

Carleton University
College of the Humanities
Religion Program: RELI 2713A
Mysticism
Fall 2013

Instructor Information

Professor Mohammed Rustom
Office Location: 2A61 Paterson
E-mail: mrustom@connect.carleton.ca
Office Hours: Monday, 11:30-12:30; Thursday, 2:30-3:30

Course Information

Class Meetings: Monday, 8:35-11:25
Classroom Location: 413 Southam Hall
Course Website: Accessible through CU Learn

Course Description

By drawing on the writings of the foremost past and present representatives of mysticism on the one hand, as well as the work of contemporary scholars engaged in its academic study on the other, this course offers a survey of mysticism's central themes and various expressions as articulated by the spiritual traditions of the world's major religions.

Required Texts

Withall Perry (ed.), *The Spiritual Ascent*
Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*

Requirements and Due Dates

/25	Book Report	Oct. 7 th
/30	Test	Nov. 11 th
/45	Research Paper	Dec. 2 nd

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

- Sep. 9th** *What is Mysticism?*
- Sep. 16th** *The Absolute*
Readings: *The Spiritual Ascent*, 771; 773-775; 803-813
- Sep. 23rd** *The Relative*
Readings: *The Spiritual Ascent*, 23; 26-28; 83-84; 775-790
- Sep. 30th** *Selfhood and the Fall*
Readings: *The Spiritual Ascent*, 42-47; 53-55; 65-77; 89-94; 118-120;
480-484; 488-493; 561-562; 573-578
- Oct. 7th** *The Homeward Journey*
Readings: *The Spiritual Ascent*, 64-65; 77-82; 142-152; 275-295; 484-488
- Oct. 14th** **Holiday, No Class**
- Oct. 21st** *Spiritual Virtues*
Readings: *The Spiritual Ascent*, 152-161; 190-203; 509-512; 595-608;
663-670; 676-679
- Oct. 28th** **Fall Break, No Class**
- Nov. 4th** *Action, Invocation, Liberation*
Readings: *The Spiritual Ascent*, 329-335; 520-549; 692-707; 745-749;
1001-1042
- Nov. 11th** **Test**
- Nov. 18th** *Love and Knowledge*
Readings: *The Spiritual Ascent*, 136-142; 204-222; 612-635; 636-645;
749-770; 814-828
- Nov. 25th** *Love and Knowledge cont'd.*
- Dec. 2nd** *Non-Duality*
Readings: *The Spiritual Ascent*, 835-895; 971-1000
- Dec. 9th** *Myth and Symbolism*
Readings: *The Spiritual Ascent*, 302-324; 679-691

Book Report Guidelines

Instructions

Carefully read Seyyed Hossein Nasr's *Knowledge and the Sacred*. After you have completed the book, proceed to type up a report on it (see below for formatting guidelines). The first part of the report must thoroughly summarize the book's underlying argument(s). The second part must offer an analysis of the author's argument(s). This assignment is designed to provide you with an opportunity to think critically about this important book. It will also help hone your academic writings skills. Moreover, close study of this text will prove to be very beneficial in preparing for the test and the research paper.

Method of Evaluation

The report is out of 25, and is worth 25% of the total course mark. For a good mark, you have to (1) follow the format guidelines to a tee; (2) offer an effective summary of the text; and, most importantly, (3) demonstrate to me, through your analysis of the work, that you have given considerable thought to the issue(s) raised by the author.

Due Date

Book reports are due at the **beginning of class on October 7th, 2013. Emailed versions of the assignment are not acceptable.**

Penalties

Reports not handed in on the due date will receive a mark of zero. Absolutely no exceptions will be made to this rule. Papers submitted late due to a medical or other compassionate reason must be accompanied by relevant documentation (i.e., a medical certificate, etc.). Plagiarized reports will be assigned a **zero**, and the issue will be taken up with the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

Format Guidelines

1. Your report should be **6 full** pages in length, **double spaced**, and written in **Times New Roman** font (**size 12**). It must use the normal page layout which comes standard on all Word programs, and page numbers must be on the bottom right corner of the page.
2. Diction is to be formal, and each piece is to be written in Canadian English. Grammar, syntax, spelling, and style must be impeccable. You may write in the first person.

3. At the top right of the first page of your report, include the course code, your student number, full name, and the assignment's due date. This should be in **Times New Roman font (size 12)**.
4. At the top left of the first page of your report, include the main title of the book in italics, **Times New Roman font (size 12)**.
5. All paragraphs—except the first paragraph of your piece—must be indented. **Every paragraph of the paper—including isolated quotations—must be justified.** This can easily be done by using the “paragraph” function on your Word program.
6. There are to be no title pages, footnotes, endnotes, or bibliographies. If you want to directly cite the book in your report, provide the passage in quotation marks, and then, in brackets directly following the quoted passage, include the page number, preceded by a “p.” For example, (p. 29).
7. If you cite from the book, do not put your quotations in italics, bold, or a combination of the two. Sentences which are more than 3 lines long are to be isolated, **single spaced**, and reduced to **font size 11** with their margins indented to 1 inch on both the right and left. This can easily be done by using the “paragraph” function on your Word program.

Test Guidelines

Content

The test will cover all of the course's lectures and assigned readings up to and including the class before the day of the test.

Date and Test Length

The test is on **November 11th, 2013**. You will have the entire class to write your test.

Aid Allowed

Withall Perry (ed.), *The Spiritual Ascent*

Structure

The test is divided into two parts. Each part is out of 15, and is worth 15% of the total course mark. Part one contains one question that must be answered. Part two contains two questions, one of which must be answered. The entire test, therefore, is out of 30, and is worth 30% of the total course mark.

Format

The test's questions are response-type questions. That means your responses do not have to be in essay format. They simply have to address the question asked in as thorough and thoughtful a manner as possible. Keep in mind that answers must be both **descriptive** and **analytical**.

Research Paper Guidelines

Instructions

Address **ONE** of the following topics/questions:

1. Carefully assess the worldviews of two pre-modern mystical figures. Are they ultimately different or similar? Why?
2. Carefully assess the worldview of one particular mystical figure. By drawing extensively from his/her works, provide a careful presentation and analysis of his/her major teachings.
3. Describe the nature and significance of any important symbol common to the world's great mystical traditions.
4. Why is the remembrance of God (*dhikr*) so central to Sufism?
5. Explain the notion of non-duality in Advaita Vedanta.
6. Explain the notion of the Jesus Prayer in Eastern Orthodox Christianity. How does this spiritual method allow Christians to fulfill St. Paul's injunction to pray to God "ceaselessly"?
7. A topic of your choice in consultation with the Professor.

Evaluation

Essays are graded out of 45, and are worth 45% of the total course mark. Each essay will be evaluated in terms of (1) the clarity of its thesis, (2) the coherence of its argument(s), (3) evidence of original research and its careful integration into the fabric of the essay, (4) thoughtful reflection on the subject matter, and (5) faithful adherence to the content and formatting guidelines mentioned below.

Content

The paper must have a clear thesis which is defended consistently throughout. An essay without a thesis cannot receive more than a C+. A thesis essentially summarizes, in one or several sentences, the entire point of your essay. It is simply not enough to say "I am going to talk about x, y, and z"; you must be more specific than that. A good thesis should be concise and straightforward, and must endeavour to prove a point: "In this essay, I am going to demonstrate that x because of y and z." You may not use the wording of this example in your essay.

Due Date

Essays are due at the **beginning of class on December 2nd, 2013. Emailed versions of the essay are not acceptable.**

Penalties

Essays not handed in on the due date will receive a mark of zero. Absolutely no exceptions will be made to this rule. Papers submitted late due to a medical or other compassionate reason must be accompanied by relevant documentation (i.e., a medical certificate, etc.). Plagiarized essays will be assigned a **zero**, and the issue will be taken up with the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

Form

1. Essays are to be **10 full** pages in length (**excluding the title page and bibliography**), **double spaced**, and written in **Times New Roman** font (**size 12**). It must use the normal page layout which comes standard on all Word programs.
2. Diction is to be formal, and the essay is to be written in Canadian English. Grammar, syntax, spelling, and style must be impeccable. You may write in the first person.
3. All paragraphs—except the first paragraph of your essay—must be indented. **Every paragraph in your essay—including isolated quotations and footnotes—must be justified.** This can easily be done by using the “paragraph” function on your Word program.
4. Use footnotes as opposed to endnotes and/or internal citations. Footnotes are to be **single spaced** and written in **Times New Roman** font (**size 10**). A bibliography must be appended to the essay. Your method of citation **must** follow the rules laid out in the *Chicago Manual of Style*.
6. Do not put your quotations in italics, bold, or a combination of the two. Sentences which are more than 3 lines long are to be isolated, **single spaced**, and reduced to **font size 11** with their margins indented to 1 inch on both the right and left. This can easily be done by using the “paragraph” function on your Word program.
7. Your essay must have a title page. All pages—excluding the title page and bibliography—are to be numbered at the bottom right corner of the page.

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. 9, 2013**. The last day to withdraw from **FALL/WINTER (Full Term)** and **WINTER** term courses is **APRIL 8, 2014**.

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. 8, 2013** for the Fall term and **March 7, 2014** 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