

CARLETON UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF THE HUMANITIES  
RELIGION PROGRAM: **RELI 3722A** WINTER 2010  
**RELIGION and VIOLENCE**

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**OBJECTIVES**

Since September 11, 2001 the academy has committed considerable energies to the compound theme of “religion and violence.” (Some recent scholarship in this area has even been the work of specialists in the academic study of religion!) The fundamental aim of this course is to develop critical perspectives on such recent scholarly hyperactivity, especially as regards two marked tendencies. First, there is the widespread assumption that the events of 9-11 represented new experience or even a unique phenomenon. From a global historical perspective, however, this is highly unlikely. Thus this course will consider other case studies of “religious violence” in order to redirect the trend towards universalizing conclusions drawn from this most recent American experience. Second, the rubric “religion and violence,” which has been accepted in the academy to a remarkable degree since 9-11, will itself be scrutinized. Far from self-evident, the formulation is embedded in a considerable theoretical and ideological complex, including basic assumptions about the nature of violence as objective and absolute and the nature of religion as subjective, culturally relative, and so forth...

Finally, please note that while some of the worldviews studied in this course are explicitly theological, the academic procedures and critical methods employed in the academic study of religion are not. **This course presupposes your acceptance of the principles of the modern research university.** Your understanding of these, especially as they pertain to the study of religion, will undoubtedly develop further during this course. Similarly, your development and presentation of the essay proposal and completion of the term essay will likely add to your academic skills set.

**EVALUATION**

Essay proposal – 20% (due 22 February)  
Term Essay – 40% (due 22 March)  
Examination – 40% (in April Examination Period)

**Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date specified.** Certainly it is my aim as a teacher to get to know you as individuals, to recognize your individual strengths and weaknesses and to foster individual intellectual development. At the same time, however, I am obliged also to treat individuals equally in certain key respects. As a marker, therefore, I cannot take into consideration anything other than your actual performance on the items above. Similarly, for the sake of equity the following **penalties for late assignments** will be strictly enforced: 2 marks (i.e. 2% of total grade) per day or partial day. Exceptions will be made only in extreme cases (snow storm, documented medical emergency, etc.) and when an extension has

been granted by me (and for very good reasons, of course) at least one week in advance of the due date.

### **LECTURES**

This is a lecture course, which means that my oral presentation is the primary mode of communication. Nevertheless, I shall also devote a considerable amount of time in each class to discussion and question periods. Your participation in these will undoubtedly be reflected in the quality of your evaluated work for this course. Thus I consider attendance in class to be essential. If you want a remote learning environment I suggest you look elsewhere! Classes will be held Mondays from 11:35-2:25, with a short break around 1:00. Late arrivals are very distracting to both your fellow students and to me, so please be punctual. Finally, please be advised that I do not permit audio or A/V recording in my classes. It goes without saying, but please do switch off all electronic communication devices during class.

### **READINGS**

There is no text book for this course. All assigned readings are available online or will be made available via WebCT, as per the class schedule (below). It is your responsibility to read the assigned selections carefully. These readings are a prerequisite rather than a substitute for class attendance. Please note that your ability to participate effectively in question and discussion periods will depend on you keeping up with the reading. Finally, consider also that is likely that the choice and development of a suitable essay topic will start with these readings.

### **TERM ESSAY**

In this course you will be expected to produce a term essay on a topic of your choice, within certain parameters. An essay is different in certain key respects from other forms of academic writing. Certainly, a term essay is not a book report or a research paper. An **essay brief** with detailed instructions will be distributed to you in due course. To further increase the likelihood of your success with the essay, I have made the preparation and “workshopping” of an **essay proposal** a significant part of this course.

### **OFFICE HOURS**

Office hours will be held on Wednesdays from 4:00-5:00.

### **E-MAIL COMMUNICATION**

In order to ensure compliance with the federal privacy act commonly known as FIPPA (i.e. for your protection), Carleton communications policy states that faculty must conduct email communications with students only through their Carleton Connect 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.). Finally, for obvious reasons I cannot and will not repeat lecture material in emails, so if you miss a class it is your responsibility to get lecture notes from a classmate (if you don't know anybody in the class, I can facilitate an introduction).

## **CLASS SCHEDULE: TOPICS AND READINGS**

Week I (4 January) – **Introduction to the basic problems and key terms.**

Readings: Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God* (2003), 3-15 [WebCT]; Bruce Lincoln, “Conflict” in: M.C. Taylor, ed. *Critical Terms for Religious Studies* (1998), 55-69 [WebCT].

Week II (11 January) – **Case Study 1: Northern Ireland: Religion or politics?**

Reading: L. P. Barnes, “Was the Northern Ireland Conflict Religious?” *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 20 (2005), 55-69 [CU Library elec. Resource].

Week III (18 January) – **Case Study 2: Human Bombers: Maniacs or martyrs, or what?**

Reading: Ivan Strenski, “Sacrifice, Gift and the Social Logic of Muslim “Human Bombers”” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 15 (2003), 1-34 [CU Library elec. Resource].

Week IV (25 January) – **Theoretical Debate: Is religion inherently violent?**

Readings: René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (1977), 1-38 [WebCT]; William T. Cavanaugh, “Colonialism and the Myth of Religious Violence” in: Timothy Fitzgerald, ed., *Religion and the Secular* (2007), 241-62 [WebCT].

Week V (1 February) – **Are some religions inherently more violent than others?**

Reading: Samuel P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs* 72 (1993), 22-49 [CU Library elec. resource]; Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (2004), 290-325 [via WebCT].

Week VI (8 February) – **Are some religions inherently less violent than others?**

Reading: N.F. Gier, *The Virtue of Non-violence: From Gautama to Ghandi* (2004), 29-38 [via WebCT]; D.N. Lorenzen, “Warrior Ascetics in Indian History,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 98 (1978), 61-75 [JSTOR].

WINTER BREAK

Week VII (22 February) – **ESSAY PROPOSAL WORKSHOP** (essay proposals due)

Week VIII (1 March) – **Case Study 3: Sikhs “at home” and in “diaspora.”**

Readings: Harjot Singh Oberoi, “Sikh Fundamentalism: Translating History into Theory” in: Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Fundamentalisms and the State* (1993), 356-85 [WebCT].

Week IX (8 March) – **Case Study 4: New Religious Movements and “Death Cults.”**

Reading: David G. Bromley and J. Gordon Melton, eds. *Cults Religions and Violence* (2002), 42-56; John R. Hall and Philip D. Schuyler, *Apocalypse Observed* (2000), 111-48.

Week X (15 March) – **Gender and Religious Violence: Diverse aspects of “domesticity.”**

Reading: C. G. Ellison, J.P. Bartkowski and K. L. Anderson, “Are there Religious Variations in Domestic Violence?” *Journal of Family Issues* 20 (1999), 87-113 [CU Library elec. resource];

M. E. Hegland, "Flagellation and Fundamentalism: (Trans)forming meaning, identity, and gender through Pakistani women's rituals of mourning," *American Ethnologist* 25 (1998), 240-66 [JSTOR].

Week XI (22 March) – **Religion and Symbolic Violence: On images.**

Reading: T. M. Luhrmann, "The Ugly Goddess: Reflections on the Role of Violent Images in Religious Experience" *History of Religions* 41 (2001), 114-141 [JSTOR]. See also, Matthis Miller's "Last Judgment" (1516) [Web CT]; Crucifixion scene from "Jesus of Montreal" (dir. Denys Arcand) on youtube [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gS4ZT28\\_-GI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gS4ZT28_-GI); reportage on modern crucifixion in the Philippines from Kirsty Kinnealy's "Decoding Christianity" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P27AKEonIWs>

**TERM ESSAYS DUE!**

Week: XII (29 March) – **Religion and de-colonization/postcolonial conflicts.**

Reading: Bruce Lincoln, *Holy Terrors* (2003), 62-76 [WebCT]; Mark Juergensmeyer, *Global Rebellion* (2008), 9-38 [WebCT].

Week XIII (5 April) – **Conclusions to the course.**

## 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 range from a mark of zero for the plagiarized work to a final grade of “F” for the course, and even suspension from all studies or expulsion from the University.

### GRADING SYSTEM

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

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

F	Failure. No academic credit
WDN	Withdrawn from the course
ABS	Absent from the final examination
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 November 16, 2009. The last day to withdraw from Fall/Winter (full year) and Winter term courses is March 12, 2010.

### REQUESTS FOR 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 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. For more details visit the Equity Services website: [http://www.carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/student\\_guide.htm](http://www.carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/student_guide.htm)

**Religious obligation:** 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. For more details visit the Equity Services website: [http://www.carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/student\\_guide.htm](http://www.carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/student_guide.htm)

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 are 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 I receive 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 the last official day to withdraw from classes in each term. For more details visit the PMC website: [http://www.carleton.ca/pmc/students/acad\\_accom.html](http://www.carleton.ca/pmc/students/acad_accom.html)

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

### PETITIONS TO DEFER

Students unable to complete a **final** term paper or write a **final** examination because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control or whose performance on an examination has been impaired by such circumstances may apply in writing within five working days to the Registrar's Office for permission to extend a term paper deadline or to write a deferred examination. The request must be fully and specifically supported by a medical certificate or other relevant documentation. Only deferral petitions submitted to the Registrar's Office will be considered.

### ADDRESSES: (Area Code 613)

College of the Humanities 520-2809	300 Paterson
Classics and 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	500 Unicentre
Writing Tutorial Service 520-6632	4 <sup>th</sup> floor Library
Learning Commons 520-1125	4 <sup>th</sup> floor Library