CARLETON UNIVERSITY
College of the Humanities

SEMINAR IN “RELIGION AND PUBLIC LIFE”

RELI 5802F – (Fall 2013); Tuesdays 8:35-11:25, PA 2A46
Professor Johannes C. Wolfart
Office: 2A62 Paterson Hall; Telephone: x2932; email johannes_wolfart@carleton.ca

COURSE OBJECTIVES
The seminar has as its 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 highly debatable, in particular because the observation is premised on the dubious 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”, etc., have lately proliferated both in para-academic and bona fide academic settings. While the cultural conditions and political circumstances of the adoption of such rubrics may be fairly 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 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, 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, precisely, is the analytical utility (if any) of the rubric “religion and public life”?
2) What, precisely, is the cultural salience of the rubric “religion and public life”?
3) Inasmuch as (2) may be exerting considerable influence on academic practice sub (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. Your understanding and appreciation of such principles will hopefully develop further during over the course of the seminar.

EVALUATION
Essay Proposal – 20% (1500-2000 words; due 15 October); detailed brief to be distributed
Essay – 50% (8,000-12,000 words; due 3 December)
Seminar participation/contribution – 30% (up to 3% per class)
**POLICY ON ATTENDANCE**
Not only is it common practice to evaluate participation in discussion and contribution to a seminar, it is also customary 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 for 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 you 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 12:00-14:00, or 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 24 hour 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  
**NB members of the seminar should come prepared to articulate their interests and expectations.**
- Various academic and para-academic program websites TBA

**UNIT 1: Making religion in public (and in the public academy)**  
Week II (17 September) – An historical datum (and the tip of an iceberg…)

Week III (24 September) – An iceberg lasts a long time…
Week IV (1 October) – “Public” and “Private” Religions


UNIT 2: Orientation to Canadian Context(s)

Week V (8 October) – Considering external difference: how Canada was and is different from America


Week VI (15 October) – Is there a private sphere (beyond “religious” imagining)?

ESSAY PROPOSAL DUE


Week VII (22 October) – Considering internal difference: the limits of “policy” in Canada


UNIT 3: Current academic debates: on secularism/post-secularism

Week VIII (5 November) – In academic theory…

- Various media reports and blogs (eg. First Things) responding to “secular studies” TBA
Week IX (12 November) – In academic practice…


Week X (19 November) – In Religious Studies…


UNIT 4: Special topic: ritual and public life

Week XI (26 November) – “secular” rituals of public life


Week XII (3 December) – Ritual dimensions of global politics

- Readings to be determined collectively by the seminar.

Term Papers Due!
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:

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<td>A+</td>
<td>90-100</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Failure</td>
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<td>ABS</td>
<td>Absent from final examination, equivalent to F</td>
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<td>DEF</td>
<td>Official deferral (see &quot;Petitions to Defer&quot;)</td>
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<td>FND</td>
<td>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.</td>
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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. 9, 2013. The last day to withdraw from FALL/WINTER (Full Term) and WINTER term courses is APRIL 8, 2014.

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. 8, 2013 for the Fall term and March 7, 2014 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 assignments 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 Floor Library
Learning Support Service 520-2600 Ext 1125 4 Floor Library