

The College of the Humanities
Religion Program: RELI 2800A Fall Term
Indigenous Traditions

Instructor: Manvitha Singamsetty

Office Hours: By appointment

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Lecture: Wed/Fri 18.05-19.25

Course Delivery:

Online synchronous course. Zoom link for class is available on Brightspace

Course Calendar 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.

Precludes additional credit for RELI 1720 (no longer offered).

Course Description:

This course begins with an introduction to the concepts of religion and indigenous religious traditions. Then students are taken around the globe in studying indigenous traditions from India, Japan, Australia, North and South America, and Western Africa, in that order. In so doing, students will have a chance to acquire and practice sociological, anthropological, and philosophical tools in the study of religious and spiritual traditions of indigenous nations across the globe. Each lecture begins with an overview of the historical context of the indigenous nation, and then goes on to explicate the network of cosmological, metaphysical, philosophical, and ritualistic elements that make up their religious/spiritual belief system. The course will include weekly lectures, class discussions, audio and video materials, and guest lectures from Indigenous Elders. This pedagogy will enable students to have a thorough understanding of each of the religious traditions in the course, and it will equip them with the skills required to navigate contemporary issues related to indigenous spirituality. In addition, students will gain analytical and critical thinking skills, reading and writing skills, and engage in deliberative pedagogies all of which are crucial to their University Undergraduate career.

Learning Outcomes:

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

- Construct an argument and support it with evidence
- Understand the basic history, doctrinal variety, rituals, and social contexts of the religions studied in this course
- Understand the historical development, basic data, and disciplinary vocabulary associated with the religions studied in this course
- Differentiate sources of information on religion: the class, gender, literacy etc. of living informants or ancient textual authors

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. Quizzes - 25%

Online quizzes, hosted on Brightspace, will include questions from readings and class discussions. There will be a total of 10 quizzes worth 2.5% each. Students would benefit greatly if they attempt quizzes soon after the relevant topics are discussed in class. All quizzes will close on 15 December 2021.

2. Midterms – 20% each, in total 40%

- a. Midterm 1 – opens at 6am on 06 October 2021 and closes at 6am 07 October 2021
- b. Midterm 2 – opens at 6am on 05 November 2021 closes at 6am on 06 November 2021

Both midterms will be hosted on Brightspace and are range assignments; the midterm will be open for 24 hours and students are able to attempt the midterm once anytime during this 24-hour period. For more information about range exams [click here](#).

The midterm will consist of multiple-choice, short, and long answer questions. A sample midterm containing the syllabus, format of the questions etc. is available on Brightspace.

3. Final Exam – 35%

The final exam will be a scheduled range exam and will be hosted on Brightspace. The final exam is not cumulative and will contain a mix of multiple choice, short and long answer questions. Format of the final exam will be discussed in class. A final exam review document containing all details of the final exam – syllabus, exam format, tips on how to study etc. - will be posted on Brightspace.

The date of the final exam will be determined and announced by Examination Services. The examination period runs between 11 – 23 December 2021.

Absence from any midterm or examination must be justified by valid documentation (e.g. letter from a doctor). Only students with valid documentation will be permitted to write a make-up midterm/exam.

Required texts:

1. Textbook - Bahr, Ann Marie B., 2005, *Religions of the World: Indigenous Religions*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publisher. Available on Brightspace.
2. Electronic versions of all other readings and materials are available on Brightspace.

Reading Schedule:

Sept 08 - Introduction to syllabus, course overview and themes, technology required etc.
Bahr reader - pp. 2-10

Sept 10 – 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

Sept 15 – Christianity, Colonialism and Indigenous Religions

Sept 17 – Adivasis in India

Bahr reader - pp. 10-20

Online Quiz - Adivasis

Sept 22 – 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

Online Quiz – Ainu

Sept 24 - Inuit Peoples

Bahr reader - pp.90-104

Online Quiz – Inuit

Sept 29 – First Nations Spiritualities

Religion and Spirituality of Indigenous Peoples of Canada Source: The Canadian Encyclopedia

Online Quiz – First Nations

Oct 01 – Métis in Canada

Métis Spiritualism - entry by Darren R. Préfontaine, Todd Paquin and Patrick Young. Source: Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research

Oct 06 – Midterm 1

Oct 08 – Guest Lecture by Indigenous Elder

Oct 13 – Australian Aboriginal Religions

Bahr reader – pp. 61-69

Oct 15 – Australian Aboriginal Religions (continued)

Bahr reader – pp. 70-85

Online Quiz – Australian Aborigenes

Oct 20 – African Indigenous Religions

Bahr reader - pp. 35-43

Oct 22 - African Indigenous Religions (continued)

Bahr reader – pp. 44-53

Online Quiz – African Indigenous Religions

Oct 27 – Reading Week. No class

Oct 29 - Reading Week. No class

Nov 03 – The Mayas
Bahr reader - pp. 105-116
Online Quiz – Mayas

Nov 05 – Midterm 2

Nov 10 - The Quechuas
Bahr reader - pp. 124-134
Online Quiz – Quechuas

Nov 12 - Indigenous religions in diaspora - Candomblé
Prandi, R., (2001), African Gods in contemporary Brazil, *International Sociology*, 15(4), pp. 643-653
Online Quiz – Candomblé

Nov 17 - 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
Online Quiz – Roma/Sinti

Nov 19 – Video – ‘The Wild Unknown’, link on website

Nov 24 – Class Discussion on ‘The Wild Unknown’

Nov 26 – “Moana” Film on Polynesian peoples – link in Ares

Dec 01 – Class Discussion on Polynesian Spiritual Traditions

Dec 03 – Decolonizing the study of Indigenous Religious Traditions

Dec 08 – Final Exam Review

December 11 - 23 – Final Exam Period. Final exam date will be decided and announced by Examination Services.

Tips for doing well:

1. **Read.** Students are expected to do the readings before class
2. **Attendance.** Make sure to attend all synchronous classes. The readings and all topics related to the course assignments will be discussed in detail in class. This information will not be repeated outside of class, so attendance for lectures is highly recommended.
3. **Study.** 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.

4. **Communicate.** The course website on Brightspace 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. Should you require any course related assistance outside of these materials, please do not hesitate to reach out to the instructor.

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 required to be respectful of your colleagues and the professor during class discussions and interactions
5. Please note that lectures will not be recorded, and you are prohibited from recording online classes and discussions
6. 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).
7. 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).
8. My lectures and course materials (including all PowerPoint presentations, videos, outlines, and similar materials) are protected by copyright. I am the exclusive owner of copyright and intellectual property of all course materials. You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own educational use. You may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly for commercial purposes without my express written consent.

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

[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

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

Always retain for yourself a copy of all essays, term papers, written assignments or take-home tests submitted in your courses.

Academic Integrity Policy (updated June 2021)

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, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms,

formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;

- using another's data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one's own; and
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

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

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

Academic accommodation refers to educational practices, systems and support mechanisms designed to accommodate diversity and difference. The purpose of accommodation is to enable students to perform the essential requirements of their academic programs. At no time does academic accommodation undermine or compromise the learning objectives that are established by the academic authorities of the University.

Addressing Human Rights Concerns

The University and all members of the University community share responsibility for ensuring that the University's educational, work and living environments are free from discrimination and harassment. Should you have concerns about harassment or discrimination relating to your age, ancestry, citizenship, colour, creed (religion), disability, ethnic origin, family status, gender expression, gender identity, marital status, place of origin, race, sex (including pregnancy), or sexual orientation, please contact the [Department of Equity and Inclusive Communities](#).

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:

Religious Accommodation

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. For more details, please review the [Student Guide to Academic Accommodation](#).

Pregnancy Accommodation

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. . For more details, please review the [Student Guide to Academic Accommodation](#).

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 where 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 the [Equity and Inclusive Communities website](#).

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. For more details, see the [Senate Policy on Accommodation for Student Activities](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC 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 your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more details, visit the [Paul Menton Centre website](#).

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 can be found [here](#). 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.

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).
[More information](#)

Student Rights and Responsibilities at Carleton

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.

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.

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) 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.
3. If a student is concerned the instructor did not respond to the request for academic accommodation or did not provide reasonable accommodation, the student should consult with the department/school/institute chair/director. If a mutually agreeable accommodation to complete course requirements prior to the course grade submission deadline cannot be achieved, the Associate Dean will become involved. If academic accommodation is not granted, and the student receives word **after** the academic withdrawal deadline, the student may submit a petition to the Registrar's Office (undergraduate courses)/Graduate Registrar (graduate courses) for a final grade of WDN (Withdrawn) in the course(s). If academic

accommodation is not granted, and the student receives word **prior** to the academic withdrawal deadline, the student may elect to withdraw from the course(s).

4. Furthermore, if academic accommodation is granted, but the student is unable to complete the accommodation according to the terms set out by the instructor as a result of further illness, injury or extraordinary circumstances beyond their control, the student may submit a petition to the Registrar's Office (undergraduate courses)/Graduate Registrar (graduate courses). Please note, however, that the course instructor will be required to submit an earned final grade and further consideration will only be reviewed according to established precedents and deadlines. [More information of deferred Term Work](#)

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.

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 Registrar's Office "Defer an Exam" page](#)

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. A fee adjustment is dependent on registration being canceled within the published [fee deadlines](#) and dependent on your course load. A course dropped after the deadline for financial withdrawal will receive a grade of Withdrawn (WDN), which appears on your official transcript.

Even if you miss the deadline for financial withdrawal, you might decide to drop a course to avoid a failure or a poor grade showing up on your student record and bringing down your CGPA. It is your responsibility to drop the course via Carleton Central within the published [deadlines](#) (see Academic Withdrawal).

If you are considering withdrawing from a course, you may want to talk to an advisor first. Course withdrawal may affect your student status, as well as your eligibility for student funding, immigration status, residence accommodation and participation in varsity sports, etc. Additionally, remember that once you choose your courses, you must use the “Calculate amount to pay” button to determine the correct amount of fees to pay.

Carleton Central is your one-stop shop for registration activities. If you are interested in taking a course, make sure to complete your registration. Simply attending a course does not mean you are registered in it, nor is it grounds for petition or appeal.

Department Contact Information

Bachelor of the Humanities 300 Paterson Hall
CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca

Greek and Roman Studies 300 Paterson Hall
GreekAndRomanStudies@cunet.carleton.ca

Religion 2A39 Paterson Hall
Religion@cunet.carleton.ca

Digital Humanities (Graduate) 2A39 Paterson Hall
digitalhumanities@carleton.ca

Digital Humanities (Undergraduate Minor) 300 Paterson Hall
digitalhumanities@carleton.ca

MEMS (Undergraduate Minor) 300 Paterson Hall
CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca