

**The College of the Humanities: Religion Program**  
**RELI 3360A**  
**Interpretations of Hadith**

Professor: Ash Geissinger

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Office Location and Office Hours are posted on Brightspace

**Classes:** Tuesdays, 11:35 am-2:25 pm

(classes are online, synchronous—but note that exams are in-person on campus)

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**Course Description**

This seminar course examines the Hadith literature as a case study of religious communities' constructions of sacred pasts as ways to address issues or debates of concern in their presents. Topics examined include: the origins, transmission, and compilation of hadiths, historical-critical approaches to reading hadiths, internal Muslim debates about their authority and application, the multiple roles played by hadiths in constructing and questioning cosmic order, identity, communal boundaries, and social hierarchies, as well as the ramifications of this for public life.

**NOTE:** The purpose of this course is not confessional—so, it is not intended to persuade you to adopt or reject a particular religious viewpoint. This course presupposes that all students accept that the Hadith will be studied using critical methods that are employed in a modern research university when examining any texts, whether religious or otherwise.

**Course Objectives**

Students who complete this course successfully will:

- gain a clearer appreciation of the various ways that religious communities memorialize the past to address issues in the present, and the real-world implications of these for public life
- further develop their understanding of the historical development of the Hadith literature and its continuing importance to many Muslim communities
- be able to read hadiths from a historical-critical perspective
- formulate positions consistent with the academic study of religion, which stresses outsider discourse, methodological atheism, and the ability to differentiate between advocacy and the critical study of religion
- strengthen their ability to formulate and articulate academic arguments supported by evidence, and express them in written form
- strengthen their ability to engage with the viewpoints of others constructively and critically
- improve their ability to communicate their research findings to others

### **Course Evaluation**

Regular, active, and informed class participation—20%

Midterm exam (Oct. 14, **on campus and in-person**)—25%

Two class presentations on assigned readings (15% each)—30%

Final exam (university scheduled, **on campus and in-person**)—25%

### **Required Course Readings**

There is no textbook in this course. Links to all the assigned readings are available through the course webpage on Brightspace. These are mostly library resources—therefore, for the links to work, you need to be signed into the library website if you are not on campus.

### **Presentations on Assigned Readings**

At the beginning of the semester, students will sign up for two classes for which they will give a short (15 min.) presentation on one of the readings assigned. One of the presentations must be for a secondary source, and the other for a primary source. Both presentations must address relevant analytical questions in detail. Further instructions will be provided in class.

### **In-Class Electronics Policy**

In order to help maintain a respectful environment that is conducive to learning, no photography, audio or video recording, or livestreaming of any kind is allowed during class without the explicit permission of the instructor.

### **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. Students may take notes and make copies of course materials for their own educational use, but may not reproduce or distributed lecture notes and course materials publicly for any purpose, commercial or otherwise, without my express written consent. Student work in this course remains the exclusive intellectual property of the student(s) who produced it, and will not be shared with anybody without their permission, except in accordance with Carleton University policies.

### **Academic Integrity**

The University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether 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 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, artworks, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, 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, **including the use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT);**

- 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;
- 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.

### **Email Policy**

The Carleton communications policy states that faculty must conduct email communications with students only through Carleton email accounts. Therefore, be sure to send any emails to me through your Carleton email; I cannot respond to messages sent through any other account. Typically, I respond to emails within 48 hours of receiving them, except during evenings, weekends or holidays.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Sept. 9**—What are hadiths? How do we read hadiths in a Religious Studies course?

### Readings:

- Scott Lucas, "Major Topics of the Hadith," *Religion Compass* 2.2 (2008), pp. 226-239.
- Su'ad Abdul Khabeer, "Africa as Tradition in U.S. African American Muslim Identity," *Journal of Africana Religions*, 5.1 (2017), pp. 26-49.

**Sept. 16**—The origins and development of the Hadith literature: traditional Muslim perspectives and historical questions

Readings:

- J. Fueck, “The Role of Traditionalism in Islam,” in *Hadith: Origins and Developments*, ed. Harald Motzki (Ashgate, 2004), pp. 3-24.
- *Sahih Muslim*, Chapter 47 (“The Book of Knowledge”); Tabarsi, *Mishkat*, Section 3, Chapter 8, hadiths #676-732 (“On Science”).
- [recommended reading]: Ulrike Mitter, “‘The Majority of the Dwellers of Hell-fire are Women’: A Short Analysis of a Much Discussed Hadith,” in *The Transmission and Dynamics of the Textual Sources of Islam: Essays in Honour of Harald Motzki*, eds. Nicolet Boekhoff-Van der Voort et al. (Brill, 2011), pp. 443-473.

**Sept. 23**—Hadith transmission as a devotional practice

Readings:

- *Riyad as-Salihin*, Chapter 12 (“The Book of Knowledge”).
- Asma Sayeed, *Women and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge in Islam* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), Chapter 3 (pp. 108-143).
- [recommended reading]: Sayeed, *Women and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge*, Chapter 2.

**Sept. 30**—World-construction through hadiths

Readings:

- *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Chapter 59 (“Beginning of Creation”).
- Amina Inloes, “How Did Eve Get Married? Two Twelver Shi’i *Hadith* Reports,” in *Islamic Interpretive Tradition and Gender Justice: Processes of Canonization, Subversion, and Change*, eds. Nevin Reda and Yasmin Amin (McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2020), pp. 127-150.

**Oct 7.**—Popular practice, hadiths, and death rites

Readings:

- *Sahih Muslim*, Chapter 11 (“The Book of Funerals”).
- Leor Halevi, “Wailing for the Dead: The Role of Women in Early Islamic Funerals,” *Past & Present* 183.1 (2004), pp. 3-39.

**Oct 14** Midterm exam (in-person and on campus)

**Oct 21** Fall Break (no class)

**Oct. 28**—Hadiths and constructions of sacred space

Readings:

- *Sunan an-Nasa'i*, Chapter 8 ("The Book of the Masjids").
- Sahih al-Bukhari, Chapter 10 ("Call to prayers"), sub-chapters 157-166.
- Marion Holmes Katz, *Women in the Mosque: A History of Legal Thought and Social Practice* (Columbia University Press, 2014), pp. 111-128, 17-27, 38-48.

**Nov. 4**—Hadiths, healing, and magic

Readings:

- *Jami' at-Tirmidhi*, Chapter 28 ("Chapters on Medicine").
- TBA

**Nov. 11**—Food, communal boundaries, and hadiths

Readings:

- *Sunan Abi Dawud*, Chapter 28 ("The Book of Food").
- David Freidenreich, *Foreigners and Their Food: Constructing Otherness in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Law* (University of California Press, 2011), Chapters 10 and 11 (pp. 140-168).

**Nov. 18**—Memories of past battlefields and constructions of social order

Readings:

- *Sunan an-Nasa'i*, Chapter 25 ("The Book of Jihad").
- Christian Sahner, "'The Monasticism of My Community is Jihad': A Debate on Asceticism, Sex, and Warfare in Early Islam," *Arabica* 64 (2017), pp. 149-183.
- [recommended reading]: Asma Afsaruddin, "Reconstituting Women's Lives: Gender and the Poetics of Narrative in Medieval Biographical Collections," *Muslim World* 92.3/4 (2002), pp. 461-480.

**Nov. 25**—Hadiths and dream interpretation

Readings:

- *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Chapter 91 ("Interpretation of Dreams").
- Amira Mittermaier, *Dreams that Matter: Egyptian Landscapes of the Imagination* (University of California Press, 2011), Chapter 2 (pp. 54-83).
- [recommended reading]: Elizabeth Sirriyeh, "Dreams of the Holy Dead: Traditional Islamic Oneirocriticism Versus Salafi Skepticism," *Journal of Semitic Studies* XLV/1 (Spring 2000), pp. 115-130.

## Dec. 2—Apocalyptic hadiths, constructions of time, and catastrophes

### Readings:

- *Sunan Abi Dawud*, Chapter 37 (“Trials and Fierce Battles”); Chapter 38 (“The Promised Deliverer (Kitab al-Mahdi”)); Chapter 39 (“Battles” (Kitab al-Malahim), starting at sub-chapter 12, “Signs of the Hour”).
- Claudia Merli, “Context-bound Islamic Theodicies: The Tsunami as Supernatural Retribution vs. Natural Catastrophe in Southern Thailand,” *Religion* 40.2 (2010), pp. 104-111.

## University Regulations for All College of the Humanities Courses (Updated July 21,2025)

### 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

The University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether 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 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, artworks, 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, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT)
- 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
- failing to acknowledge sources with 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 follows a rigorous [process for academic integrity allegations](#), including reviewing documents and interviewing the student, when an instructor suspects a violation has been committed. Penalties for violations may include a final grade of "F" for the course.

### **Co-operation or Collaboration**

An important and valuable component of the learning process is the progress a student can make as a

result of interacting with other students. In struggling together to master similar concepts and problems

and in being exposed to each other's views and approaches, a group of students can enhance and

speed up the learning process. Carleton University encourages students to benefit from these activities

which will not generally be viewed as a violation of the Policy. With the exception of tests and

examinations, instructors will not normally limit these interactions.

Students shall not co-operate or collaborate on academic work when the instructor has indicated that the

work is to be completed on an individual basis. Failure to follow the instructor's directions in this regard

is a violation of the standards of academic integrity. Unless otherwise indicated, students shall not co-

operate or collaborate in the completion of a test or examination.

**Group Work:** There are many cases where students are expected or required to work in groups to

complete a course requirement. Normally, students are not responsible for violations of this policy

committed by other members of a group in which they participate.

**More information on the process [here](#).**

## Academic Accommodations

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.

Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the *Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances*, are outlined on the [Academic Accommodations website](#).

### Requests for Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes can be [found here](#).

### 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](mailto:equity@carleton.ca) at [equity@carleton.ca](mailto:equity@carleton.ca).

## Grading System at Carleton University

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points and the percentage conversion can be found [here](#).

## 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 extenuating circumstances beyond their control, which forces them to delay submission of the work. Requests for academic consideration are made in accordance with the [Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical or Other Extenuating Circumstances](#).

Students who claim short-term extenuating circumstances (normally lasting up to five days) as a reason for missed term work are held responsible for immediately informing the instructor concerned and for making alternate arrangements with the instructor. If the instructor requires supporting documentation, the instructor may only request submission of the University's self-declaration form, which is available on the [Registrar's Office website](#). The alternate arrangement must be made before the last day of classes in the term as published in the academic schedule.

1. 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 extenuating circumstances lasting for a significant period of time/ long-term (normally more than five days), 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 consideration or did not provide reasonable accommodation, the student should follow the appeals process described in the [Academic Consideration Policy](#).
4. If academic consideration 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: [Undergraduate](#) | [Graduate](#)).

## Deferred Final Exams

Students who are unable to write a final examination because of extenuating circumstances, as defined in the [Academic Consideration Policy](#), 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 (3) working days after the original final examination or the due date of the take-home examination; and,

2. be fully supported by appropriate documentation. In cases of short-term extenuating circumstances normally lasting no more than five (5) days, students must include the University's self-declaration form, which can be found on [the Registrar's Office website](#). Additional documentation is required in cases of extenuating circumstances lasting longer than five (5) days and must be supported by a medical note specifying the date of 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](#).

## Academic Consideration Policy

As per the [Academic Consideration Policy](#), if students encounter extenuating circumstances that temporarily hinder their capacity to fulfil in-class academic requirements, they can request academic consideration. The Academic Consideration for Coursework is only available for accommodations regarding course work. Requests for accommodations during the formal exam period must follow the [official deferral process](#).

NOTE: As per the Policy, students are to speak with/contact their instructor before submitting a request for Academic Consideration. Requests are not automatically approved. Approving and determining the accommodation remains at the discretion of the instructor. Students should consult the course syllabus about the instructor's policy or procedures for requesting academic consideration. [More information here](#).

## 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.

## Mental Health and Wellness at Carleton

As a student you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. For more information, please consult <https://wellness.carleton.ca/>

### Emergency Resources (on and off campus)

- Suicide Crisis Helpline: call or text 9-8-8, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- For immediate danger or urgent medical support: call 9-1-1

### Carleton Resources

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
- Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>
- Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
- Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
- Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
- Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

### Off Campus Resources

- Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: call 613-238-3311, text 343-306-5550, or connect online at <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: call 613-722-6914 or toll-free 1-866-996-0991, or connect online at <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Empower Me Counselling Service: call 1-844-741-6389 or connect online at <https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>
- Good2Talk: call 1-866-925-5454 or connect online at <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: for online or on-site service <https://walkincounselling.com>

## The Centre for Indigenous Support and Community Engagement

The Centre for Indigenous Initiatives is proud to offer culturally centered individual counselling to students who self-identify as First Nation, Metis or Inuk. Through this service,

Indigenous students [can access confidential, individual sessions for support with personal, mental health or academic challenges.](#)

## Department Contact Information

Bachelor of the Humanities 300 Paterson Hall  
[CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca](mailto:CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca)

Greek and Roman Studies 300 Paterson Hall  
[GreekAndRomanStudies@cunet.carleton.ca](mailto:GreekAndRomanStudies@cunet.carleton.ca)

Religion 2A39 Paterson Hall  
[Religion@cunet.carleton.ca](mailto:Religion@cunet.carleton.ca)

Digital Humanities (Graduate) 2A39 Paterson Hall  
[digitalhumanities@carleton.ca](mailto:digitalhumanities@carleton.ca)

Digital Humanities (Undergraduate Minor) 300 Paterson Hall  
[digitalhumanities@carleton.ca](mailto:digitalhumanities@carleton.ca)

MEMS (Undergraduate Minor) 300 Paterson Hall  
[CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca](mailto:CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca)