

RS3AR3 CULTURE AND RELIGION
FALL 2016-17
MONDAYS 11:30-2:20
ETB 237

Professor Celia Rothenberg
905-525-9140 ext. 24363
rothenb@mcmaster.ca (Please use my email, not my extension, to reach me quickly.)
Office hours – UH 110, Mondays 2:30-3:30

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

Course objectives:

This course aims to help students achieve:

- Comprehension of the theoretical and practical issues involved in pursuing the social scientific study of the intersection of religion and culture;
- Necessary groundwork for pursuing further study and research in the area of religion and culture;
- Ability to apply insights from course material to understanding current events.

REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS

Bielo, James S.
2015 Anthropology of Religion: The Basics. New York: Routledge.

Rothenberg, Celia
2004 Spirits of Palestine: Gender, Society, and Stories of the Jinn. New York: Lexington Books.

Additional readings may be required and will be available through the McMaster University Library.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Film journal 25%

We will be watching eight films through the course of the semester. **SIX of these films are required** for discussion in your “film journal.” In your film journal you should include for each film:

- (1) a brief overview of the film (approximately one to two paragraphs);
- (2) a critical discussion of the film, incorporating material from lecture and the course text.

There will be a 4% deduction (from the total weight of 25% for the assignment) per missed film. You may write an entry for more than six films; I will count only your highest six marks towards the final grade.

Each film’s journal entry should be between two and three pages, typed, and double-spaced. Your entries should be polished, clear, and thoughtful pieces of writing.

Please note: If you do not complete the film journal, you cannot fulfill the requirements for this course.

Test 1 25%

Test 2 25%

Each test will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions.

Final paper 25%

This assignment will be discussed in class.

Course schedule

September 12

Meet and greet; review syllabus; introductory remarks; Q and A; course pointers.

PART I ANTHROPOLOGY OF RELIGION

September 19

Bielo, Chapter 1

Film: Margaret Mead: An Observer Observed (Interlibrary Loan)

September 26

Bielo, Chapter 2

Film: American Mystic (McMaster collection)

October 3 – No class (Rosh Hashanah)

October 10 – Midterm recess

October 17

Bielo, Chapter 3

Film: Hell House (TBD)

October 24

Test 1 (Bielo, Chapters 1-3)

Bielo, Chapter 4

October 31

Bielo, Chapter 5

Film: Joy Unspeakable (available online)

* Optional: Submit a film journal entry for feedback.

November 7

Bielo, Chapter 6

Film: Islam in France – BBC documentary (2016) (available online)

PART II CASE STUDY: SPIRIT POSSESSION

November 14

Test 2 (Bielo, Chapters 4-6)

Rothenberg, Spirits, Chapters 1

November 21

Rothenberg, Chapter 2 and 3

Film: Diabla Blanca (available online)

November 28

Rothenberg, Chapters 4 and 5

Film: In Pursuit of the Siberian Shaman (McMaster collection)

December 5

Rothenberg, Chapter 6

Film: Fieldwork slide show

FILM JOURNAL DUE BY NOON ON DECEMBER 9 VIA EMAIL TO: ROTHENB@MCMASTER.CA

FINAL PAPER DUE BY NOON ON DECEMBER 16 VIA EMAIL TO: ROTHENB@MCMASTER.CA

Late submissions will be penalized (see below).

Course policies

AVENUE TO LEARN

In this course we will be using 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.

WRITTEN WORK AND LATE SUBMISSIONS

All written work will be marked on grammar, clarity of writing, and organization, as well as content and analysis. Students are encouraged to visit the Centre for Student Development to improve their essay skills (MUSC B107; x24711). For information about the Writing Clinic and the Centre's other services, visit the Centre's website: <http://csd.mcmaster.ca>.

All written work must be submitted as indicated on the syllabus, on the due date.

Late assignments will be penalized two percentage points (deducted from the overall weight of the assignment) per day, including weekends. Late penalties will not be waived unless your Faculty/Program Office advises the instructor that you have submitted to that office the appropriate documentation to support your inability to submit the work by the due date. Late assignments must be emailed to the instructors and will be penalized, if appropriate, according to the date received.

Staff in the office of the Department of Religious Studies will not date-stamp or receive papers and other assignments. Do not place papers under my office door or in my mailbox: EMAIL your papers only.

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.

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.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.

POLICY FOR MODIFYING A COURSE

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check her/his McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

E-MAIL COMMUNICATION POLICY

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

MCMASTER STUDENT ABSENCE FORM

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". Please note these regulations have changed beginning Spring/Summer 2015. The timeframe within which the MSAF is valid has been reduced from 5 days to 3 days. The upper limit for which an MSAF can be submitted has been reduced from 'less than 30%' to 'less than 25%' of the course weight. As per the policy, students must immediately follow up with their instructors to request accommodation for any missed academic work. Failure to do so may negate their relief. If you have any questions about the MSAF, please contact your Associate Dean's office.

TURNITIN.COM

In this course we may be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students may be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.