

**RS3AR3 CULTURE AND RELIGION**  
**FALL 2017-18**  
**LECTURES: MONDAYS 1:30-2:20, WEDNESDAYS 1:30-2:20 KTH B132**  
**TUTORIALS: WEDNESDAYS 4:30-5:20 KTH B132**

Professor Celia Rothenberg  
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Office hours – UH124, Mondays 2:30-3:30

**Calendar description:**

This course introduces key theorists and theories, classic and current topics, and issues of methodology and writing in the study of religion and culture.

**Course objectives:**

This course aims to help students achieve:

- A thorough understanding of the theoretical issues relevant to the intersection of religion and culture;
- A solid foundation for pursuing further study and research in the areas of religion and culture;
- Ability to apply insights from course material to understanding current events.

**REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS**

Bielo, James S.  
2015 *Anthropology of Religion: The Basics*. New York: Routledge.

Rothenberg, Celia E.  
2004 *Spirits of Palestine: Gender, Society, and Stories of the Jinn*. New York: Lexington Books.

Additional readings may be required and will be available through the McMaster University Library.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Two film commentaries 20% (10% per commentary)

Each film commentary should include:

- (1) a brief overview of the film (approximately one to two paragraphs);
- (2) a critical discussion of the film, incorporating **specific material from the course text**. Your discussion should cite relevant points (including paraphrased points and/or direct quotes) from Bielo's text, **including page numbers**.

Each film commentary should be between three and four pages, typed, and double-spaced. Your commentaries should be polished, clear, and thoughtful pieces of writing. PLEASE refer to the grading rubric (posted on Avenue) prior to writing your commentary.

Test 1 25%

Test 2 25%

Each test will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions.

Final paper 30%

This assignment will be discussed in class. FINAL PAPER DUE BY NOON ON DECEMBER 13 – UPLOADED TO AVENUE. Late submissions will be penalized (see below).

## COURSE SCHEDULE

**Lectures:** Each week's lecture will highlight, clarify, and expand on concepts covered in that week's reading. In Part I of the course, you should read the chapter assigned prior to the Monday lecture and then reread the chapter prior to the Wednesday lecture. In Part II, you should read each lecture's assigned reading prior to attending the lecture.

**Tutorials:** Tutorials will provide time to discuss questions you may have about the readings and lecture; review material for tests; and discuss course writing assignments (film commentaries and the final paper). You should watch the films PRIOR to tutorial. The films will NOT be shown in class.

### **September 6**

Meet and greet; review syllabus; introductory remarks; Q and A; course pointers.

## **PART I ANTHROPOLOGY OF RELIGION**

### **September 11 and 13 What is "Religion?"**

Reading: Bielo, Chapter 1

- September 13 Tutorial: Q&A for Chapter 1

### **September 18 AND 20 Doing Religious Ethnography**

Reading: Bielo, Chapter 2

- September 20 Tutorial: Discuss film (watch film PRIOR to tutorial):

Strangers abroad - Strange Beliefs: Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard (1902-1973)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIm2mL3g3t8> **PART ONE ONLY**

### **September 25 and 27 Bodies, Words, and Things**

Reading: Bielo, Chapter 3

- September 27 Tutorial: Discuss film (watch film PRIOR to tutorial):

Jesus Camp  
<https://freedocumentaries.org/documentary/jesus-camp#watch-film>

### **October 2 Midterm review, film commentary discussion**

**October 4 Test 1** (test material: Bielo, Chapters 1-3; film: Strange Beliefs)

- **No tutorial October 4**

### **October 9 and 11 FALL RECESS – NO LECTURES**

- **October 9 Film commentary on Jesus Camp due at 5pm (upload to Avenue)**

### **October 16 and 18 In Time, In Place**

Reading: Bielo, Chapter 4

- October 18 Tutorial: Discuss film (watch film PRIOR to tutorial):

Inside Mecca (National Geographic 2003)

<https://freedocumentaries.org/documentary/national-geographic-inside-mecca>

**October 23 and 25 Who Do You Trust?**

Reading: Bielo, Chapter 5

- October 25 Tutorial: Q&A; additional film discussion.

**October 30 and November 1 Going Global**

Reading: Bielo, Chapter 6

- **October 30 Film commentary on Inside Mecca due at 5pm (upload to Avenue)**
- November 1 Tutorial: Q&A

**November 6 Review/Q&A**

**November 8 Test 2** (test material: Bielo, Chapters 4-6)

- **No tutorial November 8**

**PART II CASE STUDY: SPIRIT POSSESSION**

**November 13** Rothenberg, Chapter 1

**November 15** Rothenberg, Chapter 2

- November 15 Tutorial: Q&A

**November 20** Rothenberg, Chapter 3

**November 22** Class and tutorial cancelled

**November 27** Rothenberg Chapter 4

**November 29** Rothenberg, Chapter 5 and 6

- November 29 Tutorial: Q&A

**December 4 Reading:**

Rothenberg, Celia E.

2011 Islam on the Internet: The Jinn and the Objectification of Islam. *Religion and Popular Culture* 23(3):358-371.

**December 6** Course wrap up; final paper discussion; Q&A.

- December 6 Tutorial: Q&A

**FINAL PAPER DUE DECEMBER 13 AT NOON (UPLOAD TO AVENUE).**

## Course Policies

### 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.

### WRITTEN WORK AND LATE SUBMISSIONS

All written work will be marked on grammar, clarity of writing, and organization, as well as content and analysis. Students are encouraged to visit the Centre for Student Development to improve their essay skills (MUSC B107; x24711). For information about the Writing Clinic and the Centre's other services, visit the Centre's website: <http://csd.mcmaster.ca>.

All written work must be submitted as indicated on the syllabus, on the due date.

Late assignments will be penalized two percentage points (deducted from the overall weight of the assignment) per day, including weekends. 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. Late assignments must be emailed to the instructors and will be penalized, if appropriate, according to the date received. Staff in the office of the Department of Religious Studies will not date-stamp or receive papers and other assignments. Do not place papers under my office door or in my mailbox: EMAIL your papers only.

### 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 <http://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.

### 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](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca). For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.

## POLICY FOR MODIFYING A 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## TURNITIN.COM

In this course we may be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students may 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 go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).