

CARLETON UNIVERSITY
College of the Humanities-Religion Program

SEMINAR IN “RELIGION AND PUBLIC LIFE”

RELI 5802F – (Fall 2015); 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 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 19 October); detailed brief to be distributed

Essay – **50%** (8,000-12,000 words; due 7 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. In one manner of speaking such leadership is *ex officio*. 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 actually share leadership duties. **Each one of you will be assigned a week in which you will be responsible for leading the seminar.** Of course you will have me as your co-pilot (in another manner of speaking).

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 11:00-13:00, 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 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

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

Week I (4 September NB this is a Friday, but Carleton is following a Monday schedule) –

General introduction and discussion: what is a seminar (in 'religion and public life')?

- Jonathan Z. Smith, "The Necessary Lie: Duplicity in the Disciplines"
(<http://rel.as.ua.edu/secure/rel490smithnecessarylie.pdf>)
- Matthew Day, "The Educator Must be Educated: The study of religion at the end of the humanities" *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 22 (2010), 1-8.

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

Week II (14 September) – **An historical datum or two (and the tip of an iceberg...)**

- 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]

- 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”]
- Some chips from my workbench (via CULearn)

Week III (21 September) – **An iceberg lasts a long time...**

- Jonathan Z. Smith, Introduction to *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1981).
- Russell T. McCutcheon, “A Default of Critical Intelligence? The Scholar of Religion as Public Intellectual” in: *idem, Critics Not Caretakers: Redescribing the Public Study of Religion* (Albany: SUNY, 2001), 125-144. [see also *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 66 (1997), 443-68.]
- Hans Kippenberg, “Searching for the link between Religion and Violence by Means of the Thomas-Theorem” *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 22 (2010), 97-115.

Week IV (28 September) – **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.
- Peter Lake and Steven Pincus, “Re-thinking the Public Sphere in Early Modern England” in: *idem, eds., The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 1-30. [see also *Journal of British Studies* 45 (2006), 270-292]
- Harold Mah, “Phantasies of the Public Sphere: Rethinking the Habermas of Historians”, *Journal of Modern History* 72 (2000), 153-182.

UNIT 2: Orientation to Canadian Context(s)

Week V (5 October) – **Talking Religion with a Canadian accent**

- Roger O’Toole, “Religion in Canada: Its Development and Contemporary Situation” *Social Compass* 43 (1996), 119-134.
- 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
- Andrew E. Kim, “The Absence of Pan-Canadian Civil Religion: Plurality, Duality and Conflict in Symbols of Canadian Culture” *Sociology of Religion* 54 (1993), 257-275.

Week VI (19 October) – **“Public” and “Private” Religions in Canada**

- 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.
- 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.

ESSAY PROPOSAL DUE

Week VII (2 November) – **Public Policy and Religion in Canada**

- Paul Bramadat, “Religion and Public Policy in Canada: An Itinerary” *Studies in Religion* 37 (2008), 121-143.
- Jean Kunz, “Religious Diversity in a multi-cultural Canada: Quo Vadis?” *Horizons* 10 (2009) (https://policyresearch.gc.ca/page.asp?pagenm=2009-0008_04)
- Jean Lock Kunz and Stuart Sykes, *From Mosaic to Harmony: Multicultural Canada in the 21st Century: Results of Regional Roundtables* (Government of Canada Policy Research Initiative, 2007?) (https://policyresearch.gc.ca/doclib/SP_div_Mosaic_%20e.pdf)
- Lori Beaman, “Aboriginal Spirituality and the Legal Construction of Freedom of Religion” *Journal of Church and State* 44 (2002), 135-149.

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

Week VIII (9 November) – **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.
- Jacques Berlinerblau, introduction to *How to be Secular: A call to arms for religious freedom* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012).

Week IX (16 November) – **Post-secularism...**

- 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.
- Ludger Viefhues-Bailey, “Can the post-colonial be post-religious? Reflections from the secular metropolis” *Critical Research on Religion* 3 (2015), 101-117.

Week X (23 November) – **In Religious Studies in particular...**

- Donald Wiebe, “The Failure of Nerve in the Academic Study of Religion” *Studies in Religion* 13 (1984), 401-22.
- Matthew Robbins, “Re-placing Theology: Theologizing the Academic Study of Religion” *Bulletin of the Council of Societies for the Study of Religion* 28 (1999) 118-125.
- Johannes C. Wolfart, “Secular Responsibility and the Public Intellectual in the Study of Religion” *Studies in Religion* 30 (2001), 223-229.
- Johannes C. Wolfart, “Revisiting the Confessional: Donald Wiebe’s “Small ‘C’ Confessional,” Its Historical Entailments and Linguistic Entanglements” in: W. Arnal, W. Braun and R.T. McCutcheon, eds., *Failure and Nerve in the Academic Study of Religion* (Sheffield/Briston CT: Equinox, 2012), 95-110.

UNIT 4: Special topic: ritual and public life

Week XI (30 November) – **Are rituals always “public religion”?**

- Ed Muir, “Introduction: What is a Ritual?” in: idem, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1-11.
- Jane Schneider and Peter Schneider, “Mafia Burlesque: The profane Mass as a peace-making ritual” in: Eric Wolf, ed., *Religion, Power and Protest in Local Communities: The north shore of the Mediterranean* (Berlin and New York: Mouton, 1984), 117-135.

- Jill Delaney, “Ritual Space in the Canadian Museum of Civilization: Consuming Canadian Identity” in: R. Shields, ed., *Lifestyle Shopping: the Subject of Consumption* (London: Routledge, 1992), 136-148.
- Some more chips from my workbench [via CULearn]

Week XII (7 December) – Agenda and Readings to be determined collectively by the seminar!

Term Essays 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:

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