

Draft Copy: Subject to change (see course requirements)

**Religion 1730 A
Interpreting Religion
Fall 2009**

Professor: Richard Mann
Office: Paterson Hall 2A51
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 4-5 PM
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Office e-mail: richard_mann@carleton.ca
TAs: TBA
Class Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:35 PM to 3:55 PM

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*, 3rd edition. McGraw-Hill.

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

Selected Readings posted to Web-CT.

Course Requirements: please note that the course requirements are subject to change once the professor is informed of the number of Teaching Assistants/Graders assigned to this course

1. Unit test (30% of the course grade):

- Written on **October 13** in class.
- The test will cover lecture material and assigned readings covered from the period September 10 to October 08
- The midterm will consist of a mixture of multiple choice, matching and written/essay answers

2. Unit test (30% of the course grade):

- Written on **November 19** in class
- The test will cover lecture material and assigned readings covered from the period October 08 to November 19
- The midterm will consist of a mixture of multiple choice, matching and written/essay answers

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 is cumulative (i.e., all of the material covered in the course will be subject to examination)

General Notes on Evaluation:

1. 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.
2. Late assignments may not be graded. Those that are graded will receive a 5% mark deduction per day late.
3. 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.
4. To receive a passing grade, students must write all of the tests and exams for the course.

Class and Reading Schedule:

Week 1: Sept. 10

Lecture Topics: Course overview, defining religion

Readings: 1. Kessler, chapter 1

Week 2: Sept. 15 and 17

Lecture Topics: Defining religion

Readings: 1. Kessler, chapter 2

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

Week 3: Sept. 22 and 24

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. 29 and Oct. 01

Lecture Topics: *Life of Pi*

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

Week 5: Oct. 06 and 08

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. 13 and 15

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. 20 and 22

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. 27 and 29

Lecture Topics: Ritual as Sacred Action

Case Study Focus: Seder

Readings: 1. Kessler, chapter 5

Week 9: Nov. 03 and 05

Lecture Topics: Sacred Space and Time

Case Study Focus: Mount Kilimanjaro and The Dreamtime

Readings: 1. Kessler, chapter 6

Week 10: Nov. 10 and 12

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. 17 and 19

Lecture Topics: Experiencing the Sacred, continued

Week 12: Nov. 24 and 26

Lecture Topics: Religion and Politics

Case Study Focus: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Readings: 1. Kessler, chapter 10

Week 13: Dec. 01 and 03

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 “*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 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	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 November 16, 2009. The last day to withdraw from Fall/Winter (full year) and Winter term courses is March 12, 2010.

REQUESTS FOR 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 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. For more details visit the Equity Services website: http://www.carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/student_guide.htm

Religious obligation: 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. For more details visit the Equity Services website: http://www.carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/student_guide.htm

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 are 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 I receive 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 the last official day to withdraw from classes in each term. For more details visit the PMC website: http://www.carleton.ca/pmc/students/acad_accom.html

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation>

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: (Area Code 613)

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 th floor Library
Learning Commons 520-1125	4 th floor Library