

COURSE OUTLINE

Religion and Diversity

SCAR 2RD3-C01

Winter 2021

Instructor: Meirav Jones

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Lecture: Wednesdays, 12:30pm, Fridays 12:30pm (see below)

Tutorial: Wednesdays 9:30am (no tutorial on the first day of class – see below)

Office: Online chat room

Office Hours: By appointment with instructor or TA

Course Description

When, from our homes, we imagine our own diverse societies, we imagine these as containing multiple cultures or ethnic groups, including indigenous peoples, immigrants, refugees, descendants of early settlers, and workers. In diverse urban settings such as Toronto, New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and London, as well as in university communities and college towns, people are visibly different from one another, in their facial features, their skin color, their build, and/or their dress.

To the extent that religion is part of how we conceive of diversity in our cities, religious diversity is considered a consequence or a subcategory of ethnic and cultural diversity, rather than a category of its own. Certainly, if societies become home to immigrants from the Middle East, Asia, and Africa, or if lands were initially inhabited by indigenous peoples, these societies will be religiously diverse, but this diversity, unlike visible diversity, is considered private. Societies that welcome immigrants thus invest in assimilating immigrants into language and local culture, while religion is set aside, as an aspect of their diversity that immigrants should be able to hold onto without modification on their part or on the part of the state. A side effect of this setting of religion aside is that difficult topics in multicultural societies may be boxed off as “religion”, leading to obscure policies and avoidance behaviors on the part of the state.

In this course we will unpack this common understanding and approach to diversity and religious diversity, and explore other ways of conceiving religion and diversity from history and the history of ideas that may lead to different social outcomes, for better and worse. We will look at ideas of sameness and difference within religious approaches in the ancient world, imagined homogeneity and imagined diversity in the Medieval world, study the close relationship between religion and diversity in the making of the modern West, and examine both the privatization of religion with the birth of more radical forms of toleration and multiculturalism, and the historically persistent ideal of religious harmony. We will move back and forth in time to understand how our current understanding of

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diversity evolved, and we will learn to critically-approach the extent to which religious diversity is underplayed today.

While the course will focus on Western ideas of religion and diversity, and on Canada, the United States, and Europe in particular, we will have some opportunities to look at the non-Western in history, and students interested in further exploring non-Western approaches to diversity will be encouraged to bring alternative sources and approaches into the conversation.

Course Objectives

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

- Understand different approaches to religious difference that play out in diverse societies today, including two distinct Canadian approaches.
- Have a sense for how and why our current approaches to religion, diversity, and religious diversity took hold.
- Critically approach contemporary issues of religion and diversity, including being able to critique the use of the category “religion” in diverse societies.
- Voice educated personal positions on contemporary issues, based on understanding complexity.

Required Materials and Texts

There will be no textbook for this course. Materials will be uploaded weekly to Avenue to Learn. Materials will include religious texts, classic works of political theory, virtual museum exhibitions, YouTube videos, Scholarly articles, and academic book chapters.

Class Format

Religion and Diversity will take place in a hybrid format.

Class materials for each week will be uploaded by 10am Monday morning. Class materials will include a weekly checklist, zoom links for meetings, and readings, with guidance on the order of the readings.

Each week on Wednesday at 12:30pm there will be a Zoom session that will take the form of a lecture on the week’s theme, and some of the readings will be discussed. Students should attend this lecture as often as possible. For those unable to make the lecture, a recording or lecture notes will be made available. In general students will be expected to have read one of the readings by Wednesday’s class.

Each week on Friday at 12:30pm there will be an informal discussion session on Zoom. The discussion session will not be recorded. Students should arrive to class that day having read the materials we will be discussing, bringing their questions and difficulties with the text to the readings.

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Prior to each Wednesday class, on the same day at 9:30am, there will be a tutorial session at which there will be a group reading of one of the texts for the week. This will help students who wish to read collaboratively rather than alone, prior to class.

Aside from the discussion session on Zoom there will also be a course discussion board that will follow the course week-by-week. The discussion board will be an alternative forum for participating in class discussion, for those who prefer asynchronous learning.

The course should take 3-4 hours per week, including meetings, reviewing materials, reading, tutorial, and participating in the discussion board, but possibly not including graded writing assignments. There will be three reading reports due in weeks 4, 7, and 10, and one final paper due at the end of the course.

Course Evaluation: Overview

Students will be evaluated based on:

Participation - 20%

Reading Reports - 30% (due: February 3, March 3, March 24)

Final Paper - 50% (due: April 21)

Course Evaluation: Details

Participation. I have emphasized participation in evaluating students for this course, despite the fact that we are not meeting in person, as it is through participation that we will all gain the most from the course. Each participation grade will be determined by the student's active presence in Zoom meetings and/or discussion. There will be no penalty for not participating in all media, however to obtain an A grade, students will need to make their presence known at least twice a week, either by video presence (camera on) at zoom sessions, and/or by vocalizing perspectives and opinions on the discussion board. Students who express themselves well and frequently in class and/or on the discussion board may be graded A+, with ranking to be determined by the lecturer. Students who don't meet participation requirements will be ranked according to how often they participated. Students who have trouble participating for any reason should be in touch in real time. There may be other ways to make up participation grade if attendance is difficult.

Reading Reports. Personal responses to one or more readings, including both a descriptive and reflective component, will be due before the start of class in weeks 4, 7, and 10. Reports may be video-recorded (+/-3 minutes) or written (1-2.5 double-spaced pages). At least one written report must be submitted by each student.

Final paper. The final paper is to be submitted no earlier than the last class of the semester, and no later than one week after the end of the course (11:59pm, Wednesday April 21). Papers should be 8-10 double-spaced pages in length (12-point standard font), not including bibliography. I would expect that

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the paper breakdown would be roughly 3-4 pages of description, 4-5 pages of historical and conceptual analysis, 1-2 pages of individual response and summary. Footnotes should be used as needed, in any standard format, with consistency being important. A bibliography should be provided at the end of the paper, not included in the page-count. Please do not write anything in footnotes except references. All discussion should be in the paper. Topics for the final paper will be discussed in Week 10.

Weekly Course Schedule

Unit 1 (Weeks 1-3): Intro to Contemporary Western and Canadian Diversity and Religion

Week 1 (Wednesday January 13, Friday January 15): Course Intro, a comparative look at how governments of diverse societies approach religious difference in our time. A preliminary mapping of religion and diversity in the Modern West and Canada.

Readings and Materials:

Holiday Greetings from Western Leaders: Short takes on Different Approaches to Religion and Diversity.

Pew Report: Canada's Changing Religious Landscape

Week 2 (Wednesday January 20, Friday January 22): Religious difference in the context of Canadian multiculturalism and in Canadian law.

Readings and Materials:

Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford, 1995), Chapter 2.

Benjamin Berger, *Laws' Religion: Religious Difference and the Claims of Constitutionalism* (University of Toronto Press, 2005), Chapter 2.

Week 3 (Wednesday January 27, Friday January 29): Multiculturalism vs. Quebec's Francophone secularism.

Readings and Materials:

Bill 21 (passed, 2019):

<http://www2.publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca/dynamicSearch/telecharge.php?type=5&file=2019C12A.PDF>

David Koussens, "Nationalistic Secularism and the Critique of Canadian Multiculturalism in Quebec", dans Ramona Mielusel et Simona Pruteanu (dir.), *Citizenship and Belonging in France and North America. Multicultural Perspectives on Political, Cultural and Artistic Representations of Immigration*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2020, p. 17-32.

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CBC News on Canadian Immigration, and Quebec in Canadian context:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N7_2ru-u5RA&feature=youtu.be

Media Responses to Bill 21 (headscarf ban):

The Atlantic: <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2019/07/quebec-bans-religious-symbols/593998/>

Washington Post: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/quebec-ban-on-religious-symbols-would-fall-heavily-on-hijab-wearing-teachers/2019/04/26/44cfd560-5633-11e9-aa83-504f086bf5d6_story.html

NY Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/canada/quebec-religious-symbols-ban.html#:~:text=Fran%C3%A7ois%20Legault%2C%20the%20right%2Dleaning,neutrality%20of%20public%20sector%20workers.>

Unit 2 (Weeks 4-5): Religion and Diversity from the Hebrew Bible to the New World

Week 4 (Wednesday February 3, Friday February 5): How does the religion we address in “religion and diversity”, approach diversity in its foundational texts?

Readings and Materials (tentative):

Reading from Genesis Rabbah, the Q’uran, and Paul on Judaism, Christianity, and Islam defining themselves against other religions (on Abraham breaking idols, Paul’s new Israel).

Reading from Luke, The Good Samaritan

Reading from Philo, *On the Account of the World’s Creation Given by Moses* (known as *On Creation*) and *On Abraham*, selections. *On the Creation* is Accessible here in Latin and English: <https://ryanfb.github.io/loebolus-data/L226.pdf>

Week 5 (Wednesday February 10, Friday February 12): Religious diversity (and its denial) in Memories of Catholic Europe and Medieval Jerusalem

Readings and Materials (tentative):

Peter Brown, *Western Christendom, Triumph and Adversity, AD 200-1000* (Massachusetts: Blackwell, 2003) - selections

Online Exhibition: Jerusalem (at the MET)

Mid-Winter Break February 15-21

Unit 3 (weeks 6-8): Approaches to Diversity in Protestant Modernity

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Week 6 (Wednesday February 24, Friday February 26): The Protestant Reformation, Modern Sovereignty and the separation from religious difference for the sake of peace.

Readings and Materials (partial and tentative):

Jean Bodin, *Six Books on the Republic*, Selections

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Selections

Meirav Jones and Yossi Shain, "Modern Sovereignty and the Non-Christian, or Westphalia's Jewish State," *Review of International Studies* 43:5 (2017)

Week 7 (Wednesday March 3, Friday March 5): Toleration of Minority and Indigenous Religions in Early Modernity, moderate and radical.

Readings and Materials (partial and/or tentative):

John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (London, 1689). <https://socialsciences.mcmaster.ca/~econ/ugcm/3ll3/locke/toleration.pdf>

Teresa Bejan, "Evangelical Toleration," *The Journal of Politics* 77:4 (2015)

Week 8 (Wednesday March 10, Friday March 12): Principles and Paradoxes of the US constitution, US Civil Religion, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Readings and Materials (partial and/or tentative):

The US Constitution, Selections

Robert Bellah, "Civil Religion in America", *Daedalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 96:1 (1967), 1-21. http://www.robertbellah.com/articles_5.htm

Universal Declaration of Human Rights: <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

Samuel Moyn, Selections from *Christian Human Rights*

Unit 4 (weeks 9-13): Beyond Toleration to Religious Freedom, and its Discontents

Week 9 (Wednesday March 17, Friday March 19): US Division vs. Smith: Indigenous religion and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act

Employment Division v. Smith <https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/494/872>

Religious Freedom Restoration Act (1993): <https://www.congress.gov/bill/103rd-congress/house-bill/1308/text>

Christopher L. Eisgruber * and Lawrence G. Sager, "Why the Religious Freedom Restoration Act is Unconstitutional," *NYU Law Review* 69:3 (1994)

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"Preface to the New Edition," Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, "The Impossibility of Religious Freedom"
(Princeton University Press, 2005)

https://books.google.ca/books?hl=en&lr=&id=LKBHDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=the+impossibility+of+religious+freedom&ots=o1gNq_Y23s&sig=g9Xqg8tpl_2jvtX2Rvd00Rs8Mu0&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=the%20impossibility%20of%20religious%20freedom&f=false

Weeks 10, 11 (Wednesday March 24, Friday March 26, Wednesday March 31 NO CLASS FRIDAY APRIL 2): Religious Freedom and Competing Freedoms and Rights in the US Today.

Readings and Materials:

Three Cases:

Burwell vs. Hobby Lobby

Obergefell v. Hodges (read syllabus, ie. first five pages, and beyond as you like): https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/14pdf/14-556_3204.pdf

Masterpiece Cakeshop v.

Accompanying Texts:

Howe, Amy. 2016. "In Historic Decision, Court Strikes down State Bans on Same-Sex Marriage: In Plain English." SCOTUSblog. <https://www.scotusblog.com/2015/06/in-historic-decision-court-strikes-down-state-bans-on-same-sex-marriage-in-plain-english/>

Amicus Briefing by the Becket Fund, filed with the Supreme court for Obergefell vs. Hodges

History and Controversy:

Faramerz Dabhoiwala, "The Secret History of Same-Sex Marriage," The Guardian (Books), January 23, 2015 <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/jan/23/-sp-secret-history-same-sex-marriage>

Emma Green, "Can States Protect LGBT Rights Without Compromising Religious Freedom?" The Atlantic, January 6, 2016 [\[Link\]](#)

Nancy Knauer, "Religious Exemptions, Marriage Equality, and the Establishment of Religion," UMKC Law Review, 84:3, 2016.

Wendy Brown, "Religious Freedom's Oxymoronic Edge," in Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, and Saba Mahmood, eds., Politics of Religious Freedom (Chicago University Press, 2015)

Week 12 (Wednesday April 7, Friday April 9): Religious Freedom and Indigenous Religion in Canada

Readings and Materials (tentative and partial):

Case:

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Ktunaxa Nation vs. British Columbia

Week 13 (Wednesday April 14): The question of religious freedom and womens' rights, through the lens of the headscarf.

Readings and Materials (tentative and partial)

Lilla, Mark. 2016. "France on Fire." *The New York Review of Books*.

Heeba Ahmed and Muna Eltahawy on the headscarf ban in France:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kWJRam64dQY>

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments. Assignments will be submitted on Avenue to Learn. All assignments are due at 12:30pm on Wednesday. They should be submitted in PDF format, or video submissions in MP4, AVI, WMV, or MOV format, or as a link to YouTube. The final paper for the course is due 2 weeks after the end of the course, so 11:59pm, Wednesday April 22.

Grades. Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
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

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Late Assignments. Late assignments will forfeit 5% of the grade for that assignment for each day late. Assignments will not be accepted more than a week late.

SENATE-APPROVED ADVISORY STATEMENTS

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. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

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. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>.

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.

AUTHENTICITY / PLAGIARISM DETECTION

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. **All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., online search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

COURSES WITH AN ONLINE ELEMENT

Some courses may use online elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, 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 a course that uses online elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

ONLINE PROCTORING

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer

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activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

REQUESTS FOR RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC TERM WORK

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”.

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 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.

COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

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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.

NOTES FOR ALL ARTS & SCIENCE COURSES

1. Some of the statements above refer to a “Faculty Office”; please note that the Arts & Science Program Office serves in this capacity.
2. It is the responsibility of students to check their McMaster email regularly. Announcements will be made in class, via A2L, and/or via the course email distribution list.