

Religious Studies 3860 – Implicit Religion – F2016

Slot: 18 (Tues/Thurs 10:30-11:45)
Classroom: C3053

Instructor: Dr. Jennifer Porter
Office: A5009
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Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 1:30-3:30, Wed. 6-7pm 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. 20 th	20%
Research Term Paper	Due: Dec. 1 st .	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.

NOTE: Assignments that are submitted more than 5 days late without email notification or documentation will receive a 10% deduction per day after the first 5 days.

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.

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)

Read: Chidester, David. “Introduction,” in Authentic Fakes: Religion and American Popular Culture. Berkeley/Los Angeles/ London: University of California Press, 2005, 1-10.

Porter, Jennifer. "The Ambiguous Captain Jack Sparrow: Destabilizing Gender, Politics and Religion in Disney's *Pirates of the Caribbean*," in The Disney Dialogues, ed. Douglas Brode and Shea Brode, Scarecrow, 2016.

Fadner, Donald E. "Disney gets Religion." Paper presented at the American Academy of Religion meeting in Orlando, November 1998.

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

Read: Possamai, Adam "*Hyper-Real Religion*," in Religion and Popular Culture: A Hyper-Real Testament. Brussels: Peter Lang, 2005, 71-83

Bowen, Jonathan and Rachel Wagner "*Hokey Religions and Ancient Weapons: The Force of Spirituality*." Finding the Force of the Star Wars Franchise: Fans, Merchandise and Critics. Ed. Matthew W. Kapell and John Shelton Lawrence. New York: Peter Lang, 2006, 75-93.

Porter, Jennifer "*I Am a Jedi: Star Wars Fandom, Religious Belief, and the 2001 Census*." Finding the Force of the Star Wars Franchise: Fans, Merchandise and Critics. Ed. Matthew W. Kapell and John Shelton Lawrence. New York: Peter Lang, 2006, 95-112.

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

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

Read: Bailey, Edward. "What does Implicit Religion Mean?" in Implicit Religion: An Introduction. Middlesex University Press, 2006, 16-19.

Porter, Jennifer. "Implicit Religion in Popular Culture: The Religious Dimensions of Fan Communities." Implicit Religion 12:3 (2009):271-280.

Jindra, Michael. "*Its about Faith in our Future': Star Trek fandom as Cultural Religion*." Religion and Popular Culture in America. Ed. Bruce Forbes and Jeffrey Mahan. Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 2000, 165-179.

NOTE: Outline and annotated bibliographies due Oct. 20th!

Section Four: Pilgrimage Studies and Star Trek (Oct. 27th – Nov. 1st)

Porter, Jennifer “*To Boldly Go: Star Trek Convention Attendance as Pilgrimage.*” *Star Trek and Sacred Ground: Explorations of Star Trek, Religion and American Culture.* Ed. Jennifer Porter and Darcee McLaren. NY: SUNY Press, 1999, 245-270

Porter, Jennifer “*Pilgrimage and the IDIC Ethic.*” *Intersecting Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage.* Ed. Ellen Badone and Sharon Roseman. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004, pp?

Watch: *Trekkies 2*

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

Read: Gauthier, François “*Rave and Religion? A Contemporary Youth Phenomenon as seen through the lens of Religious Studies*” *Studies in Religion* 2004, vol. 33, no3-4, 397-413.

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)

Read: Albanese, Catherine L. “Introduction,” in *American Religions and Religion* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 1999, 2-11.

Doss, Erika. “*Saint Elvis,*” in *Elvis Culture: Fans, Faith & Image.* Lawrence, KA: U of Kansas P, 1999.

Duffett, Mark “*False Faith or False Comparison? A Critique of the Religious Interpretation of Elvis Fan Culture.*” *Popular Music and Society,* Vol. 26, No. 4, 2003, 513-522.

Watch: *The Church of Elvis.*

Section Seven: Thomas Luckman's 'Invisible Religion' and Hockey (Nov. 22nd – 24th)

Read: Tom Sinclair-Faulkner "A Puckish Look at Hockey in Canada." Religion and Culture in Canada. Ed. Peter Slater. CCSR, 1977, 383-405.

Can be accessed online at:

<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/memorial/docDetail.action?docID=10139348>

Trothen, Tracy. "Hockey: A divine sport? Canada's national sport in relation to embodiment, community and hope." Studies in Religion 35(2) 2006, 291-305.

Watch: *The Chiefs*

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

Read; Ball, Michael R. "The Ritual Drama," in Professional Wrestling as Ritual Drama in American Popular Culture.

Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990, 115-138.

Nadelhaft, Matthew "Death, Religion and Wrestling: A Serious Undertaking." CJAS 1(1), 2005, 1-16.

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!
