

# Draft Copy

## Religion 1205 A Interpreting Religion Fall 2008

**Professor:** Richard Mann

**Office:** Paterson Hall 2A51

**Office Hours:** TBA

**Office Phone:** 520-2600 ext. 2504

**Course e-mail:** A course e-mail address will be posted closer to the start of classes

**TAs:** TBA

**Class Time:** 11:30-1:00, Tuesdays and Thursdays

### Course Description:

This course describes and analyzes various understandings of how religion is understood. Defining what religion is and how it should be interpreted is a challenging exercise. To guide us through this course we will rely on a variety of sources and differing perspectives to gain as comprehensive an understanding of the topic as we can given the limits of time and resources a single semester course presents to both students and professors. This course does not hope to present a single definition or understanding of religion, rather the course aims to make students familiar with a variety of definitions of religion and approaches to interpreting religion.

### Required Texts:

Kessler, Gary. *Studying Religion: An Introduction Through Cases*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. McGraw-Hill.

-- please note: second-hand copies of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition are missing some of the case studies examined in the course

Martel, Yann. *Life of Pi*. Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2002.

Selected Readings posted to Web-CT.

### Course Requirements:

#### 1. Midterm Exam (30% of the course grade):

- Written on **October 18** (9:00 AM-12:00PM) on Carleton University campus (rooms TBA, see the CUTV web-site for room allocations)
- The midterm exam will cover lecture material and assigned readings covered from the period September 04 to October 16

- The midterm will consist of a mixture of multiple choice, matching and written/essay answers
- please note: if you intend to apply to write a distance exam you must apply to do so before the posted deadline, see the CUTV web-site for details on the deadlines and how to apply

## **2. Two Short Written Assignments (2 x 15% = 30% of the course grade):**

- The first short written assignment is due **October 02**
- The second short written assignment is due **November 06**
- Further details and instructions on the short written assignments will be posted to Web-CT

## **3. Final Exam (40% of the course grade):**

- The final examination will be scheduled within the fall 2008 final examination period
- The location, date and time of the exam will be posted by Carleton University during the term (check the university web-site)
- The final examination will consist of a mixture of multiple choice, matching and written/essay answers
- The final exam covers lecture and reading material from the entire course
- please note: if you intend to apply to write a distance exam you must apply to do so before the posted deadline, see the CUTV web-site for details on the deadlines and how to apply

## **Carleton University statements particular to CUTV courses:**

- Students are advised to allow an extra 30 minutes at the end of the scheduled lecture broadcast time when viewing or recording lectures broadcast on the CUTV channel.
- Please be advised that VOD lectures will be removed and that copies of DVDs will be removed from the CUTV Student Centre following the final examination of the course. DVD or VOD lectures are NOT available to any student after the final examination (regardless of deferral status).

## **General Notes on Evaluation:**

1. You will receive a guideline for the short written assignments. Your short written assignments must follow these guidelines and your grade will be based on your adherence to that criteria.
2. Please see "Regulations Common to all Humanities Courses" attached to the syllabus for policy on plagiarism, grading systems, requests for academic accommodation and petitions to defer.

3. Late assignments may not be graded. Those that are graded will receive a 5% mark deduction per day late.
4. Missed tests and assignments can only be made up if the student supplies adequate written documentation (i.e., a doctor's note, an obituary) for the absence.

### **Class and Reading Schedule:**

Week 1: Sept. 04

Lecture Topics: Course overview, defining religion

Readings: 1. Kessler, chapter 1

Week 2: Sept. 09 and 11

Lecture Topics: Defining religion

Readings: 1. Kessler, chapter 2

2. "The Nature of Religion" by Willard Oxtoby (Web-CT)

Week 3: Sept. 16 and 18

Lecture Topics: *Life of Pi*

Readings: 1. *Life of Pi*, "Author's Note" and pages 1-103 (Part One of the novel)

Week 4: Sept. 23 and 25

Lecture Topics: *Life of Pi*

Readings: 1. *Life of Pi*, pages 104-318 (Part Two of the novel)

Week 5: Sept. 30 and Oct. 02

Lecture Topics: The Study of the 'Other'

Readings: 1. Selections from Macaulay's "Minute on Education" (Web-CT)

2. Selections from Edward Said's *Orientalism* (Web-CT)

Week 6: Oct. 07 and 09

Lecture Topics: Sacred Power

Case Study Focus: Dao (Tao) and Anselm

Readings: 1. Kessler, chapter 3

2. Selections from the *Daodejing* and Anselm (Web-CT)

Week 7: Oct. 14 and 16

Lecture Topics: Myth as Sacred Story

Case Study Focus: Enuma elish

Readings: 1. Kessler, chapter 4

2. The *Enuma elish* (Web-CT)

Week 8: Oct. 21 and 23

Lecture Topics: Ritual as Sacred Action

Case Study Focus: Seder

Readings: 1. Kessler, chapter 5

Week 9: Oct. 28 and 30

Lecture Topics: Sacred Space and Time

Case Study Focus: Mount Kilimanjaro and The Dreamtime

Readings: 1. Kessler, chapter 6

Week 10: Nov. 04 and 06

Lecture Topics: Experiencing the Sacred

Case Study Focus: Muhammad and The Buddha

Readings: 1. Kessler, chapter 7

2. Selected readings on Muhammad and The Buddha (Web-CT)

Week 11: Nov. 11 and 13

Lecture Topics: Experiencing the Sacred, continued

Week 12: Nov. 18 and 20

Lecture Topics: Religion and Politics

Case Study Focus: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Readings: 1. Kessler, chapter 10

Week 13: Nov. 25 and 27

Lecture Topics: Organizing the Sacred

Case Study Focus: Jonestown, and Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, "The Grand Inquisitor"

Readings: 1. Kessler, chapter 11

2. Selected readings on Jonestown (Web-CT)

3. "The Grand Inquisitor" section of *The Brothers Karamazov* (Web-CT)

## 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 “to use and pass off as one’s own idea or product the work of another without expressly giving credit to another.” This can include:

- Copying from another person's work without indicating this through appropriate use of quotation marks and footnote citations.
- Lengthy and close paraphrasing of another person's work (i.e. extensive copying interspersed with a few phrases or sentences of your own).
- Submitting written work produced by someone else as if it were your own work (e.g. another student's term paper, a paper purchased from a term paper "factory", materials or term papers downloaded from the Internet, etc.).
- Handing in "substantially the same piece of work to two or more courses without the prior written permission of the instructors...involved." (University Senate)

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 range from a mark of zero for the plagiarized work to a final grade of "F" for the course, and even suspension from all studies or expulsion from the University.

### GRADING SYSTEM

Letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100 (12)	B+ = 77-79 (9)	C+ = 67-69 (6)
A = 85-89 (11)	B = 73-76 (8)	C = 63-66 (5)
A - = 80-84 (10)	B - = 70-72 (7)	C - = 60-62 (4)
D+ = 57-59 (3)	D = 53-56 (2)	D - = 50-52 (1)

F	Failure. No academic credit
WDN	Withdrawn from the course
ABS	Absent from the final examination
DEF	Official deferral (see "Petitions to Defer")
FND	"Failed, no Deferral" – assigned when the student is absent from the final exam and has failed the course on the basis of inadequate term work as specified in the course outline.

### WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY

The last date to withdraw from Fall term courses is November 7th, 2008. Last day to withdraw from Fall/Winter (full year) and Winter term courses is March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

### REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

#### For Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must contact a coordinator at the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities to complete the necessary *Letters of Accommodation*. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet and discuss your needs with me in order to make the necessary arrangements as early in the term as possible. Please note the deadline for submitting completed forms to the Paul Menton Centre is November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008 (for fall/winter term courses) / March 6<sup>th</sup> 2009 (for winter term courses).

#### **For Religious Obligations:**

Students requesting academic accommodation on the basis of religious obligation should make a formal, written request to their instructors for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student.

Students or instructors who have questions or want to confirm accommodation eligibility of a religious event or practice may refer to the Equity Services website for a list of holy days and Carleton's Academic Accommodation policies, or may contact an Equity Services Advisor in the Equity Services Department for assistance. (613-520-5622)

#### **For Pregnancy:**

Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a *letter of accommodation*. The student must then make an appointment to discuss her needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

#### **PETITIONS TO DEFER**

Students unable to complete a **final** term paper or write a **final** examination because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control or whose performance on an examination has been impaired by such circumstances may apply in writing within five working days to the Registrar's Office for permission to extend a term paper deadline or to write a deferred examination. The request must be fully and specifically supported by a medical certificate or other relevant documentation. Only deferral petitions submitted to the Registrar's Office will be considered.

#### **ADDRESSES**

College of the Humanities 520-2809	300 Paterson
Classics and 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	500 Unicentre
Writing Tutorial Service 520-6632	4 <sup>th</sup> floor Library