

Carleton University
College of the Humanities
Religion Program: RELI 5780
Research Methods
Winter 2018

Instructor Information

Professor: Mohammed Rustom
Office Location: 2A61 Paterson Hall
Office Hours: M 10:00 am–11:30 am
Email: mrustom@connect.carleton.ca

Course Information

Course Site: NA
RELI Site: www.carleton.ca/religion/
Class Meetings: M 11:35 am–2:25 pm
Classroom Location: 2A46 Paterson Hall

Course Description

This mandatory seminar, intended as a workshop, guides students through the process of producing a major paper proposal and the initial stages of writing the research essay.

Course Objectives

The mark you receive will be based on whether and to what extent you meet the course objectives: (1) To engage fully and participate *every* week; (2) To perform at a high level on course exercises; (3) To offer high quality interaction (detailed questions, comments, critiques, and support) on the work of your peers; (4) To submit a stellar, *20 page written section of your MRE, plus a bibliography*, on or before April 30th.

Evaluation

In this course, it is not the case that participation is worth x%, and interaction with your peers happens twice and is worth x%. All of these elements work and measure together. When it comes to the “quality” of your interaction with your peers, the questions are: Were you helpful and did you ask useful questions? Were you fully engaged, or were you comatose? When it comes to the “quality” of your workshop exercises (bibliography, editing exercises, etc.), the questions are more obvious: How well did you master the software? Did your editing improve the work, or worsen it? Therefore, the mark you receive in this course reflects my assessment of your term-long engagement, effort, and performance.

You will not receive marks for any of the individual assignments. The graduate student grade-range most prominent in North America is an A+ to a B-, where a B- is the equivalent to a D, and a C+ and lower are equivalent to an F. It is *generally* the case that graduate grades in the B-range mean you are not suitable for doctoral level work in the field.

Schedule of Work

Jan. 8th	The process of writing long papers; How to do research; How to publish
Jan. 15th	Bibliography Software
Jan. 22nd	Presentations of MRE Outlines 1
Jan. 29th	Presentations of MRE Outlines 2
Feb. 5th	Discussion of Editing Exercises and Abstract Writing
Feb. 12th	Student-led Seminar 1
Feb. 19th	Winter Break; No Class
Feb. 26th	Student-led Seminar 2
Mar. 5th	Student-led Seminar 3
Mar. 12th	Student-led Seminar 4
Mar. 19th	Preparation Week
Mar. 26th	Discussion of MA Essay Section 1
Apr. 2nd	Discussion of MA Essay Section 2
Apr. 9th	Discussion of MA Essay Section 3

Course Exercises

Academic Agenda (Jan. 8th)

Due electronically on Jan. 8th.

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? Writer's block? More importantly: how are you going to address your weaknesses? Being a scholar is about being self-critical and self-aware.

Editing Workshop
(Jan. 8th to Feb. 5th)

Step One: On Jan. 8th, I will give you a book review written by me, and into which I have introduced errors. Edit/Fix/Improve it using the “track changes” function on your Word document. On Jan. 15th, hand it back to me via e-mail. I will then offer my comments on your piece via e-mail.

Step Two: On Jan. 15th, submit to me a clean, original electronic file for any paper that you have written for a University course in the past.

Step Three: On Jan. 22nd, I will give you 2-3 pages of your own work for you to edit. Edit it **by hand** this time.

Step Four: Jan. 29th, return your edited pages to me at the start of class. I will make copies of your edited pages during the break and distribute the materials to everyone for their peer review. The objective here is to learn to become a ruthless editor of your own writing.

Step Five: On Feb. 5th, we will have an editing workshop and class discussion in which we will peer-review everyone’s *self-editing*. The guiding question: did your classmates sufficiently edit their own work? I will moderate.

In-Class Presentations of MA Essay Outlines
(Jan. 22nd and Jan. 29th)

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 MRE will look like.

The maximum time allotted to each outline discussion will be 30 mins.

Annotated Bibliography
(Feb. 12th)

On Feb 12th, you will send me an electronic version of your Annotated Bibliography. By this point your bibliography should be very 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 in question, can say a few words by way of summary, and offer a few critical thoughts on how this piece contributes to your work.

Having this deadline forces you to make sure your work is advancing, and it helps me to get to know your work better.

Student-led Seminars
(Feb. 12th to Mar. 12th)

Each student assigns one article/book chapter that (1) got them thinking about their research topic, or (2) represents the key issues/questions pertaining to their research topic, or (3) is foundational in setting the boundaries of their research topic, or (4) all of the above.

Each student leads a one-hour seminar discussion of their assigned article. Others should come having read the piece, and be prepared to discuss, ask questions, challenge, etc. Students are also encouraged to think how, if possible, the respective piece they are reading might intersect in any way with their own projects.

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. which inform it. This will enable them to be better interlocutors when they are engaging critically with your work.

Readings must be distributed to all of us one week before your session.

Abstract Writing
(Feb. 5th to Mar. 19th)

Due electronically on March 19th.

It is an important skill to be able to write an abstract. It will also be the only thing most people read of your crowning-achievement, your MRE. So, in preparation of this, I will lead a brief discussion on Feb. 5th about how to write an abstract.

After that, you will write a 150-word abstract for each of the readings that have been assigned (this includes the reading that you have selected).

Peer-Review of MRE Section
(Mar. 26th to Apr. 9th)

Papers must be distributed one week before they are discussed in class.

Students will read the papers closely, and come to class prepared to engage rigorously and to assist in improving their peer's paper. 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 long. 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 MRE Section
(April 26th)

Due electronically on April 26th.

This document must be 20 double-spaced pages including notes. There should be a full bibliography, which is extra to the page-count. The bibliography and notes should follow Chicago Style: www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html; please follow the "Notes and Bibliography" option, not the "Author-Date" option.

The content of the proposals will vary according to the type of work being undertaken. I will trust you to consult with your MRE director to establish the best form for you. Remember, the goal is to end up with a solid section that jump-starts you on your MRE project, and that sets you up to complete it on time.

Please submit your papers to me electronically. I will look at them, but **will not mark them**. Since I am not your director (unless I am your director), it is not my job to do that close an analysis of your work. Thus, you may not hear from me at all.

If I see that the work has been done, I will be satisfied. I strongly encourage you to maintain contact with your MRE directors throughout the course, and to especially ensure that they see your 20-page paper before the April 26th submission deadline. MRE directors do not want surprises coming out of this course (e.g., a student having decided on a new topic!).

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, 2017**. The last day to withdraw from **FALL/WINTER (Full Term)** and **WINTER** term courses is **APRIL 11, 2018**.

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. 14, 2017** for the Fall term and **March 9, 2018** 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 a final assignment or take home, in courses without a final examination, 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 made in writing to the Registrar’s Office no later than **3 working days** of the original final exam or the due date of the take home 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 & Career Development Services 520-7850	302 Tory
Paul Menton Centre 520-6608/TTY 520-3937	501 Uni-Centre
Writing Tutorial Service 520-6632	4 th Floor Library
Learning Support Service 520-2600 Ext 1125	4 th Floor Library