

The College of the Humanities  
Religion Program: RELI 1720A; Fall Term  
Indigenous Religions in Global Context  
0.5 credit

**Class timing: Mondays and Wednesdays, 8.35am – 9.55am**  
**Class location: 214 Residence Commons (CO)**

**Professor: Manvitha Singamsetty**  
**E-mail: manvithasingamsetty@carleton.ca**  
**Office: 310A, Paterson Hall**  
**Office hours: by appointment**

### **Course Description:**

This course illuminates a recent category of “World Religions” by examining a diversity of cases from all five continents, as well as in diaspora (e.g. Brazilian Candomblé, Roma/Sinti religion). Key considerations include the study of minority religions, religion in oral cultures, myth and ritual studies, colonialism, and globalisation.

### **Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:**

- By the end of the course students will gain a comprehensive understanding of important concepts, methods, assumptions and ambiguities of classical and contemporary debates in indigenous religious literature, especially Indian, Southeast Asian, Japanese, Australian, African, American, and European perspectives
- They will be able to present written and oral work on key critical perspectives, in both descriptive and evaluative ways, on various indigenous traditions.
- Students will learn how to apply normative ethical and political principles to actual cases of diversity and policy in contemporary societies
- Students will gain an understanding of and experience in analyzing current political trends using anthropological methodologies and classical philosophical principles.
- Students will begin to appreciate how critical reflections on religions draw on and intersect with other academic disciplines.

### **Teaching Philosophy:**

This course has been designed to enhance student-centered learning. Critical analysis, self-reflection and class discussion are all key to the learning mechanisms in this course. Learning involves not only gaining new information but also a critical and ethical application of this newly gained knowledge. In this course we will focus on both these aspects of learning.

## Assignments:

**1. Attendance and participation - 25%**

Based on online quizzes, in-class activities, reflection pieces etc., this is a means to encourage and monitor attendance and in class participation.

**2. Class test – 20% each, in total 40%**

- a. Class test 1 – 09 October 2019
- b. Class test 2 – 20 November 2019

This test will be in written form, in class, and will focus on the topics discussed in class until the date of the test. The test will comprise of multiple-choice, short, and long answer questions. A sample test will be posted on the course website one week prior to the test.

**3. Final Exam – 35%**

This will be a written, scheduled exam and will contain a mix of multiple choice, short and long answer questions. Format of the final exam will be discussed in class. The date of the final exam will be determined and announced by Examination Services. The examination period runs between December 09-21. Please do not make any travel arrangements until the exam schedule has been posted.

## Required texts:

1. Bahr, Ann Marie B., 2005, [\*Religions of the World: Indigenous Religions\*](#). Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publisher.
2. Electronic versions of all the readings will be available on the course website.

## Reading Schedule:

**September 4** - Introduction to syllabus, course overview and themes.

Bahr reader - pp. 2-10

This information will not be repeated so please make sure to attend class.

**September 9** – What are “Indigenous” Religions?

Wright, R., 2013, “[Indigenous Religious Traditions](#)” in L. Sullivan (ed), *Religions of the World: A Cultural Introduction to the Making of Meaning*. Minneapolis: Fortress. Pp.33-45

**Quiz 1 – online**

**September 11** – Adivasis in India

Bahr reader - pp. 10-20

**September 16** – Adivasis in India (continued)

Bahr reader – pp. 21-34

**Quiz 2 – online**

**September 18** – Southeast Asian creation myths

Van, D. N., (Summer 1993), The Flood Myth and the Origin of Ethnic Groups in Southeast Asia, *The Journal of American Folklore*, 106 (421), pp. 304-305, 317-319, 324-327

**September 23** - Ainu in Japan

Irimoto, T., (1996), "Ainu worldview and bear hunting strategies", In J. Pentikainen, *Shamanism and Northern Ecology*, New York: Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 293-301

**Quiz 3 – online**

**September 25** – Inuit Peoples

Bahr reader - pp.90-104

**September 30** – First Nations Spiritualities

[Religion and Spirituality of Indigenous Peoples of Canada](#)

Source: The Canadian Encyclopedia

**Quiz 4 – online**

**October 02** – Metis in Canada

[Métis Spiritualism](#) - entry by Darren R. Préfontaine, Todd Paquin and Patrick Young

Source: Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research

**October 07** – Polynesian Indigenous Spirituality - Film Screening and Class Discussion

**Quiz 5 – online**

**October 09** – Class Test 1 – in class

**October 14 - Thanksgiving. No class**

**October 16** – Australian Aboriginal Religions

Bahr reader – pp. 61-69

**October 21 – Reading Week. No class**

**October 23 – Reading Week. No class**

**October 28** – Australian Aboriginal Religions (continued)

Bahr reader – pp. 70-85

**Quiz 6 – online**

**October 30** - African Indigenous Religions

Bahr reader - pp. 35-43

**November 4** - African Indigenous Religions (continued)

Bahr reader – pp. 44-53

**Quiz 7 – online**

**November 6** – African Indigenous Religions (continued)

Bahr reader – pp. 54-60

**November 11** – The Mayas

Bahr reader - pp. 105-116

**Quiz 8 – online**

**November 13** – The Mayas (continued)

Bahr reader – pp. 117-123

**November 18** – Guest Lecture on Maya Spirituality by Swamy De Lyon

**November 20** – Class Test 2 – in class

**November 25** - The Quechuas

Bahr reader - pp. 124-134

**November 27** – The Quechuas (continued)

Bahr reader – pp.135-141

**Quiz 9 – online**

**December 02** – Indigenous religions in diaspora - Candomblé

Prandi, R., (2001), African Gods in contemporary Brazil, *International Sociology*, 15(4), pp. 643-653

**December 04** – Roma/Sinti Mythology

Lecouteux, C., (2018), *Mythology in Charms, Rites, and Magical Traditions of the Roma*, Rochester: Imprint Traditions, pp. 164-173

**Quiz 10 – online**

**December 06** – Christianity and Indigenous Religions Today

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OoxNyNWFvZw>

Final Exam Review

**December 09 to December 21** – Final Exam Period. Final exam date will be decided and announced by Examination Services.

### **Tips for doing well:**

1. Students are expected to do the readings before class, and class participation is highly encouraged/expected.
2. On average, you will spend about five hours on this class every week – 3 hours in lectures and 2 hours in preparation and reading for class. Approximately, you will spend another 6 hours each preparing for the tests and final exam, so please schedule your semester accordingly.
3. The course website on cuLearn will be updated regularly after each class. The presentations used in class will be available online. All course related announcements and communication will also be channeled through the website.

## **Class resources and policies:**

1. You are encouraged to approach the academic writing help center in case you need any assistance with learning how to write essays etc. The CSAS holds regular workshops on writing, taking notes etc. that you may find helpful. You can learn more about these workshops and services [here](#)
2. If you feel stressed or overwhelmed you are encouraged to access the resources on campus to manage your time, stress levels, seek mentors etc. More information can be found [here](#)
3. You are expected to be on time to the lectures.
4. You are expected to be respectful of your colleagues and the professor during class discussions and interactions.

If I can ensure your full participation in any way not already addressed in this syllabus/course outline please do not hesitate to contact me with your queries/requests.



## University Regulations for All College of the Humanities Courses

### Copies of Written Work Submitted

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Always retain for yourself a copy of all essays, term papers, written assignments or take-home tests submitted in your courses.

### Academic Integrity at Carleton

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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, and material on the internet. More information can be found [here](#).

### Academic Accommodation Policy

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#### **Academic Accommodation**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

**Pregnancy obligation:** write to the 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 [Student Guide](#)

**Religious obligation:** write to the 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 [Student Guide](#)

**Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at

613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and 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 me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the [PMC website](#) for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

### **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 is 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: [carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support](http://carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support)

### **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. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

## **Grading System at Carleton University**

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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 is below. 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.

[Grading System](#)

## **Course Sharing Websites and Copyright**

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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).

## Statement on Class Conduct

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The Carleton University Human Rights Policies and Procedures affirm that all members of the University community share a responsibility to:

- promote equity and fairness,
- respect and value diversity,
- prevent discrimination and harassment, and preserve the freedom of its members to carry out responsibly their scholarly work without threat of interference.



## Deferred Term Work

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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.

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 (3.0) 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. More information is available [in the calendar](#).

## Deferred Final Exams

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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. [More information.](#)

The application for a [deferral](#) must:

1. be made in writing or online 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 [forms and fees page](#).

Any questions related to deferring a Final Exam or Final Assignment/Take Home Examination should be directed to the [Registrar's Office](#).

## Withdrawal From Courses

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Withdrawn. No academic credit, no impact on the CGPA. WDN is a permanent notation that appears on the official transcript for students who withdraw after the full fee adjustment date in each term (noted in the Academic Year section of the Calendar each term). Students may withdraw on or before the last day of classes.

Important dates can be found [here](#).

## Financial vs. Academic Withdrawal

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**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. [More information](#)

## Department Contact Information

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**College of the Humanities** 300 Paterson Hall (613)520-2809

[CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca](mailto:CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca)

Drop box for CLCV, HUMS LATN GREK Term Papers and assignments is outside 300 P.A.

**Greek and Roman Studies** 300 Paterson Hall (613)520-2809

[GreekAndRomanStudies@cunet.carleton.ca](mailto:GreekAndRomanStudies@cunet.carleton.ca)

Drop Box is outside of 300 P.A.

**Religion** 2A39 Paterson Hall (613)520-2100

[Religion@cunet.carleton.ca](mailto:Religion@cunet.carleton.ca)

Drop box for RELI and SAST Term Papers and assignments is outside of 2A39 P.A.

**Registrar's Office** 300 Tory (613)520-3500

<https://carleton.ca/registrar/>

## Student Resources on Campus

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[CUKnowHow Website](#)

[Academics: From registration to graduation, the tools for your success.](#)