

Carleton University

Winter, 2021

**College of the Humanities  
Religion Program: RELI 2741 B**

**Interpretations of Religion**

**Professor:** Dr. Andrea D. Lobel

**Email:** Andrea.Lobel@carleton.ca

**Class location:** Online

**Office hours:** By appointment: Zoom/phone

**Class times:** Blended asynchronous lectures/synchronous Zoom discussion groups (Fridays, 13:05-14:25). Recorded for students with course conflicts.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In this introduction to the academic study of religion, we will consider and examine its fundamental components, including: myth, symbol, scripture, doctrine, code, and ritual. These will be contextualized by referring to their manifestations in various world religions.

Through lectures, the assigned readings and viewing, and weekly group discussion, students will examine a selection of interpretive writings by religious studies theorists spanning the fundamental components of religion listed above. By so doing, students will view religion through a variety of theoretical lenses, and will come to engage with many key thinkers in the field.

By the end of this course, students should be able to think and write critically about the themes examined in the lectures, as well as in the assigned texts and viewing. In addition to presentations, a research paper, and a final examination, class participation on CULearn discussion forums is an integral component of this course.

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

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

- Think, reflect, and write critically, at a second-year university level, about the topics and themes examined in the lectures and assigned materials, and discussed in the live discussion groups and online forums
- When reading, be able to distinguish a paper's argument from its subject matter
- Construct an argument and support it with evidence
- Work well with primary and secondary sources, and be able to recognize and properly cite acceptable academic sources for the study of religion
- Demonstrate second-year undergraduate-level research skills and proper citation styles

- Recognize personal situated-ness and personal bias in confronting religious phenomena
- Understand and discuss the theoretical frameworks taught in the course
- Recognize and use key theoretical religion concepts and terminology covered in the lectures and readings

## PRECLUSIONS

Precludes additional credit for RELI 2002 (no longer offered), RELI 1205 (no longer offered), RELI 1402 (no longer offered), RELI 1731, RELI 1730 (no longer offered).

## REQUIRED TEXTS

- 1) Nye, Malory. 2008. *Religion: The Basics*, Second Edition. Routledge. (Available in eformat via the Carleton University Library.)
- 2) Additional readings on CULearn and/or ARES

## EVALUATION

1. Video presentation (Pre-recorded) ~8-10 minutes in duration. Video will be posted to CULearn for student viewing. *There will be an option for some students to present live, during Zoom sessions.* Details TBA. **Due: Throughout the term. (20%)**  
*Dates will be assigned during the first week of classes.*
2. Final term paper. **Due: April 14, 5 pm, via CULearn.** Details TBA. **(25%).**
3. April online exam on CULearn: **Date TBA, to be set by Exam Services (25%)**
4. Class participation: Details provided below. **Due: Throughout the term. (30%)**

## ON ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

### *Attendance*

This is a blended asynchronous/synchronous course. The lectures will be recorded and uploaded to CULearn for viewing/listening on your own time, and the weekly live component will be a discussion group to be held on Zoom.

To be successful in this course, reading the posted lecture slides on CULearn and listening to any included audio narration, keeping up with the assigned readings and viewing, and participating actively in the online discussion forums are critical. “Attendance” will be taken, in the sense that all students are expected to post in the discussion forums on CULearn (see “Evaluation,” above) and to attend the Friday afternoon Zoom discussion groups, except for students taking another course conflicting with the Friday meeting time. (Course conflicts are permitted, but please notify the instructor if you cannot attend the Friday sessions due to a conflict.)

### ***Friday afternoon discussion groups***

A stable Zoom link will be sent to students prior to the first Friday meeting. This link will be used throughout the term. The sessions will be recorded to allow students with course conflicts, or all those present who wish to review, to benefit from the discussion. *These recordings are for the sole use of our class, and are not for electronic distribution beyond students' devices.*

The discussion groups will be an opportunity to ask questions, and to talk about the week's readings and viewing (if any), as well as to discuss that week's student presentations (these will be made available on CULearn, with a live Zoom presentation option TBA). Please be sure to come prepared for lively discussion.

### ***Class Participation***

The blended nature of this course means that the success of the learning that takes place will be strongly influenced by student interaction and engagement with the material, with the instructor, and with other students.

The following is what the 30% mark for Attendance and Participation will be based on. Each student is expected to:

1. Post ***three reflective commentaries in total*** over the entire term (**The first any time between Jan 11 and Jan 29, the second between February 1 and Feb 26, and the third between March 1 and April 14**) on the designated CULearn Discussion Forums addressing at least one of the lectures and/or readings and any assigned videos. Each of these must be a commentary on content from different/distinct weeks. This written commentary may range from 300 to 500 words, and is much like a journal entry. **Unlike a research paper, this is where you can insert your opinions and analysis. No formal citations are required**, but do mention the specific lecture, reading (e.g., chapter and page numbers), or film you're referring to. Participation in the online forums will be marked for both meeting word-count requirements and for quality/substance.
2. Students are invited to comment on their classmates' commentaries. Although it is not required, evidence of strong engagement with other students' postings can improve your participation mark.

If any of the above is unclear, please feel free to ask for clarification, either in the Discussion Forums, or at [andrea.lobel@carleton.ca](mailto:andrea.lobel@carleton.ca).

### **POLICY ON LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

- All work is due on the stated due dates.
- Extensions will be granted in serious circumstances (e.g., illness, family illness or emergency)
- The late penalty is 2% of the assignment mark per day of lateness.

## **WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU FIND YOURSELF MISSING DEADLINES OR FALLING BEHIND**

Send me an email as soon as you can, and we can arrange an office hour/time to talk via Zoom or phone. I'll always do what I can to help you catch up.

## **ACCOMMODATIONS AND THE PAUL MENTON CENTRE**

Should you require accommodations for a disability or other health condition, and have not already made arrangements with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities, please be sure to contact them as soon as possible at 613-520-6608 or via email at [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca). (Visit their web site at: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>) I will work with them to ensure that you receive the accommodations you require throughout the academic year.

## **A NOTE ON STUDENT WELL-BEING**

As my student, your well-being is important to me. University can be stressful, and part of the job of being your professor is responding to you as a whole person, not just as a student working to earn marks. And of course, the current coronavirus pandemic has been stressful and isolating for many, adding to these difficulties to varying degrees.

Here are some recommendations to help you make the academic year a smoother one:

Take care of yourself. Do what you can to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well and exercising, avoiding illegal drugs, avoiding or minimizing alcohol, getting enough sleep, and taking some time to relax.

Meditation and yoga may also be useful. This will help you better achieve your academic goals, and to cope with stress.

Remember to wear masks and practice social distancing, and follow advice found on Carleton University's COVID-19 page, at <https://students.carleton.ca/coronavirus>.

None of us is immune to life's challenges. If you find yourself feeling stressed, you are far from alone! There are many useful resources available on campus, and an important part of the university experience is learning how to ask for help. If you or anyone you know experiences academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support sooner rather than later. Visit <https://carleton.ca/wellness/> to access useful resources both here at Carleton University and off-campus. As well, please consider reaching out to a friend, faculty or family member you trust for additional support.

## CLASS DATES AND ASSIGNED READINGS

### Week

- Jan 11-15**                      **Course introduction; Library resources and research methods;**
- Required viewing:**
- The Academic Study of Religion Explained.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6VAx4jZbBr8&ab\\_channel=ReligionForBreakfast](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6VAx4jZbBr8&ab_channel=ReligionForBreakfast)
- Zoom Discussion Group (Friday, Jan 15, 13:05-14:25)**
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- Jan 18-22**                      **Religion – The Basics: Toward definitions of religion, magic, myth, symbol, scripture, doctrine, codes, and ritual; scripture**
- Required Reading:** Nye, Chapter 1
- Required viewing:**
- Animism: The First Religion?  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xoYZ5xNyKbc&ab\\_channel=ReligionForBreakfast](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xoYZ5xNyKbc&ab_channel=ReligionForBreakfast)
- Required listening:**
- Definitions of Religion  
<https://medium.com/religion-bites-podcast/002-definitions-of-religion-b162a8feb4ef>
- Talking about Religion  
<https://medium.com/religion-bites-podcast/003-talking-about-religion-641b6f7461f9>
- The Relevance of Religion  
<https://medium.com/religion-bites-podcast/004-the-relevance-of-religion-a8407ede0b9f>
- Zoom Discussion Group (Friday, Jan 22, 13:05-14:25)**
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- Jan 25-29**                      **Culture**
- Required Reading:** Nye, Chapter 2
- Required Listening:**

Culture and Religion

<https://medium.com/religion-bites-podcast/005-culture-and-religion-9b081b0011b4>

Mind the gap: religion in culture

<https://medium.com/religion-bites-podcast/006-mind-the-gap-religion-in-culture-298dd7364d81>

Culture in religion: there is no gap

<https://medium.com/religion-bites-podcast/007-culture-in-religion-there-is-no-gap-7f1fb69111a1>

Religion and Culture

<https://medium.com/religion-bites-podcast/008-religion-and-culture-23c19f562c37>

**Zoom Discussion Group (Friday, Jan 29, 13:05-14:25)**

Feb 1-5

**Power**

**Required Reading:** Nye, Chapter 3

**Required listening:**

Power, Gender, and Race

<https://medium.com/religion-bites-podcast/009-power-gender-and-race-10be1ce6c1b6>

Religion, Power, and Ideology

<https://medium.com/religion-bites-podcast/010-religion-power-and-ideology-38c3609fc70a>

Religious Literacy is Social Justice: The Religious Studies Project

<https://www.religiousstudiesproject.com/podcast/religious-literacy-is-social-justice/>

**Other readings/viewing TBD**

**Zoom Discussion Group (Friday, Feb 5, 13:05-14:25)**

Feb 8-12

**Gender**

**Required Reading:** Nye, Chapter 4

**Required viewing:**

[Her Story: The Female Revolution—Religion](#)

On Films on Demand (MacOdrum Library)

**Required listening:**

Gender, Sexuality, and Religion  
<https://medium.com/religion-bites-podcast/011-gender-sexuality-and-religion-51ce9bef7214>

**Zoom Discussion Group (Friday, Feb 12, 13:05-14:25)**

**Feb 15-19 STATUTORY HOLIDAY AND WINTER BREAK; NO CLASSES**

**Feb 22-26**

**Belief**

**Required Reading:** Nye, Chapter 5

**Required viewing:**

Belief and the Gods

On Films on Demand (MacOdrum Library)

**Required listening:**

The Problem with Belief in the Study of Religion  
<https://medium.com/religion-bites-podcast/015-the-problem-with-belief-in-the-study-of-religion-d816383475e1>

**Other readings/viewing TBD**

**Zoom Discussion Group (Friday, Feb 26, 13:05-14:25)**

**March 1-5**

**Ritual, Part I**

**Required Reading:** Nye, Chapter 6

**Required viewing:**

What is Ritual?

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F URgZf01hU&ab\\_channel=ReligionForBreakfast](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F URgZf01hU&ab_channel=ReligionForBreakfast)

**Other readings/viewing TBD**

**Zoom Discussion Group (Friday, March 5, 13:05-14:25)**

March 8-12

**Ritual, Part 2**

**Required Reading:**

Mitchell, N. (2008). "Ritual matters." *Worship*, 82(5), 446–456.

Foulk, T. G. (2013). Denial of ritual in the Zen Buddhist tradition. *Journal of Ritual Studies*, 27(1), 47–58.

Momen, M. (2013). The merging of the sacred and the profane: what substitutes for ritual in the Baha'i Faith. *Implicit Religion*, 16(2), 157–168.  
<https://doi-org.proxy.library.carleton.ca/10.1558/imre.v16i2.157>

**Required viewing:**

Religious Practice Precedes Religious Belief?

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tj9uTOer4C4&ab\\_channel=ReligionForBreakfast](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tj9uTOer4C4&ab_channel=ReligionForBreakfast)

**Zoom Discussion Group (Friday, March 12, 13:05-14:25)**

March 15-19

**Texts, Part I**

**Required Reading:** Nye, Chapter 7

**Required viewing:**

Sacred Texts and Stories

On Films on Demand (MacOdrum Library)

**Zoom Discussion Group (Friday, March 19, 13:05-14:25)**

March 22-26

**Texts, Part 2**

**Required Reading – Any *two* of the following (Available on ARES and via the ATLA Database on the MacOdrum Library website):**

James, R. (2013). Newer testaments?: tradition, culture and the expansion of "scripture" in contemporary Africa. *Horizons in Biblical Theology*, 35(2), 115–135. <https://doi-org.proxy.library.carleton.ca/10.1163/18712207-12341256>

Havea, J. (2007). Is there a home for the Bible in the postmodern world? *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 42(4), 547–559.

Flood, G. D. (2008). Dwelling on the borders: self, text and world. *Temenos*, 44(1), 13–34.

Smith, S. G. (2008). What is Scripture?: Pursuing Smith's question. *Anglican Theological Review*, 90(4), 753–775.

**Zoom Discussion Group (Friday, March 26, 13:05-14:25)**

**March 29-Apr 2**

**Contemporary Religions, Part I**

**Required Reading:** Nye, Chapter 8

**Required listening:**

Spirituality: The Religious Studies Project

<https://www.religiousstudiesproject.com/podcast/spirituality/>

**Additional required viewing/listening TBD**

**Zoom Discussion Group (Friday, April 2, 13:05-14:25)**

**April 5-9**

**Contemporary Religions, Part II; The Future of Religion**

**Required listening:**

Artificial Intelligence and Religion: The Religious Studies Project

<https://www.religiousstudiesproject.com/podcast/artificial-intelligence-and-religion/>

**Additional required viewing/listening TBD**

**April 12-14**

**Unanswered questions; unquestioned answers – Discussion Forum  
Synthesis and wrap-up.**

**\*Term papers due online via CULearn by April 14, 5:00 pm.**



# 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.

### Online Learning Resources

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While online courses offer flexibility and convenience, they also present unique challenges that traditional face-to-face courses do not. [On this page](#), you will find resources collected by Carleton Online to help you succeed in your online courses; Learning Strategies and Best Practices, Study Skills, Technology and Online Interaction and Engagement.

### 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 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)

*MEMS (Undergraduate Minor)* 300 Paterson Hall  
[CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca](mailto:CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca)