

**Carleton University**  
**College of the Humanities**  
**Religion Program: RELI 1730A**  
**Interpretations of Religion**  
**Fall 2012**

**Instructor Information**

Professor Mohammed Rustom  
Office Hours: Monday, 9:00-11:00  
Office Location: 2A61 Paterson Hall  
E-mail: [mrustom@connect.carleton.ca](mailto:mrustom@connect.carleton.ca)

**Teaching Assistants' Information**

TBA

**Course Information**

Classroom Location: 102 Azrieli Theatre  
Class Meetings: Monday and Wednesday, 4:05-5:25  
Course Website: Accessible through Carleton WebCT

**Course Description**

By drawing on materials from a variety of world religions, as well as the work of key theorists in the field of religious studies, this course introduces the academic study of religion. Students will thus gain exposure to the discipline's approaches to such phenomena as the sacred, myth and symbolism, religious experience, and religion and society.

**Required Text**

Kessler, *Studying Religion*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.

**Requirements and Due Dates**

/15	Assignment 1	Sep. 26 <sup>th</sup>
/20	Assignment 2	Oct. 22 <sup>nd</sup>
/30	Assignment 3	Nov. 12 <sup>th</sup>
/35	Assignment 4	Dec. 3 <sup>rd</sup>

## Schedule of Lectures and Readings

Sep. 10 <sup>th</sup> and 12 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Approaching the Study of Religion</i> Readings: Kessler, 1-12, 14-35
Sep. 17 <sup>th</sup> and 19 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Notions of the Divine</i> Readings: Kessler, 38-55
Sep. 24 <sup>th</sup> and 26 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Myth and Sacred History</i> Readings: Kessler, 60-77
Oct. 1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<i>Symbols and Rituals</i> Readings: Kessler, 82-98
Oct. 8 <sup>th</sup>	No Class
Oct. 10 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Sacred Time and Space</i> Readings: Kessler, 103-121
Oct. 15 <sup>th</sup> and 17 <sup>th</sup>	<i>The Nature of Religious Experience</i> Readings: Kessler, 127-152
Oct. 22 <sup>nd</sup> and 24 <sup>th</sup>	<i>The Role of Evil</i> Readings: Kessler, 159-181
Oct. 29 <sup>th</sup> and 31 <sup>st</sup>	<i>Morality and Ethics</i> Readings: Kessler, 186-203
Nov. 5 <sup>th</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Religion and Politics</i> Readings: Kessler, 210-233
Nov. 12 <sup>th</sup> and 14 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Social Dimensions of Religion</i> Readings: Kessler, 240-268
Nov. 19 <sup>th</sup> and 21 <sup>st</sup>	<i>Meaning and Deliverance</i> Readings: Kessler, 276-295
Nov. 26 <sup>th</sup> and 28 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Religious Diversity</i> Readings: Kessler, 300-317
Dec. 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<i>Course Wrap-Up</i>

## **Assignment # 1**

Carefully read the two case studies on pp. 38-43 of the course text and address the following:

*Are Laozi (Lao-tzu) and St. Anselm's conceptions of ultimate reality similar/the same? Why or why not?*

The quality of your response will largely depend on how much familiarity you show with the content of Chapter 3 of the course text, **as well as** the relevant discussions from the lectures.

### **Method of Evaluation**

The report is out of 15, and is worth 15% of the total course mark. For a good grade, you have to (1) follow the format guidelines to a tee and (2) demonstrate, through your analysis, that you have given considerable thought to the case studies in formulating your response.

### **Due Date and Penalties**

Papers are due at the **beginning of class on September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Emailed versions of the assignment are not acceptable. Essays not handed in on the due date will receive a mark of zero.** Papers submitted late due to a medical or other compassionate reason must be accompanied by relevant documentation.

### **Format Guidelines**

1. Your paper should be **at least 1 full page** in length. It should be **double spaced**, and written in **Times New Roman** font (**size 12**). It must use the normal page layout which comes standard on all Word programs, and page numbers must be on the bottom right corner of the page.
2. Diction is to be formal, and each piece is to be written in Canadian English. Grammar, syntax, spelling, and style must be impeccable.
3. At the top right of the first page of your paper, include the course code, your full name and student number, and the assignment's due date.
4. All paragraphs are to be indented and justified.
5. There are to be no title pages, footnotes, endnotes, or bibliographies. If you want to directly cite a small excerpt from the book in your paper, provide the passage in quotation marks, and then, in brackets directly following the quoted passage, include the page number, preceded by a "p." For example, (p. 29).

## Assignment # 2

Taking as your lead Eliade's statement on p. 73 of the course text, address the following:

*What is the relationship between myth and sacred time? How do religious symbols and rites relate to these phenomena?*

The quality of your response will largely depend on how much familiarity you show with the content of Chapters 4-6 of the course text, **as well as** the relevant discussions from the lectures.

### Method of Evaluation

The report is out of 20, and is worth 20% of the total course mark. For a good grade, you have to (1) follow the format guidelines to a tee and (2) demonstrate, through your analysis, that you have given considerable thought to the questions in formulating your response.

### Due Date and Penalties

Papers are due at the **beginning of class on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2012. Emailed versions of the assignment are not acceptable. Essays not handed in on the due date will receive a mark of zero.** Papers submitted late due to a medical or other compassionate reason must be accompanied by relevant documentation.

### Format Guidelines

1. Your paper should be **at least 2 full pages** in length. It should be **double spaced**, and written in **Times New Roman** font (**size 12**). It must use the normal page layout which comes standard on all Word programs, and page numbers must be on the bottom right corner of the page.
2. Diction is to be formal, and each piece is to be written in Canadian English. Grammar, syntax, spelling, and style must be impeccable.
3. At the top right of the first page of your paper, include the course code, your full name and student number, and the assignment's due date.
4. All paragraphs are to be indented and justified.
5. There are to be no title pages, footnotes, endnotes, or bibliographies. If you want to directly cite a small excerpt from the book in your paper, provide the passage in quotation marks, and then, in brackets directly following the quoted passage, include the page number, preceded by a "p." For example, (p. 29).

## **Assignment # 3**

Address the following:

*How does mysticism attempt to overcome “evil”? Does this necessarily entail that those engaged in mysticism be apolitical?*

The quality of your response will depend on how much familiarity you show with Chapters 7-11 of the course text, **as well as** the relevant discussions from the lectures.

### **Method of Evaluation**

The assignment is out of 30, and is worth 30% of the total course mark. For a good grade, you have to (1) follow the format guidelines to a tee and (2) demonstrate, through your analysis, that you have given considerable thought to the questions in formulating your response.

### **Due Date and Penalties**

Papers are due at the **beginning of class on November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Emailed versions of the assignment are not acceptable. Essays not handed in on the due date will receive a mark of zero.** Papers submitted late due to a medical or other compassionate reason must be accompanied by relevant documentation.

### **Format Guidelines**

1. Your paper should be **at least 3 full pages** in length. It should be **double spaced**, and written in **Times New Roman** font (**size 12**). It must use the normal page layout which comes standard on all Word programs, and page numbers must be on the bottom right corner of the page.
2. Diction is to be formal, and each piece is to be written in Canadian English. Grammar, syntax, spelling, and style must be impeccable.
3. At the top right of the first page of your paper, include the course code, your full name and student number, and the assignment’s due date.
4. All paragraphs are to be indented and justified.
5. There are to be no title pages, footnotes, endnotes, or bibliographies. If you want to directly cite a small excerpt from the book in your paper, provide the passage in quotation marks, and then, in brackets directly following the quoted passage, include the page number, preceded by a “p.” For example, (p. 29).

## Assignment # 4

Address **both** of the following:

1. *What is the difference between religious inclusivism and exclusivism? How do each of these approaches relate to the question of soteriology?*

The quality of your response will depend on how much familiarity you show with Chapters 12 and 13 of the course text, **as well as** the relevant discussions from the lectures.

2. *What is religion, and what are the various aims and approaches to its academic study?*

The quality of your response will depend on how much familiarity you show with the **entire** course text, **as well as** the discussions from the class lectures. It would be wise to re-read Chapters 1 and 2 of the course text before attempting to answer this question.

### Method of Evaluation

Each question is out of 17.5 and is worth 17.5% of the total course mark, meaning this entire assignment is out of 35, and is worth 35% of the total course mark. For a good grade, you have to (1) follow the format guidelines to a tee and (2) demonstrate, through your analysis, that you have given considerable thought to the questions in formulating your responses.

### Due Date and Penalties

Papers are due at the **beginning of class on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012. Emailed versions of the assignment are not acceptable. Essays not handed in on the due date will receive a mark of zero.** Papers submitted late due to a medical or other compassionate reason must be accompanied by relevant documentation.

### Format Guidelines

1. Your paper should be **at least 4 full pages** in length. It should be **double spaced**, and written in **Times New Roman** font (**size 12**). It must use the normal page layout which comes standard on all Word programs, and page numbers must be on the bottom right corner of the page.
2. Diction is to be formal, and each piece is to be written in Canadian English. Grammar, syntax, spelling, and style must be impeccable.
3. At the top right of the first page of your paper, include the course code, your full name and student number, and the assignment's due date.
4. All paragraphs are to be indented and justified.

5. There are to be no title pages, footnotes, endnotes, or bibliographies. If you want to directly cite a small excerpt from the book in your paper, provide the passage in quotation marks, and then, in brackets directly following the quoted passage, include the page number, preceded by a "p." For example, (p. 29).

## 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. 3, 2012**. The last day to withdraw from **FALL/WINTER (Full Term)** and **WINTER** term courses is **APRIL 10, 2013**.

### 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/)

### 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*).

### 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