

CARLETON UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY |
RELIGION PROGRAM, COLLEGE OF THE HUMANITIES

RELIGION AND SOCIETY
ANTH 2550 / RELI 2736

2025 WINTER TERM

Instructor:

Alyshea Cummins

Office Hours: before class or by appointment

Office Location: PA310a | Zoom

Email: alyshea.cummins@carleton.ca

Teaching Assistant(s):

See Brightspace Homepage

Online/Blended: Asynchronous Online Learning with In-Person Class Discussions

Course Content: Available on Mondays (except for holidays)

In-Person Class Discussions: Tuesdays from 2:35-3:55pm

(**NOTE:** Some classes take place over Zoom, see Class Schedule and Brightspace for Zoom meeting details)

Course Requires Reliable and High-Speed Internet Connection

Algonquin Land Acknowledgement: Carleton University acknowledges the location of its campus on the traditional, unceded territories of the Algonquin nation. In doing so, Carleton acknowledges it has a responsibility to the Algonquin people and a responsibility to adhere to Algonquin cultural protocols.

Description: Cross-cultural survey of religious institutions, focusing on theories and methodologies in the study of religion. Topics may include myth, totemism, cults, ritual, belief systems, altered states of consciousness, new religious and/or new age movements and the relationship of religion with other social institutions and processes.

Rationale: This course serves as an introductory exploration into anthropological perspectives on the study of religion. It delves into the historical evolution of this subdiscipline, examines key theoretical frameworks, explores fundamental conceptual terminology, and engages with the various challenges and considerations inherent in research methodology within the field. Throughout the course, students will gain a comprehensive understanding of the foundations, theories, and methodological intricacies involved in anthropological investigations of religion.

Learning Outcomes: This course aims to give students a broad understanding of the study of religion in its social context(s). Through the lectures, readings, videos, and selected case studies we will investigate the role of religion in shaping society and how context, in turn, shapes religion. Students taking this course will learn disciplinary vocabulary associated with the religion(s) studied in this course. They will also be able to recognize personal situated-ness and personal bias in confronting religious phenomena. Through class discussions, students will gain confidence in presenting, arguing, and defending their ideas while engaging with course content. Through assignments, students will develop skills in research and writing. Further, students taking this course will be able to distinguish different methods of increasing knowledge in the field of the study of religion, including historical (largely based on texts) and social scientific (largely based on field work).

Class Time: Each class we will meet to discuss the respective module, lecture, and readings. Through discussions and in-class assignments and activities, students will engage further with class material and gain confidence in expressing their ideas. Participation in class counts towards the participation grade (20%; see details below).

Welcoming Classroom Commitment: We each come from diverse backgrounds and experiences, and we will inevitably approach discussions and the subject matter in unique ways. Throughout the course we will collectively try to make sure that everyone feels safe and respected when presenting their ideas and understandings about course content. We will be respectful towards one another and do our best to reflect on our own biases and assumptions in order to make space for diverse views and ways of thinking.

Instruments of Evaluation: The Evaluation Procedures of the university are described in the

Undergraduate Calendar. Final grades are subject to the Dean's approval and are not official until that approval has been received. There are three instruments of evaluation plus potential bonus marks. As stated in the Academic Regulations of the University, Section 2.1: "To obtain credit in a course, students must meet all the course requirements for attendance, term work and examinations as published in the course outline."

Instruments of Evaluation Summary:

Participation	20%	During Class
Quizzes	30%	Each Module
Research Project	50%	Feb 7 (20%) Mar 28 (30%)
*BONUS MARKS	+3%	*Due Friday Apr 4

Participation (20%)

- The class meets every Tuesday
- Students are expected to complete the Module and readings prior to each meeting
- Students will earn marks for their participation in class activities and discussions (participation is recorded through group submissions)
- There will be a total of 11 class modules and students only need to participate in 10 of those classes
- Some classes take place over Zoom. See the Class Schedule on Page 6 for more details

NOTE: There are no makeups for missed classes, however extra credit opportunities will be made available and will be announced on Brightspace (see *Bonus Marks*).

Weekly Quizzes (30%):

- Weekly quizzes are open-book and timed to prevent student collaboration
- There will be a total of 11 Quizzes and the best 10 will count towards the final grade
- Quizzes can be found in each Learning Module and completed on Brightspace
- Available each Monday (except on holidays) until 23:59 EDT each following Monday except for Module 6 (see Schedule on page 6 of Syllabus for more details)

NOTE: There are no makeups for quizzes, however extra credit opportunities will be made available and will be announced on Brightspace (see *Bonus Marks*).

Research Project (50%)

- There are two components related to the Research Project:
 1. Outline & Annotated Bibliography (20%; due Friday Feb 7 at 11:59pm EDT)
 2. Student will then choose one of the following assessments:
 - a) Research Paper (30%; due Friday Mar 28 at 11:59pm EDT)
 - b) Infographic (30%; due Friday Mar 28 at 11:59pm EDT)
- Instructions and Rubrics can be found on Brightspace

NOTE: Late submissions are subject to a **-5%** penalty each day they are late up to 4 days after the deadline. After 4 days, late work will no longer be accepted for grading.

Bonus Marks (+3%):

Extra Credit Assignment (ECA): The ECA allows students to earn up to 3% on top of their final grade and/or make up for missed quizzes. To participate, students must attend an approved public university lecture (online or in-person) on the topic of religion and write a short critical reflection on the content (see Instructions and Rubric on Brightspace). Students must submit their ECA 1-week after the posted event. Eligible events will be posted on the “Extra-Credit Opportunities” discussion forum on Brightspace.

NOTE: Please email the professor if you are doing an ECA to replace a quiz grade. Late submissions are subject to a **-5%** penalty each day they are late up to 4 days after the deadline. After 4 days, late work will no longer be accepted for grading. The final day to submit an ECA is **Friday April 4th, 2025**, no late submissions will be accepted.

Required Readings

Textbook

Rebecca L. Stein, Philip L. Stein, Benjamin R. Kracht, and Marjorie M. Snipes. 2024. *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic and Witchcraft*, 5th edition. Allyn and Bacon, Boston.

Note: The textbook is on hold at the library and available for purchase at the University Bookstore (they price match). There is also an online version available through the library, but it is limited to 6 simultaneous users.

Cost of Educational Material

Textbook cost as per Bookstore:

New \$174.00

Used \$130.50

Additional Readings

Additional readings will be posted on Brightspace and may include PDFs, links to online sources, and Multi-Media Readings. See the respective module for full list of required readings.

FAQs

1. **Do I have to attend live meetings?** Yes. Students are expected to attend class every Tuesday from 14:35-15:55. Some of our meetings take place over Zoom. See Class Schedule for more information. The Participation grade (20%) is earned during class time.
2. **Do I need the textbook?** Yes. There is a free online version available through the Carleton Library, but access is limited to 6 students. The textbook can also be purchased through the University Bookstore (they price match).
3. **Are there any weekly activities that I need to complete?** Yes. Each module requires you to complete a quiz and participate in class activities and discussions. See Brightspace for a complete list of all required readings, videos, and activities.
4. **Are there any assignments to complete?** Yes. There is a Research Project is worth 50% of the final grade and has two components: an outline and annotated bibliography (20%) and either a research paper (30%) OR an infographic (30%). Late submissions will be subject to a late penalty of -5% each day it is late. Late submissions will not be accepted after 4 days.
5. **Can I earn bonus marks in this class?** Yes, students can complete one Extra-Credit Assignment (ECA) to earn up to 3% on top of their final grade. Students can also complete additional ECAs if they missed a class or a quiz. See Brightspace for more details.
6. **What if I miss a Quiz or a class?** If a student misses a quiz, they can complete an ECA to replace the missed quiz or class. See Brightspace for details.
7. **What is the best way to reach you?** Email, Office Hours, or the “Ask the Instructor Q&A” online forum on Brightspace.

SCHEDULE of CLASSES, READINGS, and ACTIVITIES

WEEK 1 Available: January 6	
CLASS MEETING (Online): Wednesday 01/07 to discuss Syllabus and course logistics — See Brightspace for Zoom Meeting Link	
Module 1	<i>Studying Religion</i> READ: Stein & Stein chapter 1 – “The Anthropological Study of Religion” COMPLETE: Module 1 on Brightspace QUIZ #1 – Due at 23:59, Monday 01/13

WEEK 2 Available: January 13	
CLASS MEETING: Wednesday 01/14 to discuss Module 1	
Module 2	<i>Religious Symbols</i> READ: Stein & Stein chapter 2 – “Religious Symbols” COMPLETE: Module 2 on Brightspace QUIZ #2 – Due at 23:59, Monday 01/20

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WEEK 3

Available: January 20

CLASS MEETING: Wednesday 01/21 at 11:35 to discuss Module 2

Module 3

Importance of Myths

READ: Stein & Stein chapter 2 – “Myths”

COMPLETE: Module 3 on Brightspace

QUIZ #3 – Due at **23:59, Monday 01/27**

WEEK 4

Available: January 27

CLASS MEETING: Wednesday 01/28 at 11:35 to discuss Module 3

Module 4

Religious Rituals

READ: Stein & Stein chapter 4 – “Ritual”

COMPLETE: Module 4 on Brightspace

QUIZ #4 – Due at **23:59, Monday 02/03**

WEEK 5

Available: February 3

CLASS MEETING: Wednesday 02/04 to discuss Module 4

Module 5

Religious Experience

READ: Stein & Stein chapter 5 – “Altered States of Consciousness”

COMPLETE: Module 5 on Brightspace

QUIZ #5 – Due **23:59, Monday 02/10**

Outline and Annotated Bibliography – Due at 23:59, Friday February 7th

WEEK 6

Available: February 10

CLASS MEETING: Wednesday 02/11 to discuss Module 4

Module 6

Religious Authorities

READ: Stein & Stein chapters 6 – “Religious Specialists”

COMPLETE: Module 6 on Brightspace

QUIZ #6 – Due 23:59, Friday 02/14*

*Due on Friday due to Reading Week

WEEK 7

READING WEEK: February 17-23

WEEK 8

Available: February 24

CLASS MEETING: Wednesday 02/25 to discuss Module 6

Module 7

Magic and Society

READ: Stein & Stein chapter 7 – “Magic and Divination”

COMPLETE: Module 7 on Brightspace

QUIZ #7 – Due 23:59, Monday 03/03

WEEK 9

Available: March 3

CLASS MEETING: Wednesday 03/04 to discuss Module 7

Module 8

Death and the Afterlife

READ: Stein & Stein chapter 8 – “Souls, Ghosts, and Death”

COMPLETE: Module 8 on Brightspace

QUIZ #8 – Due 23:59, Monday 03/07

WEEK 10

Available: March 10

CLASS MEETING: Wednesday 03/11 to discuss Module 8

Module 9

God(s) and Society

READ: Stein & Stein chapter 9 – “Gods and Spirits”

COMPLETE: Module 9 on Brightspace

QUIZ #9 – Due 23:59, Monday 03/17

WEEK 11

Available: March 17

CLASS MEETING (Online): Wednesday 03/18 to discuss Module 9

Module 10

Witchcraft and Society

READ: Stein & Stein chapter 10 – “Witchcraft”

COMPLETE: Module 10 on Brightspace

FILM: The Burning Times

QUIZ #10 – Due 23:59, Monday 03/24

WEEK 12

SYLLABUS – RELI2736 / ANTH2550

Available: March 24

CLASS MEETING: Wednesday 03/27 at 11:35 to discuss Module 10

Module 11

A Changing Landscape

READ: Stein & Stein chapter 12 – “The Search for New Meaning”

COMPLETE: Module 11 on Brightspace

QUIZ #11 – Due 23:59, Monday 03/31

RESEARCH PROJECT – Due at 23:59, Monday March 28

WEEK 13

March 31

Final Discussion

CLASS MEETING (Online): Wednesday 04/01 to discuss Module 11

EXTRA-CREDIT ASSIGNMENT(S) – Due at 23:59, FRIDAY, APRIL 4th

EXAMINATION PERIOD

April 11-26

Additional Information

In accordance with the Carleton University Undergraduate Calendar Regulations, the letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 67-69	D+ = 57-59
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 63-66	D = 53-56
A - = 80-84	B - = 70-72	C - = 60-62	D - = 50-52
F = Below 50	WDN = Withdrawn from the course	DEF = Deferred	

University Regulations for All College of the Humanities Courses (Updated November 22,2024)

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.

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.

Online Learning Resources

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.

Academic Integrity Policy

The University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This 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, artworks, 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, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT)
- 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
- failing to acknowledge sources with 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 follows a rigorous [process for academic integrity allegations](#), including reviewing documents and interviewing the student, when an instructor suspects a violation has been committed. Penalties for violations may include a final grade of "F" for the course.

Co-operation or Collaboration

An important and valuable component of the learning process is the progress a student can make as a result of interacting with other students. In struggling together to master similar concepts and problems and in being exposed to each other's views and approaches, a group of students can enhance and speed up the learning process. Carleton University encourages students to benefit from these activities which will not generally be viewed as a violation of the Policy. With the exception of tests and examinations, instructors will not normally limit these interactions.

Students shall not co-operate or collaborate on academic work when the instructor has indicated that the work is to be completed on an individual basis. Failure to follow the instructor's directions in this regard is a violation of the standards of academic integrity. Unless otherwise indicated, students shall not co-operate or collaborate in the completion of a test or examination.

Group Work: There are many cases where students are expected or required to work in groups to complete a course requirement. Normally, students are not responsible for violations of this policy committed by other members of a group in which they participate. **More information on the process [here](#).**

Academic Accommodations

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.

Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the *Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances*, are outlined on the [Academic Accommodations website](#).

Requests for Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes can be [found here](#).

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](mailto:equity@carleton.ca) at equity@carleton.ca.

Grading System at Carleton University

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points and the percentage conversion can be found [here](#).

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 extenuating circumstances beyond their control, which forces them to delay submission of the work. Requests for academic consideration are made in accordance with the [Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical or Other Extenuating Circumstances](#).

Students who claim short-term extenuating circumstances (normally lasting up to five days) as a reason for missed term work are held responsible for immediately informing the instructor concerned and for making alternate arrangements with the instructor. If the instructor requires supporting documentation, the instructor may only request submission of the University's self-declaration form, which is available on the [Registrar's Office website](#). The alternate arrangement must be made before the last day of classes in the term as published in the academic schedule.

1. 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 extenuating circumstances lasting for a significant period of time/ long-term (normally more than five days), 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 consideration or did not provide reasonable accommodation, the student should follow the appeals process described in the [Academic Consideration Policy](#).
4. If academic consideration 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: [Undergraduate](#) | [Graduate](#)).

Deferred Final Exams

Students who are unable to write a final examination because of extenuating circumstances, as defined in the [Academic Consideration Policy](#), 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 (3) working days after the original final examination or the due date of the take-home examination; and,
2. be fully supported by appropriate documentation. In cases of short-term extenuating circumstances normally lasting no more than five (5) days, students must include the University's self-declaration form, which can be found on [the Registrar's Office website](#). Additional documentation is required in cases of extenuating circumstances lasting longer than five (5) days and must be supported by a medical note specifying the date of 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](#).

Academic Consideration Policy

As per the [Academic Consideration Policy](#), if students encounter extenuating circumstances that temporarily hinder their capacity to fulfil in-class academic requirements, they can request academic consideration. The Academic Consideration for Coursework is only available for accommodations regarding course work. Requests for accommodations during the formal exam period must follow the [official deferral process](#).

NOTE: As per the Policy, students are to speak with/contact their instructor before submitting a request for Academic Consideration. Requests are not automatically approved. Approving and determining the accommodation remains at the discretion of the instructor. Students should consult the course syllabus about the instructor's policy or procedures for requesting academic consideration. [More information here](#).

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.

Mental Health and Wellness at Carleton

As a student you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. For more information, please consult <https://wellness.carleton.ca/>

Emergency Resources ([on and off campus](#))

- Suicide Crisis Helpline: call or text 9-8-8, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- For immediate danger or urgent medical support: call 9-1-1

Carleton Resources

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
- Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>
- Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
- Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
- Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
- Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

Off Campus Resources

- Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: call 613-238-3311, text 343-306-5550, or connect online at <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: call 613-722-6914 or toll-free 1-866-996-0991, or connect online at <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Empower Me Counselling Service: call 1-844-741-6389 or connect online at <https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>
- Good2Talk: call 1-866-925-5454 or connect online at <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: for online or on-site service <https://walkincounselling.com>

The Centre for Indigenous Support and Community Engagement

The Centre for Indigenous Initiatives is proud to offer culturally centered individual counselling to students who self-identify as First Nation, Metis or Inuk. Through this service, Indigenous students [can access confidential, individual sessions for support with personal, mental health or academic challenges.](#)

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