

Carleton University
College of the Humanities
Religion Program: RELI 2713A
Mysticism
Fall 2016

Instructor Information

Professor: Mohammed Rustom
Office Hours: M 4:00 pm–5:30 pm
Office Location: 2A61 Paterson Hall
Email: mrustom@connect.carleton.ca

Course Information

Class Meetings: TR 8:35 am–9:55 am
Classroom Location: SA 306
Course Website: Available on CU Learn
COH Website: www.carleton.ca/chum/

Course Description

This course offers an investigation into the main historical expressions of mysticism, as well as the various debates in the academy surrounding its definition and interpretation. Drawing on the writings of the foremost past and present representatives of mysticism on the one hand, as well as the work of some major scholars engaged in its study on the other, we shall explore such key topics as mystical “experience,” PCEs or “Pure Consciousness Events,” and the relationship between empiricism and ineffability.

Learning Objectives

- ❖ To understand the main contours of the academic study of what is commonly referred to as “religious experience” in general, and “mysticism” in particular
- ❖ To come to a better understanding of the central scholarly debates concerning mysticism and its attendant problems
- ❖ To be able to critically analyze a wide range of materials from different religious traditions in which mystical themes and ideas are prevalent
- ❖ To gain a firm grasp of academic research methods, particularly writing and citation

Required Texts

Withall Perry (ed.), *The Spiritual Ascent*
Readings in Mysticism (articles by various authors; on course website) = *RM*

Requirements and Due Dates

/20	Term Test	Oct. 18 th
/40	Research Paper	Nov. 17 th
/40	Final Exam	TBA

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

- Sep. 8th** **The Subject Matter of Mysticism**
Readings
Perry (ed.), “Separation—Sin” (pp. 53ff.) and “Faith” (p. 499ff.)
James, “Mysticism” in *RM*
Gimello, “Mysticism in its Contexts” in *RM*
- Sep. 13th** **Mysticism and Modes of Thought**
Sep. 15th *Readings*
Perry (ed.), “Renunciation—Detachment” (pp. 135ff.)
Russel, “Mysticism and Logic” in *RM*
Schuon, “The Contradiction of Relativism” in *RM*
- Sep. 20th** **Illusion vs. Reality**
Sep. 22nd *Readings*
Perry (ed.), “Illusion” (pp. 83ff.) and “Reality” (pp. 771ff.)
Penner, “The Mystical Illusion” in *RM*
Price, “The Objectivity of Mystical Truth Claims” in *RM*
- Sep. 27th** **Neo-Kantian Models in the Study of Mysticism**
Sep. 29th *Readings*
Kant, “Introduction” to *The Critique of Pure Reason* in *RM*
Perovich, “Does the Philosophy of Mysticism Rest on a Mistake?” in *RM*
- Oct. 4th** **The Problem of Mystical Experience**
Oct. 6th *Readings*
Perry (ed.), “Charity” (pp. 595ff.) and “Ecstasy” (pp. 634ff.)
Prigge/Kessler, “Is Mystical Experience Everywhere the Same?” in *RM*
Nasr, “Knowledge of the Sacred as Deliverance” in *RM*
- Oct. 11th** **Mysticism and Modern Epistemology**
Oct. 13th *Readings*
Perry (ed.), “Knowledge” (pp. 731ff.)
Katz, “Language, Epistemology, and Mysticism” in *RM*
- Oct. 18th** **Term Test**
- Oct. 20th** **Interpreting the Data of Mysticism**
Readings
Perry (ed.), “Metanoia” (pp. 479ff.) and “Love” (pp. 612ff.)
King, “Two Epistemological Models” in *RM*
- Oct. 25th** **Winter Break; No Class**
Oct. 27th

- Nov. 1st**
Nov. 3rd **Pure Consciousness Events (PCEs)**
Readings
Perry (ed.), “Beauty” (pp. 659) and “Peace” (pp. 692ff.)
Forman, “Mysticism, Constructivism, and Forgetting” in *RM*
- Nov. 8th**
Nov. 10th **Making Sense of Pure Consciousness Events (PCEs)**
Readings
Perry (ed.), “Prayer—Meditation—Contemplation” (pp. 520ff.)
Woodhouse, “On the Possibility of Pure Consciousness” in *RM*
- Nov. 15th**
Nov. 17th **The Critique of Reductionism I**
Readings
Perry (ed.), “Grace” (p. 550ff.)
Shah-Kazemi, “Against the Reduction of the Transcendent” in *RM*
- Nov. 22nd**
Nov. 24th **The Critique of Reductionism II**
Readings
Perry (ed.), “Grace” (p. 550ff.)
Shah-Kazemi, “Against the Reduction of the Transcendent” in *RM*
- Nov. 29th**
Dec. 1st **Apophysis and the Limits of Language**
Readings
Perry (ed.), “Mysterium Magnum” (pp. 971ff.)
Sells, “Unsayings” in *RM*
- Dec. 6th**
Dec. 8th **Apophysis and Radical Empiricism**
Readings
Perry (ed.), “Realization and Identity” (pp. 855ff.)
Blum, “Radical Empiricism” in *RM*
Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 6ff. in *RM*

Term Test Guidelines

Content

The term test will cover all of the course's lectures and assigned readings up to and including the class before the day of the test.

Date and Test Length

The test is scheduled to take place in class on **October 18th, 2016**. It will be one hour in length.

Structure

The test consists of three questions and is divided into two parts. All of the questions must be answered. The first part consists of one question, which is out of ten. The second part is also out of ten, but consists of two questions, each of which is out of five. The entire test, therefore, is out of 20, and is worth 20% of the total course mark.

The test is comprised of response-type questions. This means that responses do not have to be in essay format. They simply have to address the questions in as thorough and thoughtful a manner as possible. Answer must be both descriptive and analytical.

Research Paper Guidelines

Instructions

Address one of the following topics/questions. In writing your paper, you must employ at least one of the major theoretical models used in the scholarly study of religious experience (i.e., Naturalism, Pragmatism, Radical Empiricism, etc.):

1. Critically assess the worldview of one particular mystical figure. By drawing extensively from his/her works, provide a careful, textually-grounded presentation and analysis of his/her major teachings.
2. Why is the remembrance of God (*dhikr*) so central to Sufism?
3. Explain the notion of non-duality in Advaita Vedanta.
4. How does the Jesus Prayer function in Eastern Orthodox Christianity?
5. A topic of your choice in consultation with the Professor.

Evaluation

Essays are graded out of 40, and are worth 40% of the total course mark. Each essay will be evaluated in terms of (1) the quality of its language, including grammar, spelling, and style; (2) the clarity of its thesis, (3) the coherence of its argument(s), (4) evidence of original research and its careful integration into the fabric of the essay; and (5) faithful adherence to the content and formatting guidelines mentioned below.

Content

The paper must have a clear thesis which is defended consistently throughout. An essay without a thesis cannot receive more than a C+. A thesis essentially summarizes, in one or several sentences, the entire point of your essay. It is simply not enough to say “This essay is going to talk about x, y, and z”; you must be more specific than that. A good thesis should be concise and straightforward, and must endeavour to prove a point: “In this essay, it shall be demonstrated that, because of x, y and z obtain.” You may not use the wording of this example in your essay.

Due Date

Essays are due at the beginning of class on **November 17th, 2016**. Emailed versions of the essay are not acceptable.

Penalties

Essays not handed in on the due date will receive a mark of zero. Absolutely no exceptions will be made to this rule. Papers submitted late due to a medical or other compassionate reason must be accompanied by relevant documentation (i.e., a medical

certificate, etc.). Plagiarized essays will be assigned a zero, and the issue will be taken up with the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

Form

1. Essays are to be ten full pages in length (excluding the title page and bibliography), double spaced, and written in Times New Roman font (size twelve).
2. Diction is to be formal, and the essay is to be written in Canadian English. Grammar, syntax, spelling, and style must be impeccable.
3. All paragraphs—except the first paragraph of your essay—must be indented. Every paragraph in your essay—including isolated quotations and footnotes—must be justified.
4. Use footnotes as opposed to endnotes and/or internal citations. Footnotes are to be single spaced and written in Times New Roman font (size ten). A bibliography must be appended to the essay. Your method of citation must follow the rules laid out in the *Chicago Manual of Style*.
6. Do not put your quotations in italics, bold, or a combination of the two. Sentences which are more than three lines long are to be isolated, single spaced, and reduced to font size eleven with their margins indented to one inch on both the right and the left.
7. Your essay must have a title page. All pages—excluding the title page and bibliography—are to be numbered at the bottom right corner of the page.

Final Exam Guidelines

Content

The final exam will cover all of the course's lectures and assigned readings, from the first lecture to the last, with emphasis placed on materials covered after the term test.

Date, Time, and Location

The exam will be scheduled by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and in early October. I shall inform the class of the date, time, and location of the examination as soon as this information is made available.

Length

The exam will be two hours in length.

Structure

The exam is divided into two sections. The entire exam is out of 40, and is worth 40% of the total course mark.

Part I will consist of ten terms, all of which must be defined/described in a clear and detailed manner. Each question is out of two. The first part of the exam, therefore, is out of 20, and is worth 20% of the total course mark.

Part II will consist of six questions, four of which must be answered. Each question is out of five. This part of the exam, therefore, is out 20, and is worth 20% of the total course mark. The questions in Part II are response-type questions. This means that responses do not have to be in essay format. They simply have to address the question asked in as thorough and thoughtful a manner as possible. Answers must be both descriptive and analytical.

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. 9, 2016**. The last day to withdraw from **FALL/WINTER (Full Term)** and **WINTER** term courses is **APRIL 7, 2017**.

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. 11, 2016** for the Fall term and **March 10, 2017** 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 a final assignment or take home, in courses without a final examination, 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 & Career Development Services 520-7850	302 Tory
Paul Menton Centre 520-6608/TTY 520-3937	501 Uni-Centre
Writing Tutorial Service 520-6632	4 th Floor Library
Learning Support Service 520-2600 Ext 1125	4 th Floor Library