

The College of the Humanities  
Religion Program: RELI 1720A; Fall Term  
Indigenous Religions in Global Context  
0.5 credit

Class timing: Wednesday and Friday, 1135 – 1255 ET

Class location: Zoom link will be made available on the course website

This course is blended, i.e. it will include synchronous and asynchronous learning sessions. The details of each class are mentioned clearly in the section titled 'reading schedule' in this syllabus, and will be discussed on the first day of class.

Professor: Manvitha Singamsetty

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Office hours: by appointment

### **Course Description:**

This course illuminates a recent category of “World Religions” by examining a diversity of cases from all five continents, as well as in diaspora (e.g. Brazilian Candomblé, Roma/Sinti religion). Key considerations include the study of minority religions, religion in oral cultures, myth and ritual studies, colonialism, and globalisation.

### **Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:**

By the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the basic history, doctrinal variety, rituals, and social contexts of various indigenous religious traditions including Indian, Japanese, Australian, African, North and South American, and European perspectives
- Develop critical thinking skills and be able to distinguish a paper's argument from its subject matter
- Construct an argument and support it with evidence
- Recognize acceptable academic sources for the study of religion
- Write coherent English prose at a university level

### **Teaching Philosophy:**

This course has been designed to enhance student-centered learning. Critical analysis, self-reflection and class discussion are all key to the learning mechanisms in this course. Learning involves not only gaining new information but also a critical and ethical application of this newly gained knowledge. In this course we will focus on both of these aspects of learning.

### **Assignments:**

**1. Attendance and participation - 25%**

Based on online quizzes, polls, reflection pieces etc., this is a means to encourage and monitor attendance and in-class participation. Since all classes and contact hours will be held online, students are encouraged to participate by using various online tools like “raise hand” and chat box feature in group discussions. It is recommended that students keep their video functions on at all times during class.

**2. Class test – 20% each, in total 40%**

- a. Class test 1 – 14 October 2020
- b. Class test 2 – 25 November 2020

This test will be in written form, online, and will focus on the topics discussed in class until the date of the test. The test will comprise of multiple-choice, short, and long answer questions. A sample test will be posted on the course website one week prior to the test.

**3. Final Exam – 35%**

This will be an online, written, scheduled exam and will contain a mix of multiple choice, short and long answer questions. Format of the final exam will be discussed in class. The date of the final exam will be determined and announced by Examination Services. The examination period runs between 12 – 23 December 2020.

## **Required texts and technology:**

1. Bahr, Ann Marie B., 2005, [\*Religions of the World: Indigenous Religions\*](#). Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publisher.
2. Electronic versions of all the readings and materials will be available on the course website.
3. This course and all components therein will be conducted online and hence students are required to have access to an electronic device like computer, tablet, or phone with a camera, be able to access Zoom links, and have a stable internet connection where possible. Exceptions and alternatives to these ideal situations will be provided where necessary.

## **Reading Schedule:**

**September 9** - Introduction to syllabus, course overview and themes, technology required etc.

Bahr reader - pp. 2-10

This information will not be repeated so please make sure to attend class.

**September 11** – What are “Indigenous” Religions?

Wright, R., 2013, “[Indigenous Religious Traditions](#)” in L. Sullivan (ed), *Religions of the World: A Cultural Introduction to the Making of Meaning*. Minneapolis: Fortress. Pp.33-45

**Quiz 1 – online**

**September 16** – Christianity, Colonialism and Indigenous Religions

**September 18** – Adivasis in India

Bahr reader - pp. 10-20

## **Quiz 2 – online**

### **September 23 – Ainu in Japan**

Irimoto, T., (1996), “Ainu worldview and bear hunting strategies”, In J. Pentikainen, *Shamanism and Northern Ecology*, New York: Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 293-301

### **September 25 - Inuit Peoples**

Bahr reader - pp.90-104

## **Quiz 3 – online**

### **September 30 – First Nations Spiritualities**

[Religion and Spirituality of Indigenous Peoples of Canada](#)

Source: The Canadian Encyclopedia

### **October 02 – Metis in Canada**

[Métis Spiritualism](#) - entry by Darren R. Préfontaine, Todd Paquin and Patrick Young

Source: Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research

## **Quiz 4 – online**

### **October 07 – Australian Aboriginal Religions**

Bahr reader – pp. 61-69

### **October 09 – Australian Aboriginal Religions (continued)**

Bahr reader – pp. 70-85

## **Quiz 5 – online**

### **October 14 – Class Test 1**

### **October 16 - African Indigenous Religions**

Bahr reader - pp. 35-43

### **October 21 – African Indigenous Religions (continued)**

Bahr reader – pp. 44-53

## **Quiz 6 – online**

### **October 23 – The Mayas**

Bahr reader - pp. 105-116

### **October 28 and 30 – Reading Week. No class**

### **November 4 – The Quechuas**

Bahr reader - pp. 124-134

## **Quiz 7 – online**

### **November 6 - Indigenous religions in diaspora - Candomblé**

Prandi, R., (2001), African Gods in contemporary Brazil, *International Sociology*, 15(4), pp.

643-653

**November 11** - Indigenous religions in diaspora - Roma/Sinti Mythology

Lecouteux, C., (2018), *Mythology in Charms, Rites, and Magical Traditions of the Roma*, Rochester: Imprint Traditions, pp. 164-173

**Quiz 8 – online**

**November 13** – Wilderness, Episode 1 in the series “Myths and Monsters” – link in ARES

**November 18** – Class Discussion on Wilderness Episode

**Quiz 9 – online**

**November 20** – “Moana” Film on Polynesian peoples – link in Ares

**November 25** – Class Test 2

**November 27** – Class Discussion on Polynesian Traditions

**December 02** – [Christianity and Indigenous Religions Today](#)

**Quiz 10 – online**

**December 04** – Decolonizing the study of Indigenous Religious Traditions

**December 09** – Final Exam Review

**December 12 - 23** – Final Exam Period. Final exam date will be decided and announced by Examination Services.

### **Tips for doing well:**

1. Students are expected to do the readings before class
2. On average, you will spend about five hours on this class every week – 3 hours in lectures and 2 hours in preparation and reading for class. Approximately, you will spend another 6 hours each preparing for the tests and final exam, so please schedule your semester accordingly.
3. The course website on cuLearn will be updated regularly after each class. The presentations used in class will be available online. All course related announcements and communication will also be channeled through the website.

### **Class resources and policies:**

1. You are encouraged to approach the academic writing help center in case you need any assistance with learning how to write essays etc. The CSAS holds regular workshops on writing, taking notes etc. that you may find helpful. You can learn more about these workshops and services [here](#)
2. If you feel stressed or overwhelmed you are encouraged to access the resources on the University website to manage your time, stress levels, seek mentors etc. More information can be

found [here](#).

3. You are expected to be on time to the lectures.

4. You are expected to be respectful of your colleagues and the professor during class discussions and interactions.

If I can ensure your full participation in any way not already addressed in this syllabus/course outline, please do not hesitate to contact me with your queries/requests.



# Humanities

## University Regulations for All College of the Humanities Courses

### Academic Dates and Deadlines

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This schedule contains the dates prescribed by the University Senate for academic activities. Dates relating to fee payment, cancellation of course selections, late charges, and other fees or charges will be published in the Important Dates and Deadlines section of the Registration Website.

### Copies of Written Work Submitted

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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

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The University Senate defines **plagiarism** as “*presenting, whether intentionally 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 that cannot be resolved directly by the course’s instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts 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

[Academic Integrity Policy](#)

[Academic Integrity Process](#)

# Academic Accommodation Policy

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## Academic Accommodation

Carleton University is committed to providing access to the educational experience in order to promote academic accessibility for all individuals.

**Parental Leave:** The Student Parental Leave Policy is intended to recognize the need for leave at the time of a pregnancy, birth or adoption and to permit a pause in studies in order to provide full-time care in the first year of parenting a child or for health-related parental responsibilities.

**Religious obligation:** Carleton University accommodates students who, by reason of religious obligation, must miss an examination, test, assignment deadline, laboratory or other compulsory academic event.

### **Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:**

Academic accommodation of students with disabilities is available through the [Paul Menton Centre](#) by evaluations that are carried out on an individual basis, in accordance with human rights legislation and University policy, and with the support of relevant, professional/medical documentation.

### **Survivors of Sexual Violence**

Individuals who disclose that they have experienced sexual violence will be provided support services and will be treated with dignity and respect at all times by the University and its representatives. A person affected by sexual violence is not required to report an incident of or make a complaint about sexual violence under the formal complaint process of the Sexual Violence Policy in order to obtain support and services, or in order to receive appropriate accommodation for their needs.

[Supports and services available at the University to obtain information about sexual violence and/or 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. [More information.](#)

# Grading System at Carleton University

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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. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean."

The [system of grades](#) used, with corresponding grade points and the percentage conversion, is listed below. Grade points indicated are for courses with 1.0 credit value.

## Course Sharing Websites and Copyright

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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).

[More information](#)

## Student Rights and Responsibilities at Carleton

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Carleton University strives to provide a safe environment conducive to personal and intellectual growth, free of injustice and characterized by understanding respect, peace, trust, and fairness.

The [Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy](#) governs the non-academic behaviour of students. Carleton University is committed to building a campus that promotes personal growth through the establishment and promotion of transparent and fair academic and non-academic responsibilities.

[7 Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)

## Deferred Term Work

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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.

1. 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. In all cases, formative evaluations providing feedback to the student should be replaced with formative evaluations. In the event the altered due date must extend beyond the last day of classes in the term, the instructor will assign a grade of zero for the work not submitted and submit the student's earned grade accordingly; the instructor may submit a change of grade at a later date. Term work cannot be deferred by the Registrar.

2. In cases where a student is not able to complete term work due to illness or injury for a significant period of time/or long term, the instructor and/or student may elect to consult with the Registrar's Office (undergraduate courses) or Graduate Registrar (graduate courses) to determine appropriate action.

[More information of deferred Term Work](#)

## Deferred Final Exams

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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.

The application for a deferral must:

1. be made in writing 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 [here](#).

[More information on Final Exam Deferrals](#)

## [Financial vs. Academic Withdrawal](#)

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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](#). 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. You can do this via the [MyCarleton Portal](#). A fee adjustment is dependent on registration being canceled within the published [fee deadlines](#) and dependent on your course load.

## Department Contact Information

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*Bachelor of the Humanities* 300 Paterson Hall  
[CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca](mailto:CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca)

*Greek and Roman Studies* 300 Paterson Hall  
[GreekAndRomanStudies@cunet.carleton.ca](mailto:GreekAndRomanStudies@cunet.carleton.ca)

*Religion* 2A39 Paterson Hall  
[Religion@cunet.carleton.ca](mailto:Religion@cunet.carleton.ca)

*Digital Humanities (Graduate)* 2A39 Paterson Hall  
[digitalhumanities@carleton.ca](mailto:digitalhumanities@carleton.ca)

*Digital Humanities (Undergraduate Minor)* 300 Paterson Hall  
[digitalhumanities@carleton.ca](mailto:digitalhumanities@carleton.ca)