

Course Code/Title
ANTH5701F: Anthropology of Religion

Instructor	Dr. Carolyn Ramzy
Term	Fall 2025
Course Delivery	In person
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This graduate course explores the anthropology of religion, with a specific focus on religious difference. While the discipline of anthropology historically centered its focus on religious rituals, myths, symbols, and transcendence, we tune into the soundscapes of contemporary religious culture, power, and identity politics — all the ways that devotional spaces shape our everyday life and politics. Drawing on both anthropological and ethnomusicological literature, we ask: what is religion and how is it at work in our shared and highly globalized world today? Following an introduction to key definitions and various methods of the social scientific study of religion, we explore course topics that range from the making of individual identity to forging communal bonds and borders, religious conflict and difference, to the uses of religion in ongoing colonization, sectarianization, as well as state management, even violence.

In the end, this course equips students with the analytical and methodological tools to critically engage with contemporary debates, issues, and realities of religious difference on a local and global level. It also aims to highlight the multifaceted ways that religion shapes our lives, for better and for worse.

EVALUATION

Discussion Leading & Seminar Participation 30% (Sign up, First day of class)
Weekly Reading Guides 20%
Final Paper 20% - Due December 10
Individual Paper Abstract 10% - Due October 15
Roundtable/Panel Abstract 10% - Due Nov 12
Final Presentation in a Collective Roundtable Format: 10% - on Nov 26 and Dec 3

TEXT