

The College of the Humanities: Religion
RELI 4850 B/5850 T: Seminar on Gender, Sexuality, Religion and Public Life

Professor A. Geissinger
Office: 2A37 Paterson Hall
Office Phone: (613) 520-2600, ext. 3108

Email: Ash.Geissinger@carleton.ca
Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:30-4:30 pm,
or by appointment

Classes: Tuesdays 11:35 am-2:25 pm (2A46 Paterson Hall)

Course Description

Gender and sexuality are central elements of religion and public life. This seminar course examines several aspects of this complex topic, with a particular focus on how some contemporary religious communities and religious discourses construct gender categories, sexualities, families, and communities, as well as the bodies of individual believers, and the varying ways that such constructions intersect with public life.

NOTE: It is assumed that all students who take this course have already taken at least one introductory Religious Studies course, and that as a result they are broadly familiar with the basic beliefs, practices and history of major world religious traditions. Any student lacking this background is expected to acquire it through reading.

Course objectives

- To develop a clearer understanding of the various ways that gender and sexuality function in both religion and public life
- To hone your skills at analyzing written texts and oral arguments
- To strengthen your ability to formulate and articulate academic arguments supported by evidence, and to express these in written form
- To further develop your ability to communicate your research to others

Course Evaluation: Students registered in 4850

- Active class participation—15%
- Leading class discussion based on one day's assigned readings—10%
- Five response papers (1-2 pages each)—25 percent
- Paper proposal with presentation on related Ottawa-Gatineau site (in class)—15%
- Research paper (11-14 pages)—35%

Course Evaluation: Students registered in 5850

- Active class participation—15%
- Leading class discussion based on one day's assigned readings—10%
- Five response papers (2-3 pages each)—25 percent

- Paper proposal with presentation on related Ottawa-Gatineau site (in class)—15%
- Research paper (14-17 pages)—35%

NOTE: The readings assigned for this course are fairly heavy, and as this is a seminar course, regular attendance and informed participation are essential. Before deciding to take this course, students should consider whether their other time commitments will permit them to fulfil its requirements.

COURSE POLICIES

Course Readings

Links to the course readings are available through cuLearn. These are mostly library resources—therefore, for the links to work, you need to be either on campus, or signed into the library website. Please bring the readings to class with you on the days for which they are assigned.

Participation

As this is a seminar course, doing the assigned readings and coming to class prepared to discuss them is expected of all students, as is regular class attendance. A student who does not come to class regularly, or who routinely comes unprepared, cannot be regarded as having taken the course.

Class attendance will be taken and participation will be graded (1% at the end of each class for active participation). If you are absent, participation marks cannot be made up in any way.

When preparing for class, write down questions that the readings bring to mind, particularly focusing on the central issues for this course: How are gender, sexuality, religion and public life being represented in this reading? Why do they matter here? What purpose(s) does the writer appear to have in mind by highlighting (or downplaying or ignoring) them? What sources and methodological approaches are being utilized and what do they (or don't they) allow us to see?

Leading class discussions

At the beginning of the semester, students will sign up for the class that they will lead the discussion. Leading the discussion must involve the following: (1) a 15-minute presentation about one of the readings assigned for the class, which briefly summarizes the main issues that it raises, highlights at least two critical questions that it raises for you in light of the course materials, and critically evaluates the central arguments made/methodologies that it uses, (2) followed by class discussion, which the presenter leads, and (3) fielding questions.

The Response Papers

The response papers must contain (1) a clear summary of the several of the main points made in both of the readings assigned for the class, and (2) at least two critical questions that these readings raise, in light of the course materials. One of the response papers is to be done for the class that you lead the discussion; the other four are open to your choice. They are to be typed, double-spaced, with 12-point type. All response papers are due at the beginning of the class which they are associated with.

The Paper Proposal and the Research Paper

Topics must be (1) directly related to this course, and (2) directly linkable to a site (e.g. a location, building, museum holding, or piece of public art) in Ottawa-Gatineau or its immediate area. All topics need to be approved by the professor before you proceed. This is a research paper, which must be written in standard essay format, with proper citation and bibliography, following the Chicago style.

The paper proposal must contain: a working title, a thesis statement, an annotated bibliography containing at least seven sources, a digital representation (e.g. a photo or a map) of the site, and a paragraph explaining the site's significance in a way that would be suitable for a self-guided tour aimed at the general public. Site selection and presentation will be discussed in detail in class.

The annotated bibliography must provide complete citations of the sources used in the essay. Each source is to be followed by several sentences which explain why it was selected and how it will be used. Students are expected to make extensive use of academic, peer-reviewed secondary sources in their research papers, and to use all primary source materials analytically.

Each student must present their paper proposal in class on the day that proposals are due. The due date for submitting the paper proposal is given in the course schedule (see below for policies regarding late submissions). Failure to submit the proposal by the deadline will mean that your research paper will not be accepted, and will therefore receive a grade of zero. Papers which do not follow the instructions given in class will be returned ungraded for revision and resubmission. Late penalties will accrue from the due date, regardless of when the problem was discovered.

All students will give a class presentation on their completed research papers in the last class of the semester. This presentation must include: summing up your research findings, discussion of the Ottawa-Gatineau site selected and whether further research has affected how you would discuss it in a self-guided tour, fielding audience questions, and leading a short discussion.

Note that the final version of the research paper is due by Dec. 15, 4 pm, in hard copy in the drop box in the Religion department

Lateness Policy

All written work is due at the beginning of class on the dates specified. Late response papers can only receive a maximum of half the grade, and will not be accepted for marking later than two days past the due date. If the written assignment or the research essay are submitted late, 2 marks per day (including weekends) will be deducted, unless an extension has been prearranged with the professor at least a week in advance of the due date. Any requests for extensions must be accompanied by acceptable and verifiable documentation (police reports, death certificates, etc).

Please note that under all circumstances, the paper proposal must be submitted within five (5) days of the due date, or the research paper will not be accepted for marking.

Email communication

Please be aware that in order to ensure compliance with the federal privacy act known as FIPPA, Carleton communications policy states that faculty may only communicate with students through their Carleton Connect accounts. Therefore, ensure that any emails you may send me are from your Carleton Connect account. Otherwise, your email will not receive a response.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Sept 10—Introduction to the study of gender, sexuality, religion and public life

Readings: Lincoln's theses; Mohanty, "Under western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses," 333-58.

I. Religious constructions of gender categories, sexualities, and public life

Sept. 17—Gender categories and the study of religion

Readings: Eschrich, "Behold the man!': constructing the masculinity of Jesus of Nazareth in mainstream American film, 1961-2004," 520-41; Escalante, "Trans* Atlantic religion: spirit possession and gender ideology in Cuban Santeria," 386-99.

Sept 24—Constructing genders and sexualities

Readings: Wolosky, "Foucault and Jewish feminism: the mehitzah as dividing practice," 9-32; Pandya, "Subverting patriarchy through celibacy, renunciation, and ritual performance: the *kanyas* of Sakori Ashram in India," 21-34.

Oct 1—LGBTQ identities, ancient texts, and contemporary religious discourses

Readings: Yip, “Queering religious texts: an exploration of British non-heterosexual Christians’ and Muslims’ strategy of constructing sexuality-affirming hermeneutics,” 47-65; Wilcox, “When Sheila’s a lesbian: religious individualism among lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Christians,” 497-13.

Oct 8—Monogamies, nonmonogamies, polygamies, and constructions of family and community

Readings: Majeed, “Agency and authority in polygyny,” 28-51; Willey, “‘Christian nations’, ‘polygamic races’ and women’s rights: toward a genealogy of non/monogamy and whiteness,” 530-46.

Oct 14—Paper proposals due today; class presentations of paper proposals

Oct 21—Fall Break (no class)

II. Religious constructions of believing bodies

Oct 29—Gender and religious authority

Readings: Larson, “Histrionics of the pulpit: trans tonalities of religious enthusiasm,” 315-337; Hammer, “Gender justice in a prayer: American Muslim women’s exegesis, authority, and leadership,” 26-54.

Nov 5—Gender and religious constructions of purity

Readings: Gish, “Are you a ‘trashable’ Styrofoam cup? harm and damage rhetoric in the contemporary American sexual purity movement,” 5-22; Steinberg, “From a ‘pot of filth’ to a ‘hedge of roses’ (and back): changing theorizations of menstruation in Judaism,” 5-26.

Nov 12—Gendered bodies and religious dress codes

Readings: Arthur, “‘Clothing is a window to the soul’: The social control of women in a Holdeman Mennonite community,” 11-30; Morin, “Men’s modesty, religion, and the state: spaces of collision,” 307-28.

Nov 19—Gender, sexuality, violence, and public life

Readings: Keefe, “Rapes of women/wars of men,” 79-97; Olwan, “Gendered violence, cultural otherness, and honour crimes in Canadian national logics,” 533-55.

Nov 26—Preparation for paper presentations

Dec 3—In-class paper presentations; course conclusion



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.](#)