

Interpretations of Religion
Religion 1730 B & V
Religious Studies
College of the Humanities

Professor: Richard Mann

Office: Paterson Hall 2A51

Office Hours: Wednesdays and Thursdays 2:30-3:30PM

Office Phone: 520-2600 ext. 2504

Office e-mail: richard.mann@carleton.ca

TAs: TBA

Class Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:05 PM to 2:25 PM

Course Description:

This course describes and analyzes various understandings of how religion is understood. Defining what religion is and how it should be interpreted is a challenging exercise. To guide us through this course we will rely on a variety of sources and differing perspectives to gain as comprehensive an understanding of the topic as we can given the limits of time and resources a single semester course presents to both students and professors. This course does not hope to present a single definition or understanding of religion, rather the course aims to make students familiar with a variety of definitions of religion and approaches to interpreting religion.

Required Texts (available through the Carleton Bookstore):

Kessler, Gary. *Studying Religion: An Introduction Through Cases*, 3rd edition. McGraw-Hill.

Martel, Yann. *Life of Pi*. Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2002.

Selected Readings posted to Ares (the library's reserve reading system)

Course Requirements:

1. Unit test (30% of the course grade):

- Written on **February 7, 3:30-5:30 PM**, (specific locations will be advertised once the course has begun)
- **The test will cover lecture material and assigned readings covered from the period January 6 to January 29** ~~February 5~~ **“Note the change”**
- The midterm will consist of a mixture of multiple choice and written/essay answers

2. Unit test (30% of the course grade):

- Written on **March 14, 1:00-3:00 PM** (specific locations will be advertised once the course has begun)
- The test will cover lecture material and assigned readings covered from the period ~~February 10~~ **February 2** to ~~March 12~~ **March 5** “**Note the change**”
- The midterm will consist of a mixture of multiple choice and written/essay answers

3. Final Exam (40% of the course grade):

- The final examination will be scheduled within the winter 2015 final examination period
- The location, date and time of the exam will be posted by Carleton University during the term (check the university web-site)
- The final examination will consist of a mixture of multiple choice and written/essay answers
- The final exam is cumulative (i.e., all of the material covered in the course will be subject to examination)

General Notes on Evaluation:

1. Please see “Regulations Common to all Humanities Courses” attached to the syllabus for policy on plagiarism, grading systems, requests for academic accommodation and petitions to defer.
2. Missed tests and assignments can only be made up if the student supplies adequate written documentation (i.e., a doctor’s note, an obituary) for the absence.
3. To receive a passing grade, students must write all of the tests and exams for the course.

Class and Reading Schedule:

Week 1: Jan. 6 and 8

Lecture Topics: Course overview (Jan. 6), defining religion (Jan. 8)

Readings: 1. Kessler, chapters 1 and 2

Week 2: Jan. 13 and 15

Lecture Topics: Defining religion continued and introduction to *Life of Pi*

Readings: 1. “The Nature of Religion” by Willard Oxtoby (Ares)

2. Selections from *Darshan: Seeing the Divine Image in India* by Diana Eck (Ares)

Week 3: Jan. 20 and 22

Lecture Topics: *Life of Pi*

Readings: 1. *Life of Pi*, “Author’s Note” and pages 1-103 (Part One of the novel)

Week 4: Jan. 27 and 29

Lecture Topics: *Life of Pi*

Readings: 1. *Life of Pi*, pages 104-318 (Part Two of the novel)

Week 5: Feb. 03 and 05

Lecture Topics: The Study of the ‘Other’

Readings: 1. Selections from “Minute on Education” by Thomas Babington Macaulay
(web link posted to CULearn)
2. Selections from *Orientalism* by Edward Said (Ares)

Test 1 Feb. 7 (Note that this is a Saturday and the test is scheduled for 3:30-5:30PM)

Week 6: Feb. 10 and 12

Lecture Topics: Sacred Power

Case Study Focus: Dao (Tao) and Anselm

Readings: 1. Kessler, chapter 3
2. Selections from the *Daodejing* (Ares)

Week 7: Winter Reading Week (**Spend it reading**)

Week 8: Feb. 24 and 26

Lecture Topics: Myth as Sacred Story

Case Study Focus: Enuma elish

Readings: 1. Kessler, chapter 4
2. The *Enuma elish* (Web link posted to CULearn)

Week 9: Mar. 3 and 5

Lecture Topics: Ritual as Sacred Action

Case Study Focus: Seder

Readings: 1. Kessler, chapter 5

Week 9: Mar. 10 and 12

Lecture Topics: Sacred Space and Time

Case Study Focus: Mount Kilimanjaro and The Dreamtime

Readings: 1. Kessler, chapter 6

Test 2 March 14 (Note this is a Saturday and the test is scheduled for 1:00-3:00 PM)

Week 10: Mar. 17 and 19

Lecture Topics: Experiencing the Sacred

Case Study Focus: Muhammad and the Buddha

Readings: 1. Kessler, chapter 7

2. Selected readings on the Buddha (Ares)

Week 11: Mar. 24 and 26

Lecture Topics: Organizing the Sacred

Case Study Focus: Jonestown, and Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, "The Grand Inquisitor"

Readings: 1. Kessler, chapter 11

2. Selected readings on Jonestown (web link to the San Diego State University Site posted to CULearn)

3. "The Grand Inquisitor" section of *The Brothers Karamazov* (Ares)

Week 12: Mar. 31 and Apr. 2

Lecture Topics: Religion and Politics; secularism and post-secularism

Case Study Focus: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Readings: 1. Kessler, chapter 13

2. "Western Secularity" by Charles Taylor (Ares)

3. "The Secular, Secularizations, Secularisms" by José Casanova (Ares)

Week 13: Apr. 7

Lecture Topics: Conclusion and examination preparation

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. 8, 2014**. The last day to withdraw from **FALL/WINTER (Full Term)** and **WINTER** term courses is **APRIL 8, 2015**.

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. 7, 2014** for the Fall term and **March 6, 2015** 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 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 th Floor Library
Learning Support Service 520-2600 Ext 1125	4 th Floor Library