

**The College of the Humanities  
Program (Religion)**

**RELI 1730A : Interpretations of Religion**

**Professor: Leonard Librande**

**Office: 2A35PA Office Hours: Wed 1600–1700; Fri 1330–1430**

**Phone: 613 520–2100. Ext. TBA; E-mail: WebCT Mail**

**TA: TBA Office Hours: TBA**

**Lectures: Wednesdays & Fridays 1435–1555**

**360 Tory Bldg 4 January—5 April, 2012**

**Final Exam: TBA**

**Course Description**

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

**Required Text**

Gary E. Kessler, *Studying Religion: An Introduction Through Cases* (McGraw–Hill, 2008)  
(This text may be “rented” at the CU Bookstore for less than if purchased)

**Course Requirements**

The final grade for this course will be calculated as follows:

First Written Assignment (Due January 6, 2012)	5%
Second Written Assignment (Due January 25, 2012)	30%
Third Written Assignment (Due March 9, 2012)	30%
Three hour Final Exam (To Be Scheduled in April, 2012)	35%

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.

**Course Goals**

The goals of this course relate to the disciplined study of religion, especially in terms of what is entitled *Religionswissenschaft* or the scientific study of religion.

- To learn how to engage in the study of religion.
- To understand the significance of religion for people’s lives.
- To become familiar with the major ideas in the field of religious studies.

2012 WINTER TERM: RELI 1730A (Wednesdays and Fridays)						
Jan 4	Jan 6	Feb 1	Feb 2		Mar 2	Apr 4
Jan 11	Jan 12	Feb 8	Feb 10	Mar 7	Mar 9	
Jan 18	Jan 20	Feb 15	Feb 17	Mar 14	Mar 16	
Jan 25	Jan 27	WINTER BREAK		Mar 21	Mar 23	
		Feb 29		Mar 28	Mar 30	

## Course Outline

1. Kessler, "Thinking about Religion," 1-12
2. Kessler, "On Defining and Studying Religion," 14-35
3. Kessler, "Sacred Power," 38-58
4. Kessler, "Myth as Sacred Story," 60-80
5. Kessler, "Ritual as Sacred Action," 82-101
6. Kessler, "Sacred Space and Time," 103-125
7. Kessler, "Experiencing the Sacred," 127-158
8. Kessler, "Explaining Evil," 159-183
9. Kessler, "Religion and Morality," 186-207
10. Kessler, "Religion and Politics," 210-237
11. Kessler, "Organizing the Sacred," 240-274
12. Kessler, "Human Existence and Destiny," 276-298
13. Kessler, "Human Diversity and Truth," 300-323

**Each week students will read** the appropriate chapter from Kessler's textbook. In addition students will find a list of significant terms and names for each of Kessler's chapters in the WebCT folder "1730 - Terms and Names". Lecture overheads for each chapter can also be found in the WebCT folder "1730 - Lecture Overheads".

## Final Exam

A **final exam** will be scheduled during the final examination period in April. This exam will be a mix of true and false as well as multiple choice elements that reflect the content of Kessler's text and the lectures.

## Written Assignments

The First Written Assignment is due at the start of the second class on Friday January 6<sup>th</sup>. The assignment is to compose a single paragraph response to the question "**What is Religion?**"

The Second Written Assignment is due at the January 25<sup>th</sup> class. This second assignment is for a one–page essay based on Donald Wiebe’s

“Why the Academic Study of Religion? Motive and Method in the Study of Religion,” *Religious Studies*, 24(4), 1988, 403–413

and responding to the question, “**Why the academic study of religion?**”

The Third Written Assignment is due at the March 9<sup>th</sup> class. It is for a one–page essay grounded in any one of the following ten articles:

- 1) Peter Beyer, “Conceptions of Religion: On Distinguishing Scientific, Theological, and ‘Official’ Meanings,” *Social Compass*, 50(2), 2003, 141–160
- 2) Sam Gill, “No Place to Stand: Jonathan Z. Smith as Homo Ludens, The Academic Study of Religion Sub Specie Ludi,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 66(2), Summer 1998, 283–312
- 3) Hans H. Penner, “The Poverty of Functionalism,” *History of Religions*, 11(1), Aug. 1971, 91–97
- 4) Robert A. Segal, “The Myth–Ritualist Theory of Religion,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 19(2), June 1980, 173–185
- 5) Jonathan Z. Smith, “‘Narratives into Problem’: The College Introductory Course and the Study of Religion,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 56(4), Winter 1988, 14–22
- 6) Jonathan Z. Smith, “Connections,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 58(1), Spring 1990, 1–15
- 7) Jonathan Z. Smith, “Tillich[‘s] Remains...,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 78(4), December 2010, 1139–1170
- 8) Wilfred Cantwell Smith, “The Modern West in the History of Religion,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 52(1), March 1984, 3–18
- 9) Wilfred Cantwell Smith, “The Study of Religion and the Study of the Bible,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 39(2), June 1971, 131–140
- 10) Susan Thistlethwaite, “Settled Issues and Neglected Questions—How Is Religion to Be Studied?,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 62(4), Winter 1994, 1037–1045

**The Second and Third Written Assignments are to be no more than one–page in length and no less than two–thirds of the page. Top, bottom, right and left margins are to be set to 1”. Lines must be single spaced. Use the Times New Roman font and set it to 12 point size. If you must, footnotes and bibliography may appear on a second page.**

**Include your name, student number, course number in the header like this:**

Joseph Scott, 100111111, RELI 1730A

**Briefly indicate the article you have chosen in the footer like this:**

Segal, “The Myth Ritualist Theory”

**If you have a title for your paper, put it on the first line of the page.**

These written assignments will be marked for their quality of expression and for their intellectual thoughtfulness. This means you must attend to grammar and the right choice of words to express your ideas as much as to writing that is organized, original and thoughtful. Papers must evidence sufficient organization so that the reader finds it easy to follow what is being said; they should exhibit sufficient originality so that the reader can recognize an enthusiasm and depth of thought on the part of the writer; and, if the writer is thoughtful in composing, the reader should discover a main idea that is carefully chosen, clear, and well-focused.

The first written assignment has already been described above. It is a matter of a careful reading of Wiebe's article, with the question **Why the academic study of religion?** There are many ways this question may be taken. It may imply a contrast between an academic study and other styles of study.

The second written assignment allows you to choose whatever question you want to examine in the context of one of the ten articles listed above.

A grade in the A range can be awarded when the paper is outstanding or even exceptional. The paper is lively and interesting. It has style and all its parts fit the topic.

A grade in the B range can be awarded when the paper is above-average. This paper is well organized and focused on one main idea. The writing in this paper is mechanically correct with few exceptions.

A grade in the C range is satisfactory. Its idea is undeveloped or somewhat unclear so that it remains vague and uninteresting. Some sentences are incomprehensible. There are too many errors in grammar, usage, punctuation or spelling.

A grade in the D range indicates a paper that is minimally acceptable. The paper's topic is unclear and lacks any development. This paper may repeat thoughts again and again and may be filled with mechanical faults.

## 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. 5, 2011**. The last day to withdraw from **FALL/WINTER (Full Term)** and **WINTER** term courses is **APRIL 5, 2012**.

### 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/](http://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.11, 2011 for the Fall term and March 7, 2012 for the Winter term. For more details visit the Equity Services website: [carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/](http://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 <sup>th</sup> Floor Library
Learning Support Service 520-2600 Ext 1125	4 <sup>th</sup> Floor Library