

**CARLETON UNIVERSITY**  
**College of the Humanities-Religion Program**

**SEMINAR IN “RELIGION AND PUBLIC LIFE”**

RELI 5802F – (Fall 2016); Tuesdays 11:35-14:25, PA 2A46

Professor Johannes C. Wolfart

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**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The seminar has as its official mandate to focus on “key thinkers and case studies [in order] to approach “religion and public life” from Religious Studies perspectives.” (<http://calendar.carleton.ca/grad/courses/RELI/>).

Currently, it is a commonplace observation that religion has made a remarkable recovery as a feature of public life in recent years (and especially since September 11, 2001). Whether this is true or not is highly debatable, in particular because the observation is premised on the dubious assumption that religion was once in terminal decline, not only as a feature of public life, but also as a private undertaking. What is abundantly clear, however, is that rubrics linking something called “religion” with something else variously identified as “public life”, “the public sphere”, “the public square” etc., have lately proliferated both in para-academic and bona fide academic settings. While the cultural conditions and political circumstances of the adoption of such rubrics may be fairly obvious, their actual content meaning and intellectual value remain – despite their presentation as transparently self-explanatory – rather obscure.

Therefore, It is the aim of the seminar to cast some light on the rubric itself, to determine as clearly as possible what it means or could mean, and to establish such meaning as effectively as possible in relation to particular academic settings (Religious Studies, Carleton University...) and social political contexts (Ottawa, Ontario, Canada...). To that end, the seminar will take as its point of departure three broad questions, as follows:

- 1) What, precisely, is the analytical utility (if any) of the rubric “religion and public life”?
- 2) What, precisely, is the cultural salience of the rubric “religion and public life”?
- 3) Inasmuch as (2) may be exerting considerable influence on academic practice (1), what (if anything) might be gained by critical approaches (such as a social history of ideas, institutional historical analysis, rhetorical criticism, deconstruction, etc.) to our programme rubric?

Finally, the seminar presupposes your acceptance of the principles of the modern research university, and especially: **1) that a seminar differs fundamentally from a lecture course; 2) that the academic study of religion is not the same thing as confessional apologetic or pastoral theology.** Your understanding and appreciation of such principles will hopefully develop further during over the course of the seminar.

**EVALUATION**

Essay Proposal – **20%** (1500-2000 words; due 25 October); detailed brief to be distributed

Essay – **50%** (8,000-12,000 words; due 6 December)

Seminar participation/contribution, including as a leader – **30%** (roughly 3% per class!)

### **SEMINAR LEADERSHIP**

Because I am the instructor of record for this course, I am also in a certain sense the leader of the seminar. Yet, in one manner of speaking such leadership is *ex officio*. Thus, it is also customary for seminars to proceed under shared or rotating leadership. In some cases this sharing of duties has evolved into the ‘seminar presentation’ (largely for ease of administration, I suspect). In this seminar, you will **not** be asked to prepare a formal presentation. Instead, you will actually share leadership duties. **Each one of you will be assigned a week (or weeks) in which you will share responsibility for leading the seminar.**

### **POLICY ON ATTENDANCE**

Not only is it common practice to evaluate participation in discussion and contribution to a seminar, it is also customary that habitual non-attendance be considered unacceptable performance. Such non-attendance entails a failure to contribute that is simply un-collegial. Moreover, since it is impossible to make up a missed seminar, a member who does not attend regularly cannot really be said to have taken the course. **Therefore, any member who is absent from more than 3 meetings of the seminar will not receive course credit.** In other words, all members of the seminar must be present (and active!) for (minimally!) three quarters of all meetings of the seminar. Period.

### **READINGS**

All required readings are available to seminar members via the MacOdrum Library (Reserves), or electronically. Please note that readings are a prerequisite for seminar participation. Your ability to contribute effectively will depend on keeping up with the reading. Furthermore, all members of the seminar are encouraged to “read around” the seminar topics as much as possible, and to share their scholarship with the seminar. The preparation of an essay proposal and term essay will also undoubtedly involve such further reading.

### **OFFICE HOURS**

Office hours will be held Tuesdays 15:00-16:00 and Fridays 12:00-13:00.

### **E-MAIL COMMUNICATION**

Carleton communications policy states that faculty must conduct email communications with students only through their Carleton email accounts. Please be advised, further, that students can normally expect up to a 24hour turn-around time on e-mail communication, especially during high volume times (i.e. before examinations, at essay time, etc.).

## **SEMINAR MEETING SCHEDULE AND TOPICS**

### **UNIT 1: Making religion(s)/making public(s)**

Week I (13 September) – **General introduction and discussion: what is a seminar?...in ‘religion and public life’?...and from a “Religious Studies perspective?”**

- Matthew Day, “The Educator Must be Educated: The study of religion at the end of the humanities” *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 22 (2010), 1-8.

**NB: members of the seminar should come prepared to articulate their interests and expectations for the MA**

Week II (20 September) – **An historical datum or two (and the tip of an iceberg...)**

- Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract or Principles of Political Right* translated by GDH Cole (London and Toronto: J.M. Dent, 1913), 113-123 [= Chapter VIII on “Civil Religion”]

- Gilbert Burnet, *A Relation of a Conference Held About Religion at London, the Third of April, 1676* [etc]. (London: Moses Pitt, 1676). (<http://eebo.chadwyck.com>) [NB you need not read it all! Consider its possible significance as a datum]
- Some chips from my workbench (via CULearn)

Week III (27 September) – **An iceberg lasts a long time...**

- Jonathan Z. Smith, Introduction to *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1981).
- Russell T. McCutcheon, “A Default of Critical Intelligence? The Scholar of Religion as Public Intellectual” in: *idem, Critics Not Caretakers: Redescribing the Public Study of Religion* (Albany: SUNY, 2001), 125-144. [see also *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 66 (1997), 443-68.]

Week IV (4 October) – **What is the ‘public sphere’ (in relation to ‘public life’)?**

- Jürgen Habermas, “Further Reflections on the Public Sphere” trans. T. Burger in: Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1992), 421-461.
- Harold Mah, “Phantasies of the Public Sphere: Rethinking the Habermas of Historians”, *Journal of Modern History* 72 (2000), 153-182.

**UNIT 2: Orientation to Canadian Context(s)**

Week V (11 October) – **Talking Religion with a Canadian accent**

- Roger O’Toole, “Religion in Canada: Its Development and Contemporary Situation” *Social Compass* 43 (1996), 119-134.
- Mark Noll, “Continental Divides: North American civil war and religion as at least three stories” in: Marguerite Van Die, ed., *Religion and Public Life in Canada: Historical and Comparative Perspectives* (Toronto: UTP, 2001), 153-173.
- Richard Allen, “The Social Gospel as the Religion of the Agrarian Revolt” in: R.D. Francis and H. Palmer, eds., *The Prairie West: Historical Readings* (Edmonton: UofA Press, 1992), 561-572.

Week VI (18 October) – **“Public” and “Private” Religions in Canada**

- David Seljak, “Resisting the No-Man’s Land of Private Religion: The Catholic Church and Public Politics in Quebec” in: D. Lyon and M. Van Die, eds., *Rethinking Church, State and Modernity* (Toronto, UTP, 2000), 11-48.
- Lori G. Beaman, “Between the Public and the Private: Governing Religious Expressions” in: S. Lefebvre and L. Beaman, eds., *Religion in the Public Sphere: Canadian Case Studies* (Toronto: UTP, 2014), 44-65.

**ESSAY PROPOSAL DUE  
FALL BREAK**

Week VII (1 November) – **Public Policy and Religion in Canada**

- Paul Bramadat, “Religion and Public Policy in Canada: An Itinerary” *Studies in Religion* 37 (2008), 121-143.
- Lori Beaman, “Aboriginal Spirituality and the Legal Construction of Freedom of Religion” *Journal of Church and State* 44 (2002), 135-149.
- Johannes Wolfart, “‘Increased Religious Diversity’ in Canada: Some Questions and Suggestions” *Toronto Journal of Theology* 31 (2015), 159-169.

### **UNIT 3: Current academic debates: on secularism/post-secularism**

#### Week VIII (8 November) – **Secularism...**

- Talal Asad, “Thinking about Secularism” in: idem, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2003), 1-17
- José Casanova, “Rethinking Secularization: A Global Comparative Perspective” *Hedgehog Review* 8 (2006), 7-22.
- Jacques Berlinerblau, introduction to *How to be Secular: A call to arms for religious freedom* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012).

#### Week IX (15 November) – **Post-secularism...**

- James A. Beckford, “Public Religions and the Postsecular: Critical Reflections” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 51 (2012), 1-15.
- Amanda Porterfield, “Religious Pluralism, the Study of Religion and “Postsecular” Culture” in: Douglas Jacobsen and Rhonda Hustedt Jacobsen, eds., *The American University in a Postsecular Age* (Oxford and New York: OUP, 2008), 186-201.
- Ludger Viefhues-Bailey, “Can the post-colonial be post-religious? Reflections from the secular metropolis” *Critical Research on Religion* 3 (2015), 101-117.

#### Week X (22 November) – **In Religious Studies in particular...**

- Donald Wiebe, “The Failure of Nerve in the Academic Study of Religion” *Studies in Religion* 13 (1984), 401-22.
- Matthew Robbins, “Re-placing Theology: Theologizing the Academic Study of Religion” *Bulletin of the Council of Societies for the Study of Religion* 28 (1999) 118-125.
- Johannes C. Wolfart, “Secular Responsibility and the Public Intellectual in the Study of Religion” *Studies in Religion* 30 (2001), 223-229.

### **UNIT 4: Special topic: ritual and public life**

#### Week XI (29 November) – **Are rituals always “public religion”?**

- Ed Muir, “Introduction: What is a Ritual?” in: idem, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1-11.
- Jill Delaney, “Ritual Space in the Canadian Museum of Civilization: Consuming Canadian Identity” in: R. Shields, ed., *Lifestyle Shopping: the Subject of Consumption* (London: Routledge, 1992), 136-148.
- Some more chips from my workbench [ via CULearn]

Week XII (6 December) – Agenda and Readings to be determined collectively by the seminar!

**Term Essays Due!**

## 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](mailto: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 <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/religion">www.carleton.ca/religion</a> 520-2100
Registrar's Office:	300 Tory <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/registrar">www.carleton.ca/registrar</a> 520-3500
Student Academic & Career Development Services:	302 Tory <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/sasc">www.carleton.ca/sasc</a> 520-7850
Writing Tutorial Service:	4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, Library <a href="http://www1.carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service/">http://www1.carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service/</a> 520-6632
MacOdrum Library	<a href="http://www.library.carleton.ca/">http://www.library.carleton.ca/</a> 520-2735