

RELIG ST 1B03 What on Earth is Religion? Winter 2018
Monday, Thursday 12:30 – 1:20 p.m. ITB 137 (Draft Only)

Dr. Philippa Carter carterph@mcmaster.ca UH 114, ext. 23388. Thursday 1:45 – 4:15 p.m. or by appointment.

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:

An introduction to the academic study of religion and religions focusing on key themes and on how scholars approach religiosity both historically and in contemporary global cultures. Topics covered may include truth and truth-claims, ritual and practice, myth and history, authority and power, community and conformity.

This course is an introduction to the academic study of religion focusing on the history of the discipline, including ideas about what constitutes “religion” and “religions” and the ways in which religious worldviews affect individuals and communities historically and globally.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

- Rodrigues & Harding, *Introduction to The Study of Religion*. London and New York: Routledge Publishers. (Available in the bookstore and online at vitalsource.com: <<https://www.vitalsource.com/referral?term=9781134132126> >)

COURSE GOALS & LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this course students will have:

- Encountered a range of approaches to the academic study of religion both historical and contemporary;
- Become familiar with the kinds of questions religious studies scholars investigate;
- Cultivated a scholarly approach to studying religion.

By the end of this course students will:

- Recognize similarities and differences in how human beings participate in religious communities;
- Understand fundamental problems in the academic study of religion;
- Appreciate the complexity and diversity of religious studies.

GRADING:

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| 10% | 10 Quizzes | 10% | Tutorial Participation | 30% | Take-Home Test |
| 10% | Library Assignment | 40% | 4 Short Written Assignments | | |

CLASS SCHEDULE*:

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| 4 JAN | Introduction; Film: “The Trap” (NFB) | |
| 8 JAN | Defining Religion | |
| 11 JAN | Film: “Holy City of Life and Death” | READ CHAP. 1 OF ISR BEFORE NEXT CLASS |
| 15 JAN Q1 OPEN | Religious Education & Religious Studies | LIBRARY ASSIGNMENT DUE: 11:59 PM, FRI. 19 JAN. |
| 18 JAN Q1 CLOSE | Patterns in the Study of Religion | READ CHAP. 2 OF ISR BEFORE NEXT CLASS |
| 22 JAN Q2 OPEN | Philosophical Approaches | ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE: 11:59 PM WED. 24 JAN. |
| 25 JAN Q2 CLOSE | Theological Approaches | READ CHAP. 3 OF ISR BEFORE NEXT CLASS |
| 29 JAN Q3 OPEN | Anthropological Approaches | |
| 1 FEB Q3 CLOSE | Sociological, Political & Economic Approaches | READ CHAP. 4 OF ISR BEFORE NEXT CLASS |
| 5 FEB Q4 OPEN | Phenomenological Approaches | |
| 8 FEB Q4 CLOSE | Psychological Approaches | |
| 12 FEB Q5 OPEN | Film: “The Mystical Brain” (NFB) | ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE: 11:59 PM, WED. 14 FEB. |
| 15 FEB Q5 CLOSE | Worldviews, Truth Claims: Where did we come from? | |
| 19/22 FEB | READING WEEK—No Classes | |
| 26 FEB Q6 OPEN | Worldviews, Truth Claims: Where are we going? | |
| 1 MAR Q6 CLOSE | Worldviews, Truth Claims: Who are we? | READ CHAP. 5 OF ISR BEFORE NEXT CLASS |
| 5 MAR Q7 OPEN | Feminism and the Academic Study of Religion | |
| 8 MAR Q7 CLOSE | Feminism and the Academic Study of Religion | |

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| 12 MAR Q8 OPEN | Atheism, Secularism and the Academic Study of Religion | ASSIGNMENT 3 DUE: 11:59 PM, WED. 14 MAR. |
| 15 MAR Q8 CLOSE | Atheism, Secularism and the Academic Study of Religion | |
| 19 MAR Q9 OPEN | Film: "China's Leap of Faith" | |
| 22 MAR Q9 CLOSE | "World Religions" vs. "What on Earth is Religion?" | |
| 26 MAR Q10 OPEN | "What on Earth is Religion?" | |
| 29 MAR Q10 CLOSE | Film: "Honour Thy Father" (NFB) | READ ISR CHAP. 6 BEFORE NEXT CLASS |
| 2 APR | The Future of the Academic Study of Religion | ASSIGNMENT 4 DUE: 11:59 PM, MON. 2 APR. |
| 5 APR | Exam Review | |
| 9 APR | Question Period | |

THE FINE PRINT:

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.

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 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.

AVENUE TO LEARN & TURNITIN.COM

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. 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. In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com speak with me immediately. 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

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. **MSAF is now available in MOSAIC Student Center (in the drop-down menu under Academics).** **Privacy Disclaimer:** By using this tool you understand that some personal information will be submitted to your Faculty Office. ***If you find it necessary to submit the MSAF during this course you must arrange for an extension for any work missed. I do not redistribute grades for missed assignments.***

NOTE ON CHANGES IN THE 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.

SOCIAL SCIENCES FACULTY E-MAIL COMMUNICATION POLICY

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all email 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.

PERSONAL EMAIL POLICY

I no longer respond to grade queries submitted through email. If you need to discuss a grade in the course please arrange to see me in person. I also do not respond to email messages regarding missed classes. Please arrange to acquire missed notes and other information from a fellow student.

LAPTOPS, TABLETS AND PHONES

There may be times when we will want to access the internet for a classroom activity. As a courtesy to those sitting behind you please ensure that you are discreet and not a distraction to others when using your device(s). Please ensure that your cell phone is on "vibrate" before entering the classroom. (I too will try to remember this!)