

The College of the Humanities
Religion Program: RELI 1730 A (0.5 credits)
INTERPRETATIONS OF RELIGION

Professor: Josée Campion

Email: Josee.Campion@carleton.ca

Office Location: 2A35 Paterson Hall

Office Hours: Tuesday, 16:15-17:15 (or by appt.)

Office Phone: 613-520-2600, extension 2103

Class Schedule: Tuesday/Thursday, 14:35-15:55

Class Location: Southam Hall 304

* All inquiries sent by e-mail should receive a response within two working days. Please note that the professor reserves the right not respond to an e-mail if the language is inappropriate.

Course Description:

Introduction to the academic study of religion by considering its fundamental components: myth, symbol, scripture, doctrine, code, and ritual, drawing material from a variety of world religions. Precludes additional credit for RELI 2002, RELI 1205, RELI 1402 and RELI 1731.

Course Objectives:

The main goal is to introduce students to the field of religious studies. To achieve this objective, the course combines two modes of study: the case-study mode and the comparative mode. This particular approach seeks to offer students the opportunity to:

- consider various ways of defining and interpreting religion;
- gain a sense of the meaning and guidance people find in their specific religion;
- constructively compare and contrast various traditions on central aspects of religious life;
- engage critically widespread assumptions pertaining to religion and different religious groups; and,
- enhance their reading, studying, thinking and writing skills.

Course Material:

There are two required texts, which are available at the Carleton Bookstore (University Center, 1st Floor). These texts and other suggested readings will be put on reserve at MacOdrum Library and/or posted on Ares.

- Lawrence S. Cunningham and John Kelsay. *Sacred Quest: An Invitation to the Study of Religion*. 6th ed. Upper Saddle River: Pearson, 2013
- Coursepack for RELI 1730

Course Requirements:

(1) Midterm Exam	30%	October 13, 2015
(2) Short Written Assignment	30%	December 3, 2015
(3) Final Exam	40%	TBA

(1) Midterm Exam (30%):

On Oct. 13, the midterm will present you with a combination of objective test items (multiple choice, true/false, matching, etc.). It will be based on lectures, required readings, class discussions, and documentaries shown in class from Sept. 3 to Oct. 8. Crucial concepts and issues will be highlighted during lectures. No support materials may be used when writing this examination.

(2) Short Written Assignment (30%):

The short written assignment will be on a choice of different topics covered in class and will require a deeper analysis of lectures, required readings and suggested material on Ares and/or on reserve at MacOdrum library. You will be expected to answer one question in the form of a short essay. It is entirely acceptable to discuss the topics with a classmate. However, when the time for writing comes, you have to work independently. Make sure that what you submit is in your own words and reflects your own thoughts, analysis and argument.

It should be 4 pages, *excluding the title-page and bibliography*, double-spaced. Please use 12 point Times New Roman font. Your essay must also include specific references to the required reading material. Along with the different topics, you will be provided with detailed guidelines and criteria assessment for this assignment on Nov. 3. Your work can be submitted in person at the beginning of class on Nov. 26, Dec. 1 or Dec. 3. To be perfectly clear: *all* short written assignments are due at the start of class on Dec. 3.

Especially for first-year students and beginners in the field of religious studies, I strongly recommend the following book: Margot Northey *et al.* *Making Sense: Religious Studies*. (A Student's Guide to Research & Writing). Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2012. You can find it on reserve at MacOdrum library.

(3) Final Exam (40%):

The final exam will present you with a combination of objective test items (multiple choice, true/false, matching, etc.). It will be based on lectures, required readings, class discussions, and documentaries shown in class from Oct. 15 to Dec. 3. Crucial concepts and issues will be highlighted during lectures. It is a closed-book examination.

* Please note that :

- no assignments will be accepted via email;
- only legitimate reasons and adequate proof (like a doctor's note or an obituary) will get you a make-up or an extension; and,
- late assignments will be penalized 10% per day (including weekends).

Additional Remarks:

Please see "Regulations Common to all Humanities Courses" attached to the syllabus for policy on plagiarism as well as grading systems, requests for academic accommodation and petitions to defer.

Attendance will not be taken in class. Nonetheless, it is important to attend regularly, since the assignments are heavily based on lectures and class discussions. Moreover, in this course, the professor's PowerPoint slides will *not* be posted on cuLearn and will not be given to students. If you miss a class, you should ask a classmate to borrow his/her notes. If you have further questions, you can contact me via email or drop by during my office hours. You should also complete the required readings for each lecture prior to coming to class. The classroom environment will be greatly enhanced if you do the readings and come to class prepared with questions, reflections and comments.

Please know that professor or student materials created for this course (including presentations, posted notes, exams and assignments) remain the intellectual property of the author (s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

PROPOSED SCHEDULE

Sept. 3 and Sept. 8: Introduction to the Scope of the Course and the Field of Religious Studies

- G. E. Kessler. "A Challenge," *Ways of Being Religious* (2000), 3-6 (CP/Ares)
- "Introduction," *Sacred Quest*, 1-10

Sept. 10 and Sept. 15: Defining Religion – Preliminaries, Problems and Propositions

- G. E. Kessler. "What is Religion?," *Ways of Being Religious* (2000), 17-20 (CP/Ares)
- "Ch. 1: Toward a Definition of Religion," *Sacred Quest*, 11-22

Sept. 17: The Concept and the Character of the Sacred

- "Ch. 2: The Nature of the Sacred," *Sacred Quest*, 25-35

Sept. 22: Various Sacred Media and Modes of Relating to the Sacred

- Different Sections, "Ch. 3: The Appearance of the Sacred," *Sacred Quest*, 37-46, 51-52

Sept. 24: Experiencing the Sacred

– Case Study Focus: Mohammed and the Buddha

- G. E. Kessler. Part of "Ch. 7: Experiencing the Sacred," *Studying Religion* (2008), 129-139 (CP/Ares)

Sept. 29: Sacred Space and Time

– Case Study Focus: Mount Kilimanjaro and the Dreamtime

- Sections "Sacred Space" and "Sacred Time," Ch. 3, *Sacred Quest*, 46-50.
- G. E. Kessler. Part of "Ch. 6: Sacred Time & Space," *Studying Religion* (2008), 105-115 (CP/Ares)

Oct. 1: The Language(s) of the Sacred – Oral, Written and Visual

– Case Study Focus: The 2nd Commandment (Judaism) and *Murti* (Hinduism)

- Different Sections, “Ch. 4: The Language(s) of the Sacred,” *Sacred Quest*, 55-56, 62-64, 66-67
- P. Gwynne. Sections “The 2nd Commandment” & “Murti,” *World Religions in Practice* (2009), 28-32, 42-46 (CP/Ares)

Suggested: D. L. Eck. “Seeing the Divine,” *Ways of Being Religious* (2000), 157-160 (CP/Ares)

Oct. 6. and Oct. 8: Myth as Sacred Story – Creation Myths and Hero/Savior Myths

– Case Study Focus: Enuma Elish and Moses

- Different Sections, “Ch. 4: The Language(s) of the Sacred,” *Sacred Quest*, 57-61, 64-65, 68-69
- G. E. Kessler. Part of “Ch. 4: Myth as Sacred Story,” *Studying Religion* (2008), 60-71 (CP/Ares)

Oct. 13: MIDTERM (30%)**Oct. 15 and Oct. 20: Ritual and Life-Cycle Rituals**

– Case Study Focus: An Apache Initiation into Womanhood

- J. C. Livingston. “Ch. 5: Sacred Ritual,” *Anatomy of the Sacred* (2009), 74-84 (CP/Ares)
- I. Talamantez. “The Presence of Isanaklesh,” *Unspoken Worlds* (1989), 246-256 (CP/Ares)

Oct. 22: Calendrical Rituals, Commemorative Rites and Sacraments

- J. C. Livingston. “Ch. 5: Sacred Ritual,” *Anatomy of the Sacred* (2009), 86-89, 92-93 (CP/Ares)
- Section “The Passover,” “Ch. 3: Ritual,” *Sacred Quest*, 73

Oct. 26 - Oct. 30: FALL BREAK (No classes)**Nov. 3: Religion, Social Cohesion and Identity**

– PRESENTATION OF THE GUIDELINES/TOPICS FOR THE SHORT WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT

– Case Study Focus: Islam’s Five Daily Prayers (*Salat*) and the Pilgrimage to Mecca (*Hajj*)

- Section “The Social Aspect of Worship,” “Ch. 6: Sacred Communities,” *Sacred Quest*, 96-98
- P. Gwynne. Sections “Hajj” & “Summary,” *World Religions in Practice* (2009), 369-376 (CP/Ares)

Suggested: “Malcolm X (1925-1965)” and “From the autobiography of Malcom X,” *The Norton Anthology of World Religions*. Vol. 1 (2015), 1895-1902 (CP/Ares)

Nov. 5: Religious Traditions, Social Tension and Change

- Different Sections, “Ch. 6: Sacred Communities,” *Sacred Quest*, 85-87, 90-96

Nov. 10: Types of Religious Organization and Authority

– Case Study Focus: Mormonism

- Different Sections, “Ch. 6: Sacred Communities,” *Sacred Quest*, 87-90
- M. W. Muesse. “Religious Studies and Heaven’s Gate,” *Sect, Cults, and New Religions*. Vol. 1 (2014), 221-225 (CP/Ares)
- D. S. Swenson. Sections “J. Smith and the Church of J.-C. of Latter-day Saints” and “From the Cult to the Denomination: The Case of the Mormons,” *Society, Spirituality, and the Sacred* (1999), 128-131, 235-237 (CP/Ares)

Nov. 12: The Problem of Evil – Four Classic Religious Responses

- “Ch. 7: The Problem of Evil,” *Sacred Quest*, 105-114

Nov. 17 and Nov. 19: Religion and Morality

– Case Study Focus: Hindu and Christian Patterns of Morality

- “Religion and Morality,” *The HarperCollins Dictionary of Religion* (1995), 729-731 (CP/Ares)
- P. Gwynne. Sections “Dharma” and “A New Commandment,” *World Religions in Practice* (2009), 88-91, 100-104, 109-111 (CP/Ares)
- “10.90: The Hymn of Man,” *Ways of Being Religious* (2000), 118 (CP/Ares)
- J. C. Livingston. Section “Ritual & Sacrifice,” *Anatomy of the Sacred* (2009), 89-92 (CP/Ares)

Suggested: G. E. Kessler. Section “Research Case – The Primal Man,” *Studying Religion* (2008), 78-80 (CP/Ares)

Nov. 24: The Quest for Salvation and Liberation

- Different Sections, “Ch. 9: The Quest for Salvation,” *Sacred Quest*, 133-142

Nov. 26: Paths to Salvation and Liberation

- Different Sections, “Ch. 9: The Quest for Salvation,” *Sacred Quest*, 142-145
- W. E. Paden. Section “Typologies,” *Interpreting the Sacred* (2003), 80-83 (CP/Ares)
- M. Gandhi. “Adherence to Truth,” *Ways of Being Religious* (2000), 149-150 (CP/Ares)

Dec. 1: Spirituality and Religion in the West since the 1960s

- J. H. Mahan. “Ch.2: Making and Articulating Religious Identities,” *Media, Religion and Culture* (2014), 21-31 (CP/Ares)

Dec. 3: Closing Reflections

- ALL SHORT WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS (30%) ARE DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS
- FINAL EXAMINATION (Date and location to be determined)

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