

Religious Studies 2QQ3—CULTS, CONSPIRACIES & CLOSE ENCOUNTERS (Fall 2017) **DRAFT ONLY**

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CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:

Why are people often attracted to “alternative” perspectives/religious movements? An examination of some marginal or marginalized groups, beliefs and practices and the ways they challenge and enforce “received wisdom.”

REQUIRED TEXTS:

A selection of journal articles available online through Mills Library

GRADING AND EVALUATION:

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| • Five On-Line Quizzes | 10% | • Two Collaborative Tests | 40% |
| • Attendance/Participation | 15% | • Take-Home Exam | 35% |

CLASS SCHEDULE:

SEP 7	INTRODUCTION		
SEP 11	WHAT IS A CULT?		
SEP 14	NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS	Eugene V. Gallagher, “Cults” and “New Religious Movements” <i>History of Religions</i> , Vol. 47, No. 2/3 (November 2007/February 2008), 205-220.	
SEP 18	SCIENTOLOGY	“Going Clear: Scientology and the Prison of Belief” (Excerpts)	Quiz 1
SEP 21	SCIENTOLOGY	Don Jolly, “Sexuality in Three Ex-Scientology Narratives” <i>Alternative Spirituality and Religion Review</i> 6:1 (2015)51–60.	
SEP 25	PEOPLE’S TEMPLE	“Jonestown: The Life and Death of People’s Temple” (Excerpts)	
SEP 28	PEOPLE’S TEMPLE	Lorne L. Dawson, “Psychopathologies and the Attribution of Charisma” <i>Nova Religio</i> , Vol. 10, No. 2 (2006), 3-28.	
OCT 2	NESARA	“Waiting for NESARA” (Excerpts)	Quiz 2
OCT 5	NESARA	Ward, C., & Voas, D. “The Emergence of Conspiratoriality.” <i>Journal of Contemporary Religion</i> , 26(1), (2011) 103-121.	
OCT 16	CONSPIRACY THEORIES	Robertson, D.G. “Conspiracy Theories and the Study of Alternative and Emergent Religions.” <i>Nova Religio</i> . 19 (2) (2015) 5-16.	
OCT 19	COLLABORATION FOR TEST #1		
OCT 23	CONSPIRACY THEORIES AND 9/11	“9/11: The Myth & the Reality” (Excerpts)	
OCT 26	CONSPIRACY THEORIES AND 9/11	Peter Knight, “Outrageous Conspiracy Theories: Popular and Official Responses to 9/11 in Germany and the United States” <i>New German Critique</i> , No. 103, (2008), 165-193.	
OCT 30	CONSPIRACY THEORIES AND ANTISEMITISM	“The Longest Hatred” (Excerpts)	Quiz 3
NOV 2	CONSPIRACY THEORIES AND ANTISEMITISM	“Conspiracy Theory and Antisemitism” in <i>Conspiracy Theories</i> by J. Byford (Ebook available through Mills Library).	
NOV 6	CONSPIRACY THEORIES AND CLOSE ENCOUNTERS	Paul Brian Thomas “Revisionism in ET-Inspired Religions” <i>Nova Religio</i> Vol. 14, No. 2 (2010), 61-83.	
NOV 9	CONSPIRACY THEORIES AND CLOSE ENCOUNTERS	Excerpts from “Close Encounters of the Third Kind”	Quiz 4
NOV 13	CLOSE ENCOUNTERS	Robert Pearson Flaherty, “These Are They”: ET-Human Hybridization and the New Daemonology” <i>Nova Religio</i> Vol. 14, No. 2 (2010), 84-105.	
NOV 16	COLLABORATION FOR TEST #2		
NOV 20	CLOSE ENCOUNTERS: SCIENTOLOGY REVISITED	“Going Clear” (Excerpts).	
NOV 23	CLOSE ENCOUNTERS: ALIEN ABDUCTIONS	L. Tromly, “Race, Citizenship, and the Politics of Alien Abduction; Or, Why Aliens Do Not Abduct Asian Americans.” <i>The Journal of Popular Culture</i> , 50(2), (2017) 276-292.	
NOV 27	CULTS, CONSPIRACIES AND CLOSE ENCOUNTERS:	“David Icke: Conspiracy of the Lizard Illuminati” Vice, 2012.	Quiz 5
NOV 30	DAVID ICKE	D. G. Robertson, “David Icke’s Reptilian Thesis and the Development of New Age Theodicy” <i>International Journal for the Study of New Religions</i> 4.1 (2013) 27–47.	
DEC 4	EXAM REVIEW		

THE FINE PRINT:

WRITTEN WORK AND LATE SUBMISSIONS

- All written work will be marked on grammar, clarity of writing, and organization, as well as content and analysis. Where footnotes and bibliography are necessary, any protocol is acceptable provided you are consistent.
- All written work must be submitted electronically to AVENUE. Do not submit essays by email and do not slide hard copies under the instructor's or TA's door.
- **Late assignments will be penalized 5% a day (weekends will count as one day).**
- **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.**

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

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.

TURNITIN.COM

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 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 speak with me immediately.

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.

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 near 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!)