

The College of Humanities

Religion Program: RELI 3722A "Religion and Violence" (Winter 2018)

INSTRUCTOR DETAILS

Prof. Johannes Wolfart

Office: 2A62 Paterson Hall

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OFFICE HOURS

Office hours will be held on Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:00-1:00.

E-MAIL COMMUNICATION

Carleton communications policy states that faculty must communicate with students through their Carleton email account. To ensure that this policy is upheld without too much trouble, you should send email to me via CULearn. Please be advised, further, that students can normally expect up to a 24hour turn-around time on e-mail communication, especially during high volume times (i.e. before examinations, at essay time, etc.).

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Today, it is widely assumed that violence of many kinds – physical and non-physical, by and against individuals, amongst and within religious groups – plays an integral role in all religious traditions and systems. This course has two concurrent aims. First, this course explores diverse theoretical and empirical approaches to "religion and violence." Secondly, it interrogates commonplace assumptions pertaining to "religion and violence," including the widespread tendency to naturalize the paradigm itself (i.e., the assumption that there is something unique and meaningful about the concept "religious violence"). After September 11, 2001 there has been a massive proliferation of public discourse, including academic publications, in this regard. This has had powerful effects both in the rarified atmosphere of the academy (in the form of a polarization of opinion on religion in general), as well as in the "real world," where highly consequential political decisions, including the decision to wage war, have been felled in accordance with such assumptions and claims.

Please note, finally, that while some of the worldviews studied in this course are explicitly theological, the academic procedures and critical methods employed in the academic study of religion are not. **This course presupposes your acceptance of the principles of the modern research university.** Your understanding of these, especially as they pertain to the study of religion, will undoubtedly develop further during this course.

READINGS

All assigned readings for this course are on reserve and should be accessible to registered students via the ARES system of MacOdrum Library. Occasionally, I will make further materials available to you, generally via CULearn. Please note that readings are a prerequisite rather than a substitute for class attendance. Your ability to follow lectures and to participate effectively in question and discussion periods will depend on you keeping up with the reading.

LECTURES

This is a lecture course, which means that my oral presentation is the primary mode of communication. Nevertheless, I shall also devote a certain amount of time (normally about 45 minutes) in each class to formal discussion, moderated conversation, etc. Readings are a prerequisite for participation in such activities, but (as above) they are not a substitute for lecture material. Thus I consider regular attendance in class essential in this course. As a matter of policy I don't post my own class notes. If you miss a class, it is up to you to find a classmate who will help you with notes. I absolutely will not repeat class materials in an email, over the phone, etc. Finally, in my experience (which is considerable) students who attend class enjoy considerably greater success than those who don't. Of course there is such a thing as the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy...

Late arrivals are very distracting to both your fellow students and to me, so please be punctual. Finally, please be advised that I do not permit any recording during class time. PLEASE turn off all electronic communication devices during class.

EVALUATION (detailed assignment briefs to be distributed in class)

- 1) Précis of an assigned reading – 10% (1-2 pages)
- 2) Critical response to an assigned reading – 20% (2-4 pages)
- 3) Proposal of a topic for on a course “Religion and Violence” – 30% (3-5 pages)
- 4) Case Description/Analysis (take-home exam) – 40% (5-8 pages)

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date specified in the class schedule (below). Certainly it is my aim as a teacher to get to know you as individuals, to recognize your individual strengths and weaknesses, and to foster individual intellectual development. At the same time, however, I am obliged also to treat individuals equally in certain key respects. As a marker, therefore, I cannot take into consideration anything other than your actual performance on the items above. Similarly, for the sake of equity the following **penalties for late assignments** will be strictly enforced: 2 marks (i.e. 2% of total grade) per day or partial day. **No assignment will be accepted more than one week past its due date.** Exceptions will be made only in extreme cases (snow storm, documented medical emergency, etc.) and when an extension has been granted by me (and for very good reasons, of course) at least one week in advance of the due date.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Class I (11 January)

Imagining and relating “Religion and Violence”: Why should one study “Religion and Violence?” How should one study “Religion and Violence”? The many problems with many stereotypes...

Reading: None. This class serves as a substantive introduction to the course.

Class II (18 January)

Topic: The origins of religion and/in violence: a classical “humanist” approach.

Reading: René Girard in: Mark Juergensmeyer and Margo Kitts, eds., *Princeton Readings in Religion and Violence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 127-140.

Class III (25 January)

ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE

Topic: Religion and violence as a “civilizational” problem: a classical “essentialist” approach.

Reading: Samuel P. Huntington, “the Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs* 72 (1993), 22-49.

Class IV (1 February)

Topic: Religion and violence as a “sectarian” problem: a classical “reductionist” approach.

Reading: L. P. Barnes, “Was the Northern Ireland Conflict Religious?” *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 20 (2005), 55-69.

Class V (8 February)

Topic: “Implicit religion” and violence: an “extensionist” approach.

Reading: Paul C. Johnson, “Savage Civil Religion,” in: Bryan Rennie and Philip Tite, eds., *Religion, Terror and Violence: Religious Studies Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2008), 41-65.

Class VI (15 February)

ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE

Topic: A myth-critique of the “religious violence” paradigm.

Reading: William T. Cavanaugh, “The Anatomy of the Myth,” in: idem, *The Myth of Religious Violence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 15-56.

Suggested Viewing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-tb1ZHISfJk>

FAMILY DAY/ BREAK

Class VII (1 March)

Topic: Religion as a variable in empirical violence studies: a “shifted frame.”

Reading: C. G. Ellison, J.P. Bartkowski and K. L. Anderson, “Are there Religious Variations in Domestic Violence?” *Journal of Family Issues* 20 (1999), 87-113; M. B. Brinkerhoff, E. Grandin and E. Lupri, “Religious Involvement in Spousal Violence: The Canadian Case,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 31 (1992), 15-31.

Class VIII (8 March)

Topic: A “psychogenic” approach to religious radicalization.

Reading: Ian McGregor, Joseph Hayes and Mike Prentice, “Motivation for Aggressive Religious Radicalization: Goal Regulation Theory and a Personality x Threat x Affordance Hypothesis,” *Frontiers in Psychology* 6 (2015), art. 1325.

Class IX (15 March)

ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE

Topic: A “sociogenic” approach to religious extremism.

Reading: Ivan Strenski, “Sacrifice, Gift and the Social Logic of Muslim “Human Bombers”,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 15 (2003), 1-34.

Class X (22 March)

Topic: Symbolic violence, for example in Southeast Asian Buddhist iconology

Reading: Bernard Faure, “Buddhism and Symbolic Violence,” in: Andrew R. Murphy, ed., *The Blackwell Companion to Religion and Violence* (Chichester: Blackwell, 2011), 211-226. Images via CULearn.

Class XI (29 March)

Topic: Ritual violence, for example in southern Italian popular Catholicism.

Reading: Michael P. Carroll, “Mezzogiorno Masochism,” in: idem, *Madonnas that Maim: Popular Catholicism in Italy Since the Fifteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 129-137.

Class XII (5 April)

ASSIGNMENT#4 -- TAKE HOME EXAM DUE AS DETERMINED BY UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS.

Topic: Religious identities and victims: some unexpected contemporary examples.

Reading: TBA.



University Regulations for 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.

Academic Integrity at Carleton

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 on <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/#AIatCU>.

Academic Accommodation Policy

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 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).

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 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 Chart](#)

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).

Statement on Class Conduct

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

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 Exams

Students who do not write/attend a final examination because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control may apply to write a deferred examination.

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 [forms and fees page](#).

The granting of a deferral also requires that the student has performed satisfactorily in the course according to the evaluation scheme established in the Course Outline, excluding the final examination for which deferral privileges are requested. Reasons for denial of a deferral may include, among other conditions, a failure to (i) achieve a minimum score in the course before the final examination; (ii) attend a minimum number of classes; (iii) successfully complete a specific task (e.g. term paper, critical report, group project, computer or other assignment); (iv) complete laboratory work; (v) successfully complete one or more midterms; or (vi) meet other reasonable conditions of successful performance.

More information can be found [in the calendar](#).

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

Withdrawal From Courses

Withdrawn. No academic credit, no impact on the CGPA.

NEW FALL 2017: WDN is a permanent notation that appears on the official transcript for students who withdraw after the full fee adjustment date in each term. Students may withdraw on or before the last day of classes.

Dates can be found here: <http://calendar.carleton.ca/academicyear/>

Department Contact Information

College of the Humanities 300 Paterson Hall (613)520-2809

CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca

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

Greek and Roman Studies 300 Paterson Hall (613)520-2809

GreekAndRomanStudies@cunet.carleton.ca

Drop Box is outside of 300 P.A.

Religion 2A39 Paterson Hall (613)520-2100

Religion@cunet.carleton.ca

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

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

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

Student Resources on Campus

[CUKnowHow Website](#)