

RE 400 Writing in Religious Studies
Course Syllabus W 2011
T/Th 11:30-12:50 p.m. DAWB 3-301
S. L. Scott, Instructor

RE 400 is a required course for fourth-year Religion and Culture majors only. This syllabus contains material needed throughout the term, so if you are enrolled in this course, please be sure to bring this document with you to class. If at any time you doubt your ability to fulfil course requirements, please speak to me directly. **Office hours** are Tuesdays, 10:30-11:30 a.m. in DAWB 2-127; email me at sscott@wlu.ca or leave a message at 519.884.1970 x 2741 to book an appointment.

Method of Instruction:

RE 400 is a student-focused seminar based on mini-lectures, discussion, group work and in-class exercises, as well as extensive editorial feedback. Class content is aimed at preparing students for the kind of in-depth writing, research, reflection and analysis they should be aiming for in their final year.

Learning Objectives:

RE 400 is designed to deepen students' ability to engage in critical thinking; to improve research, writing, editing and oral presentation skills; to analyze how publishers bring religion and religious issues to public attention; and to cultivate the kind of professionalism that befits a diverse scholarly community. Course requirements are tailored to help fourth-year students meet, or exceed, these expectations.

Required Texts & Reading Materials:

1. Doug Babington, Don LePan and Maureen Okun, *The Broadview Guide to Writing*
2. Scott G. Brown, *Guide to Writing Academic Essays in Religious Studies*. The section on the *Chicago Manual of Style* (CMS) is your reference guide for this course
3. Thomas King, *The Truth about Stories: A Native Tale*
4. John Ralston Saul, *Joseph Howe & The Battle for Free Speech*
5. Miriam Toews, *A Complicated Kindness*

Note: the Chicago [Manual of Style] Humanities-style Quick Guide will be emailed as a PDF.

To learn more about Laurier's Learning Services writing and research resources, visit http://www.wlu.ca/page.php?grp_id=306&p=3111.

Class Schedule (Due dates are bolded)

Week 1: Writing & Religion

T., Jan 4: Course overview; Th., Jan 6: **Due: Writing Profile**

Week 2: Journalism/John Ralston Saul; Intro to Editing

T., Jan 11: Broadview exercises; Th., Jan 13: Reading: Saul; **Due: Research Question**

Week 3: Scholarship/Scott G. Brown & *Chicago Manual of Style* (CMS)

T., Jan 18: Reading: Brown; Th., Jan 20: CMS referencing; **Due: Annotated Bibliography**

Week 4: Storytelling/Thomas King; Argumentation

T., Jan 25: Reading: King

Th., Jan 27: Argumentation: Logic, Theses and Counter-Arguments

Week 5: Using Notes; Midterm distributed

T., Feb 1: Notes: Reference and Substantive; **Midterm distributed**

Th., Feb 3: Advanced writing & editing exercises; Prep for Creative/Oral Presentations

Week 6: Oral Presentations & Midterm

T., Feb 8: **Due in class: Midterm**; Th., Feb 10: **Oral Presentations**

Week 7: T., Feb 15 and Th., Feb 17: The Editing Process

Due T., Feb 15 in class: essays + revised annotated bibliographies to peer editors

Due Th., Feb 17 in class: return all edited materials to authors

Week 8: Feb 22 and 24 **READING WEEK**

Week 9: Abstracts; Revising your Paper

T., March 1: Abstracts; **Due Th., March 3 in class: Revised essay + all edited materials**

Week 10: T., March 8 and Th., March 10: **Consults Only** (No Class)

Week 11: T., March 15 and Th., March 17: **Oral Presentations**

Due F., March 11: Final Paper, via email

Week 12: T., March 22 and Th., March 24: **Oral Presentations**

Week 13: Creative Writing/Miriam Toews

T., March 29: Reading: Toews; Th., March 31: course review

Marking Schemes:

5% Peer Editing: editing two student papers using the Editor's Evaluation Form(s) (below) + their respective annotated bibliographies.

5% Peer Support: collegiality, regular attendance and participation, as well as contributing to the overall learning environment of the class.

10% Creative: peer-evaluated oral presentations exploring writing in ways that relate creatively to the required readings. (Joint presenters will receive the same mark.)

20% Midterm: testing standard writing issues covered in *The Broadview Guide*.

60% 15-page Essay: three drafts of a research paper. Only the final paper will be marked; however, each draft must be complete. See the Academic Essay Checklist (below) for details. Incomplete drafts will be penalized (see Penalties, below).

Instructions for the Creative/Oral Presentation:

This "enrichment" assignment allows you to explore publishing and design, journalism and new media, creative writing or storytelling at some depth; options will be discussed at length in class. Briefly, with a partner, you will design a 30-minute oral presentation that adopts a creative, integrative approach to research and writing that touches on one of the areas covered by the required readings. All presentations must include a class handout with: contact info, info (for example, key titles or abstracts) to keep listeners oriented, and creative activities to engage the class.

Instructions for the Midterm:

This take-home exam will be keyed to common writing issues summarized in Editing Tips (below) and in *The Broadview Guide*. Bring your hard copy to class, to mark on the due date.

Instructions for the Essay:

Most of the term will focus on an advanced research paper; see the Academic Essay Check List (below) for details. Briefly, here is the process followed throughout the term:

- Week 2: due: one-paragraph summary of your topic and key research question(s)
- Week 3: due: annotated bibliography in CMS humanities-style (see Quick Guide)
- Week 4: in-class exercises to develop your thesis and counter-argument(s)
- Week 5: in-class exercises on the advantages of using notes
- Week 7: due: (T) essay + annotated bibliography submitted to two peer editors, while you take 2 student papers to edit; (Th) all edited work is returned to authors with Editor's Evaluation Forms
- Week 9: (T) in-class exercises on abstracts; (Th) due in class: your revised essay, annotated bibliography and all edited materials to date
- Week 10: Consult to discuss your research and writing (no class)
- Week 11: due (F) via email: final paper

Corresponding with the Prof:

When emailing me, please include your name in the subject line. I strongly advise you to avoid text-messaging style, i.e., please use standard letter-style salutation and closing.

Policies & Penalties:

Due dates: Are fixed. Extensions are not granted, because everyone's schedule is so closely linked; accordingly, all late submissions will be docked 5% per calendar day.

Papers: Incomplete drafts will be returned unmarked, and 5 marks deducted from your grade. An incomplete paper is any draft that falls short of all requirements outlined in the Academic Essay Checklist (below).

Recycling: Re-using, or borrowing, papers from other courses is not permitted; breach of this agreement results in a failing grade on the essay portion of your mark.

Plagiarism: Please review the university's policy on this practice in Last Words, below.

Guide to Creating a Writing Profile

Prepare to introduce yourself to the class using the following questions selectively, as a guide, then hand in your written account after class; a one-page, single-spaced synopsis is plenty.

What attracts you initially: the author or the book? Do you follow certain authors (dead or alive), or are you more inclined towards certain kinds of reads, regardless of the author, publisher or critical acclaim? If you could choose any author as a writing mentor, who would it be and why?

How much of your reading time is claimed by a particular genre (see list below)? How would you prefer to spend your time? Which kinds of voices (academic, storytelling, journalistic, poetic, etc.,) are you most drawn to? When (if ever) do you read what you actually prefer? Describe your reading habits—time, place, favourite rituals, and so on.

How much writing experience have you had in any of the following genres and how has your work been received (read, marked, critiqued, rejected, published)? If left to your own devices, which of the following would you read more/less of? Which would you weed out altogether?

- Print journalism (newspapers, magazines, blogs)
- Academic works, textbooks, formal or “serious” writing, historical and contemporary
- Resources, reports and guides (encyclopaedias, atlases, etc.)
- Sacred texts (scripture, etc.)
- Public addresses, speeches or lectures
- Essay collections (formal or informal)
- Memoirs, biographies, autobiographies
- Storytelling, spoken word (myths, fables, ancient epics)
- Creative writing (fiction, literary non-fiction, poetry, drama)

Describe your relationship to publishers, books, bookstores and libraries. How familiar are you with the cycle of writing/publication/distribution/sales and consumption, or with any aspect of book production? Do you recognize the terms listed on the Required Readings page (below)? Briefly describe your book buying/borrowing habits. Did you grow up with books, or among avid readers? Were you read to as a child? Are you a first- or second-generation university student? Describe your family’s relationship to both print and electronic media. Do you see yourself on the same continuum or are you on a different trajectory? Why?

Required Readings

The assigned readings in this course will introduce you to how religion and/or religious issues are explored in fiction, non-fiction, print and new media, as well as to how journalists, scholars, public intellectuals and novelists navigate the tumultuous world of publishing.

A. Independent Research

Familiarize yourself with the following so you can participate effectively in Group Work:

- The role of authors, editors, publishers, designers, distributors, agents, critics, booksellers as well as whatever professional organizations represent these professions
- The current crisis in journalism--professional vs. citizen journalism—and why it matters
- Independent/small presses vs. corporate publishers
- Scholarly vs. trade publishing
- Genre distinctions: fiction, non-fiction, creative non-fiction, public address, personal essay, formal vs. informal paper
- Awards (i.e., The Giller, Pulitzer, G-Gs and so on), awarding agencies or sponsors (i.e., the Canada Council for the Arts) and why they matter
- Publishing partnerships, i.e., such as the Massey Lectures, CBC and Anansi Press

B. Group Work

One week before a reading, you will join a small group to explore one of the following:

Author: How do Web sources describe an author's bio and publishing history, including awards and accolades? What's included, what's left out? Where does this particular book fit into the author's career as a whole?

Publisher: Company history and mission? Scholarly or trade, independent or corporate? Where based? Parent company and auxiliaries? Imprints? Concentration? Other authors represented?

Book as Commodity: Consider the look and feel of the book, including its layout and design features (font, book size, paper quality, etc). What is the implied target audience, and what marketing strategies has the publisher adopted to reach the desired consumer? Endorsements and awards— who, what, where, how and why?

Hot Button Issues: What connects this particular work to broader issues? How does the book relate specifically to current debates that affect writers and/or the scholarly community? How does the book relate to other issues in RE 400?

Annotated Bibliographies

The first draft should reflect your essay topic and research question(s); your revised draft should reflect the scope of your research, your tentative thesis (the answer to your research question), and whatever methods you are using to conduct your research. You can expect to revise your bibliography during your research. You can also request a sample student annotated bib (PDF); in the meantime, see Scott G. Brown and the CMS Quick Guide for the proper referencing style.

FAQs:

- *Why an annotated bibliography?*

A research paper is only as good as its sources; researching these allows you to learn more about your authors, their works and publishers—who is reliable, and why.

- *How many sources should I look for?*

For the purpose of RE 400, you will need fifteen: twelve scholarly works directly related to your topic, thesis, counter-argument and methodology (i.e., historical, sociological, etc.); these should be based on core readings in religious studies. Plus, you will need: one reputable media source, one work of fiction and one of non-fiction. Reviews, websites, films, etc., may be added, but do not count as substitutes for your core sources.

- *What's the best way to begin?*

Consult the bibliographies of key works in religious studies, including classics and recent works—post-2000 for books, post-2005 for journal articles—in, for example, the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* (JAAR), *Studies in Religion* (SR) and in standard reference works such as the *Encyclopaedia of Religion*, Lyndsay Jones, editor or the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Nature*, Bron Taylor, editor; see Scott G. Brown as well. Interdisciplinary sources should supplement, not supplant, those in your home discipline. Remember that reputable websites and blogs are valuable sources of insight into topical issues, but do not count towards the required number of academic sources.

- *How much should I write on each title?*

Aim for two or three pithy lines that summarize the topic, main argument and other standout features (i.e., “This article on sacred space is a classic,” or “So-and-so is an expert on Zen Buddhism in America”). Focus on why or how the work relates directly to your research; skip constructions such as: “This book is about....” Draft straight-forward annotations that you can also use in your presentation Handout, if needed.

- *Why use Chicago-style referencing?*

Peer editing demands consistent guidelines that everyone can follow, and the *Chicago Manual of Style* (CMS) is the standard reference work in North American publishing.

Oral Presentations: Preparing

Performance: Concentrate on establishing rapport. Your task is not to display expertise but to connect with your audience. Self-confidence convinces an audience that you know what you're talking about, so make eye contact, find a relaxed posture, project your voice, and breathe.

Speed: Slow down, even if it feels unnatural. We normally read at around 300 w.p.m., yet typically speak at 120-150 w.p.m. Check with people periodically to make sure they're following your train of thought. A drifty or perplexed audience is a signal to shift tempos and slow down.

Diction & Syntax: Generally less formal, more relaxed. Vary sentence length (short sentences are best), and edit for clarity, weeding out unintelligible jargon that distances your audience.

Handout & Referencing: A well-designed one-page handout is an ideal tool for keeping yourself grounded and for orienting your audience. Your handout for this course should include: the title of your paper; your name and contact info; thesis or abstract (directly from your paper); select bibliography (to indicate your key references); and any specific questions you'd like the class to discuss. Remember, use this time to have the class brainstorm along with you, or offer you specific feedback on issues you are trying to address if your paper.

Visual Qualities: Contemporary audiences have a visual rather than an auditory bias; use aural images and concrete examples throughout your presentation to hold your listeners' attention and to drive your point home.

Storytelling: Use brief anecdotes to strengthen the narrative qualities of your presentation, and to set everyone at ease. An audience in the hands of a good storyteller is relaxed, alert and generous, regardless of whether or not everyone agrees with the speaker's position.

Rhythm & Timing: Stay attuned to the overall human rhythms and be ready to adapt accordingly: for example, people droop after meals and in hot, stuffy rooms. Check sound and lighting in advance of speaking and be sure to time your paper, as well as stick to the time allotted.

Presentation of Self: Don't expect your audience to be relaxed and alert if you're not. Your comportment sets the tone for the whole presentation, so do yourself a favour: eat, sleep, wear something snappy, and show up on time. Tip: Make sure you've rehearsed your paper often enough that you can deliver it with conviction and ease.

Oral Presentations: Evaluating

Presentation of self: Are presenters relaxed and alert? Are papers well rehearsed, delivered with ease? How do speakers cope with nervousness? Point out specific tendencies and habits that enhance or detract from the overall presentation.

Performance: How do presenters establish rapport with the audience? Do they make eye contact and project their voices? Do they speak freely, engagingly, with confidence? What specifics can you point out to help speakers become aware of their strengths and weaknesses?

Speed: Are speakers able to maintain an appropriate speed? Can you make out everything that's said? Are some phrases too complex or in-house to catch? Do presenters check in with you to see if you're following along? Do they adapt if they see they're losing their audience?

Diction & syntax: Do presenters speak clearly, with conviction? Is the language intelligible? Engaging? Jargon-free? Are specialized terms adequately explained?

Adapting written information for live presentations: Is the text well suited to this particular audience? Has the writing been adapted for oral presentation, or would it work better as a written piece—if so, say why.

Storytelling: Does the work have strong narrative qualities? Are presenters comfortable (or not) with storytelling? Is storytelling a presenter's strong suit, or does it strain the speaker, seem at odds with his/her native style?

Rhythm & Timing: Are speakers attuned to the overall rhythms of the group and are they able to adapt to whatever happens in the room? Do speakers keep to their allotted time limit? Are they aware of going overtime?

Handout: How effective was the speakers' handout in keeping him or grounded and in keeping the group oriented.

Audience: Rate the group's contribution to the whole experience. Does class behaviour enhance or detract? Are people responsive to the speaker, willing to ask questions, sensitive to the mood, tone, content, etc.?

Editing Tips

Study this list, which corresponds to issues in *The Broadview Guide*, to prepare for the Midterm.

The goal of editing is to alert authors to issues they can address to strengthen and clarify their work. Successful editing communicates to authors specifics about what they need to do to free a piece from blocks, inconsistencies, stylistic weaknesses and so on—your **evaluative comments** (see Editor's Evaluation Form) should address these specific problems.

The good news is that editing other people's work will improve your own; your editing mark will be based on how well you can demonstrate your familiarity with *The Broadview Guide*. For editing purposes, and for writing in general, Broadview is ideal for assessing and remedying the following common writing problems:

- Active and passive voice
- Bias-free language for gender, case, culture, class and religion
- Clauses (versus phrases); identifying principal (or main) and subordinate clauses
- Commas (conventions for using)
- Dashes—en-dash and em-dash, when to use and why
- Ellipses—e.g., “She would not say any more. . . .”
- Grammatical conventions—what's in and what's out
- Hyphens, hyphenation (contrast with dashes)
- Mixed metaphors
- Paragraphing—when to create a new paragraph and why
- Parentheses—correct usage, minimizing overuse
- Possessive—knowing when to use apostrophes, for example
- Punctuation—general guidelines about what to use, and why
- Quotations—interlinear versus block quotes; punctuation issues
- Quotation marks—single versus double; misuse for emphasis
- Referents (Pronoun Referents)
- Rhythm and balance
- Run-on sentences
- Spelling conventions (American, English, Canadian)
- Slang and colloquialisms—do not use except in quotations
- Split infinitives—e.g., “to really think,” “to ideally understand”
- Subject-verb agreement—e.g., “She call whenever possible”
- Tenses—verb; and academic writing
- Word choice—what does the context call for: “immigrant” or “emigrant”?
- Word order
- Wordiness—excising unneeded baggage

Thesis Statements + Counter-Arguments

Your argument is the engine that drives your research. That means your thesis statement (argument) should be stated clearly and logically; it should also be demonstrable (with a reasonable burden of proof) and easy to find—i.e., make it the last sentence of your introduction.

Analyzing Theses:

1. What makes the following a poor thesis?

“Religions are important to society in many ways, and I will talk about them in this paper; one of the great religious leaders I will focus on is Gandhi who reveals how other religious figures can also be the subject both of much reverence as well as historical controversy.”

2. What makes this thesis statement effective?

“Despite the fact that Gandhi is an outstanding figure in the history of world peace, the religious factors that contributed to his successful activism have been overlooked.”

Logic & Grammar:

A thesis statement must be logical; faulty grammar or syntax will automatically undermine a statement's validity. Make sure you can analyze a statement properly, for example, are the above samples **simple** or **compound sentences**? Identify the **principal** and **subordinate clause(s)**.

Proofing a Thesis Statement:

Save yourself a little heartache by using the following steps to determine whether or not you've drafted a valid thesis for your paper:

1. State what **topic** is implied by the thesis. (The topic, after all, is not the thesis...)

2. Identify the **burden of proof**: circle each concept you must investigate, or unpack, in your paper to validate your argument. Tip: visualize each of these concepts as a section (with heading) or sub-section (with sub-heading) in the paper. Do they connect, flow? Do they cover everything that should be covered?

3. State possible **counter-argument(s)** implied by the thesis statement. Brainstorm all possible angles before you decide which counter-argument to focus on.

4. Brainstorm the range of **sources** needed to build a solid case *and* to present a convincing counterargument. What kinds of works should appear in your bibliography?

5. Now, use the topic, burden of proof, counter-argument(s) and sources to generate your **outline**.

Substantive Notes¹

Citations, or reference notes, are foot- or endnotes that direct your readers to the exact sources you used in your research. Substantive notes also appear in foot- or endnotes the difference is that they include “substance” that is relevant to your research but that does not belong in the body of the essay. Such notes often function like “asides” do in conversation, referring to extra information that readers can pursue on their own. Both kinds of notes are common in academic works; you can usually find them grouped at the end of an article, chapter, or at the end of the book.

What belongs in a substantive note:

Research always generates information that you don’t know what to do with. If you try to squeeze all that information into the body of your paper, you will end up on a tangent or simply cluttering your argument. This “surplus” material is best handled by being placed in a substantive note. In sum, create a note whenever you want to:

1. **Define or explain something:** for example, see superscript #1 on this sheet;
2. **Add supplementary references or ideas.** You can refer to other authors, comment on someone’s research, or add information that will guide your readers to other resources (as per superscript #2, below);
3. **Detail or flesh out ideas** that are significant but that do not belong in the body of the text.

Adding substantive notes to Chicago A:²

Simply add a superscript, the same as if you were creating a new foot- or endnote, then insert your commentary, plus any necessary citations. Do not create a separate list of reference and substantive notes.

Make sure you place your Notes at the end of an essay before, not after, the Bibliography.

1

The term “notes” is fast replacing “footnotes” and “endnotes”; substantive notes include material beyond mere citations: that is, “substance” refers to reflections, definitions or critical comments relevant to the research at hand.

2

For examples, see the “Chicago Humanities-Style Citation Quick Guide” pdf. Note: The version we use in class has been reduced to Chicago A. You can download the full Guide from the department’s website.

Abstracts

An abstract is a terse descriptive overview of the topic, method (i.e., approach or theoretical stance), thesis and summary or conclusion in a research paper. The key is to communicate the gist of your work.

The following sample by a former RE 400 student has numbered (in square brackets) sentences that correspond to the four-line model, which is explained below.

Responding to Intermarriage:
Strategies in Contemporary North American Judaism
By M. Richter

[1. Topic] After a 1990 Jewish Population Survey that placed the rate of intermarriage at 52%, North American Jewish communities responded to what they saw as a crisis of Jewish survival. [2. Method] Scholarship from the major denominational strands of Judaism in North America—Modern Orthodox, Conservative and Reform—is compared, with emphasis on the particularities of each strand's approach to the intermarriage issue. [3. Thesis] The dominant North American Jewish responses to intermarriage are characterized as reluctant acceptance and accommodation. [4. Summary] The tendency across denominations to respond to intermarriage within a Jewish context by encouraging growth, or strengthening, established Jewish communities is also highlighted.

In four sentences only, compose your abstract by following these guidelines:

1. Describe the **topic**, subject matter or problem your research tackles.
2. Specify the **method(s)** or approach (i.e., psychological, historical, sociological, qualitative, quantitative, etc.) you are using to analyze the topic or issue.
3. State your **thesis** (argument) in one cogent, grammatically correct sentence.
4. **Summarize** the main ideas of your paper.

Note: Keep in mind that an abstract is often published independently of the work to which it refers, which is why it is written in the third person, repeating the language and ideas of the work summarized. In other words, you do not need to introduce new issues, vocabulary, or evaluations, so avoid telling what happens, i.e., "First, I say...; then I look at...; and finally, I argue...."

For your essay: Place your titled, single-spaced abstract on a separate page after the title page and before the body of the essay; place the Roman numeral (i) at the bottom of this page. (Note: MS Word does not allow you to switch numbering, so you will need to pen or pencil in that Roman numeral by hand.)

RE 400 W 2011 Editor's Evaluation Form

Peer editors, please attach a copy of this form to each author's paper.

Author: _____ **Editor:** _____

The following sections correspond to those detailed in the Academic Essay Check List. Editors, please assign the number(s) (5 = strong; 1 = weak) that reflect your honest evaluation of the author's efforts in each area, then add comments, below. Your evaluation on this form should be accompanied by detailed line editing throughout the author's paper.

General Professionalism

The paper is complete, with all necessary scholarly apparatus (Y/N). The Abstract, Notes (both reference and substantive) and CMS humanities-style referencing match expectations as outlined in the syllabus (Y/N). The Abstract is complete and appropriate to the paper (Y/N). More work is needed on the: Abstract (Y/N); Notes (Y/N); citations (Y/N); substantive Notes (Y/N); and/or formal aspects of the bibliography (Y/N).

-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5---

Logic + Argumentation: Thesis & Counter-Argument(s), Plus Support

There is a clear, central thesis placed at the end of the Introduction (Y/N). Sound reasons and clear, concrete examples are provided in support of the thesis (Y/N). The counter-argument is also clear, easy to find, and appropriate to the thesis (Y/N). The development of the essay's overall argument is logical and coherent (Y/N). There are the required number and kind of sources, and these are handled well (Y/N). Substantive Notes are used to real advantage (Y/N).

-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5---

Organization, Flow & Quality of Writing

The essay is well-organized, with smooth, logical transitions (Y/N); flow would be enhanced by dividing this paper into sections using headings and sub-headings, as needed (Y/N). The paper is focused (Y/N), states the scope (limitations) of the research (Y/N). Any important or related issues that have been left out are explained briefly in a note (Y/N). The writing style is clear and compelling, engaging readers (Y/N/Not yet). Unwarranted jargon and vague abstractions are kept to a minimum (Y/N). More work is needed on grammar, syntax and a variety of stylistic issues (Y/N). The prose is error-free and stylistically appropriate for a formal research paper (Y/N).

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Additional Comments:

RE 400 W 2011 Academic Essay Check List

A. General Professionalism (cover sheet, abstract, sources, notes & referencing)

- Paper: complete and submitted on time with cover page, abstract, notes (both reference and substantive) and bibliography in CMS-humanities style referencing; paper is double-spaced and numbered; hard copies are stapled
- Cover sheet: title, student name and ID, course name, instructor and due date; include date submitted if different from due date. Font: TNR 12-point (reduced font size is used for footnotes only); Justification: flush left
- Abstract: On a separate page after the title page, using Roman numeral (i), a one-paragraph, single-spaced summary composed in third-person formal prose; passive constructions kept to a minimum; abstract should be a succinct outline of the paper's topic, method, thesis and summary; well-written, engaging, error-free
- Notes: are adequate in kind and placement; avoid over- and under-use; reference and substantive notes should both be used to advantage; the latter will include asides, definitions, elaborations, commentary, etc., as needed
- Citations: CMS referencing used correctly (see Brown and CMS Quick Guide)

B. Argumentation (thesis/counter-thesis) and support (bibliography)

- Thesis: clear, concise and demonstrable; placed at the end of the Introduction
- Argument: built upon the burden of proof implied by the thesis
- Counter-argument(s): well-placed, clear and substantial, with appropriate references to substantiate the point(s) made
- Logic + reasoning: consistent in both the thesis and counter-argument
- Conclusion: sums up the argument and suggests directions for further research
- Bibliography: includes a minimum of twelve appropriate scholarly sources, including core readings in religious studies (a range of journals, monographs, anthologies, encyclopaedias, etc.), plus one work of fiction, one of non-fiction and one reliable media source on the paper's topic; Websites kept to a minimum

C. Organization, focus, flow and quality of the writing

- Flow: paper is balanced, cogent, engaging
- Organization: author uses sections and sub-sections, as needed
- Diction and syntax: appropriate to intended audience, paper written in author's own voice, free from plagiarism³
- Style: formal, without slang or colloquialisms; academic jargon and wordiness are kept to a minimum
- Punctuation: correct and consistent throughout
- Grammar: free from repeated errors and stylistic folly
- Introduction and Conclusion: engaging and proportionate to one another

RE 400 W 2011 Course Work Assessment

Your final grade will be based on your marks for the following assignments:

A. Peer Editing (5%): _____

Editing 2 student essays with respective annotated bibliographies using the Editor's Evaluation Form(s).

B. Peer Support (5%): _____

Collegiality, regular attendance and participation, as well as contributing to the overall learning environment of the class.

C. Creative/Oral Presentation (10%): _____

Peer-evaluated assignment exploring creative approaches to research and writing; connected to issues raised in the required readings. Note: both you and your joint presenter are receiving the same mark for this assignment.

D. Midterm (20%): _____

A take-home test based on standard writing issues covered in *The Broadview Guide*.

E. Research Paper, final draft (60%): _____

- a. Overall professionalism (20%): _____
- b. Argumentation (thesis/counter-thesis) and support (20%): _____
- c. Overall organization, focus, flow and quality of the writing (20%): _____

Note: To receive full marks, all drafts of your paper must include the following: a cover sheet, abstract, both reference & substantive notes, and fifteen appropriate sources, which will be evaluated under support (see "b," above). Sources should include: one reputable media article, one work of fiction and one of (creative) non-fiction related directly to your topic, as well as twelve appropriate scholarly works from journals, monographs, anthologies, encyclopaedias, etc., in religious studies. Interdisciplinary papers will necessarily include sources from whichever fields or disciplines are related to your methodology, i.e., psychology, history, English, philosophy and so on—but these are not substitutes for work in your home discipline.

Winter 2011 Additional Information

Student Awareness of the Accessible Learning Centre: Students with disabilities or special needs are advised to contact the Accessible Learning Office for information regarding its services and resources. Students are encouraged to review the Calendar for information regarding all services available on campus.

For night classes: After class call 886-FOOT for a walk or drive home - No Walk is Too Short or Too Long!!!"

Academic and Research Misconduct: Wilfrid Laurier University uses software that can check for plagiarism. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form and have it checked for plagiarism.

Students are expected to be aware of and abide by University regulations and policies, as outlined in the current on-line Calendar (see <http://www.wlu.ca/calendars>).

The University has an established policy with respect to cheating on assignments and examinations, which the student is required to know. Students are cautioned that in addition to a failure in the course, a student may be suspended or expelled from the University for cheating and the offence may appear on one's transcript, in which event the offence can have serious consequences for one's business or professional career. For more information refer to the current Undergraduate calendar (University Undergraduate Regulations).

Students are to adhere to the *Principles in the Use of Information Technology*. These *Principles* and resulting actions for breaches are stated in the current Undergraduate Calendar.

Examination and/or Deferrals: Students must reserve the examination period of **April 7-28**. If you are considering registering for a special examination or event, you should select a time outside the examination period. Consult with the Undergraduate Calendar for special circumstances for examination deferment.

Please note: Students' names may be divulged in the classroom, both orally and in written form, to other members of the class. Students who are concerned about such disclosures should contact the course instructor to identify whether there are any possible alternatives to such disclosures.

The up-to-date and official version of the Calendar can be found at www.wlu.ca/calendars. Note: It is your responsibility to keep a hard copy of all written work submitted for this class. Please back up your electronic copies in the event that you lose your hard copy, or are asked to reproduce it.