

Carleton University

Summer, 2021

**College of the Humanities
Religion Program: RELI 2741 A**

Interpretations of Religion

Professor: Dr. Andrea D. Lobel **Email:** Andrea.Lobel@carleton.ca
Class location: Online/asynchronous **Class dates/times:** Jul 02-Aug 16, 2021
Office hours: By appointment: Zoom/phone

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this introduction to the academic study of religion, we will consider and examine its fundamental components, including: myth, symbol, scripture, doctrine, code, and ritual. These will be contextualized by referring to their manifestations in various world religions.

Through lectures and the assigned readings, viewing, and listening, students will examine a selection of interpretive writings by religious studies theorists spanning the fundamental components of religion listed above. By so doing, students will view religion through a variety of theoretical lenses, and will come to engage with many key thinkers in the field.

By the end of this course, students should be able to think and write critically about the themes examined in the lectures, as well as in the assigned texts, listening, and viewing.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- Think, reflect, and write critically, at a second-year university level, about the topics and themes examined in the lectures and assigned materials
- When reading, be able to distinguish a paper's argument from its subject matter
- Construct an argument and support it with evidence
- Work well with primary and secondary sources, and be able to recognize and properly cite acceptable academic sources for the study of religion
- Demonstrate second-year undergraduate-level research skills and proper citation styles
- Recognize personal situated-ness and personal bias in confronting religious phenomena
- Understand and discuss the theoretical frameworks taught in the course
- Recognize and use key theoretical religion concepts and terminology covered in the lectures and readings

PRECLUSIONS

Precludes additional credit for RELI 2002 (no longer offered), RELI 1205 (no longer offered), RELI 1402 (no longer offered), RELI 1731, RELI 1730 (no longer offered).

REQUIRED TEXT

- 1) Nye, Malory. 2008. *Religion: The Basics*, Second Edition. Routledge. (Available in print and eformats online, via booksellers and Routledge, and via the Carleton University Library.)

EVALUATION

1. Short reflective paper (700-1000 words): **Due: July 9, 5 pm on Brightspace (10%)**
2. Video presentation (recorded) ~8-10 minutes in duration. Via YouTube video link to be submitted on Brightspace. Details TBA. **Due: July 30, 5 pm (30%)**
3. Final synthetic term paper or creative assignment. **Due: August 16, 5 pm, via Brightspace. Details TBA. (30%).**
4. August online exam on Brightspace: **Date TBA, to be set by Exam Services (30%)**

ON KEEPING UP WITH READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

This is an asynchronous course. The lectures will be recorded and uploaded to Brightspace for viewing/listening on your own time.

To be successful in this course, viewing the posted lectures (narrated, and slides for exam study) on Brightspace, and keeping up with the assigned readings, viewing, and listening are critical.

POLICY ON LATE ASSIGNMENTS

- All work is due on the stated due dates.
- Extensions will be granted in serious circumstances (e.g., illness, family illness or emergency)
- The late penalty is 2% of the assignment mark per day of lateness.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU FIND YOURSELF MISSING DEADLINES OR FALLING BEHIND

Send me an email as soon as you can, and we can arrange an office hour/time to talk via Zoom or phone. I'll always do what I can to help you catch up.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND THE PAUL MENTON CENTRE

Should you require accommodations for a disability or other health condition, and have not already made arrangements with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities, please be sure to contact them as soon as possible at 613-520-6608 or via email at pmc@carleton.ca. (Visit their web site at: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>) I will work with them to ensure that you receive the accommodations you require throughout the academic year.

A NOTE ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

As my student, your well-being is important to me. University can be stressful, and part of the job of being your professor is responding to you as a whole person, not just as a student working to earn marks. And of course, the current coronavirus pandemic has been stressful and isolating for many, adding to these difficulties to varying degrees.

Here are some recommendations to help you make the academic year a smoother one:

Take care of yourself. Do what you can to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well and exercising, avoiding illegal drugs, avoiding or minimizing alcohol, getting enough sleep, and taking some time to relax.

Meditation and yoga may also be useful. This will help you better achieve your academic goals, and to cope with stress.

Remember to wear masks and practice social distancing, and follow advice found on Carleton University's COVID-19 page, at <https://students.carleton.ca/coronavirus>.

None of us is immune to life's challenges. If you find yourself feeling stressed, you are far from alone! There are many useful resources available on campus, and an important part of the university experience is learning how to ask for help. If you or anyone you know experiences academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support sooner rather than later. Visit <https://carleton.ca/wellness/> to access useful resources both here at Carleton University and off-campus. As well, please consider reaching out to a friend, faculty or family member you trust for additional support.

Optional online social gatherings

Online Zoom gatherings will be held at least twice during the class date span of July 2-August 16th. A Zoom link will be posted for students prior to these gatherings, on Brightspace. These are completely optional, and will not count toward marks. No course content will be covered during these gatherings, however questions about the class are welcome. Nevertheless, this is a good way to connect and get to know your instructor and classmates. If you are able to attend, please do, and feel free to bring snacks.

CLASS DATES AND ASSIGNED READINGS

Week beginning

July 2

**Course introduction; Library resources and research methods;
Defining terms**

Required Reading: Nye, Chapter 1

Required viewing:

The Academic Study of Religion Explained.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6VAx4jZbBr8&ab_channel=ReligionForBreakfast

Animism: The First Religion?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xoYZ5xNyKbc&ab_channel=ReligionForBreakfast

Required listening:

Definitions of Religion

<https://medium.com/religion-bites-podcast/002-definitions-of-religion-b162a8feb4ef>

Talking about Religion

<https://medium.com/religion-bites-podcast/003-talking-about-religion-641b6f7461f9>

The Relevance of Religion

<https://medium.com/religion-bites-podcast/004-the-relevance-of-religion-a8407ede0b9f>

July 5

Culture

Required Reading: Nye, Chapter 2

Required Listening:

Culture and Religion

<https://medium.com/religion-bites-podcast/005-culture-and-religion-9b081b0011b4>

Mind the gap: religion in culture

<https://medium.com/religion-bites-podcast/006-mind-the-gap-religion-in-culture-298dd7364d81>

Culture in religion: there is no gap

<https://medium.com/religion-bites-podcast/007-culture-in-religion-there-is-no-gap-7f1fb69111a1>

Religion and Culture

<https://medium.com/religion-bites-podcast/008-religion-and-culture-23c19f562c37>

July 12

Power

Required Reading: Nye, Chapter 3

Required listening – Power

Power, Gender, and Race

<https://medium.com/religion-bites-podcast/009-power-gender-and-race-10be1ce6c1b6>

Religion, Power, and Ideology

<https://medium.com/religion-bites-podcast/010-religion-power-and-ideology-38c3609fc70a>

Religious Literacy is Social Justice: The Religious Studies Project

<https://www.religiousstudiesproject.com/podcast/religious-literacy-is-social-justice/>

July 19

Gender

Required Reading: Nye, Chapter 4

Required listening:

Gender, Sexuality, and Religion

<https://medium.com/religion-bites-podcast/011-gender-sexuality-and-religion-51ce9bef7214>

Required viewing:

[Her Story: The Female Revolution—Religion](#)
On Films on Demand (MacOdrum Library)

July 26

Belief

Required Reading: Nye, Chapter 5

Required viewing:

[Belief and the Gods](#)

On Films on Demand (MacOdrum Library)

Required listening:

The Problem with Belief in the Study of Religion

<https://medium.com/religion-bites-podcast/015-the-problem-with-belief-in-the-study-of-religion-d816383475e1>

August 3*

Ritual

Required Reading: Nye, Chapter 6

Required viewing:

What is Ritual?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FURgZf01hU&ab_channel=ReligionForBreakfast

Religious Practice Precedes Religious Belief?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tj9uTOer4C4&ab_channel=ReligionForBreakfast

**August 2: University closed – civic holiday*

August 9

Texts

Required Reading: Nye, Chapter 7

Required viewing:

Sacred Texts and Stories

On Films on Demand (MacOdrum Library)

August 16*

Contemporary Religions; The Future of Religion; Synthesis and Wrap-up

Required Reading: Nye, Chapter 8

Required listening:

Spirituality: The Religious Studies Project

<https://www.religiousstudiesproject.com/podcast/spirituality/>

Artificial Intelligence and Religion: The Religious Studies Project

<https://www.religiousstudiesproject.com/podcast/artificial-intelligence-and-religion/>

***Term papers due online via Brightspace by August 16, 5:00 pm.**