

Big Questions in Religious Studies: The Fiction of History

RELI 2741B (Winter 2024)
Tuesday + Thursday 1:00-2:30pm
Room: TB 236

Religion
College of the Humanities
Professor Z.A. Crook
2a43 Paterson Hall
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Office Hours: by appointment
(masks must be worn for in-person office meetings)

Other ways to get answers: send an email; or ask for a Zoom session

Course Objective

This is an *inquiry course*, the theme of which is: **The Fiction of History**, or How do we get to and construct the past? Students will engage categories that are common in the study of religion (memory, culture, gender, authority, interpretation, power, identity, etc.), and will use them to think about what we can know about the religious past: how do we get to the past? what constitutes evidence and how was this evidence transmitted? how do we talk about the past in the present? Students will use these questions and the categories to work on any topic of their choosing – in any religion, any location, and any period. The course then focuses on how we write: developing every student's skills from coming up with a topic, to researching, writing, editing, and presenting.

Course Learning Objectives

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

- present and share their thoughts with each other in effective ways
- think critically about their own participation in the creation of historical narratives
- analyze and contextualize diverse sources (e.g., textual, oral, material, graphic, electronic, film, primary, secondary, etc.)
- apply a variety of analytical categories to the study of religion in the past

Religion Program Learning Objectives

This course contributes towards the Program Learning Objectives in several ways. By the end of a degree in Religion, students should be able to:

- carry out effective library research;
- develop thesis statements, defend them using evidence, and present them in both written and oral forms;
- differentiate faith-based perspectives from historical critical approaches to religious narratives, practices, and beliefs, a distinction which is basic to the core Religious Studies frameworks of outsider discourse and methodological atheism.

Course Evaluation

Classroom Participation (30%)

Scaffolded Paper Project (50%)

Assigned Reading Summaries (10%)

Project Presentation/Reading (10%)

Required Textbook

Aaron W. Hughes and Russell T. McCutcheon, *Religion in 50 Words* (London: Routledge, 2021). **Bolded** readings in the schedule

- Additional readings will be supplied where needed from Aaron W. Hughes and Russell T. McCutcheon, *Religion in 50 More Words* (London: Routledge, 2021). These are underlined in the schedule

Email Communication

- Email is my only means to contact you outside of class, and Carleton's Connect e-mail is the official mode of email communication for all matters having to do with the university and with this course. Therefore, you must check your Carleton email daily (at least). All communications sent to your Carleton address are official, and you are expected to get them. It is not an option to claim you did not get some announcement or request because you have another email address or took a break from email. You can configure your Connect account to forward university emails to another address, but you must be reachable through your Connect account. Also, any communication between you and me involving your personal information (like grades) must originate from a Connect account (as per Carleton's Privacy Policy FIPPA).

Daily Schedule and Assigned Readings

	TUESDAY – Content	Tuesday Assigned Summaries Bold = Textbook <u>Underline</u> =photocopy	THURSDAY – Skills
Jan 9 + 11	Intro to course		Finding a topic
Jan 16 + 18	Classifying Religion in the Past	Classification, Definition, Religion	Finding Sources
Jan 23 + 25	Historiography	History	Working with sources
Jan 30 + Feb 1	Memory	Origin , <u>Hagiography</u> , <u>Myth</u>	Project Focus
Feb 6 + 8	Ritual	<u>Pilgrimage</u> , <u>Ritual</u>	Process Update#1
Feb 13 + 15	Identity	Identity , <u>Initiation</u>	Thesis Statements
Feb 20 + 22	READING WEEK		
Feb 27 + 29	Culture 1	Culture, Material Religion	Writing
Mar 5 + 7	Culture 2	<u>emic/etic</u>	Acknowledging Sources
Mar 12 + 14	Gender	Gender , <u>Sexuality</u> , <u>Renunciation</u>	Project Focus
Mar 19 + 21	Textual Authority	Canon, Interpretation, Text	Process Update#2
Mar 26 + 28	Power	Authority, Authenticity, Politics, Power , <u>Magic</u>	Editing / Presentation
April 2	Presentations/Readings		Project Focus
April 9	Presentations/Readings		Project Focus

Assessments

Classroom Participation (30%)

- This is not a lecture course. It's a discussion course and a show-and-tell course. Its success will depend on student participation.
- Tuesdays: Content Days
 - All students complete all the readings assigned for that day. They are short.
 - Students use those readings to think of examples from the world of religion (or their own experience), or questions about them in order to contribute to class discussion
- Thursdays: Skills Days
 - We will focus on some aspect of the writing process. Students should be prepared to share their struggles and experiences
 - A short portion of the class will be devoted to writing skills (grammar tips, style tips, etc). These will be announced in class on the preceding Thursday.

Scaffolded Paper Project (50%)

- Topic (3%) – DUE January 18
- Summary of three bibliography items (7%) – DUE February 1
- Process Updates (5% x 2; in class Feb 8 and March 21)
- Paper Project (30%)
 - Final Draft (DUE: April 10) 15%
 - Feedback will be provided by April 18
 - Finished Version (functioning as a take home exam, DUE: April 25) (15%)
 - The grade for the Paper Project is the average of the Final Draft and the Final Version: in other words, it is in students' best interest to make their Final Draft as good as possible.
- Students may choose between two projects for the term: a short story in the genre of historical fiction or a tradition essay that explores what can and cannot be known (i.e., the challenges with knowing) about a topic or datum of the student's choosing.
 - Both projects require significant library research.

Assigned Reading Summaries (10%)

- Each Tuesday, 1-2 students will present a summary to the class of one of the assigned readings for that day
- How many summaries each student has to take on will depend on enrollment
- 10 mins each max
- A handout can be provided to the class members if the presenter wants to, but no slides or visuals can be used for this.
- This is an ideal opportunity to earn participation points (e.g., speaking in class, asking questions), as students having also done the reading might have questions for the presenter.

Project Presentation / Reading (10%)

- Student's will present in alphabetical order across both days. Students are free to negotiate with each other to switch days, but must let me know no later than the day before
- Time allotted for each will depend on the number of students in the class by then
 - Essay writers will present a slide show summary of their whole project
 - Short Story writers will offer a reading of a section

Academic Integrity and Being an Ethical Student

- I take academic integrity extremely seriously. Assignments are carefully scrutinized. You must write your paper independently and in your own words.
 - Avoid sharing your paper with classmates
 - It can lead to trouble
 - Avoid websites that present themselves as “plagiarism checkers”
 - They do not operate with Carleton's definition of plagiarism and therefore will not give you an accurate assessment. Please also read the material relating to plagiarism at the end of this document. If you have written the assignment entirely on your own, you do not need to use such a tool. And conversely, “A plagiarism checker told me my assignment was fine” is not a defense when faced with questions about academic integrity.
 - Avoid on-line “rewording,” paraphrasing, or word-spinning tools
 - These tools also present themselves as legitimate ways of avoiding plagiarism, but it is not true. They exist not to help students, but to make money, and students are often fooled.
 - Avoid ChatGPT
 - It produces writing that is very easy to spot. Therefore, it will not help you achieve the grade you're hoping for by using it.
- It is an academic offense to use any of these practices / tools (or similar) in the writing of your paper. Please take me at my word: I have been doing this a long time, and I know what undergraduate and human-produced writing looks like.



Humanities

University Regulations for All College of the Humanities Courses

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.

Online Learning Resources

While online courses offer flexibility and convenience, they also present unique challenges that traditional face-to-face courses do not. [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.

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.

Academic Integrity Policy (updated June 2021)

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.

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts 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.

[Academic Integrity Policy](#)

[Academic Integrity Process](#)

Academic Accommodation Policy

Carleton University is committed to providing access to the educational experience in order to promote academic accessibility for all individuals.

Academic accommodation refers to educational practices, systems and support mechanisms designed to accommodate diversity and difference. The purpose of accommodation is to enable students to perform the essential requirements of their academic programs. At no time does academic accommodation undermine or compromise the learning objectives that are established by the academic authorities of the University.

Addressing Human Rights Concerns

The University and all members of the University community share responsibility for ensuring that the University's educational, work and living environments are free from discrimination and harassment. Should you have concerns about harassment or discrimination relating to your age, ancestry, citizenship, colour, creed (religion), disability, ethnic origin, family status, gender expression, gender identity, marital status, place of origin, race, sex (including pregnancy), or sexual orientation, please contact the [Department of Equity and Inclusive Communities](#).

Requests for Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your [academic obligations](#) during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

Religious Accommodation

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. For more details, please review the [Student Guide to Academic Accommodation](#).

Pregnancy Accommodation

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. . For more details, please review the [Student Guide to Academic Accommodation](#).

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 where 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 the [Equity and Inclusive Communities website](#).

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. For more details, see the [Senate Policy on Accommodation for Student Activities](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC 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 your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more details, visit the [Paul Menton Centre website](#).

Grading System at Carleton University

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 can be found [here](#). 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.

Course Sharing Websites and Copyright

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).
[More information](#)

Student Rights and Responsibilities at Carleton

Carleton University strives to provide a safe environment conducive to personal and intellectual growth, free of injustice and characterized by understanding respect, peace, trust, and fairness.

The [Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy](#) governs the non-academic behaviour of students. Carleton University is committed to building a campus that promotes personal growth through the establishment and promotion of transparent and fair academic and non-academic responsibilities.

Deferred Term Work

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.

1. 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) 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. In all cases, formative evaluations providing feedback to the student should be replaced with formative evaluations. In the event the altered due date must extend beyond the last day of classes in the term, the instructor will assign a grade of zero for the work not submitted and submit the student's earned grade accordingly; the instructor may submit a change of grade at a later date. Term work cannot be deferred by the Registrar.
2. In cases where a student is not able to complete term work due to illness or injury for a significant period of time/or long term, the instructor and/or student may elect to consult with the Registrar's Office (undergraduate courses) or Graduate Registrar (graduate courses) to determine appropriate action.
3. If a student is concerned the instructor did not respond to the request for academic accommodation or did not provide reasonable accommodation, the student should consult with the department/school/institute chair/director. If a mutually agreeable accommodation to complete course requirements prior to the course grade submission deadline cannot be achieved, the Associate Dean will become involved. If academic accommodation is not granted, and the student receives word **after** the academic withdrawal deadline, the student may submit a petition to the Registrar's Office (undergraduate courses)/Graduate Registrar (graduate courses) for a final grade of WDN (Withdrawn) in the course(s). If academic

accommodation is not granted, and the student receives word **prior** to the academic withdrawal deadline, the student may elect to withdraw from the course(s).

4. Furthermore, if academic accommodation is granted, but the student is unable to complete the accommodation according to the terms set out by the instructor as a result of further illness, injury or extraordinary circumstances beyond their control, the student may submit a petition to the Registrar's Office (undergraduate courses)/Graduate Registrar (graduate courses). Please note, however, that the course instructor will be required to submit an earned final grade and further consideration will only be reviewed according to established precedents and deadlines. [More information of deferred Term Work](#)

Deferred Final Exams

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.

The application for a deferral must:

1. be made in writing 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 [here](#).

[More information on Final Exam Deferrals](#)
[Registrar's Office "Defer an Exam" page](#)

Financial vs. Academic Withdrawal

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. A fee adjustment is dependent on registration being canceled within the published [fee deadlines](#) and dependent on your course load. A course dropped after the deadline for financial withdrawal will receive a grade of Withdrawn (WDN), which appears on your official transcript.

Even if you miss the deadline for financial withdrawal, you might decide to drop a course to avoid a failure or a poor grade showing up on your student record and bringing down your CGPA. It is your responsibility to drop the course via Carleton Central within the published [deadlines](#) (see Academic Withdrawal).

If you are considering withdrawing from a course, you may want to talk to an advisor first. Course withdrawal may affect your student status, as well as your eligibility for student funding, immigration status, residence accommodation and participation in varsity sports, etc. Additionally, remember that once you choose your courses, you must use the “Calculate amount to pay” button to determine the correct amount of fees to pay.

Carleton Central is your one-stop shop for registration activities. If you are interested in taking a course, make sure to complete your registration. Simply attending a course does not mean you are registered in it, nor is it grounds for petition or appeal.

Department Contact Information

Bachelor of the Humanities 300 Paterson Hall
CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca

Greek and Roman Studies 300 Paterson Hall
GreekAndRomanStudies@cunet.carleton.ca

Religion 2A39 Paterson Hall
Religion@cunet.carleton.ca

Digital Humanities (Graduate) 2A39 Paterson Hall
digitalhumanities@carleton.ca

Digital Humanities (Undergraduate Minor) 300 Paterson Hall
digitalhumanities@carleton.ca

MEMS (Undergraduate Minor) 300 Paterson Hall
CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca