**What on Earth is Religion?**

**RELIGST 1B03 Winter 2020**

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### **CONTACT INFOMATION**

**Instructor:** Dr. Philippa Carter, UH 125, ext. 23388

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

**Office Hours:**Mon, Wed 3:30 – 4:20 p.m. or by appointment: <https://calendly.com/philippacarter>

**Lecture:** CNH 104, Mon, Wed. 2:30 – 3:20 p.m.

**Tutorials and TAs:**

* T01 Tue 11:30 & T02 Tue 12:30PM KTH 106
* T03 Mon 3:30 & T04 Mon 4:30 KTH 106
* T05 Tue 11:30 & T06 Tue 12:30 JHE 329
* T07 Tue 11:30 & T08 12:30 ETB 119
* T09 Wed 11:30 & T10 Wed 12:30 BSB B142
* T11 Tue 11:30AM & T12 Tue 12:30 TSH B126

### **Course 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.

### **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course students should be able to:

* 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.

### **Required Materials and Texts**

* Rodrigues & Harding, *Introduction to The Study of Religion*. London and New York: Routledge Publishers. (Available in the bookstore and online.)
* Other resources as required

### **Course Evaluation – Overview**

* 10 % Tutorial participation and engagement
* 60% Three written assignments @ 20% (Details to follow on Avenue)
* 10% Ten mini-quizzes on Avenue @1%
* 20% One final take-home exam

### **Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings**

#### Week 1 (6 & 8 January) Introduction: Defining Religion

Read: ISR, 1-6

#### Week 2 (13 & 15 January) Religious Education & Religious Studies

Read: ISR, 7 - 17

#### Week 3 (20 & 22 January) Philosophical Approaches &Theological Approaches

Read: ISR, chapter 2.

#### Week 4 (27 & 29 January) Anthropological Approaches

Read: ISR, 49 - 66 Assignment 1: Due 30 January, 11:59 p.m.

#### Week 5 (3 & 5 February) Sociological, Economic and Political Approaches

Read: ISR, 66 - 73

#### Week 6 (10 & 12 February) Phenomenological Approaches

Read: ISR, 74 - 83

#### Week 7 (17 & 19 February) READING WEEK

#### Week 8 (24 & 26 February) Psychological Approaches

Read: ISR, 74 - 103 Assignment 2: Due 5 March, 11:59 p.m.

#### Week 9 (2 & 4 March) Feminist Approaches

Read: ISR, 104 - 119

#### Week 10 (9 & 11 March) Religion and Atheism

Read: ISR, 119 - 133

#### Week 11 (16 & 18 March) Historical and Comparative Approaches

Read: ISR, 134 - 140 Assignment 3: Due 26 March, 11:59 p.m.

#### Week 12 (23 & 25 March) Conclusions

#### Week 13 (30 March & 1 April) Review

### **THE FINE PRINT**

#### 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:

* 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.

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#### AUTHENTICITY / PLAGIARISM DETECTION

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via Avenue to Learn (A2L) plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish to submit their work through A2L and/or Turnitin.com must still submit an electronic and/or hardcopy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com or A2L. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

#### ON-LINE COMPONENTS

In this course we will be using Avenue2Learn and 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. 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.

#### ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Laptops and tablets are welcome for note-taking and internet searches related to materials being covered in class. Please limit your access to social media during class so as not to prove a distraction to those around you. Cell phones should be turned to vibrate on entering the classroom.

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#### ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. 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 *Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities* policy.

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#### 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 requiring a RISO accommodation 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.

#### ABSENCES, MISSED WORK, ILLNESS AND REQUESTS FOR RELIEF 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”. ***If you find it necessary to submit the MSAF during this course, you must submit the missed work before the end of classes. I do not redistribute grades for missed assignments.*** ***ADDITIONALLY, it is not necessary to contact me to report your submission of the MSAF; simply submit your work as soon as possible.***

Attendance is randomly taken on occasion and for every tutorial in this course as part of the participation and engagement grade. ***Accommodations are not provided for not coming to class since class attendance is part of your obligation to your class peers, instructor and to yourself in our effort to cultivate a scholarly, learning community in this course.*** There are no make-up assignments. If you miss a class due to illness, please contact your teaching assistant as soon as possible. Please do not attach doctors’ notes in email messages. Relief should be sought through the faculty office for unexpected absences lasting more than two weeks.

#### SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments should be submitted to Avenue as .doc(x) or .pdf. Please ***do not*** include a cover page. Assignments submitted in other formats will not be graded. Please do not submit assignments by email attachment unless specifically instructed to do so. If you have a query about a grade for an assignment please see your TA first and then speak to Dr. Carter if the issue is not resolved to your satisfaction.

#### 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.

#### GRADES

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

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