

# SCAR/ANTHROP 3AR3 – CULTURE AND RELIGION Winter 2022

**Instructor:** Jeremy Cohen

**Email:** [cohenj10@mcmaster.ca](mailto:cohenj10@mcmaster.ca)

**Office:** TBD

**Office Hours:** By Appointment via Teams, Zoom or In Person

**Lecture:** HSC 1A6: Tuesdays & Fridays @ 11:30AM-12:20PM



# Table of Contents

03	Course Overview
04	Course Objectives
05	Course Evaluation
06	Course Assignments
07	Course Schedule
10	Student Resources
11	Course Policies
12	University Policies

# Course Overview

---

## ■ Land Acknowledgement

I recognize and acknowledge that McMaster University is located on the traditional territories of the Mississauga and Haudenosaunee nations, and within the lands protected by the “Dish with One Spoon” wampum agreement.

## ■ Course Information

This course introduces key theorists and theories, classic and current topics, and issues of methodology and writing in the study of religion and culture.

We will explore topics ranging from the trouble with defining religion, the social sciences and colonization, the globalization of religion, ritual and bodies, gender, ritual creativity, research ethics and and research writing.

We will examine methodological, theoretical, cultural and social dynamics and issues through a number of case studies, including Judaism in Ghana, Islamic punks, the digital occult, Star Trek fandom, religion in space, and other examples of diverse religious expressions in our modern world.



# Course Objectives

---

This is a Level III course offered by the Department of Religious Studies. While I assume you have some background in the social scientific study of religion, I do not assume you have knowledge of the topics discussed. All are welcome!



## ■ Introductory Survey

To provide you with an introductory survey of topics and themes in the study of popular culture and religion, religion in popular culture, and religion as popular culture.



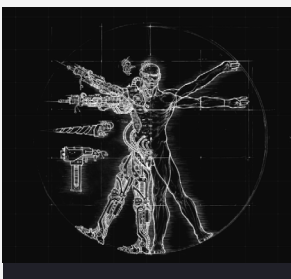
## ■ Interdisciplinarity

To gain familiarity with interdisciplinary perspectives and issues within the anthropology of religion.



## ■ Critical Thinking

To cultivate analytical, reflective and critical thinking skills. You will learn to evaluate your own and others' attitudes toward popular culture and religion, religion in popular culture, and popular culture as religion.



## ■ Empathy

By examining our rich mosaic of religious life more generally, you will focus on our shared collective humanity, and learn to articulate the power of empathy.



# Course Evaluation

---

You are responsible for completing all the assigned weekly readings, attending lectures, and attending tutorials. Movies are watched on your own time. These will prepare you for the course assignments.

## ■ Course Delivery

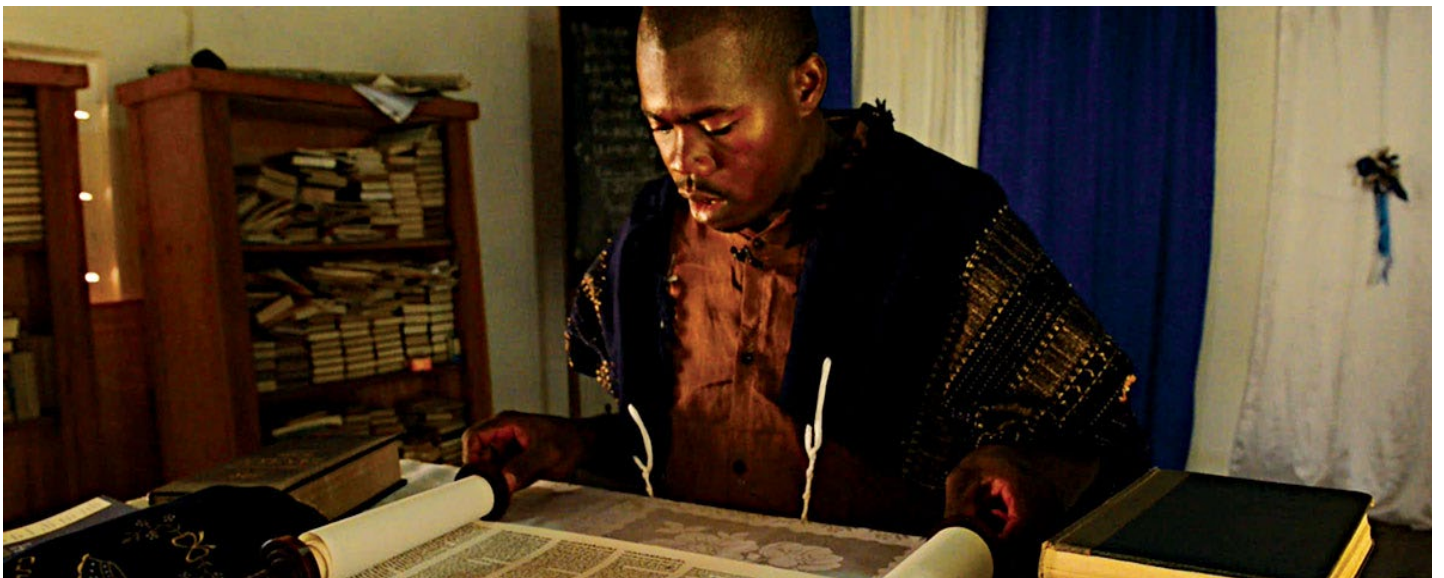
- In Person Lectures & Tutorials
- The course uses Avenue2Learn
- PowerPoint Slides made available weekly

## ■ Required Texts

- Journal Articles via McMaster Library
- Chapters are on Avenue
- Videos are all publically available



*I've always tried to insert consciousness and spirituality in my records, interpreting the writings of all cultures and religions and how they apply to life in modern times - Rakim (Hip Hop artist).*



# Course Assignments



## ■ Introduction (5%)

Introduce yourself and answer the following questions: Who are you? Why are you taking this course? What are your learning objectives for this semester? What is one academic skill that you most want to improve (ex: writing, reading comprehension)?

**Due Date:** January 24th, 2022 (11:59pm)



## ■ Participation (15%)

You are expected to attend lectures and tutorials as part of this course. Your TA will work with you to determine how participation grades are allocated. Tutorials will be opportunities to discuss the films in depth.



## ■ Online Quizzes (20%)

There will be 2 short online quizzes. The quiz covers the concepts presented in the readings, films, and lectures for each module (no need to memorize dates). The goal of each quiz is to strengthen your knowledge of the topics discussed, and there will be opportunities to reflect on your answers during and after each quiz.

**Quiz dates:** March 1st & April 11th.

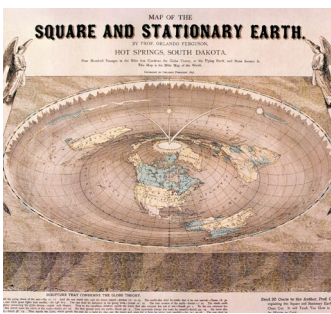


## ■ Film Meditations (30%)

Pick any 3 out of our 6 full-length films and write a short review/analysis.

**Due dates:** Detailed due dates on Avenue.

**Format:** Detailed instructions & rubric posted to Avenue.



## ■ Final Assignment (30%)

For the final assignment you will examine religion in popular culture, or popular culture as religion, by choosing and analyzing a case study of your choice. You can choose to write a traditional essay, or propose a creative “un-essay” project.

**Due Date & Formats:** TBD

# Weekly Schedule

---

## MODULE 1: THEORY AND METHOD

### ■ Week One: Jan 11th & 14th Introduction & What is Religion?

- **Jan 11th:** Overview of the course, assignments and learning objectives.
- **Jan 14th:** Stein, Rebecca L., and Philip L. Stein. 2017. "The Anthropology of Religion" In *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft*. 50-72 **ONLY**.

### ■ Week Two: January 18th – 21st How Can (Should) we Study Religion?

- Bielo, James. 2015. "Doing Religious Ethnography" In *Anthropology of Religion: The Basics*. 29-53.
- **Watch:** *Strangers abroad - Strange Beliefs: Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard (1902-1973)* [www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIm2mL3g3t8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIm2mL3g3t8) **PART ONE ONLY**.

### ■ Week Three: January 25th – 28th - Introductions due Bodies, Words, and Things

- Bielo, James. 2015. "Bodies, Words, and Things" In *Anthropology of Religion: The Basics*. 54-80.
- **Watch:** *Jesus Camp* - [watchdocumentaries.com/jesus-camp/](http://watchdocumentaries.com/jesus-camp/)

### ■ Week Four: February 1st – 4th Religious Action

- Eller, Jack David. 2015. "Religious Action: Ritual" In *Introducing Anthropology of Religion*. 152-182.
- **Watch:** *Doing Jewish: A Story from Ghana* - [mcmaster.kanopy.com/video/doing-jewish](http://mcmaster.kanopy.com/video/doing-jewish)

# Weekly Schedule

---

## ■ Week Five: February 8th – 11th The Search for New Meaning

- Stein, Rebecca L., and Philip L. Stein. 2017. "The Search for New Meaning" In *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft*. 410-440
- Watch: *Taqwacore: The Birth of Punk Islam* - [mcmaster.kanopy.com/video/taqwacore-birth-punk-islam](https://mcmaster.kanopy.com/video/taqwacore-birth-punk-islam)

## ■ Week Six: February 15th – 18th Religion in a Connected World

- Kirby, Danielle. 2013. "The Internet and Popular Cultures: Sources of Context" In *Fantasy and Belief Alternative Religions, Popular Narratives, and Digital Cultures*. 103-128
- Watch: *Behind the Curve* - [www.behindthecurvefilm.com/](http://www.behindthecurvefilm.com/) (Rent for cheap, or 'free' on Netflix).

## ■ Week Seven - Winter Break!

## MODULE 2: CASE STUDIES

### ■ Week Eight: March 1st – 4th Hyper-real Religion

- Possamai, Adam. 2012. "Yoda Goes to Glastonbury: An Introduction to Hyper-real Religions" In *Handbook of Hyper-real Religions*, 1-21.
- Jindra, Michael. 2017. "It's About Faith In Our Future: Star Trek Fandom as Cultural Religion." In *Religion and Popular Culture in America*. Edited by Bruce David Forbes and Jeffrey H. Mahan, 223-41.

### ■ Week Nine: March 8th – 11th Religion Online

- Rothenberg, Celia E. 2011 "Islam on the Internet: The Jinn and the Objectification of Islam." *Religion and Popular Culture* 23: 358-371.
- Kirby, Danielle. 2012. "Occultural Bricolage and Popular Culture: Remix and Art in Discordianism, the Church of the SubGenius, and the Temple of Psychick Youth" In *Handbook of Hyper-real Religions*, 39-57.



# Weekly Schedule

---

## ■ Week Ten: March 15th – 18th Religion and Popular Music

- Bivins, Jason C. 2017. "The Weight of the World: Religion and Heavy Metal Music in Four Cases." In *Religion and Popular Culture in America*. Edited by Bruce David Forbes and Jeffrey H. Mahan, 100–118.
- Robin Sylvan "Rap Music, Hip-Hop Culture, and 'The Future Religion of the World'" In *God in the Details: American religion in popular culture*. Edited by Eric Michael Mazur and Kate McCarthy 291-306.

## ■ Week Eleven: March 22nd – 25th Religion and Social Justice

- Gray, Biko Mandela. 2019. "Religion in/and Black Lives Matter: Celebrating the impossible." *Religion Compass*.13: e2293
- **Watch:** Williams, Jeremy. 2017. *ON A KNIFE EDGE: A Lakota Teenager Fights for Social Justice* - [mcmaster.kanopy.com/video/knife-edge](https://mcmaster.kanopy.com/video/knife-edge)

## ■ Week Twelve: March 29th – April 1st The Future and/of Religion Part 1: Religion and the Human

- Andersen, M., U. Schjoedt, K.L. Nielbo, and J. Sørensen. 2014. "Mystical Experience in the Lab", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 26: 217-245.
- Boss, Jacob. 2020. "The harmony of metal and flesh: Cybernetic futures" In *Spiritualities, ethics, and implications of human enhancement and artificial intelligence*. Edited by Christopher Hrynkow. 139-158.
- Yasinski, Emma. 2021. "Religion on the Brain" [www.the-scientist.com/news-opinion/religion-on-the-brain-68969](https://www.the-scientist.com/news-opinion/religion-on-the-brain-68969)

## ■ Week Thirteen: April 5th – 8th The Future and/of Religion Part 2: Religions for a Galactic Age

- Sims, William Bainbridge. "Religion for a Galactic Civilization 2.0" [archive.ieet.org/articles/bainbridge20090820.html](https://archive.ieet.org/articles/bainbridge20090820.html)
- Roger D. Launius. 2013. "Escaping Earth: Human Spaceflight as Religion" *Astropolitics*, 11: 45-64.

## ■ April 12th – Last Day of Class No Lecture. Final Review / Q&A

---

# Student Resources

---

## CAMPUS RESOURCES

- Food Collective Centre: [www.msumcmaster.ca/services-directory/14-mac-bread-bin](http://www.msumcmaster.ca/services-directory/14-mac-bread-bin)
- Indigenous Student Services: [indigenous.mcmaster.ca/](http://indigenous.mcmaster.ca/)
- Sexual Violence Response Coordinator: [svpro.mcmaster.ca/contact/](http://svpro.mcmaster.ca/contact/)
- Equity and Inclusion: [equity.mcmaster.ca/](http://equity.mcmaster.ca/)
- Online Learning Support: [studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/academic-skills/online-learning/](http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/academic-skills/online-learning/)
- Writing Support: [studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/academic-skills/writing-support/](http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/academic-skills/writing-support/)
- Student Success Centre: [studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/](http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/)
- Ontario Crisis Resources and Helplines: [www.camh.ca/en/health-info/crisis-resources](http://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/crisis-resources)
- Canada Suicide Prevention Service: [www.crisisservicescanada.ca/en/](http://www.crisisservicescanada.ca/en/)

## HOW TO CITE

- MLA: [owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/mla\\_style/mla\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/mla\\_in\\_text\\_citations\\_the\\_basics.html](http://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_in_text_citations_the_basics.html)
- Chicago: [www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html)
- APA: [guides.libraries.psu.edu/apaquickguide/intext](http://guides.libraries.psu.edu/apaquickguide/intext)

## HOW TO AVOID UNINTENTIONAL PLAGIARISM

- [www.lakeforest.edu/academics/resources/writingcenter/plagiarism.php](http://www.lakeforest.edu/academics/resources/writingcenter/plagiarism.php)

## HOW TO WRITE AN ESSAY & PUNCTUATION RULES

- How to Write an Essay: [advice.writing.utoronto.ca/general/general-advice/](http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/general/general-advice/)
- Reading and Writing for Academic Purposes: [studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/reading-and-writing-for-academic-purposes-2021/](http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/reading-and-writing-for-academic-purposes-2021/)
- 13 Rules for Using Commas: [www.businessinsider.com/a-guide-to-proper-comma-use-2013-9](http://www.businessinsider.com/a-guide-to-proper-comma-use-2013-9)
- How to use the Semi-Colon: [theoatmeal.com/comics/semicolon](http://theoatmeal.com/comics/semicolon)

# Course Policies

---

## SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS

All written assignments must be uploaded to Avenue in .docx or .pdf format (NO .pages).

## GRADES

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

### MARK GRADE

90-100 A+

85-90 A

80-84 A-

77-79 B+

73-76 B

70-72 B-

67-69 C+

63-66 C

60-62 C-

57-59 D+

53-56 D

50-52 D-

0-49 F

## LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Students should contact their TA or professor if they plan on handing in an assignment late.

Students will lose 1 point a day for every day the final take-home essay is late.

## AVENUE TO LEARN

Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure.

If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

# University Policies

---

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at [secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/)

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

## AUTHENTICITY / PLAGIARISM DETECTION

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.).

For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

# University Policies

---

## COURSES WITH AN ON-LINE ELEMENT

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

## ONLINE PROCTORING

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

## CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

## ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.



# University Policies

---

## REQUESTS FOR RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC TERM WORK

[McMaster Student Absence Form \(MSAF\)](#): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

## ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar’s Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

## COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, including lectures by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

## EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.