

**COLLEGE OF THE HUMANITIES
RELIGION: RELI 3741**

CLASSICAL APPROACHES TO RELIGION

Instructor: Dr. Shawna Dolansky
Office hours: 2a60 PA, Tues 10:00am – 12:00PM
Lectures: M/W 2:35-3:55pm

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In this course, we will consider a variety of important theories of religion that have been advanced since the idea of a scientific approach to religion was first proposed. Over the semester, we will discuss, debate, and reflect on the nature of the origin of religion according to the founders and key thinkers within the discipline, and work toward an understanding of how, when, why, by whom, and for what purpose(s) the systematic, critical, and scientific study of religion came into existence and continues to be sustained. Our review begins in the 19th century and continues until roughly 1990.

Learning Outcomes:

In this course, students will –

- Learn the history of the field of religious studies;
- Learn the fundamental terminology and concepts used in the academic study of religion;
- Come to understand the origins of differing ways of thinking about and defining religion;
- Encounter a variety of theories and analytical methods used in the interpretation of religion;
- Learn how to critically analyse primary source texts that outline these theories and methods;
- Develop their own reflections and responses to theoretical perspectives on religion that have been and continue to be employed in the academy.

Textbooks:

Required – Daniel Pals, *Introducing Religion: Readings From The Classic Theorists* (bookstore)

Recommended – Beal & Deal, *Theory for Religious Studies* *available as e-book through library*

Evaluation:

1. Weekly reading analyses.

8 papers worth 5 points each (you do 10, I'll take your top 8); for a total of 40 points

- (a) These are due every week starting Jan 13 and continuing until Mar 30. They must be posted to CUPortfolio *before the beginning* of class at 2:35pm each Monday. Late analyses will not be accepted under any circumstances.
- (b) They are to be 1-2 page overviews of the primary source readings assigned, following the “5 questions” format outlined in Pals’ introduction. The purpose of these is to demonstrate understanding of the primary source readings, as well as to keep a log and summary of the major thinkers and works read.

2. Glossaries.

Up to 2 points per week over 11 weeks; total of 22 possible points

- (a) This is an ongoing project in which you will keep track of key terms from lecture and readings on a weekly basis (from Jan 10 through April 3).
- (b) You will be expected to update your glossaries weekly by the end of each Friday; they will be checked and marked anytime between 9am Saturdays and 9pm Sundays, and I will grade whatever is there.
- (c) Although you may discuss the contents of your glossary with your classmates, the final work should be your own. Any glossaries which bear suspicious resemblances to other glossaries in the class will be flagged for potential plagiarism and treated accordingly.

3. Individual presentations.

Your presentation will be 10-15 minutes long and worth a total of 5 points

- (a) Each student is responsible for signing up to give one presentation between the dates of Jan 29 and Apr 1.
- (b) Individual presentations are available in 3 forms:
- Summary of a theorist and his work according to the same format as the weekly reading analyses, based on extra primary source reading in Pals that the rest of the class will not be assigned (Otto only);

- Summary of a theorist and his/her work according to the same format as the weekly reading analyses, based on the secondary source overview in Deal & Beal PLUS a primary source reading (or selection of readings) of the presenter's choice (to be determined in discussion with professor ahead of time);
- Summary of a published academic response to the theorist under discussion that day, and explication of that response to the class.

(c) When you sign up for a presentation, you are committing to covering that topic/author for the class. The class will be counting on you to explain important material to which they will otherwise not be exposed. Be sure to arrive to class prepared to fulfil that commitment in the same way as you will want others to fulfil it for you.

4. Group presentations.

Your presentation will be worth a total of 5 points (per individual)

- (a) Each student will sign up to present material on one of four potential topics on April 6 (see schedule below); four groups/partnerships will accordingly be formed in the class.
- (b) You will be given some class time to coordinate with each other, but groups should also arrange to meet outside of class as necessary.
- (c) Although you will be part of a group, the work will be divided up so that each group member will have their own discrete theorists or articles to present to the class in coordination with the demands of the topic and the constituency of the group. **MARKS WILL BE ASSIGNED TO INDIVIDUALS BASED ON THE MATERIAL EACH PERSON PRESENTS** - there will be no group marks assigned.
- (d) When you sign up for a presentation, you are committing to covering that topic/article/author for both your group, and the class as a whole. Both your group, and the class as a whole, will be counting on you to explain important material to which they will otherwise not be exposed. Be sure to arrive to class prepared to fulfil that commitment in the same way as you will want others to fulfil it for you.

5. Attendance and participation.

You will be marked out of 20 for your attendance and participation during the whole semester, for a total of 20 points

- (a) More than 4 absences over the course of the semester will endanger your ability to pass the course. If you have legitimate reasons for your absences, notify the professor prior to the class and follow up with proper documentation within 24 hours of the class missed.
- (b) Arriving late more than once or twice will be looked upon with disfavour for its discourtesy to fellow classmates and disrespect to the professor, and will be reflected in your marks accordingly.
- (c) Arriving excessively late without prior notice to the professor, or leaving at the break without medical documentation will be counted as absences.
- (d) Being engaged on electronic devices for purposes that have nothing to do with class activities is also notably discourteous to fellow classmates and disrespectful of the professor and will be counted as absences from class. (Yes, I can tell.)
- (e) This is a course about ideas, and is best experienced within the context of an enthusiastic, dynamic, fluid, and informed exchange of same. Active and constructive participation in class discussions will be rewarded.

6. Final take-home exam.

This will be marked out of 10 for a total of 10 points

- (a) You will be asked to write an 8-10 page paper that will consider the cumulative knowledge gained in the course and discuss it in light of extra readings and a question presented to the class April 6.
- (b) It will be typed, double-spaced, pages numbered, due April 25 by 11:50pm in the online dropbox at cuLearn.
- (c) It must use Chicago style for citations: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html
- (d) Exams that copy, in whole *or in part*, wording or ideas from any source online or in print without proper citation, will be considered instances of plagiarism. Plagiarism will be prosecuted in this course to the fullest extent, which means it will be painstakingly documented and presented in a report to the Dean's office. The Dean's office takes all allegations of plagiarism extremely seriously and an investigation will ensue which will leave a permanent mark on your academic record. You could receive an F for the course, be placed on academic probation, or even expelled from the university.
- (e) Exams that do not follow the basic guidelines above will not be marked and will receive zero.
- (f) Late exams will not be accepted.

SCHEDULE:

Week One: Introductions to the course and to “classical approaches to religion”

Mon Jan 6 Introduction to the course

Wed Jan 8 What are “classical approaches to religion”?
READ Pals intro
DUE CUPortfolio set-up (you will start filling in your glossary today)
Lecture: intro to Tylor (bio)

Week Two: E. B. Tylor – Animism and the Origin of Religion

Mon Jan 13 E. B. Tylor
READ Pals ch. 1
DUE 5 Qs on Tylor

Wed Jan 15 Responses to Tylor
- analysis and critiques
Lecture: intro to Frazer (bio)

Week Three: James G. Frazer – Magic and the Rise of Religion

Mon Jan 20 James Frazer
READ Pals ch.2
DUE 5 Qs on Frazer

Wed Jan 22 Responses to Frazer
- analysis & critiques
Lecture: intro to Freud (bio)

Week Four: Sigmund Freud – Religion as Neurosis

Mon Jan 27 Sigmund Freud
READ Pals ch. 3
DUE 5Qs on Freud

Wed Jan 29 Responses to Freud
- analysis & critiques
Presentations (close reading/distillation and explication of arguments in each article)
1. Marsha Aileen Hewitt, “Psychoanalysis, Religious Experience, and the Study of Religion: Not “Religious Studies.”” *Critical Research on Religion* 1 #1 (2013): 25-32.
2. Jonathan Lear, “The Illusion of a Future: The Rhetoric of Freud’s Critique of Religious Belief,” ch 2 in *On Freud’s The Future of an Illusion*, ed. S. Akhtar, Routledge 2018.
Lecture: intro to Durkheim (bio)

Week 5: Emile Durkheim – The Social as Sacred

Mon Feb 3 Emile Durkheim
READ Pals ch. 4, especially pp. 99-125; 135-142
DUE 5Qs on Durkheim

Wed Feb 5 Responses to Durkheim
- analysis & critiques
Presentations (close reading/distillation and explication of arguments in each article)
1. Steven Lukes, “Is Durkheim’s Understanding of Religion Compatible with Believing?” *Religion* 42 #1 (2012): 41-52.
2. W.S.F. Pickering, “The Eternality of the Sacred: Durkheim’s Error?” *Archives des sciences sociales des religions*. N. 69 (1990): 91-108.
Lecture: intro to Marx (bio)

Week 6: Karl Marx – Religion as Agent of Economic Oppression

Mon Feb 10 READ Pals ch. 5
DUE 5Qs on Marx

Wed Feb 12 Responses to Marx
- analysis & critiques
Presentation: Friedrich Nietzsche (ch 3 Deal and Beal; + primary source of choice*)
Lecture: intro William James (bio)

Week 7: SPRING BREAK

Mon Feb 17 BREAK
Wed Feb 19 BREAK

Week 8: William James – The Testimony of Religious Experience

Mon Feb 24 William James
READ Pals ch. 6
DUE 5Qs on James

Wed Feb 26 Responses to James
- analysis & critiques
Presentation: Rudolf Otto (Pals ch 7)
Lecture: intro to Max Weber (bio)

Week 9: Max Weber – Religion and Culture Interwoven

Mon Mar 2 Max Weber
READ Pals ch. 8
DUE 5 Qs on Weber

Wed Mar 4 Responses to Weber
- analysis & critiques
Presentations:
1. Ferdinand De Saussure (ch 4 in Deal & Beal; + primary source)
2. Louis Althusser (ch 5 in Deal & Beal; + primary source)
Lecture: intro to Mircea Eliade (bio)

Week 10: Mircea Eliade – Religion as Response to the Sacred

Mon Mar 9 Mircea Eliade
READ Pals ch. 9
DUE 5Qs on Eliade

Wed Mar 11 Responses to Eliade
- analysis & critiques
Presentations:
1. Jacques Lacan (ch 20 in Deal & Beal + primary source)
2. Pierre Bourdieu (ch 11 in Deal & Beal + primary source)
Lecture: intro to Evans-Pritchard (bio)

Week 11: E. E. Evans-Pritchard – Primitive Religion and Modern Theories

Mon Mar 16 E. E. Evans-Pritchard
READ Pals ch. 10
DUE 5 Qs on Evans-Pritchard

Wed Mar 18 Responses to Evans-Pritchard
- critique & analysis
Presentations:
1. Roland Barthes (ch 7 in Deal & Beal + primary source)

2. Maurice Merleau-Ponty (ch 24 in Deal & Beal + primary source)
Lecture: intro to Geertz (bio)

Week 12: Clifford Geertz – Religion as Worldview and Ethic

Mon Mar 23 Clifford Geertz
READ Pals ch. 11
DUE 5 Qs on Geertz

Wed Mar 25 Responses to Geertz
- analysis & critiques
Presentations:
1. Jean Baudrillard (ch 9 in Deal & Beal + primary source)
2. Jean-Francois Lyotard (ch 23 in Deal & Beal + primary source)
Lecture: intro to post-structuralism, post-colonialism, feminism, and civil religion

Week 13: Late 20th century thinkers & developments (group presentations)

Mon Mar 30 Post-structuralism, Orientalism
(readings in Deal & Beal for Derrida, Foucault + primary sources; readings in Orientalism begin with Deal & Beal, plus Said's intro and ch. 1, and further TBD)

Wed Apr 1 Feminism, Civil Religion
(readings in civil religion begin here: http://www.robertbellah.com/articles_5.htm and further TBD in consultation with prof; readings in feminism begin with Juschka's "Gender in the Study of Religion" and further TBD in consultation with prof)

- Talk about take-home exam – Topic: do classical approaches still matter?

For Take-Home exam (due April 25)

READ Russell McCutcheon "Studying Religion" pp 1-11 only

READ Rodney Stark, "SSSR Presidential Address, 2004: Putting An End to Ancestor Worship," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 43:4 (2004) 465–475

READ Bruce Lincoln "Theses on Method," Method and Theory in the Study of Religion 8 (1996), 225-7



University Regulations for All College of the 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 [here](#).

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).

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 is 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: carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support

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. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

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](#)

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 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. [More information.](#)

The application for a [deferral](#) must:

1. be made in writing or online 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](#).

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

Withdrawal From Courses

Withdrawn. No academic credit, no impact on the CGPA. WDN is a permanent notation that appears on the official transcript for students who withdraw after the full fee adjustment date in each term (noted in the Academic Year section of the Calendar each term). Students may withdraw on or before the last day of classes.

Important dates can be found [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. [More information](#)

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 and SAST 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](#)

[Academics: From registration to graduation, the tools for your success.](#)