

CARLETON UNIVERSITY
College of the Humanities-Religion Program
[as of 10 August 2022]

SEMINAR IN “RELIGION AND PUBLIC LIFE”

RELI 5802F – (Fall 2022); Mondays 11:35-14:25, PA 2A46

Professor Johannes C. Wolfart

Office: 2A62 Paterson Hall; Telephone: x2932; email johannes.wolfart@carleton.ca

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The seminar has as its official mandate to focus on “key thinkers and case studies [in order] to approach 'religion and public life' from Religious Studies perspectives.”
(<http://calendar.carleton.ca/grad/courses/RELI/>).

Currently, it is a commonplace observation that religion has made a remarkable recovery as a feature of public life in recent years (and especially since September 11, 2001). Whether this is true or not is debatable, especially because the observation is premised on the assumption that religion was once in terminal decline, not only as a feature of public life, but also as a private undertaking. What is abundantly clear, however, is that rubrics linking something called “religion” with something else variously identified as “public life”, “the public sphere”, “the public square” etc., have lately proliferated both in para-academic and bona fide academic settings. While the cultural conditions and political circumstances in which such rubrics flourish may be obvious, their actual content-meaning and intellectual value remain – despite their presentation as transparently self-explanatory – rather obscure.

Therefore, it is the aim of the seminar to cast some light on the rubric “religion and public life” itself, to determine as clearly as possible what it means or could mean, and to establish such meaning as effectively as possible in relation to particular academic settings (Religious Studies, the Humanities, Carleton University...) and social political contexts (Ottawa, Ontario, Canada...). To that end, the seminar will take as its point of departure three broad questions, as follows:

- 1) What is the analytical utility (if any) of the rubric “religion and public life”?
- 2) What is the cultural salience of the rubric “religion and public life”?
- 3) Inasmuch as cultural and political factors (2) may be exerting considerable influence on academic practices (1), what (if anything) might be gained by critical approaches (such as a social history of ideas, institutional historical analysis, rhetorical criticism, deconstruction, etc.) to our programme rubric?

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.** Understanding and appreciation of such principles will hopefully develop further during over the course of the seminar.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

In addition to the above objectives, this course targets the development of skills in accordance with degree level learning outcomes established for the MA in Religion and Public Life. Evaluations in this course will thus be focused on your developing ability to:

- engage critically with the intersection of religion and public life
- represent the core Religious Studies principles of outsider discourse and methodological atheism
- formulate a coherent research question, use appropriate theoretical frameworks, and identify and pursue relevant methods for conducting research independently

EVALUATION

Essay Proposal – **20%** (1500-2000 words; due 17 October); detailed brief to be distributed

Essay – **50%** (8,000-12,000 words; due 9 December)

Seminar participation/contribution, including as a leader – **30%** (roughly 3% per class!)

SEMINAR LEADERSHIP

Because I am the instructor of record for this course, I am also in a certain sense the leader of the seminar. Yet, in one manner of speaking such leadership is *ex officio*. Thus, it is also customary for seminars to proceed under shared or rotating leadership. In some cases, this sharing of duties has evolved into the ‘seminar presentation’ (largely for ease of administration, I suspect). In this seminar, you will **not** be asked to prepare a formal presentation. Instead, you will be asked to share leadership duties. **Each one of you will be assigned a week (or weeks) in which you will share responsibility for leading the seminar.**

POLICY ON ATTENDANCE

Not only is it common practice to evaluate participation in discussion and contribution to a seminar; it is also the custom that habitual non-attendance be considered unacceptable performance. Such non-attendance entails a failure to contribute that is simply un-collegial. Moreover, 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 3 meetings of the seminar will not receive course credit.** In other words, all members of the seminar must be present (and active!) for (minimally!) three quarters of all 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 keeping up with the reading. Furthermore, all members of the seminar are encouraged to “read around” the seminar topics as much as possible, and to share their scholarship with the seminar. The preparation of an essay proposal and term essay will also undoubtedly involve such further reading.

OFFICE HOURS

Office hours will be held Tuesdays from 2-3pm; I am also available to members of the seminar by appointment.

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.).

NOTE ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

All course materials (including lectures, outlines, PowerPoint presentations, handouts, and similar materials) are protected by copyright. I am the exclusive holder of copyright and other intellectual property rights for all course materials. You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own educational use. You may not reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly for any purpose, commercial or otherwise, without my express written consent. By turn, your work in this course remains your own exclusive intellectual property and will not be shared

with anybody without your permission, except in accordance with Carleton University policies, which must conform directives of the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (for example, anonymized student work may be reviewed for the purposes of quality assurance, etc.).

UNIVERSITY STATEMENT REGARDING PUBLIC HEALTH

It is important to remember that COVID is still present in Ottawa. The situation can change at any time and the risks of new variants and outbreaks are very real. There are [a number of actions you can take](#) to lower your risk and the risk you pose to those around you including being vaccinated, wearing a mask, staying home when you're sick, washing your hands and maintaining proper respiratory and cough etiquette.

Feeling sick? Remaining vigilant and not attending work or school when sick or with symptoms is critically important. If you feel ill or exhibit COVID-19 symptoms do not come to class or campus. If you feel ill or exhibit symptoms while on campus or in class, please leave campus immediately. In all situations, you must follow Carleton's [symptom reporting protocols](#).

Masks: Carleton has paused the [COVID-19 Mask Policy](#), but continues to strongly recommend masking when indoors, particularly if physical distancing cannot be maintained. It may become necessary to quickly reinstate the mask requirement if pandemic circumstances were to change.

Vaccines: Further, while proof of vaccination is no longer required as of May 1 to attend campus or in-person activity, it may become necessary for the University to bring back proof of vaccination requirements on short notice if the situation and public health advice changes. Students are strongly encouraged to get a full course of vaccination, including booster doses as soon as they are eligible, and submit their booster dose information in [cuScreen](#) as soon as possible. Please note that Carleton cannot guarantee that it will be able to offer virtual or hybrid learning options for those who are unable to attend the campus.

All members of the Carleton community are required to follow requirements and guidelines regarding health and safety which may change from time to time. For the most recent information about Carleton's COVID-19 response and health and safety requirements please see the [University's COVID-19 website](#) and review the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#). Should you have additional questions after reviewing, please contact covidinfo@carleton.ca.

SEMINAR MEETING SCHEDULE AND TOPICS

UNIT 1: Making religion(s)/making public(s)

Week I (12 September) – **General introduction and discussion: what is a seminar? What, if anything, does a seminar do? Are seminars in Religious Studies special?**

- Bonnie Smith, "Gender and the Practices of Scientific History: The Seminar and Archival Research in the Nineteenth Century" *American Historical Review* 100 (1995), 1150-1176.

NB: members of the seminar should come prepared to articulate their interests and expectations for the MA

NBB: leadership duties for the term will be assigned at this meeting

Week II (19 September) – **An historical datum or two (representing the tip of an iceberg...)**

- Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract or Principles of Political Right* translated by GDH Cole (London and Toronto: J.M. Dent, 1913), 113-123 [= Chapter VIII on "Civil Religion"]

- Gilbert Burnet, *A Relation of a Conference Held About Religion at London, the Third of April, 1676* [etc]. (London: Moses Pitt, 1676). (<http://eebo.chadwyck.com>) [NB you need not read it all! Consider its possible significance as a datum]
- Some chips from my workbench (via Brightspace)

Week III (26 September) – **An iceberg lasts a long time...(and they rarely travel alone!)**

- Jonathan Z. Smith, Introduction to *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1981).
- Jonathan Z. Smith, "Religion, Religions, Religious" in M.C. Taylor, ed., *Critical Terms for Religious Studies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 269-284.
- Rushain Abbasi, "Islam and the Invention of Tradition: A Study of Medieval Muslim Discourses on *Dīn*" *Studia Islamica* 116 (2021), 1-106. [this is a very long article -- as long as some monographs -- but the argument is important, so do what you can with it]

Week IV (3 October) – **What is the ‘public sphere’ (in relation to ‘public life’)?**

- Jürgen Habermas, “Further Reflections on the Public Sphere” trans. T. Burger in: Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1992), 421-461.
- Harold Mah, “Phantasies of the Public Sphere: Rethinking the Habermas of Historians”, *Journal of Modern History* 72 (2000), 153-182.
- Johannes Wolfart, "We Are All Institutionalized: Three Works to Challenge the Conceit of a Generically "Academic" Study of Religion" *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* (2021) [currently still in pre-publication -- see <https://doi.org/10.1177/00084298211052933>]

THANKSGIVING (No meeting on 10 October)

UNIT 2: Orientation to Canadian Context(s)

Week V (17 October) – **Talking Religion with a Canadian accent**

ESSAY PROPOSALS DUE (at the beginning of class)

- Aaron Hughes, *From Seminary to University: An Institutional History of the Study of Religion in Canada* (Toronto: UTP, 2020), ix-16.
- 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.
- Richard Allen, “The Social Gospel as the Religion of the Agrarian Revolt” in: R.D. Francis and H. Palmer, eds., *The Prairie West: Historical Readings* (Edmonton: UofA Press, 1992), 561-572.

FALL BREAK (No meeting on 24 October)

Week VI (31 October) – **“Public” and “Private” Religions in Canada (or, the limits of the Trudeau doctrine)**

- David Seljak, “Resisting the No-Man’s Land of Private Religion: The Catholic Church and Public Politics in Quebec” in: D. Lyon and M. Van Die, eds., *Rethinking Church, State and Modernity* (Toronto, UTP, 2000), 11-48.
- 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 VII (7 November) – **Public Policy and Religion in Canada and Ontario**

- Paul Bramadat, "Religion and Public Policy in Canada: An Itinerary" *Studies in Religion* 37 (2008), 121-143.
- David Seljak, "Post-secularism, Multiculturalism, Human Rights, and Religion in Ontario" *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* (2016) [<https://doi.org/10.1177/0008429815596547>]; compare "Protecting Religious Freedom in a Multicultural Canada" <https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/book/export/html/8764>]
- Johannes Wolfart, "Increasing Religious Diversity: Historiographical Criticism of a Current Paradigm" *Nova Religio* 21 (2018), 63-87 [Compare: "'Increased Religious Diversity' in Canada: Some Questions and Suggestions" *Toronto Journal of Theology* 31 (2015), 159-169.]

UNIT 3: Current Cases and Debates: Religious Studies and Public Life?

Week VIII (14 November) – Secularism and Post-secularism

- Talal Asad, "Thinking about Secularism" in: idem, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2003), 1-17
- José Casanova, "Rethinking Secularization: A Global Comparative Perspective" *Hedgehog Review* 8 (2006), 7-22.
- James A. Beckford, "Public Religions and the Postsecular: Critical Reflections" *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 51 (2012), 1-15.
- Amanda Porterfield, "Religious Pluralism, the Study of Religion and "Postsecular" Culture" in: Douglas Jacobsen and Rhonda Hustedt Jacobsen, eds., *The American University in a Postsecular Age* (Oxford and New York: OUP, 2008), 186-201.

Week IX (21 November) – How Did America end up *Post-Roe v. Wade*?

OR

Is Putin's War on Ukraine a Holy War?

(the seminar will choose which topic to pursue as a Religion and Public Life problem)

- **Readings TBA**

Week X (28 November) – Freedom Convoy/Ottawa Occupation -- Religion and Public Life?

- **Readings TBA**

Week XI (5 December) – "Religious Literacy" as a primary objective or Religious Studies?

- *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* special issue on "Religious Literacy" [forthcoming; available online in pre-publication]
- *Bulletin of the Council of Societies for the Study of Religion* 38:2 (2009) [a special issue responding to the publication of Stephen Prothero's book]

Week XII (9 December N.B. this Friday = "Carleton Monday")

TERM ESSAYS DUE (at the beginning of class)

- Agenda and Readings to be determined collectively by the seminar!

Term Essays Due!



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.

Online Learning Resources

While online courses offer flexibility and convenience, they also present unique challenges that traditional face-to-face courses do not. [On this page](#), you will find resources collected by Carleton Online to help you succeed in your online courses; Learning Strategies and Best Practices, Study Skills, Technology and Online Interaction and Engagement.

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 Policy (updated June 2021)

Plagiarism is presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas, or work of others as one's own.

Plagiarism includes 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. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, art works, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms,

formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;

- using another's data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one's own; and
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

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

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

Academic accommodation refers to educational practices, systems and support mechanisms designed to accommodate diversity and difference. The purpose of accommodation is to enable students to perform the essential requirements of their academic programs. At no time does academic accommodation undermine or compromise the learning objectives that are established by the academic authorities of the University.

Addressing Human Rights Concerns

The University and all members of the University community share responsibility for ensuring that the University's educational, work and living environments are free from discrimination and harassment. Should you have concerns about harassment or discrimination relating to your age, ancestry, citizenship, colour, creed (religion), disability, ethnic origin, family status, gender expression, gender identity, marital status, place of origin, race, sex (including pregnancy), or sexual orientation, please contact the [Department of Equity and Inclusive Communities](#).

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:

Religious Accommodation

Please contact your instructor 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, please review the [Student Guide to Academic Accommodation](#).

Pregnancy Accommodation

Please contact your instructor 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, please review the [Student Guide to Academic Accommodation](#).

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit the [Equity and Inclusive Communities website](#).

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. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor 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, see the [Senate Policy on Accommodation for Student Activities](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more details, visit the [Paul Menton Centre website](#).

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. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points and the percentage conversion can be found [here](#). Grade points indicated are for courses with 1.0 credit value. Where the course credit is greater or less than one credit, the grade points are adjusted proportionately.

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.

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) 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.
3. If a student is concerned the instructor did not respond to the request for academic accommodation or did not provide reasonable accommodation, the student should consult with the department/school/institute chair/director. If a mutually agreeable accommodation to complete course requirements prior to the course grade submission deadline cannot be achieved, the Associate Dean will become involved. If academic accommodation is not granted, and the student receives word **after** the academic withdrawal deadline, the student may submit a petition to the Registrar's Office (undergraduate courses)/Graduate Registrar (graduate courses) for a final grade of WDN (Withdrawn) in the course(s). If academic

accommodation is not granted, and the student receives word **prior** to the academic withdrawal deadline, the student may elect to withdraw from the course(s).

4. Furthermore, if academic accommodation is granted, but the student is unable to complete the accommodation according to the terms set out by the instructor as a result of further illness, injury or extraordinary circumstances beyond their control, the student may submit a petition to the Registrar's Office (undergraduate courses)/Graduate Registrar (graduate courses). Please note, however, that the course instructor will be required to submit an earned final grade and further consideration will only be reviewed according to established precedents and deadlines. [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 Registrar's Office "Defer an Exam" page](#)

Financial vs. Academic Withdrawal

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. A fee adjustment is dependent on registration being canceled within the published [fee deadlines](#) and dependent on your course load. A course dropped after the deadline for financial withdrawal will receive a grade of Withdrawn (WDN), which appears on your official transcript.

Even if you miss the deadline for financial withdrawal, you might decide to drop a course to avoid a failure or a poor grade showing up on your student record and bringing down your CGPA. It is your responsibility to drop the course via Carleton Central within the published [deadlines](#) (see Academic Withdrawal).

If you are considering withdrawing from a course, you may want to talk to an advisor first. Course withdrawal may affect your student status, as well as your eligibility for student funding, immigration status, residence accommodation and participation in varsity sports, etc. Additionally, remember that once you choose your courses, you must use the “Calculate amount to pay” button to determine the correct amount of fees to pay.

Carleton Central is your one-stop shop for registration activities. If you are interested in taking a course, make sure to complete your registration. Simply attending a course does not mean you are registered in it, nor is it grounds for petition or appeal.

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

MEMS (Undergraduate Minor) 300 Paterson Hall
CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca