THEORY AND METHOD SEMINAR
RELI 4740 B – (Winter 2013)
Professor Johannes C. Wolfart
Office: Office: 2A62 Paterson Hall; Telephone: x2932; email: Johannes_wolfart@carleton.ca

COURSE OBJECTIVES
The seminar has as its mandate “[e]xamination of selected theoretical and methodological models used in the interpretation of religious data.” Since the seminar is, with the exception of RELI 1730 “Interpretations of Religion,” the only such course offered undergraduates at Carleton it must survey a relatively broad selection of such models, both “classic” and recent. In keeping with developments in the academic study of religion in the last two decades (roughly), primary emphasis will be on theoretical questions, though these are frequently entwined with methodological issues. In keeping with the rich traditions of the academic seminar, the presentation of material by the instructor will be limited in favour of participation of all members of the seminar (on which, more below). Finally, wherever possible, the seminar will explore the contrasting positions and debates that are inevitably associated with any theory or method in the world of scholarship.

This course presupposes your acceptance of the principles of the modern research university, in particular: 1) that a seminar differs fundamentally from a lecture course; 2) that the academic study of religion is not the same thing as confessional theology. Your understanding of these will undoubtedly develop further during this course.

EVALUATION
1) Essay – 40% (15-20 pages; due 18 March, at the beginning of class; details described in an essay brief to be distributed)
2) Presentation to the seminar of one of the assigned readings – 20% (each enrolled member of the seminar must present a reading in the mode of a conference panel presenter)
3) Response to a seminar presentation – 20% (each enrolled member of the seminar must respond to a classmate’s presentation, adopting the mode of a conference panel respondent)
4) Ongoing seminar contribution – 20% (up to 2% per class!)

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 to treat individuals equally in certain key respects. Therefore, as a marker I cannot take into consideration anything other than your actual performance on the items above.

Late work will be assessed a penalty of 2 marks per day or partial day, without exception. Extensions will be granted by me and only for very good reason. Except in emergencies, no extension will be granted within a week of the due date.

POLICY ON ATTENDANCE
Not only is it common practice to evaluate participation in discussion and contribution to a seminar, it is also customary that habitual non-attendance be considered unacceptable performance. Such non-attendance entails a failure to contribute that is simply un-collegial. Moreover, since it is impossible to make up a missed seminar, a member who does not attend regularly cannot really be said to have taken the course. Therefore, any member who is absent from more than 3 meetings of the seminar will not receive course credit. In other words, all members of the seminar must be present for three quarters of all meetings of the seminar.

1 http://www4.carleton.ca/calendars//ugrad/current/courses/RELI/4740.html
READINGS
All required readings are available to seminar members through MacOdrum Library, either electronically or via the reserve system. Please note that readings are a prerequisite for seminar participation. Your ability to contribute effectively will depend on you keeping up with the reading. Furthermore, all members of the seminar are encouraged to “read around” the seminar topics as much as possible, and to share their scholarship with the seminar. The preparation of an essay proposal and term essay will also undoubtedly involve such further reading.

OFFICE HOURS
Office hours will be held Wednesdays from 1:00-2:00pm.

E-MAIL COMMUNICATION
In order to ensure compliance with the federal privacy act commonly known as FIPPA (i.e. for your protection), Carleton communications policy states that faculty must conduct email communications with students only through their Carleton accounts. Please be advised, further, that students can normally expect up to a 24-hour turn-around time on e-mail communication, especially during high volume times (i.e. before examinations, at essay time, etc.).

SEMINAR MEETING SCHEDULE AND TOPICS
Week I (7 January) – General Introduction and discussion: Why worry about theory and method in the academic study of religion? Assignment of Topics to members of the Seminar.
READINGS:

UNIT 1: DEFINITIONS AND DEFINITIONAL DEBATES (sunt denique fines)
Week II (14 January) – The Definition of Religion
READINGS:

Week III (21 January) – The Limits of Religious Studies (and Theology)
READINGS:

Week IV (28 January)
UNIT 2: INTERPRETATIONS (academic, allegedly)

Week V (4 February) – Myth and Religion

READINGS:

Week VI (11 February) – Ritual and Religion

READINGS:

BREAK

UNIT 3: EXPLANATIONS (of phenomena, supposedly religious)

Week VII (25 February) – Psychological reason

READINGS:

Week VIII (4 March) – Sociological reason

READINGS:

Week IX (11 March) – Evolution and Cognition

READINGS:

UNIT 4: CRITICISMS (From DWMs to WMDs)

Week X (18 March) – Gender and Religious Studies

READINGS:
Week XI (25 March) – **Postcolonialism and Religious Studies**

**READINGS:**


Week XII (1 April) – **Theory and Method – A “Little Tradition” of Academic Politics?**

**READINGS:**


Week XIII (8 April) – Concluding Discussion: Agenda and readings to be established by the seminar.
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>85-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>80-84</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>73-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>53-56</td>
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<td>D-</td>
<td>50-52</td>
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</tbody>
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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. 3, 2012. The last day to withdraw from FALL/WINTER (Full Term) and WINTER term courses is APRIL 10, 2013.

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/

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).

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.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADDRESS:</th>
<th>(Area Code 613)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College of the Humanities 520-2809</td>
<td>300 Paterson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek and Roman Studies Office 520-2809</td>
<td>300 Paterson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion Office 520-2100</td>
<td>2A39 Paterson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registrar's Office 520-3500</td>
<td>300 Tory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Academic Success Centre 520-7850</td>
<td>302 Tory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul Menton Centre 520-6608/TTY 520-3937</td>
<td>501 Uni-Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Tutorial Service 520-2600 Ext. 1125</td>
<td>4th Floor Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning Support Service 520-2600 Ext 1125</td>
<td>4th Floor Library</td>
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