

Carleton University  
The College of the Humanities  
Religion Program

## RELI 2310A Islam – Winter 2020

**Meeting:** Monday & Wednesday, 2:35 PM - 3:55 PM  
Southam Hall 515

**Instructor:** Dr. Mourad Laabdi  
**Email:** mourad.laabdi@carleton.ca

**Office:** 2A61 Paterson Hall

**Office Hours:** Monday, 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM

**Office Phone:** 613-520-2600, extension 1991

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### Course Description

This course is an introduction to the complex and diverse tradition of Islam as religion, culture, and field of academic study. First, we examine the foundational sources of Islam (Quran and Hadith), and the role of Muhammad as historical figure and Prophet. Then, we explore Muslims' important intellectual, cultural, and spiritual systems and achievements (e.g., theology, law, philosophy, mysticism, and arts). In the last part of the course, we inquire into key expressions of Muslims' encounter with modernity and pay close attention to orientalism, European colonialism and Islamic revivalism, militant *jihad*, and select scholarly debates (e.g., issues concerning women, democracy, human rights). Throughout the course, students will draw on primary and secondary sources and engage various textual and audio-visual materials.

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### Course Evaluation

Reading Reflections.....	20% (10 x 2%)
Midterm Exam.....	20% Feb. 12
Book Report (two components) .....	30% Feb. 26 and Mar. 11
Take-Home Exam (two components) .....	30% Mar. 25 and Apr. 25.

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### Required Readings

Alexander Knysh, *Islam in Historical Perspective* (New York and London: Routledge, 2017), 2nd ed.  
Available for purchase at Carleton's Bookstore.

Shahab Ahmed, *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017). E-copy available free of charge at Carleton library.

All other required readings will be made available on cuLearn.

Recommended:

Kecia Ali and Oliver Leaman, *Islam: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2008).  
*The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, ed. Seyyed H. Nasr (New York: HarperOne, 2017).

**Please, do not skim this syllabus!**

*Failing to meet a course requirement as a result of not attending to the syllabus will not be accepted as an excuse. No accommodations will be granted in such cases.*

*Missing four (4) classes in total will cause the absentee to fail this course. Attendance is essential and will be recorded through your weekly reading reflections and other means.*

*Missing the first week or two of classes due to late registration is the student's sole responsibility. Except in a justifiable cases, making up the missed first reflections will not be allowed.*

## Learning Outcomes

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By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Gather, review, interpret, present and critically evaluate several arguments, assumptions and concepts related to Islam and its study.
- Engage relevant approaches to the study of Islam and apply them critically to primary sources including texts and film.
- Explain the place of Islam as a major religious and political player of the modern period.
- Enjoy informed discussion of the historical role of Islam and its contribution to human culture at multiple levels (spirituality, arts, technology, etc.).
- Express information, arguments and analyses accurately and with clarity in writing.

## Important Dates and Deadlines

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Jan. 31:	Last day to withdraw from this course with a full fee adjustment
Feb. 12:	Midterm Test
Feb. 17-21:	Winter break. No classes.
Feb. 26:	Book Report Due
Mar. 9:	Guest lecture by renowned scholar and architect, Taj Masud, (to be confirmed).
Mar. 11:	Self-Review Due
Mar. 25:	Introduction/Bibliography Due.
Apr. 25:	Last day to submit the Take-Home Essay

## Course Requirements

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### 1. Reading, Attendance, Notetaking:

As a student in this course, you are responsible for studying on your own and before coming to class all assigned materials. As you read, try to identify the goal of the authors, who they are responding to, how they develop their thesis, what evidence they provide to sustain it, and if their narrative agrees or conflicts with what you know about the topic, etc. Reading is your first step toward doing well in this course.

This course fuses lecture and discussion-based styles, and a good deal of class activity requires attendance. Attendance will be taken through your weekly reflections. Attending regularly has several benefits besides that it is the only way you can hand in your reflections. It will also allow you to enjoy interesting films, participate in vivid group discussions, voice your concerns and opinions, stay informed of the latest updates, and especially to take lecture notes since they will not be provided by the instructor in any form.

## **2. Reading Reflections (20%)**

Students will write 10 weekly reading reflections. See “Lecture Schedule” below for exempt weeks. Each reflection is worth 2% of your grade, covers all assigned readings per week, must be typed, printed out and handed in person in class. For more details, see “Reading Reflections Guidelines” on cuLearn.

## **3. Midterm Exam (20 %)**

The mid-term will be **written in class on February 12**, Exam questions are based mainly in lecture materials and readings covered in class. See “Midterm Guide” on cuLearn for details.

## **4. Book Report (30%)**

This assignment consists of two stages. Everything you need to know about it can be found in the “Book Report Guidelines” posted on cuLearn. In a nutshell:

### Stage One: Book Report (25%)

Write a report on the first chapter of Shahab Ahmed’s *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic*. Chapter will be uploaded to cuLearn. In this chapter, Ahmed engages with six situations that complicate the concepts of “Islam,” “being Islamic” and “being Muslim.” Your task is to read, understand, summarize, and reflect on Ahmad’s conceptualizing of Islam as a unity within diversity. From the six situations, choose one to further investigate and use one or two scholarly sources that address the same question to help you develop an informed discussion. Reports are **due on cuLearn by February 26**.

### Stage Two: Self-Review (5%)

After you receive feedback on your report, implement necessary changes as suggested by your instructor and upload your revised paper **to cuLearn by March 11**.

## **5. Take-Home Essay (30%)**

This assignment intends to allow students to further explore a question of interest on the subject of Islam through film analysis. For full instructions, see “Take-home Essay Guidelines” on cuLearn. It also consist of two stages. In a nutshell:

### Stage one: Introduction and Bibliography (5%)

At this stage, select a film from a list provided by the instructor and relate it, or aspects of it, to a topic or question relevant to Islam. Then, write an introduction for your essay, cite your references properly, and upload it **to cuLearn by March 25**.

### Stage two: Film Essay (30%)

You will receive comments on areas of your intro and/or bibliography that may need improvement. Using my feedback, write your film essay and upload it **to cuLearn by April 25**.

## **Academic Integrity**

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**Plagiarism IS NOT tolerated in my classes.** Plagiarism cases will be dealt with following Carleton’s Academic Integrity Policy. See <https://carleton.ca/secretariat/wp-content/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Policy.pdf>.

**Plagiarism is to present, intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas, or work of others as one's own.** This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as your own without proper citation or reference to the original source.

Examples of plagiarism in this class include, but are not limited to:

- Using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material without proper acknowledgment in any academic assignment.
- Failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotations marks.
- Submitting a take-home exam, essay or other assignment, in whole or in part, by someone else.

For more on *Academic Integrity at Carleton*, see: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

## Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage	Point Equivalence	Grade Definition
A+	90-100	12	Excellent: Strong evidence of original thinking; good organization; capacity to analyze and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter with sound critical evaluations; evidence of extensive knowledge base.
A	85-89	11	
A-	80-84	10	
B+	77-79	9	Good: Evidence of grasp of subject matter; some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with literature.
B	73-76	8	
B-	70-72	7	
C+	67-69	6	Adequate: Student who is profiting from his/her university experience; understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material.
C	63-66	5	
C-	60-62	4	
D+	57-59	3	Marginal: Some evidence of familiarity with subject matter and some evidence that critical and analytic skills have been developed.
D	53-56	2	
D-	50-52	1	
F	0-49	0	Inadequate: Little evidence of even superficial understanding of subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; with limited or irrelevant use of literature.

Read about the Grading System at Carleton in:

<https://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/acadregsuniv2>

## Course Website and Submission

### 1. Course Website:

The course website on [cuLearn](#) is your main resource. There, you will find key updates, announcements and all necessary information about the course, including the syllabus, instructor's contact information, and more. All announcements will be sent to your Carleton account ending with [@carleton.ca](#). Please, consult this account regularly to stay informed of important updates.

### 2. Electronic Submission:

Book reports must be submitted electronically through the course website. To upload your assignment, log in to cuLearn, open "Submit Assignments" tab, and upload your assignment. It is your responsibility to submit your assignment on time. No exception will be made for students who run into last minute technical problems (Internet service down, cuLearn temporarily out of work, laptop broke, etc.).

### **3. File Format:**

All written assignments must be submitted as **Microsoft Word files only** (.doc or .docx). If you use Mac, convert PAGES ext. into your WORD. PDF files will be graded, but, will receive no in-text feedback.

### **4. System of Source Citation:**

The citation style used in this course is Chicago Notes and Bibliography. You are required to use it in all written assignment that ask for citations. You can access it directly at:

[https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html)

## **Missing Tests and Late Penalty**

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### **1. Reading Reflections:**

Reflections will be accepted only if the student attends all sections of class from the beginning to end. Those from students who come late will not be accepted (or receive 1 point at best). See “Reflections Guidelines” on cuLearn for situations in which a student may lose their reflection’s mark.

### **2. Written Assignments:**

Reports and essays submitted late without a legitimate reason will be deducted 10% of their grade per day including weekends. Extension requests must be joined with justificatory documents and must be communicated to the instructor **before the due date, not after**.

### **3. Missing the Midterm:**

Missing the midterm without a legitimate reason will result in a grade of zero. Students who present proper documentation will have a makeup scheduled for them. There will be only one makeup exam.

### **4. What does a *Legitimate Reason* mean?**

A legitimate reason may include illness, injury, urgent travel or other compassionate reasons (e.g., death). For illness/injury, submit Carleton’s official medical certificate: [https://carleton.ca/registrar/wp-content/uploads/med\\_cert.pdf](https://carleton.ca/registrar/wp-content/uploads/med_cert.pdf). For travel, submit a copy of your itinerary with full name and dates of travel. In the event of death, submit a letter from the funeral house which confirms your attendance.

## **Course Protocols and Etiquettes**

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### **1. Emailing the Instructor:**

Always use your Carleton account and insert the course code followed by a precise title in the subject box (RELI2310: Question about Reflection 2). Emails sent via other operators (gmail, Hotmail, etc.) risk being spammed and not read. I respond to emails within 1-2 business days, but it may take longer under special circumstances. Please, save your questions only for things that you cannot find *easily* in the syllabus and/or cuLearn.

### **2. Teaching Assistant:**

If a TA has been appointed in this course, their contact information will be included in the syllabus and the course website. A TA is a skillful individual devoted to help you with your learning. Take advantage of their skills and interact with them with respect. Email the TA only about things they are involved with, especially marking essays and exams. For questions about attendance, reflections, exams, lectures and cuLearn, email me directly or come during office hours

### **3. Classroom Behavior:**

The classroom is a space where every student should feel safe and included. Formative dialogue is highly encouraged, and open-mindedness is expected. Respect for each other’s differences and different views will be always sustained. Disruptive behavior, such as dual chatting, taking naps or preparing for another class while in this class, will not be tolerated.

#### **4. Cellphones and Laptops:**

The use of cellphones and laptops is **not permitted in class**. There will be short breaks during which you can check your phones. Using laptops for taking notes is allowed. However, you must (1) email me and obtain my permission, and (2) always take a seat in the front rows. Students seen consumed by their phones or laptops will receive a zero (or half the mark at best) on their reading reflection.

#### **5. Course Sharing and Copyright:**

Video/audio recording of the lectures and taking photos of the slides is not allowed. If you have a *special need* to record the lectures, you must talk to me in advance and receive my permission in writing.

## **Academic Accommodation Policy**

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You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. To request accommodation the processes are as follows:

**For Students with Disabilities:** The Paul Merton Centre (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 (<https://carleton.ca/pmc/students/>) for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

**Pregnancy obligation:** write to the instructor 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. For more detail, see the Student Guide: <http://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf>

**Religious obligation:** write to the instructor 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. For more details, see the Student Guide (above).

## **Student Resources**

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### **1. Writing Services:**

Writing is a major component of this course. Students seeking to improve their writing are encouraged to benefit from Carleton's Writing Services (<https://carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/>). You can meet with a writing consultant during drop-in hours on the 4th Floor of MacOdrum Library or book an appointment online. Check the Writing Centre for Student Academic Support (<https://carleton.ca/csas/>).

**2. For more student resources on campus, see <https://carleton.ca/cuknowhow/student-resources/>**

## **Department Contact Information**

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**Religion Program**, 2A39 Paterson II 613-520-2100 II [religion@cunet.carleton.ca](mailto:religion@cunet.carleton.ca)  
Office Hours: 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM, 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM.

## Lectures Schedule

Lecture Date	Topic of the Week	Required Readings	Assignments Due
Jan. 6 & 8	Introduction	The Syllabus; Knysh, "Introduction"	
Jan. 13 & 15	Orientalism	Said, <i>Orientalism</i> (introduction)	Reflection 1
Jan. 20 & 22	Islam: The Beginnings	Knysh, Chapters 1 and 2; and Ali, "Wife of Muhammad."	Refl. 2
Jan. 27 & 29	The Sources: Quran and Sunna	Knysh, Chs. 5 and 6; and Matson, "How to Read the Quran."	Refl. 3
Feb. 3 & 5	The Division of the Muslim Community	Knysh, Chs. 7 and 11.	Refl. 4
Feb. 10 & 12	God's Law: The <i>Shari'a</i> Midterm Writing Workshop	Knysh, Ch. 9; Ibn Khaldun, " <i>The Muqaddima</i> "; "Book Report Guidelines."	Midterm (Feb. 12)
Feb. 17 & 19	No Class. Winter break.		
Feb. 24 & 26	Theology and Philosophy	Knysh, Chs. 10 and 14.	Refl. 5 Book Report (Feb. 26)
Mar. 2 & 4	Spirituality and the Transmission of Knowledge	Knysh, Chs. 13 and 15.	Refl. 6
Mar. 9 & 11	Contributions to the Arts and Science.	Knysh, Ch. 17. Guest lecture.	Refl. 7 Self-Review (Mar. 11)
Mar. 16 & 18	Women in/and Islam	Knysh, Ch. 18; Shepard, Ch. 21.	Refl. 8
Mar. 23 & 25	Encountering Modernity	Knysh, Chs. 21 and 22.	Refl. 9 Outline/Bib (Mar. 25)
Mar. 30 & Apr. 1	Islam Reinterpreted	Knysh, Chs. 23 and 24.	Refl. 10
Apr. 6	Take-Home Review	"Take-Home Guidelines."	
Apr. 25	Last day to submit the take-Home essay.		

\* This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the Instructor.

\* Students must complete all course components and requirements to obtain credit in this class



## University Regulations for All College of the Humanities Courses

### Copies of Written Work Submitted

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Always retain for yourself a copy of all essays, term papers, written assignments or take-home tests submitted in your courses.

### Academic Integrity at Carleton

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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, and material on the internet. More information can be found [here](#).

### Academic Accommodation Policy

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#### Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

**Pregnancy obligation:** write to the instructor 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. For more details see the [Student Guide](#)

**Religious obligation:** write to the instructor 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. For more details see the [Student Guide](#)

**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).

### **Survivors of Sexual Violence**

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and is survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: [carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support](http://carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support)

### **Accommodation for Student Activities**

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor 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. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

## **Grading System at Carleton University**

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Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. Standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points and the percentage conversion is below. Grade points indicated are for courses with 1.0 credit value. Where the course credit is greater or less than one credit, the grade points are adjusted proportionately.

### [Grading System](#)

## **Course Sharing Websites and Copyright**

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Classroom teaching and learning activities, including lectures, discussions, presentations, etc., by both instructors and students, are copy protected and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s). All course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, outlines, and other materials, are also protected by copyright and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s).

Students registered in the course may take notes and make copies of course materials for their own educational use only. Students are not permitted to reproduce or

distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly for commercial or non-commercial purposes without express written consent from the copyright holder(s).

## Statement on Class Conduct

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The Carleton University Human Rights Policies and Procedures affirm that all members of the University community share a responsibility to:

- promote equity and fairness,
- respect and value diversity,
- prevent discrimination and harassment, and preserve the freedom of its members to carry out responsibly their scholarly work without threat of interference.

## Deferred Term Work

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In some situations, students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, which forces them to delay submission of the work.

Students who claim illness, injury or other extraordinary circumstances beyond their control as a reason for missed term work are held responsible for immediately informing the instructor concerned and for making alternate arrangements with the instructor and **in all cases this must occur no later than three (3.0) working days after the term work was due.**

The alternate arrangement must be made before the last day of classes in the term as published in the academic schedule. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of term. More information is available [in the calendar](#).

## Deferred Final Exams

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Students who are unable to write a final examination because of a serious illness/emergency or other circumstances beyond their control may apply for accommodation. Normally, the accommodation for a missed final examination will be granting the student the opportunity to write a deferred examination. In specific cases when it is not possible to offer a deferred examination, and with the approval of the Dean, an alternate accommodation may be made. [More information.](#)

The application for a [deferral](#) must:

1. be made in writing or online to the Registrar's Office no later than **three working days** after the original final examination or the due date of the take-home examination; and,
2. be fully supported by appropriate documentation and, in cases of illness, by a medical certificate dated no later than one working day after the examination, or by appropriate documents in other cases. Medical documents must specify the date of the onset of the illness, the (expected) date of recovery, and the extent to which the student was/is incapacitated during the time of the examination. The University's preferred medical form can be found at the Registrar's Office [forms and fees page](#).

Any questions related to deferring a Final Exam or Final Assignment/Take Home Examination should be directed to the [Registrar's Office](#).

## Withdrawal From Courses

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Withdrawn. No academic credit, no impact on the CGPA. WDN is a permanent notation that appears on the official transcript for students who withdraw after the full fee adjustment date in each term (noted in the Academic Year section of the Calendar each term). Students may withdraw on or before the last day of classes.

Important dates can be found [here](#).

## Financial vs. Academic Withdrawal

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**Make sure that you are aware of the separate deadlines for Financial and Academic withdrawal!**

Making registration decisions in Carleton Central involves making a financial and academic commitment for the courses you choose, regardless of attendance. If you do not attend – you must withdraw in Carleton Central within the published deadlines to cancel your registration.  
[More infomation](#)

## Department Contact Information

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**Collegeofthe Humanities** 300 Paterson Hall (613)520-2809

[CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca](mailto:CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca)

Drop box for CLCV, HUMS LATN GREK Term Papers and assignments is outside 300 P.A.

**Greekand RomanStudies** 300 Paterson Hall (613)520-2809

[GreekAndRomanStudies@cunet.carleton.ca](mailto:GreekAndRomanStudies@cunet.carleton.ca)

Drop Box is outside of 300 P.A.

**Religion** 2A39 Paterson Hall (613)520-2100

[Religion@cunet.carleton.ca](mailto:Religion@cunet.carleton.ca)

Drop box for RELI and SAST Term Papers and assignments is outside of 2A39 P.A.

**Registrar's Office** 300Tory (613)520-3500

<https://carleton.ca/registrar/>

## Student Resources on Campus

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[CUKnowHow Website](#)

[Academics: From registration to graduation, the tools for your success.](#)