

RELIGION IN THE NEWS SPRING 2019—Draft ONLY

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Course Description

Calendar Description: Examination of a variety of topical religious issues covered in the Canadian and global news media, to cultivate awareness of key historical, cultural, and social contexts framing these issues.

Course Objectives

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

- Evaluate critically news items and social media posts about religion
- Undertake research to discover the “story behind the story”
- Engage in temperate debate and discussion about religion in the news

Required Materials and Texts

- Subscription to Religion News Service Morning Report (no cost)
- Other readings as required from Mills Library electronic resources

Class Format

- This is an active learning course. Attendance is mandatory. **A student who misses five classes not only fails the participation grade but also fails the course. No exceptions.**

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Group Project 70%
 - a. Regular research updates and reports 20%
 - b. Content 30%
 - c. Presentation 20%
2. Weekly quizzes 5%
3. Participation 25%

Course Evaluation – Details

Group Project (70%), due June 13

There are several components to this assignment all of which will be negotiated at the beginning of the course in consultation with the students.

Weekly Quizzes (5%)

Each Tuesday students will complete a brief quiz on Avenue based on the news stories of the previous week.

Participation (25%)

As noted above, this is an active learning class. Regular attendance and participation is mandatory.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Class 1 (7 May)

Introduction

[How to Report the News](#) (BBC)

Class 2 (9 May)

Reading the News Critically

Reading: Douglas, C. (2018). Religion and fake news: Faith-based alternative information ecosystems in the US and Europe. *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, 16(1), 61-73.

RNS Discussion

Group Projects and Requirements

Class 3 (14 May)

What's in the News?

Reading: Haskell, D. M. (2011). "What we have here is a failure to communicate": same-sex marriage, evangelicals, and the Canadian news media. *Journal of Religion and Popular Culture*, 23(3).

RNS Discussion; Group Reports

Class 4 (16 May)

What's in the News?

Reading: Lewis, J. (2015) Scientology vs. the media. *Alternative Spirituality and Religion Review*, 6(1), 61-78.

RNS Discussion; Group Reports

Class 5 (23 May)

What's in the News?

Reading: Wasserman, H. (2019). Relevance, resistance, resilience: Journalism's challenges in a global world. *Journalism*, 20(1), 229–232.

RNS Discussion; Group Reports

Class 6 (25 May)

What's in the News?

Reading: George, C. (2019). Journalism in a climate of hate. *Journalism*, 20 (1), 106-109.

RNS Discussion; Group Reports

Class 7 (28 May)

What's in the News?

RNS Discussion; Group Reports

Class 8 (30 May)

What's in the News?

RNS Discussion; Group Reports

Class 9 (4 June)

**What's in the News?
RNS Discussion; Group Reports**

Class 10 (6 June)

**What's in the News?
RNS Discussion; Group Reports**

Class 11 (11 June)

**What's in the News?
RNS Discussion; Group Reports**

Class 12 (13 June)

**What's in the News?
Group Presentations**

Class 13 (18 June)

**What's in the News?
Group Presentations**

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

All assignments MUST BE submitted through Avenue to Learn. Assignments submitted in hard copy or as email attachments WILL NOT BE GRADED.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

| MARK | GRADE | MARK | GRADE |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| 90-100 | A+ | 63-66 | C |
| 85-90 | A | 60-62 | C- |
| 80-84 | A- | 57-59 | D+ |
| 77-79 | B+ | 53-56 | D |
| 73-76 | B | 50-52 | D- |
| 70-72 | B- | 0-49 | F |
| 67-69 | C+ | | |

Late Assignments, Absences, Missed Work, Illness

Participation Grade

This is an active learning course. Attendance is mandatory. **A student who misses four classes not only fails the participation grade but also fails the course. No exceptions.**

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 the 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 submit the missed assignment before the end of classes. I do not redistribute grades for missed assignments.

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using 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. 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.

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 must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please to go www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

University Policies

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior 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 behavior 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 credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

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.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail 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.

Course Modification

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 his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

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.

Email Policy

I no longer respond to grade queries submitted through email. If you need to discuss a grade in the course please arrange to see me in person < <https://philippacarter.youcanbook.me>>. I also do not respond to email messages regarding missed classes. Please arrange to acquire missed notes and other information from a fellow student.

Policy on Electronic Devices

There may be times when we will want to access the internet for a classroom activity. As a courtesy to those sitting behind 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!)