

The College of the Humanities
Religion Program: RELI 3722A
“Religion and Violence” (34697)

Instructor: Dr. Richard MacPhail
Office: 3A60 Paterson Hall
Office Hours: Tuesdays – 11:30 am to 12:30 pm
Class Hours: Tuesdays – 8:35 to 11.25 am
Class Location: 317 Southam Hall
Email: Richard.MacPhail@Carleton.ca

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

RELI 3722 - Religion and Violence

From the Calendar:

“A thematic course that examines putative cases of 'religion and violence' from a range of world traditions, but also interrogates aspects of the “religion and violence” rubric itself.”

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND METHODS:

We will explore the putative relations between what we call “religion” and “violence”, taking care to qualify these terms, and explore popular assumptions concerning their relationships. Our perspective and method is non-sectarian, secular, and humanist, and ideological only insofar as secular humanism is ideological. The course is designed to move back and forth between theory and specific conflict/violence scenarios. Discussion in class based on reading and audio/visual assignments posted the previous week are foundational to building observational and analytical skills in a rich learning environment.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE INSTRUCTOR:

Carleton policy requires faculty to communicate with students through the **Carleton email system**. I will not respond to students' emails sent through other means such as gmail, hotmail, smart phones, etc. As a courtesy, I may respond (once) to such non-Carleton emails directing the student to find my substantive response at their Carleton account. Expect a 24-hour turn-around on emails; I will respond as soon as possible.

I am not available by telephone or voice mail. Please take advantage of my office hours, as the time posted above is the only time when I have regular access to office facilities.

USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES:

Your focus during our weekly three hours together should be on what is happening in the session. You may use laptop/tablet computers for recording your notes. However, no audio or video recording may be done in class without a Paul Menton Centre request. All electronic devices which may disturb me or other students **must** be silent.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Consistent attendance is anticipated and expected.

Evaluation will be based on assigned readings, audio-visual, and lecture material.

- 1) **Five Discussion Questions** (100-150 words—4% each, totaling 20%).
These online exercises are an opportunity for you to reflect on specific issues in religion and violence, and are to be submitted electronically within one week of being assigned. Submissions, through cuLearn, are graded as pass (4 marks) or fail (0 mark)—depending on whether or not an assignment has been received on time—so this is, in effect, a grade for participation. See cuLearn for instructions.
- 2) **Midterm Test.** November 4.
(In-class, Scantron, multiple choice & true/false, 20%).
- 3) **Research Essay.** Due November 25.
(2000-3000 words, excluding title page, notes and bibliography—30%). This will be a “case study” of
 - a) historic violence related to religion (for example, the Crusades; the Spanish Inquisition; the Irish “Troubles”; Israel/Palestine in world affairs; Islam—Peace, and/or Violence; Colonialism—Conquest of the Americas; *Hindutva* and minorities), or other such topic approved by the instructor;
 - b) a theme relating violence to religion (for example, patriarchy and gender violence; cultural “exceptionalism”; “essentialism” vs. holism; or
 - c) a critique of a contemporary method used in the study of religion and violence.

An electronic copy of your essay proposal is due October 14. An in-class **Essay Proposal Workshop** will be held October 21 for you to present your proposal and receive feedback in the form of constructive questions from other students. See cuLearn for instructions.

- 4) **Final Examination** scheduled by SES (2 hours, 30%).
Scantron, multiple choice & true/false, 10% and two interpretive essays worth 10% each. The final exam will be cumulative and may include material from any part of the course.

Students must complete all written assignments and the final examination to receive credit for the course. Do not plan to travel on examination dates.

LECTURE AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE:

This schedule may vary according to class comprehension and pace, or other contingencies. Additional resources may be added as the course and students' interests develop.

Each reading and media segment is intended to prepare you for the lectures/discussions and should be read, heard, or viewed IN ADVANCE of the class.

Week 1 - September 9

Welcome.

Outline of the Course and what to expect.

As an initial reflection exercise, we will view a video together: "Final Solution—Gujarat genocide of minorities in India".

Your assignment for the Week 2 discussion will be to review this video online at youtube.com and answer the questions, **Who? What? Where? When? How? Why?**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c0ZvADtrDPM&index=16&list=PLD5D40F0FB8F03287>

Be sure to watch the video on a device and with an application that allows you to see the timeline.

To facilitate discussion, record from the video's time line any events, statements, or issues that made a particular impact on you, or that you had reason to question, so we can review the segment together.

Be prepared to discuss your reflections on this video at the September 16 class.

Reading and Video Assignments are posted each week on cuLearn for the class of the following week. Check cuLearn for the current week for links to readings and media.

Instructions for this and all subsequent reading and audio/visual assignments:

Write down any questions you have about historical, geographical, political or cultural contexts. Are any of your presuppositions or prior learnings challenged? Be prepared to discuss them.

Discussion Assignment 1 and "Survey of Student Interest"—Due September 16. See cuLearn for instructions.

Week 2 - September 16

Due Today – Discussion Assignment 1 & Survey of Student Interest.

Lecture/Discussion Topic 1:

Discussion of video, "Final Solution—Gujarat genocide of minorities in India". What issues concerning religion and violence does this video raise for you?

Lecture/Discussion Topic 2:

Defining our terms: What do we mean by "religion"? What do we mean by "violence"? What are the "boundaries" of our concern for the purposes of this course?

Due Sep 23 – Discussion Assignment 2.

Week 3 - September 23

Due Today – Discussion Assignment 2.

Lecture/Discussion Topic 1:

Theoretical excursion into the causes of violence, insofar as it relates to religion(s). Two Classic Theories of Religion and Mimetic Violence: René Girard and Walter Burkert.

Lecture/Discussion Topic 2:

Symbolic violence and violence against symbols (iconoclasm).

Discussion Assignment 3 – Due Sep. 30.

Week 4 - September 30

Due Today - Discussion Assignment 3.

Lecture/Discussion Topic 1: Human Needs Theory.

Lecture/Discussion Topic 2: Sacrifice and Self-sacrifice.

Discussion Assignment 4 – Due Oct. 7.

Week 5 - October 7

Due Today - Discussion Assignment 4.

Lecture/Discussion Topic 1: Medieval and Early Modern Europe.

- Islam vs. Christendom, and the Crusades.
- Violence in the emergence of nation-states.
- Intra-Christian violence.
- Modernity and the emergence of secularism.

Lecture/Discussion Topic 2: Ireland—Protestant-Catholic relations.

- Irish experience of British hegemony
- Independence Movement.
- “The Troubles” (beginning 1960s).
- Easter Peace Agreement.

Week 6 - October 14

Due Today - Essay Proposal

Lecture/Discussion Topic 1:

The Myth of Religious Violence and the paradigm critique of W. T. Cavanaugh.

Lecture/Discussion Topic 2:

Cultural Exceptionalism, the “People of God”, and “Manifest Destiny”.

Reminder: Next week is the Essay Proposal Workshop.

- Bring a hard copy of your proposal.
- Be prepared to listen to others' proposals and offer questions that may help to improve them.

Week 7 - October 21

***** In-class exercise: Essay Proposal Workshop *****

Discussion Assignment 5. Due Nov. 4.

******* Oct. 27-31—Reading Break *******

Week 8 - November 4

Due Today - Discussion Assignment 5.

***** Midterm Scantron Test (20%) *****

Lecture/Discussion Topic 1: The Divine Imperative in Religious Violence.

Lecture/Discussion Topic 2: Patterns and Consequences of Bullying.

Lecture/Discussion Topic 3: Domestic and Gender Violence, and Religion.

Domestic Violence and Gender—Traditional and Contemporary.

- Neolithic to Urban shift.
- Patriarchy—Family as chattels.
- Absent, transient partner/parent.
- Child sexual abuse.
- Honour Killing.
- Genital mutilation as rite of passage.

Friday, November 7 is the last day for requests to the Paul Menton Centre for Final Exam Accommodations.

Week 9 - November 11

*** Remembrance Day Observation: Two minutes of silence at 11:00 am.***

Lecture/Discussion Topic 1: Israel/Palestine and world engagement.

Lecture/Discussion Topic 2: Intra-Muslim Violence—the Sunni-Shi'i Divide.

Islam—Peace, and/or Violence.

- Early conflicts in the founding of Islam in Hejaz.
- Intra-Muslim violence and sectarianism.
- Turkish and European hegemony.
- Contemporary Islam and the contours of violence.

Week 10 - November 18

*** **Reminder: Research Paper (30%) Due Nov. 25.** ***

Lecture/Discussion Topic: Religion and Violence in contemporary India

A complex anthropology—the populating of the Indian subcontinent.

Religious authority for endemic, doctrinal social inequality.

Muslim and colonial European hegemony.

Independence, Partition and the Constitution.

The meaning of “secularism” in the Indian cultural context.

Week 11 - November 25

*** **Due Today - Research Paper (30%)** ***

Lecture/Discussion Topic: A return to where we began...

Caste hegemony, *Hindutva*, the *Sangh Parivar*—RSS, VHP, *Bajrang Dal*, and affiliates.

The “enemy within”—Violence against minorities—Muslim and Christian.

Violence against subalterns—Reservation, SCs, STs, OBCs.

The threat lurking behind Gandhi's assassination.

Religious “riots”: Sikh massacres (1984), *Ramjanmabhumi /Babri Masjid* (1992), Godhra, Gujarat Pogrom (2002), Anti-Christian Pogrom (1998-ongoing)

Week 12 - December 2 (Last Class)

Lecture/Discussion Topic 1:

Reification, Reductionism and “Essentialism” in scholarship on religion.

Lecture/Discussion Topic 2:

Hector Avalos. *Fighting Words*. Scarcity as cause of violence *vis-à-vis* religion.

- Inscripturation.
- Sacred Space.
- Group Privileging.
- Salvation.

Summing up.

NOTES ON EVALUATION:

There are no grade-raising exams or alternative assignments in this course. If you miss an assignment due date unavoidably, you must provide adequate written documentation (e.g. a doctor's note, an obituary) for your incapacity. A timely resolution will have to be negotiated with the instructor to meet the criteria of good standing should a student wish to be eligible to write a deferred final exam.

Please see "REGULATIONS COMMON TO ALL HUMANITIES COURSES" attached to the Course Outline for policy on Academic Honesty (specifically plagiarism), the grading system, academic accommodation and petitions to defer. The University's policies on Academic Integrity and Offences apply in the writing of all tests and research assignments.

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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. 8, 2014**. The last day to withdraw from **FALL/WINTER (Full Term)** and **WINTER** term courses is **APRIL 8, 2015**.

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. 7, 2014** for the Fall term and **March 6, 2015** 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 assignments 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 Success Centre 520-7850	302 Tory
Paul Menton Centre 520-6608/TTY 520-3937	501 Uni-Centre
Writing Tutorial Service 520-2600 Ext. 1125	4 th Floor Library
Learning Support Service 520-2600 Ext 1125	4 th Floor Library