
Slot: 18 (Tues/Thurs 10:30-11:45)  Instructor: Dr. Jennifer Porter
Classroom: C3053                Office: A5009
Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 1:30-3:30, Wed. 6-7pm  Phone: 864-2469
Email: jporter@mun.ca

http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~jporter/Implicit_Religion.html
and
the D2L RELS 3860 Course page available through my.mun.ca and
https://online.mun.ca/d2l/home

Course Description:

This course begins with the question of whether it is possible to find
religion in non-religious places. What does the term “religion” mean?
Does religion always and only have to be found in a
church/mosque/temple? Or can it be found in other so-called “secular”
places? Is Hockey a religion? Are visits to Graceland or Star Trek
conventions a modern form of pilgrimage? Are Raves an urban
expression of religious transcendence and healing? This course will
explore the concept of “implicit religion” using these and other examples.
Key theorists of religious studies concepts will be introduced and their
ideas explored and applied to the examples covered in class.

Textbooks: There are no assigned textbooks for this class. Assigned
weekly readings are available on our D2L page.

Method of Evaluation:

Participation 10%
Paper proposal & annotated bibliography Due: Oct. 20th 20%
Research Term Paper Due: Dec. 1st 35%
Take Home Final Exam Due: Dec. 9th 35%
Participation (10%):

This class is going to follow a mixed lecture/discussion format. Although I will be giving lectures to cover the necessary introduction to the topics and theoretical ideas that we will be studying in the class, these lectures will be interactive: you are encouraged and expected to come prepared by having read the assigned readings, and to have comments and questions relevant to the topic ready to contribute in class. Please make sure you come prepared to class: it will make the class more enjoyable for everyone!

Proposal (20%):

Write a paper proposal that outlines the topic you will explore, the key theoretical ideas you will draw upon in your analysis, and include an annotated bibliography of academic and primary sources that you will use in your work. Due: Oct. 20th, 2016. Proposals should be submitted via the D2L dropbox.

Research Term Paper (35%):

Theories of implicit religion, secular religion, and so on can be applied to a wide variety of topics; the few that we cover in this course represent simply a small sample of the ways that religious studies can be beneficial in understanding human experience and practice outside the confines of mainstream religious contexts. For your research paper, choose a topic relevant to implicit religion (Twihards and the Church of Cullen? PETA as religious extremism? Oprah as New Age Guru? The religious dimensions of Pokemon Go? Etc.) Choose a theoretical model or models to work with, and show how/why Religious Studies can (or possibly fails to) shed light on these dimensions of human concern. Length: 3000-4000 words. Due: Dec. 1st, 2016. Research papers should be submitted via the D2L dropbox.

Take-home Exam (35%):

This course will have a take-home final exam. It is worth 35% of your grade. This exam will be essay-style, with multiple questions, and with some choice of questions. There will be questions that focus on the various specific examples of implicit religion covered in class, and others that encourage analysis of themes present in several or all of the examples we have studied. The exam is designed to encourage you to show your understanding of the details and implications of the material we have been studying. You may draw upon outside sources to answer the questions on
the exam; however, you are not required to do so. The exam will be handed out on the last day of class, and will be due December 9th, 2016.

Policies:

Late assignments will accepted in accordance with Memorial University’s policies and procedures:

A student is, at times, prevented from completing a part of the evaluation by illness or medical conditions of less than five calendar days’ duration. In such cases, a student may apply for an alternate evaluation by declaring to the relevant instructor that he or she has experienced such an illness or medical condition. This declaration should be made via telephone or in writing through the student’s @mun.ca e-mail account. This declaration should be made in advance of the original date on which an in-class part of the evaluation is to be held or a take-home part of the evaluation is due, wherever possible, but no later than 48 hours after the original date of the part of the evaluation. If the declaration is made by telephone, written confirmation must then be received by the relevant instructor within seven calendar days of the original date of the part of the evaluation.

A student who is prevented from completing a part of the evaluation by illness of at least five calendar days’ duration, bereavement or other acceptable cause, duly authenticated in writing, may apply for an alternate evaluation. This application should be made in advance of the original date on which an in-class part of the evaluation is to be held or a take-home part of the evaluation is due, wherever possible, but no later than 48 hours after the original date of the part of the evaluation. If application is made by telephone, written confirmation must then be received by the head of the appropriate academic unit within seven calendar days of the original date of the part of the evaluation. The following supporting documentation is required:

- For illness or medical conditions, medical documentation from a health professional is required. Students should provide the health professional with a copy of the Student Medical Certificate (www.mun.ca/regoff/STUDENT_MEDICAL_CERTIFICATE.pdf)
- For bereavement or other acceptable cause, official documents or letters that support the reason for the request (e.g. death certificate, letter from employer, etc.) are required.
Accommodation of Students with Special Needs:

I am committed to facilitating and promoting an accessible, inclusive, and mutually respectful learning environment. Students requiring special accommodation are asked to communicate firstly with the Glenn Roy Blundon Centre (www.mun.ca/blundon) at the earliest opportunity. University policies and procedures pertaining to accommodations for students with disabilities can be found at www.mun.ca/policy/site/policy.php?id=239.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism:

Students are directed to familiarize themselves with section 6.12.4 of the University Calendar on academic offenses: “Plagiarism is the act of presenting the ideas or works of another as one’s own. This applies to all material such as essays, laboratory assignments, laboratory reports, work term reports, design projects, seminar presentations, statistical data, computer programs, research results, and theses. The properly acknowledged use of sources is an accepted and important part of scholarship. Use of such material without acknowledgment is contrary to accepted norms of academic behaviour. Information regarding acceptable writing practices is available through the Writing Centre at www.mun.ca/writingcentre.

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Course Outline and Assigned Readings:

September 8th: Introduction to the Course – course outlines, key concepts, theories, issues.

Section One: David Chidester’s ‘Authentic Fakes’ and Disney (Sept. 13th – 27th)


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**Section Two: Adam Possamai’s ‘Hyper-Real Religion’ and Star Wars**  
(Sept. 29th – Oct. 6th)


Watch: *The Force Among Us or The People vs George Lucas*

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**Section Three: Edward Bailey’s ‘Implicit Religion’ and Star Trek**  
(Oct. 13th – 25th)


**NOTE:** Outline and annotated bibliographies due Oct. 20th!
Section Four: Pilgrimage Studies and Star Trek (Oct. 27th – Nov. 1st)


Watch: Trekkies 2

Section Five: Implicit Religion and Raves (Nov. 3rd - 10th)


Scott R. Hutson 2000 “The Rave: Spiritual Healing in Modern Western Subcultures.” Anthropological Quarterly 73 no1(Ja) 35-49.

Watch: Better Living Through Circuitry

Section Six: Catherine Albanese’s ‘American Religion’ and Elvis (Nov. 15th – 17th)


Watch: The Church of Elvis.
Section Seven: Thomas Luckman’s ‘Invisible Religion’ and Hockey (Nov. 22nd – 24th)


Watch: The Chiefs

Section Eight: Ritual Studies and Professional Wrestling (Nov. 29th – Dec. 1st)


Watch: WWE matches – Hulk Hogan vs Andre the Giant; Hulk Hogan turns heel; redemption of Hulk Hogan

NOTE: Major Research Papers due Dec. 1st!

ALSO NOTE: Take-home exams handed out Dec. 1st – Due Dec. 9th!