintain contact with your advisors throughout the course, and especially to make sure to keep them updated on how your project is unfolding.

REGULATIONS COMMON TO ALL HUMANITIES COURSES

COPIES OF WRITTEN WORK SUBMITTED

Always retain for yourself a copy of all essays, term papers, written assignments or take-home tests submitted in your courses.

PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in “*substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.*”

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of “F” for the course

GRADING SYSTEM

Letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100 (12)	B = 73-76 (8)	C - = 60-62 (4)
A = 85-89 (11)	B- = 70-72 (7)	D+ = 57-59 (3)
A- = 80-84 (10)	C+ = 67-69 (6)	D = 53-56 (2)
B+ = 77-79 (9)	C = 63-66 (5)	D - = 50-52 (1)

F	Failure. Assigned 0.0 grade points
ABS	Absent from final examination, equivalent to F
DEF	Official deferral (see “Petitions to Defer”)
FND	Failure with no deferred exam allowed -- assigned only when the student has failed the course on the basis of inadequate term work as specified in the course outline.

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean.

WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY

The last date to withdraw from **FALL TERM** courses is **DEC. 8, 2014**. The last day to withdraw from **FALL/WINTER (Full Term)** and **WINTER** term courses is **APRIL 8, 2015**.

REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term because of disability, pregnancy or religious obligations. Please review the course outline promptly and write to me 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. You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at: carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that your Instructor receives your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you only require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC by **Nov. 7, 2014** for the Fall term and **March 6, 2015** for the Winter term. For more details visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/

PETITIONS TO DEFER

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 a deferral of examination/assignment.

If you are applying for a deferral due to illness you will be required to see a physician in order to confirm illness and obtain a medical certificate dated no later than one working day after the examination or assignment deadline. This supporting documentation must specify the date of onset of the illness, the degree of incapacitation, and the expected date of recovery.

If you are applying for a deferral for reasons other than personal illness, please [contact](#) the Registrar’s Office directly for information on other forms of documentation that we accept.

Deferrals of assignments must be supported by confirmation of the assignment due date, for example a copy of the course outline specifying the due date and any documented extensions from the course instructor.

Deferral applications for examination or assignments must be submitted within **5 working days** of the original final exam.

ADDRESSES: (Area Code 613)

College of the Humanities 520-2809	300 Paterson
Greek and Roman Studies Office 520-2809	300 Paterson
Religion Office 520-2100	2A39 Paterson
Registrar's Office 520-3500	300 Tory
Student Academic Success Centre 520-7850	302 Tory
Paul Menton Centre 520-6608/TTY 520-3937	501 Uni-Centre
Writing Tutorial Service 520-2600 Ext. 1125	4 th Floor Library
Learning Support Service 520-2600 Ext 1125	4 th Floor Library