

CARLETON UNIVERSITY
College of the Humanities-Religion Program

SEMINAR IN THE DISCIPLINE

RELI 5801F – (Fall 2019); Tuesdays 8:35-11:25, PA 2A46

Professor Johannes C. Wolfart

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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” [on the meanings of which, see <https://www.chronicle.com/forums/index.php?topic=15990.0>]. 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. Here, 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 theoretical issues; we will also consider the common practices of scholarship in our field, including in conversation with a range of working scholars on faculty at Carleton.

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

As is conventional with a proseminar, performance will be evaluated solely on the basis of contributions to seminar discussions (i.e. term papers or examinations are not customary in proseminars), 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 arrives after 9am or leaves before 11am 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

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 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.

OFFICE HOURS

Office hours will be held Mondays from 4-5pm and Tuesday from 1-2pm.

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

Week I (10 September) – **General introduction and discussion: who or what makes a “seminar in the discipline”?** Read: 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.

Week II (17 September) – **‘Conjunction, what’s your function?’: How seriously do we take what happens after the ‘and’?** Read: “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.

Week III (24 September) – **From genealogies of “religion” to genealogies of “public life”?** Read: 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; Peter van der Veer, “The modernity of religion,” *Social History* 20 (1995), 365-371[= Review Article on Asad’s book]; Craig Martin’s interview with Talal Asad, here: <http://bulletin.equinoxpub.com/2015/11/genealogies-of-religion-twenty-years-on-an-interview-with-talal-asad/>

Week IV (1 October) – **Differentiating “public life” from the “rational public sphere” (and other enchanted publics).** Read: 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.

Presentation on OGS and SSHRC application process by Ms. Karina Auclair.

Week V (8 October) – **Local, historical instantiation of both “religion” and “public life”.** Read: Margit Warburg, “Much Ado about a Christmas Tree: A Conflict Involving Danish Civil Religion,” *Implicit Religion* 20 (2017). 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.

Week VI (15 October) – Dr. Ash Geissinger and Dr. Shawna Dolansky present research. Preparatory readings: **TBA**

FALL BREAK

Week VII (29 October) – Dr. Chris Jensen and Dr. Mourad Laabdi present research.
Preparatory readings: **TBA**

Week VIII (5 November) – Dr. Richard Mann and Dr. Deidre Butler present research.
Preparatory readings: **TBA**

Week IX (12 November) – Dr. Zeba Crook and Dr. Kim Stratton present research.
Preparatory readings: **TBA**

Week X (19 November) – Library visit with Religion research support specialist, Ms. Denize Tan
and archives and rare book specialist, Dr. Lloyd Keane.

Week XI (26 November) – TBA

Week XII (3 December) – TBA

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. 7, 2015**. The last day to withdraw from **FALL/WINTER (Full Term)** and **WINTER** term courses is **APRIL 8, 2016**.

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. 6, 2015** for the Fall term and **March 6, 2016** 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 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