

RELI 5801F “Seminar in the Discipline” (Fall/Winter)

Instructor: Prof. Johannes C. Wolfart (johannes_wolfart@carleton.ca)

Seminar Course (meets online in “real time”): fortnightly on Thursdays from 2:35-5:25.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

“This mandatory seminar introduces students to graduate level work in Religious Studies. A faculty team addresses current debates and practices...” [<https://calendar.carleton.ca/grad/courses/RELI/>]

This course fulfills the function of a traditional “proseminar”. Ultimately, a proseminar should provide the basis for a conversation between scholars in any field even while they are each preparing to work on their own particular research topics. In other words, it serves to provide scholars with some “common ground.” Here, furthermore, its purpose is to provide advancing scholars with an opportunity to explore the shared challenges of scholarship in the disciplinary sub-field “religion and public life.” To that end, we will read and discuss certain works together, with an eye towards the larger “whys” and “hows” of graduate study in “religion and public life” in the Canadian context. Finally, there will be opportunity to consider and discuss will also consider the common practices of scholarship in conversation with a range of working scholars on faculty at Carleton.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE

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

As is conventional with a proseminar, performance will be assessed solely on the basis of contributions to seminar discussions (i.e. term papers or examinations are not customary in proseminars) and will be evaluated using a pass-fail grading scheme. It is for this reason that attendance is mandatory. More than minimal non-attendance be considered unacceptable performance. Any member of the seminar who joins a meeting more than 15 late or leaves more than 15 minutes early will be considered absent. 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 2 meetings of the seminar will not receive course credit.** In other words, all members of the seminar must be present (and active!) for (minimally!) 10 meetings of the seminar. Period.

READINGS

The seminar will be accompanied by a core text outlining the development of the academic study of religion in Canada. You should purchase a copy of Aaron Hughes, *From Seminary to University* (UTP, 2020). We will read it together in sections; we will also use it to orient us to various other readings, as kind of *vademecum* for the seminar. Further required readings are available to seminar members via the MacOdrum Library (Electronic Reserves). Please note that readings are a prerequisite for seminar participation. Your ability to contribute effectively will depend on having done the common reading. Furthermore, all members of the seminar are encouraged to “read around” the seminar as much as possible, and to share their experience with the seminar.

MEETING AND TOPIC SCHEDULE*

FALL TERM MEETINGS

Meeting I (17 September)

General introduction and discussion:

- **What is a “discipline”?**
- **What is a “proseminar”?**
- **Who or what makes a “seminar in the discipline”?**

Read:

- Hughes...
- <https://guides.emich.edu/c.php?g=567673&p=3931812> (n.b. this very short statement is actually quite rich; please consider it carefully)
- Bonnie G. Smith, “Gender and the Practices of Scientific History: The Seminar and Archival Research in the Nineteenth Century,” *American Historical Review* 100 (1995), 1150-1176.

Meeting II (1 October)

Visit from Leslie Main, External and Endowed Awards specialist, FGPA

Conjunction, what’s your function?

- **How seriously do we take what happens after the ‘and’?**
- **What is “public life”?**
- **How is it different from “private life”? Or, from “the public sphere?”**
- **Why should “religionists” care?**

Read:

- Hughes...
- “Russell T. McCutcheon, “Redescribing ‘Religion and...’ Film: Teaching the Insider/Outsider Problem,” *Teaching Theology and Religious Studies* 1 (1998), 99-110 [reprinted in: idem, *Critics Not Caretakers: Redescribing the Public Study of Religion* (SUNY Press, 2001), 179-199.]
- 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.

Meeting III (15 October)

Genealogies...

- **Of “religion” (and religion-like things)?**
- **Of “public life” (and public life-like things)?**
- **Of “religion and public life”?**

Read:

- Hughes...
- Talal Asad, “Toward a Genealogy of the Concept of Ritual,” in: idem, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 55-79.

FALL BREAK

* Unless otherwise indicated all meetings will take place via the Zoom teleconferencing platform. Students will require an internet connection with sufficient bandwidth as well as a computer with a decent quality microphone and camera to participate in the seminar.

Meeting IV (5 November)

Visit from Denize Tan, Research Specialist for Religion, MacOdrum Library

Timing is everything – or is it?

- **Religion and non-/pre-modernity**
- **Religion and modernity**
- **Religion and post-modernity**

Read:

- Hughes...
- Peter van der Veer, "The modernity of religion," *Social History* 20 (1995), 365-371.
- James A Beckford, "Public Religions and the Postsecular: Critical Reflections," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religions* 51 (2012), 1-19.

Meeting V (19 November)

Timing is everything – or is it?

- **Publicness and non-/pre-modernity**
- **Publicness and modernity**
- **Publicness and post-modernity**

Read:

- Hughes...
- Harold Mah, "Phantasies of the Public Sphere: Rethinking the Habermas of Historians," *Journal of Modern History* 72 (2000), 153-182.
- Simon Susen, "Critical Notes on Habermas's Theory of the Public Sphere" *Sociological Analysis* 5 (2011), 37-62.

Meeting VI (3 December)

And now for somethings completely different – civil religion, implicit religion, etc.

- **What is civil religion?**
- **What is implicit religion?**
- **Why do they keep coming up?**
- **What has this got to do with religion and public life?**

Read:

- Hughes...
- 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.
- Margit Warburg, "Much Ado about a Christmas Tree: A Conflict Involving Danish Civil Religion," *Implicit Religion* 20 (2017).

WINTER TERM MEETINGS

Meeting VII (14 January)

Professor Tim Pettipiece and Professor Johannes Wolfart discuss their research/work in progress.

Read:

- To be announced...

Meeting VIII (28 January)

Professor Noel Salmond and Professor Shawna Dolansky discuss their research/work in progress.

Read:

- To be announced...

Meeting IX (11 February)

Professor Mohammed Rustom and Professor Chris Jensen discuss their research/work in progress.

Read:

- To be announced...

WINTER BREAK

Meeting X (4 March)

Professor Deidre Butler and Professor Kim Stratton discuss their research/work in progress.

Read:

- To be announced...

Meeting XI (18 March)

Professor Zeba Crook and Professor Ash Geissinger discuss their research/work in progress.

Read:

- To be announced...

Meeting XII (1 April)

Reflections and conclusions...a student led session (with a surprise special guest?).



Humanities

University Regulations for All College of the Humanities Courses

Academic Dates and Deadlines

This schedule contains the dates prescribed by the University Senate for academic activities. Dates relating to fee payment, cancellation of course selections, late charges, and other fees or charges will be published in the Important Dates and Deadlines section of the Registration Website.

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.

Academic Integrity at Carleton

The University Senate defines **plagiarism** as “*presenting, whether intentionally 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 that cannot be resolved directly by the course’s instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts 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

[Academic Integrity Policy](#)

[Academic Integrity Process](#)

Academic Accommodation Policy

Academic Accommodation

Carleton University is committed to providing access to the educational experience in order to promote academic accessibility for all individuals.

Parental Leave: The Student Parental Leave Policy is intended to recognize the need for leave at the time of a pregnancy, birth or adoption and to permit a pause in studies in order to provide full-time care in the first year of parenting a child or for health-related parental responsibilities.

Religious obligation: Carleton University accommodates students who, by reason of religious obligation, must miss an examination, test, assignment deadline, laboratory or other compulsory academic event.

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

Academic accommodation of students with disabilities is available through the [Paul Menton Centre](#) by evaluations that are carried out on an individual basis, in accordance with human rights legislation and University policy, and with the support of relevant, professional/medical documentation.

Survivors of Sexual Violence

Individuals who disclose that they have experienced sexual violence will be provided support services and will be treated with dignity and respect at all times by the University and its representatives. A person affected by sexual violence is not required to report an incident of or make a complaint about sexual violence under the formal complaint process of the Sexual Violence Policy in order to obtain support and services, or in order to receive appropriate accommodation for their needs.

[Supports and services available at the University to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support.](#)

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. [More information.](#)

Grading System at Carleton University

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. Standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean."

The [system of grades](#) used, with corresponding grade points and the percentage conversion, is listed below. Grade points indicated are for courses with 1.0 credit value.

Course Sharing Websites and Copyright

Classroom teaching and learning activities, including lectures, discussions, presentations, etc., by both instructors and students, are copy protected and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s). All course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, outlines, and other materials, are also protected by copyright and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s).

Students registered in the course may take notes and make copies of course materials for their own educational use only. Students are not permitted to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly for commercial or non-commercial purposes without express written consent from the copyright holder(s).

[More information](#)

Student Rights and Responsibilities at Carleton

Carleton University strives to provide a safe environment conducive to personal and intellectual growth, free of injustice and characterized by understanding respect, peace, trust, and fairness.

The [Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy](#) governs the non-academic behaviour of students. Carleton University is committed to building a campus that promotes personal growth through the establishment and promotion of transparent and fair academic and non-academic responsibilities.

[7 Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)

Deferred Term Work

In some situations, students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, which forces them to delay submission of the work.

1. Students who claim illness, injury or other extraordinary circumstances beyond their control as a reason for missed term work are held responsible for immediately informing the instructor concerned and for making alternate arrangements with the instructor and in all cases this must occur no later than three (3.0) working days after the term work was due. The alternate arrangement must be made before the last day of classes in the term as published in the academic schedule. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of term. In all cases, formative evaluations providing feedback to the student should be replaced with formative evaluations. In the event the altered due date must extend beyond the last day of classes in the term, the instructor will assign a grade of zero for the work not submitted and submit the student's earned grade accordingly; the instructor may submit a change of grade at a later date. Term work cannot be deferred by the Registrar.

2. In cases where a student is not able to complete term work due to illness or injury for a significant period of time/or long term, the instructor and/or student may elect to consult with the Registrar's Office (undergraduate courses) or Graduate Registrar (graduate courses) to determine appropriate action.

[More information of deferred Term Work](#)

Deferred Final Exams

Students who are unable to write a final examination because of a serious illness/emergency or other circumstances beyond their control may apply for accommodation. Normally, the accommodation for a missed final examination will be granting the student the opportunity to write a deferred examination. In specific cases when it is not possible to offer a deferred examination, and with the approval of the Dean, an alternate accommodation may be made.

The application for a deferral must:

1. be made in writing to the Registrar's Office no later than three working days after the original final examination or the due date of the take-home examination; and,
2. be fully supported by appropriate documentation and, in cases of illness, by a medical certificate dated no later than one working day after the examination, or by appropriate documents in other cases. Medical documents must specify the date of the onset of the illness, the (expected) date of recovery, and the extent to which the student was/is incapacitated during the time of the examination. The University's preferred medical form can be found at the Registrar's Office [here](#).

[More information on Final Exam Deferrals](#)

[Financial vs. Academic Withdrawal](#)

Withdrawn. No academic credit, no impact on the CGPA. WDN is a permanent notation that appears on the official transcript for students who withdraw after the full fee adjustment date in each term (noted in the Academic Year section of the Calendar each term). Students may withdraw on or before the last day of classes.

Important dates can be found [here](#). Make sure that you are aware of the separate deadlines for Financial and Academic withdrawal!

Making registration decisions in Carleton Central involves making a financial and academic commitment for the courses you choose, regardless of attendance. If you do not attend – you must withdraw in Carleton Central within the published deadlines to cancel your registration. You can do this via the [MyCarleton Portal](#). A fee adjustment is dependent on registration being canceled within the published [fee deadlines](#) and dependent on your course load.

Department Contact Information

Bachelor of the Humanities 300 Paterson Hall
CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca

Greek and Roman Studies 300 Paterson Hall
GreekAndRomanStudies@cunet.carleton.ca

Religion 2A39 Paterson Hall
Religion@cunet.carleton.ca

Digital Humanities (Graduate) 2A39 Paterson Hall
digitalhumanities@carleton.ca

Digital Humanities (Undergraduate Minor) 300 Paterson Hall
digitalhumanities@carleton.ca