

CARLETON UNIVERSITY

College of the Humanities - Religion Program

CHRISTIANITY (An introductory course in Religious Studies)

RELI 2200A – (Winter 2024)

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COURSE OBJECTIVES: This course is an introductory survey of Christianity from (roughly) the time of the earliest Christian communities to the present (approximately). The aim is to introduce key concepts, practices, and teachings of Christianity in their historical contexts. Due to the nature of the survey, as well as the complexity and diversity of Christian history, this course can only address a very small sample of materials from a few of the many Christian traditions. However, a major aim of this course is to suggest frameworks for understanding Christianity historically (i.e., for locating, arranging, or organizing further bits of Christian history one might encounter and want to study, including in more advanced university courses). At the very least this course should offer an appreciation of the diversity of historical Christianity. Please note, finally, that while some of the worldviews studied in this course are explicitly theological, the academic procedures and critical methods employed in Carleton's Religious Studies programme are not. This course presupposes your acceptance of the principles of the modern research university. Your understanding of these, especially as they pertain to the study of religion, will undoubtedly develop further during this course.

EVALUATION – GENERAL INFORMATION: In addition to a mandatory **final examination** (worth 50% of your course grade) there will be three in-class **quizzes** and three in-class **short essays** in this course. These will take place at the end of the class period on days indicated in the schedule below. Your **best five of six** results on these items will be counted towards your final grade (i.e., each one is worth 10%). Normally, there will be no make-ups for in-class quizzes or assignments missed. Exceptions will only be made in unusual circumstances and, where possible, by prior arrangement.

EVALUATION -- QUICK REFERENCE SCHEDULE: The date of the final examination will be determined by Carleton's examination services.

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|------------------------|-------------|
| In-class Quiz #1..... | 24 January |
| In-class Essay #1..... | 31 January |
| In-class Quiz #2..... | 14 February |
| In-class Essay #2..... | 6 March |
| In-class Quiz #3..... | 20 March |
| In-class Essay #3..... | 3 April |

LECTURES: This is a lecture course, which means that my oral presentation is a primary mode of communication. Nevertheless, a certain amount of time will also be devoted to discussion and question periods. **Materials posted to Carleton's LMS Brightspace are a prerequisite and not a substitute for lecture material.** You can expect the quizzes, short essays, and exam to be based primarily on material presented in class. Therefore, attendance is not optional but obligatory in this course. Late arrivals are very distracting to both your fellow students and to me, so please be punctual. Finally, please be advised that audio or visual recording of lectures, either in whole or in part, is not permitted. PLEASE switch off all electronic communication devices during class.

PREPARATORY MATERIALS or "READINGS" (AND EXPECTATIONS): There is no assigned textbook for this course. Preparatory materials (mostly conventional "readings" such as journal articles, scholarly essays, or primary sources, but also the occasional non-textual object for consideration as a datum) will be made available via Brightspace. It is expected that you will spend 2 hours for every 1 hour of in-class time preparing for class by engaging with these preparatory materials. Such engagement should take the form of careful consideration rather than line-by-line reading. The point is to introduce you to some primary sources as well as developed scholarships of historical Christianity. All-in-all, you should **expect the total time commitment for this course to be about 9-10 hours per week** (not counting final examination preparation). Please note, again, that preparatory materials are a prerequisite rather than a substitute for class attendance. The course has been planned to promote dialogue – between the readings and the lectures, occasionally between several of the readings in “conversation” with each other, and ultimately amongst us all, as active participants in the class. Your ability to follow lectures and to enter effectively in such dialogues will depend on you having considered the preparatory materials in advance of class period. In my experience, student success in this course is directly correlated to regular preparation and class attendance.

OFFICE HOURS: Regular office hours will be held Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 1:00-2:00pm.

E-MAIL COMMUNICATION: To ensure compliance with the privacy act commonly known as FIPPA (i.e., for your protection), Carleton communications policy states that faculty must conduct email communications with students only through their Carleton accounts. Please be advised, further, that students can normally expect up to a 24hour turn-around time on e-mail communication, especially during high volume times (i.e., before quizzes, exams, etc.).

A NOTE ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY: All course materials (including lectures, outlines, PowerPoint presentations, handouts, and similar materials) are protected by copyright. I am the exclusive holder of copyright and other intellectual property rights for all course materials. You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own educational use. You may not reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly for any purpose, commercial or otherwise, without my express written consent. By turn, your work in this course remains your own exclusive intellectual property and will not be shared with anybody without your permission, except in accordance with Carleton University policies, which must conform directives of the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (for example, anonymized student work may be reviewed for the purposes of quality assurance, etc.).

CLASS SCHEDULE AND TOPICS

Week I (8/10 January) Some Basic Vocabulary...

- ...for the study of Christianity as well as for the “academic study of religion”
- Borrowing the “in 50 words” approach from McCutcheon and Hughes
- Wrestling with terminology as a condition of (academic) existence

Preparatory materials for consideration:

- 1) RELI 2200: The essential word list (Brightspace)
- 2) “Introduction” to Aaron Hughes and Russell T. McCutcheon, *Religion in 50 Words: A Critical Vocabulary* (New York: Routledge, 2021).

Week II (15/17 January) What is Christianity?

- What is a “religion”?

- The challenges of definition...from both insider and outsider perspectives
- The deficiencies of “faith”, “tradition” and similar alternatives to talking about religion *per se*
- Religion as a social formation -- matters of class, gender, and race
- Christianity as a cultural phenomenon?

Preparatory materials for consideration:

1) Reading: Malcolm Ruel, “Christians as Believers” [1982] in M. Lambek, ed., *A Reader in the Anthropology of Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 99-113.

Week III (22/24 January) Who is Christianity?

- Ethno-religions and conversion religions
- “Social formation” and “social movement”
- The diversity of Christian identities...in all ages of history
- The importance of institutional organization (hierarchy, for example)
- The idea of Christian office and authority (with plenty of examples)

Preparatory materials for consideration:

- 1) The Apostles' Creed (<http://www.creeds.net/ancient/apostles.htm>)
- 2) The Nicene Creed (<http://www.creeds.net/ancient/nicene.htm>)

Week IV (29/31 January) Where is Christianity?

- Patterns of spatial mobility
- Patterns of social mobility
- Patterns of “translation” (with a nod to the late Lamin Sanneh)
- Patterns of “indigenization” (and something called “missionary euthanasia”)

Preparatory materials for consideration:

- 1) 2011 Pew report on global distribution of Christians (<https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2011/12/19/global-christianity-exec/>)
- 2) SIL International website (<https://www.sil.org/>)

Week V (5/7 February) When is Christianity?

- Periodization – for easy reference or for explanation?
- Christian historicism (esp. so-called “providential history”)
- Frameworks of Church history versus “secular” historical frameworks
- Some key examples: “Christmas tree” and “hour-glass” conceptions of formative Christianity;
- “triumphalism” and its discontents; “Reformation” versus “early modern” history...

Preparatory materials for consideration:

- 1) Christopher Dawson, “The Christian View of History” *Blackfriars* 32 (1951), 312-327 (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/43814186>)
- 2) compare one contemporary Christian take on historical orientation (<https://www.raptureready.com/>)

Week VI (12/14 February) – Christian Spirituality

- Early Christian mystical “reactions” to classical philosophy and imperial authority

- Medieval mystics (e.g., Brigitte of Sweden and Johannes Tauler)
- Early modern “spiritualists” (e.g., Caspar Schwenckfeld and George Fox)
- Modern movement(s), esp. Pentecostalism

Preparatory materials for consideration:

1) The Journal of George Fox, Chapter 1 (https://flp-assets.nyc3.digitaloceanspaces.com/en/george-fox/journal/original/Journal_of_George_Fox--original.pdf)

WINTER BREAK

Week VII (26/28 February) – Christian Materiality

- The cult of relics (with a nod to Peter Brown)
- Object and ritual, identity, agency
- Some obvious examples: liturgical objects...and some less obvious ones:
- Medieval pilgrimage marks, Early modern German “grapho-relics” and Filipino “libritos”

Preparatory materials for consideration:

1) Cynthia Hahn, "The Voices of the Saints: Speaking Reliquaries" *Gesta* 36 (1997), 20-31.

(<https://www.jstor.org/stable/767276>)

2) Aden Kumler, "Imitatio Rerum: Sacred Objects in the St. Giles's Hospital Processional," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 44 (2016), 469-502.

Week VIII (4/6 March) – Christian Textuality

- Bible basics
- Text, canon, and authority
- From interesting anomalies to major departures: apocryphal books and new revelations
- The notion of “practical” canon and the diversity of Christianity

Preparatory materials for consideration:

1) selections from the Christian textual canon and from non-canonical scripture, TBA...

Week IX (11/13 March) – Christianity and Power

- Roman Empire
- Carolingian Empire
- British Empire
- Russian Empire

Preparatory materials for consideration:

1) The Donation of Constantine (<http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/source/donatconst.asp>)

2) Henry Mayr-Harting, "Charlemagne, the Saxons, and the Imperial Coronation of 800" *English Historical Review* 111 (1996), 1113-1133. (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/575852>)

Week X (18/20 March) – Christianity and Colonialism

- The “great commission” and “intrusive altruism”
- “Soldier of Christ” and other moments of militant Christianity
- Some key Christian organization in Euro-American colonial practice
- Christians and the TRC

Preparatory materials for consideration:

- 1) Sarah Kathleen Johnson, "On our Knees: Christian ritual in residential schools and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada" *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 47 (2018), 3-24. (<https://doi.org/10.1177/0008429817733269>)
- 2) Jason Redden, "'Boil Them Hearts': The Role of Methodist Revivalist Piety in Indigenous Conversion and Evangelization in Late Nineteenth-century Coastal British Columbia" *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 46 (2016), 50-74. (<https://doi.org/10.1177/0008429816660883>)

Week XI (25/27 March) – Christians by “profession”

- Early monastic impulses and their meaning
- The rules of the “regular” religious...for example of St. Basil or St. Benedict
- Some better and lesser-known varieties (from anchorites, to beguines, to Skoptsy)
- "Integrated" monasticism (for example, in Coptic/Ethiopian Christianity)

Preparatory materials for consideration:

- 1) Selections from Benedict’s Rule (<https://gutenberg.org/files/50040/50040-h/50040-h.htm#chapter-1>; <https://gutenberg.org/files/50040/50040-h/50040-h.htm#chapter-55>)
- 2) Cliff Doerksen, “Into the Friar” *The Chicago Reader* December 23, 2010 (<https://chicagoreader.com/news-politics/into-the-friar/>)

Week XII (1/3 April) – The Architecture of Christianity

- Dedicated ecclesiastical and liturgical spaces of several kinds
- Specialist vocabulary (not too much) for Christian buildings and furnitures
- Domestic architectures and Christianity
- The interesting case of bells and their belfries

Preparatory materials for consideration: TBA

Examination Review Session on 8 April in regularly scheduled time and place.

University Regulations for All College of the Humanities Courses

(Updated December 6th 2023)

Academic Dates and Deadlines

This schedule contains the dates prescribed by the University Senate for academic activities. Dates relating to fee payment, cancellation of course selections, late charges, and other fees or charges will be published in the Important Dates and Deadlines section of the Registration Website.

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.

Online Learning Resources

[On this page](#), you will find resources collected by Carleton Online to help you succeed in your online courses; Learning Strategies and Best Practices, Study Skills, Technology and Online Interaction and Engagement.

Academic Integrity Policy

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, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else;
 - using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
 - using another's data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
 - submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one's own; and
 - failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotations marks.
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