

COURSE SYLLABUS



COURSE TITLE: REL 100 World Religions of the West

CLASS SECTION: D01

TERM: W2025

COURSE CREDITS: 3

DELIVERY METHOD(S): Online Asynchronous

Camosun College respectfully acknowledges that our campuses are situated on the territories of the Ləkʷəŋən (Songhees and Kosapsum) and WSÁNEĆ peoples. We honour their knowledge and welcome to all students who seek education here.

INSTRUCTOR DETAILS

NAME: Dr. Stephen Fielding

EMAIL: FieldingS@camosun.bc.ca

OFFICE: Y320

HOURS: In person or via Collaborate on Mondays and Wednesdays 1:30-2:30, or by appointment.

Instructor Bio:

Growing up in a railway family, I spent my childhood moving around, from Niagara Falls to Fort Erie, Sarnia, and finally, Winnipeg. I've also lived in Vancouver, Toronto, and Rome, Italy. I completed my Bachelor's degree at the University of Winnipeg, followed by a Master of Arts from Simon Fraser University and PhD from the University of Victoria.

I have taught History and Religion at four colleges and universities and published research on a wide range of topics, including immigration, multiculturalism, sport, gender, religion, and ethnic food. My wife is from Italy and we are parents of a 14-year-old daughter and 9-year-old boy.

An understanding of the world's religious traditions, particularly of their similarities and differences, is critical to the development of a person's worldview and grasp of their place in the diverse human landscape. I am looking forward to exploring Religions of the West together this semester

As your course instructor, I endeavour to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me. Camosun College is committed to identifying and removing institutional and social barriers that prevent access and impede success.

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

An introductory survey of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, this course explores the sources, beliefs (including representative texts), and practices of these religions. The traditions of each will be studied in their cultural and political contexts from both historical and contemporary perspectives.

PREREQUISITE(S):

One of: • C+ in English 12 • C in Camosun Alternative

CO-REQUISITE(S):

Not Applicable

EXCLUSION(S):

Not Applicable

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES / OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course a student will be able to:

1. Explain the contexts/historical settings in which Judaism, Christianity, and Islam arose.
2. List major dates, events, and places central to each.
3. Describe the historical linkage/relationships among them.
4. Summarize their major beliefs, teachings, ideals, and practices.
5. Explain variations/splits/divisions in each tradition.
6. Analyze their similarities/differences.
7. Compare/contrast each religion's view of the others.
8. Evaluate their relationship to and impact on the world today.

REQUIRED MATERIALS & RECOMMENDED PREPARATION / INFORMATION

1. Roy C. Amore, Amir Hussain, and Willard G. Oxtoby, *A Concise Introduction to World Religions*, 4th ed.
2. William F. Kay, *Pentecostalism: A Very Short Introduction*
3. *The Bible*, recommended translations: ***New International Version (NIV), New Revised Standard Version, or Revised Standard Version*** (NIV available in the bookstore)
4. *The Qur'an*, trans. Muhammed Abdel Haleem (available in the bookstore)

Optional:

The bookstore carries limited copies of a Bible that includes in depth scholarly commentary: ***The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha, New Revised Standard Edition***

COURSE SCHEDULE, TOPICS, AND ASSOCIATED PREPARATION / ACTIVITY / EVALUATION

The following schedule and course components are subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Lectures: The lectures are officially assigned on the D2L course site every Tuesday at 11:30 am. However, most are already viewable and you can listen to them in advance if you wish. Each is a PowerPoint slideshow featuring a combination of video, audio, and text.

Seminars: A seminar is a class discussion about the lectures and readings for that week. For this, students must participate in two (2) parts:

1. A personal reaction to the material + responses to 2 questions
This happens every Wednesday before 11:59 pm (midnight).
2. Next, respond to two students' others' posts before Thursday evening at 11:59 pm

You will find more information on the seminars on the next page.

The lectures aim to follow a similar structure to the textbook and they draw heavily on the scriptures of the three monotheistic traditions. The course delivery format is asynchronous, meaning that it is not in real time. In a few cases, there will be live online visits from local religious leaders; however, these meetings will be recorded for students who wish to view them at a later time.

Read actively the assigned textbook readings for each lecture, ideally having guide questions beside you (the questions that you consider as you read the material and the ones I provide you for each week's seminar discussion). Always be aware of the major themes of each chapter. These are listed in the textbook on the first page of every chapter. Students who do the required readings each week and view the lectures will gain a stronger understanding of western world religions, be more likely to enjoy the course, and be well positioned for success.

My role in the online seminar discussions is primarily as an observer and occasional moderator, if required. I read and thoughtfully consider every post you make and I might contribute my own comments from time to time.

As mentioned, on certain occasions during the semester, leaders from local religious communities (i.e. a rabbi, pastor, imam) will visit the class for an online presentation. These visits are a highlight of the course because they generate interactive and personable discussions with a practicing expert in the faith. As such engagements can be arranged, the lecture schedule and content will change accordingly.

Detailed Instructions about the Seminars

The seminar component of the course is critically important to the student (and instructor) learning experience, which is reflected in its weighting as 30 percent of your final grade. During the seminars, you will discuss and sometimes debate the assigned seminar materials. These are mostly primary sources taken from the scriptures or other media made available on D2L. As part of your seminar preparedness, I strongly recommend that you first read the pre-set questions on D2L and then explore the readings themselves. To follow the weekly tasks on D2L, go to the course site and then My Tools → Content.

All postings should be made in the "Discussion" link for that day's page (in Content).

To review:

Wednesday before 11:59 pm (midnight)

1. Start a Thread. This will be your "first impressions" response to the readings. It must be at least 100 words in length. Some suggested questions to guide your response include: What did you learn? What surprised you? How is the story, idea, value, claim, belief or practice in this passage similar or different to those in other religious traditions?

2. Next, answer at least two (2) of the prescribed questions I've provided on D2L for that week. Each one must be a minimum of 50 words

*Note: there are a few weeks when you do not have to create seminar posts. A short assignment is due instead.

Thursday before 11:59 pm (midnight)

3. Respond to two (2) other student's threads from the day before. Your response can be to their initial "first impressions" post and/or to their answers to the prescribed questions. Each of your responses must be a minimum of 50 words

More hints on what you should do: In your online seminar responses, provide thoughtful consideration of the scriptures and other sources you read. Communicate effectively to the other students. You are welcome

to mention what was interesting, clear or unanswered, and what made (or did not make sense) to you. Don't worry: if something doesn't seem to make sense to you, there are probably other students feeling the same way. Everyone is on a learning path here.

Next, remember that "comparison" is one of the highest forms of analysis. I strongly encourage you to look for similarities and differences in the great Western religious traditions, and perhaps also consider how they compare and contrast to the western secular society in which we live. As we move further into the semester, you will be better able to compare themes in one religious tradition (eg. the afterlife, what it means to be virtuous, views on food, the nature of God, how a follower should live, the nature of sin, etc.) with ones we've already studied.

In your posts, feel free to include your own questions for other students, as long as they relate to the material. Great dialogue and debate always starts with a thought-provoking question.

What you should not do:

1. Do not give a mere congratulatory response to other students' contributions, such as "Josh, you did a great job and clarified everything for me." This is a poor attempt at participation, akin to a Facebook "like." The result will be a poor grade. Make sure that you write an informed response that adds richness to the discussion or debate. It's okay to compliment someone (because many of you will have fascinating things to say!), but be sure to follow this virtual high-five with your own contribution to the discussion. Also, try to avoid "going into the weeds," so to speak.
2. Keep on topic. It is okay to meld some personal experience into your postings, but first speak to the assigned reading material. For your participation mark, you will be assessed primarily on the quality of your interpretations and grasp of the course readings.
3. Do not use AI to generate your answers. These must be your own. Spell checkers and grammar checkers are permitted.

*Note: A student who misses participating in 3 seminars will forfeit their entire participation grade

IMPORTANCE DATES AT A GLANCE

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Tuesday January 7 @ 11:30 am | First Online Lecture Officially Released |
| Thursday January 23 @ 11:59 pm | Crisis and the Human Response Short Paper Due |
| Thursday March 6 @ 11:59 pm | <i>Pentecostalism</i> Book Review of Chapters 1 and 4 Due |
| Tuesday March 27 @ 11:59 pm | Research Paper Due |
| Thursday April 3 @ 11:59 pm | Women in Islam Response Due |

Lecture and Seminar Schedule (subject to change)

WEEK 1 For Week 1 Lecture, Read Textbook Chapter 1

- Jan. 7 Lectures:
1. Welcome to REL 100
 2. Religions of the Ancient World: Foundational Stories and Sources of the Monotheistic Religions

Jan. 8/9

Seminar 1: Understanding Religion *No advanced readings

What to do:

Wednesday before 11:59 pm (midnight)

1. Contribute your initial response to the video. Minimum 100 words
2. Select and answer 2 of the prescribed questions from D2L Minimum 50 words each.

Thursday before 11:59 pm (midnight)

3. React/add to another student's initial response from the day before. Minimum 100 words
4. Select 2 threads started by other students and add your own contribution to the threads. It can be to their initial response and/or answers to the prescribed questions. Minimum 50 words each.

We will watch philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah's TED Talk, "Is Religion Good or Bad" (A Trick Question). If you'd like to view it in advance, here's the URL:
https://www.ted.com/talks/kwame_anthony_appiah_is_religion_good_or_bad_this_is_a_trick_question

Questions for Discussion

1. What bold claim does Appiah make about "religion"? In other words, why does he say, "There is no such thing as religion?"
2. How could a person be an atheist while practicing a religion?
3. What might be the problems and limits of Western definitions of "religion" and "non-religion"?
4. According to Appiah, what "deal" was made between Christianity and science (or philosophy) in the West during the 19th Century and still exists to this day? Do you agree that there is such a "separation"? Might there be exceptions?
5. How and why might the belief systems, structures, and practice of religion differ between time periods, places, and people groups?

WEEK 2

***For Week 2-5 Lectures, Read Textbook Chapter 4**

Jan. 14

Lectures:

Judaism Part 1: Chosen People, Covenant, and Nation

Jan. 15/16

Seminar 2: Creation, Flood, Restoration

Readings:

The origin of everything, in anticipation of Israel -- Genesis 1-11
Abraham called, commissioned, and tested -- Genesis 12, 17, 22

*Follow same submission instructions as last week--first posts due Wednesday by 11:59 pm and responses by Thursday at 11:59 pm.

Questions for Discussion:

1. What do the Creation and Flood accounts teach about
a) God's nature, b) humanity c) human relationships with one another, and d) God's relationship with humanity? (Spend some time on this)

2. Why do you think there is a Flood account in Genesis?
3. In the book of Genesis, how are the origins of the world, the first humans, Abraham (the father of the Hebrew people), and the Hebrew nation linked together?

WEEK 3

Jan. 21

Lectures:

1. Judaism Part 2: The Promised Land from Entry to Exile. Jewish Foundations to the Greco-Roman World, Rabbinic Judaism, and the Middle Ages
2. Judaism Part 3a: Pressures and Promises in the Modern Period (1492 to the present), and the Zionist Movement

Seminar 3 (No Discussions). Wisdom Literature, Poetry, Theodicy

***CRISIS AND THE HUMAN RESPONSE SHORT PAPER DUE**

THURSDAY JANUARY 23 AT 11:59 PM (see instructions in Section 5)

*Note: Due to the short paper assignment, you do not have to do seminar posts this week

Readings:

Job 1-2, 6-7, 31, 38-42 and Epilogue (feel free to skim rest of book)
 Psalm 5-6, 23, 73, 139
 Proverbs 5-6
 Ecclesiastes 1-4, 12

Holocaust survivor, Nobel Peace Prize winner and professor Elie Wiesel talks about God (also on D2L)

<https://crownheights.info/general/2897/elie-wiesel-on-his-beliefs/>

Optional: Scene from director Terrence Malick's film Tree of Life (2011), a reinterpretation of Job's final conversation with God
<https://vimeo.com/37256937>

Questions (number 6 is mandatory; the others are for consideration):

1. What lessons can be drawn from the story of Job? (i.e. Why do bad things happen to good people? And why does God allow it?)
2. Why do you think Job ultimately accepts his circumstance when God replies?
3. Taken together, what do these passages tell us about fundamental religious questions (origins, meaning of life, human ethics)?
4. To what extent are these matters universal or specific to the Jewish people?
5. How does Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel reconcile his faith with the horrors experienced at Auschwitz? Are you surprised at his reaction?
6. In comparison to Job and/or Elie Wiesel, how would you respond a massive crisis? Would belief and faith be helpful in a time of struggle? Why or why not?

WEEK 4

Jan. 28 Lectures:
Judaism Part 3b: Pressures and Promises in the Modern Period (1492 to the present), and the Zionist Movement

Judaism Part 4: The Holocaust, the State of Israel, and their Legacy

Jan. 29/30 Seminar 4: A Nation Set Apart

*Follow the same submission instructions as for previous weeks.

Readings:

God delivers the law – Exodus 19-25, 32-34

Some examples of how to atone for sin – Leviticus 1-4

How the Talmud works (D2L)

Babylonian Talmud Ch. XV Regulations Concerning the Tying and Untying of Knots on the Sabbath (D2L)

Oxtoby. 112 “Welcoming the “Sabbath Queen,” p. 122 “The Shema” and p. 139 “The Mezuzah”

For interest: Song of Solomon (or “Song of Songs”). Why do you think this book made it into the Hebrew Scriptures?

Questions for Discussion:

1. In the Mosaic covenant, what is required of God’s people and what does He promise to do in return?
2. What is God’s delivery of the Law so important to the Hebrew/Jewish people? Why has he chosen them from all nations in the world?
3. Why is there so much focus in the Law on holiness and atonement for sins?
4. Why do Sabbath observances occupy such a central importance in Judaism?
5. Why has the Shema remained the most revered and practiced prayer in all forms of Judaism?

WEEK 5

Feb. 4 **VISIT FROM RABBI LOUIS SUTKER OF CONGREGATION EMANU-EL SYNAGOGUE. Live on Collaborate at 2:00pm and recorded**

Feb. 5/6 Seminar 5: Why the Jews?

Watch Rabbi Ben Spiro’s Video: Rabbi Ben Spiro, “Why the Jews?”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dIDHbA3Afsc>

Questions for Discussion:

1. Consider the reasons Rabbi Spiro gives for the scapegoating of Jewish people. Which of these accusations stands out to you the most? Why?
2. In your view, why have Jewish people been historically subject to exclusion, expulsion, discrimination, and sometimes elimination?
3. Can you identify a modern conspiracy about Jews? How is it similar or different to historical accusations and machinations?
4. Can you recall hearing a stereotype about Jewish people?

5. What is the situation of Jewish people in the world today?

WEEK 6

***For Week 6-10 Lectures, Read Textbook Chapter 5**

Feb. 11 Lecture:
 Christianity Part 1-2: The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ

Feb. 12/13 Seminar 6: Wheat among the Weeds: The Kingdom of God is like...

 Read: Life of Jesus Christ – Gospel of Matthew 1-13
 Theme of Light into the Darkness – John chapter 1, 3:1-21

Questions for Discussion:

1. In the book of Matthew, how does Jesus authenticate his status as the Messiah?
2. What is the significance of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount? (Matthew 5-7)
3. Why does he give a list of those who are "blessed"? What does it mean to be blessed?
4. How does John chapter 1 sketch a broad picture of history? In this cosmic framework, who is Jesus and what is his mission?
5. Why does Jesus often introduce a statement by saying, "As it is written..." ?
6. What cautions does Jesus give his followers in Matthew 11-13? Why might this have been included in the gospel?

WEEK 7 READING BREAK

WEEK 8

Feb. 25 Lectures:

 Christianity Part 3: From Persecuted Church to Rome's Imperial Religion and
 Beyond (Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism)

Feb. 26/27 Seminar 8: Jesus and the Early Christians

 Read: Life of Jesus Christ – Matthew 15, 20-23, 25-28
 On Faith – Hebrews 11
 On Peculiarity of Figure of Christ – I Corinthians 1:18-31, Philippians 2:1-11

Questions for Discussion:

1. Consider again, what is the "kingdom of heaven/God" that Jesus continually speaks of during his ministry? Have this week's scriptural readings changed your interpretation?
2. What are the implicit invitations and warnings imbedded in his teachings?
3. According to Matthew, why is Jesus at odds with the teachers of the law (the Pharisees and Sadducees)? Was the tension between them inevitable?
4. According to the book of Hebrews, what is faith? What is the connection between the new movement of Jesus followers and the Jewish past?
5. What made Jesus an atypical hero of Antiquity, according to the books of 1 Corinthians and Philippians?

6. How are followers instructed to model their lives on the example of Jesus?

WEEK 9

Mar. 4 **VISIT FROM REVEREND JOSH WILTON OF THE TABLE ANGLICAN CHURCH. Live online on Collaborate at 2:00pm and recorded**

Mar. 5/6 Seminar 9: The Charismatic Movement

***PENTECOSTALISM BOOK REVIEW DUE THURSDAY MARCH 6 at 11:59 pm (see instructions in Section 5)**

*Note: Due to the short paper, you do not have to post seminar responses this week

Read: Kay Pentecostalism: A Very Short Introduction, Chapters 1 and 4 only.
From the Bible:
The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost – Acts chapter 2, 4:32-7
Spiritual Gifts – 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; 14:1-12 and 14:22-25

WEEK 10

Mar. 11 Lectures:
Christianity Part 4: Reformation Christianity and Roman Catholicism after the Protestant Reformation (1517-)

Christianity Part 5: Recent Movements and a Global Faith

Mar. 12/13 Seminar 10: Salvation, Sacraments, and Ritual

Read: Paul the Missionary and His Scripture
Living by the Spirit – Galatians 5:16-26
On Sin, Salvation, and a New Community – Ephesians 2, Romans 3-5, chapter 12:1 to chapter 14:13
“How St. Augustine Invented Sex,” The New Yorker, June 19, 2017 (D2L, skim)
www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/06/19/how-st-augustine-invented-sex
Criticism of Augustine’s view of Original Sin and its impact on Christian history (D2L)
<http://www.vision.org/visionmedia/article.aspx%3Fid%3D227>
BBC “Original Sin” (D2L)
http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/beliefs/originalsin_1.shtml
The Nicene Creed, adopted 325 CE (D2L)
<https://www.crcna.org/welcome/beliefs/creeds/nicene-creed>

Questions for Discussion:

1. What does Paul instruct early believers about a) sin and b) salvation?
2. What is the relationship between the new faith and the Jewish Law? Are they compatible?
3. How are Christians instructed to live as a community and in society?
4. Why were creeds such as the Apostles Creed and Nicene Creed so important in early Christianity and afterward?

5. How did St. Augustine frame human sexuality as a matter of original sin? How have his writings influenced the history of western Christianity?

WEEK 11

*For Week 11-14 Lectures, Read Textbook Chapter 6

Mar. 18 Lecture:

Islam Part 1: The Birth of Islam and Formation of Practice,
Parts a) and b)

Mar. 19/20 Seminar 11: Exploring the Key Teachings of Islam

Readings from the Qur'an and Questions for Discussion (combined):

Chapter (sura) 3 verses 65-68 – What is Abraham's true identity, according to the Qur'an?

Sura 2 verses 124-140 – In what context does the Qur'an place Abraham?

Sura 37 verses 101-113 – How does this version compare to the Jewish version?

Sura 3 verses 33-63, sura 4 verses 153-159 and suras 170-172 – How is Jesus venerated? How is it similar to or different from the Christian version of Jesus? Why might Christians strongly disagree?

Sura 7: verses 10-27 and sura 17 verses 61-65 Who is Satan? Why did he become the source of evil? How are Adam and Eve portrayed in the Satan story?

Sura 61 verses 1-7 and sura 33 verses 40-48 – View of Muhammad

Sura 3 verses 84-97 – View of Jews and Christians

WEEK 12

Mar. 25

Lecture:

Islam Part 2: The Sunni-Shi'ite Split over Succession, and the
Spread of Islam

*RESEARCH PAPER DUE TUESDAY MARCH 25TH AT 11:59 PM

Mar. 25/6

Seminar 12: Struggle and Schism

Readings from the Qur'an and Questions for Discussion (combined)

Sura 9:1-60 and Sura 55 What is the role of jihad? How is this re/interpreted today?

Sunnis and Shia: The Ancient Split, BBC

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-16047709>

"The Sunni-Shia Divide," Council for Foreign Relations

<https://www.cfr.org/interactives/sunni-shia-divide#!/sunni-shia-divide>

Optional: "How Modern Mathematics Emerged from a Lost Islamic Library,"

by Adrienne Bernhard, BBC Future, December 7, 2020

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20201204-lost-islamic-library-maths>

Questions for Discussion:

1. Why do you think Islam grew in spite of early resistance?

2. Why is the issue of succession to the Prophet so important in the history of Islam? And why do you think it resulted in conflict and splits?

3. Describe the current situation in the Middle East. How has the 1,400-year-old Sunni-Shia split become a critical fault line for political control?
4. What are the main differences and tensions between Sunni and Shi'ite Islam? Do you think they are reconcilable?

WEEK 13

Apr. 1 Lectures:
 Islam Part 3: Islamic Law, Philosophy, and Sufism
 Islam Part 4: Modernity and Islam

Apr. 2/3 Seminar 13: Muslim Views on Women and Paradise

***WOMEN IN ISLAM 2-PAGE SHORT PAPER DUE THURSDAY APRIL 7 AT 11:59 PM
 (see instructions in Section 5)**

*Note: Due to the short paper, you do not have to post seminar responses this week

Questions for Discussion:

1. Question for Short Paper: Compare Samina Ali's description of Qur'anic views on woman and what you read in the passages below from the Qur'an. In what ways might they be similar or different?

Readings and Questions for Consideration before you write the short paper.

1. Watch Samina Ali's TEDx Talk <https://tedxuniversityofnevada.org/speakers/samina-ali/>
2. Sura 4:1-35 and sura 2:222-242 – How does the Qur'an view marriage and divorce?
3. Sura 16:54-60 – What view of a girl's birth does the Qur'an reject?
4. Sura 9:71-2 and Sura 33:35 – Are these passages of a 'feminist' Qur'an?
5. Sura 52:17-27 and Sura 56:1-56 – View of Paradise. What is heaven like? Consider the sections on women.
6. Sura 7:26-31 and Sura 24:27-33 – About Modesty. Is a hijab Qur'anic? What is the principle here?

Optional: 7. Why has the headscarf become such a hot issue in Europe and especially France during the past two decades? What is the struggle really about? And whose identity is at stake here?

<https://www.thelocal.fr/20170314/french-firms-told-they-can-ban-the-muslim-headscarf-at-work>

WEEK 14

Apr. 10 **TENTATIVE VISIT FROM LOCAL IMAM. GUEST TBA**

Seminar 14: Reflection (no advanced readings)

***RELIGIONS OF THE WEST SHORT REFLECTION PAPER
 DUE SATURDAY APRIL 15 AT 11:59 PM**

Students registered with the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) who complete quizzes, tests, and exams with academic accommodations have booking procedures and deadlines with CAL where advanced noticed is

required. Deadlines can be reviewed on the [CAL exams page](https://camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/accessible-learning/academic-accommodations-exams). <https://camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/accessible-learning/academic-accommodations-exams>

EVALUATION OF LEARNING

| DESCRIPTION | WEIGHTING |
|---|--------------|
| Crisis and the Human Response 2-Page Reflection | 15 % |
| <i>Pentecostalism</i> Book Short Chapter Review | 15 % |
| Women in Islam Short Paper | 15 % |
| Research Paper | 25 % |
| Seminar Participation | 30 % |
| | TOTAL |
| | 100% |

If you have a concern about a grade you have received for an evaluation, please come and see me as soon as possible. Refer to the [Grade Review and Appeals](http://camosun.ca/about/policies/education-academic/e-1-programming-and-instruction/e-1.14.pdf) policy for more information. <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/education-academic/e-1-programming-and-instruction/e-1.14.pdf>

COURSE GUIDELINES & EXPECTATIONS

a) ASSIGNMENTS

i) Crisis and the Human Response Paper

15 percent

Length: Minimum 500 words

Read the seminar material from Week 4 and write a short reflection paper about how you would respond to a great crisis in comparison (or contrast) to the two remarkable individuals we studied this week (Elie Wiesel and the biblical Job). Your paper will focus on question 6 for that week, which is:

In comparison (or contrast) to the biblical Job and Elie Wiesel, respectively, how would you respond a massive crisis? Would belief and faith be helpful to you in a time of struggle? Why or why not?

You must provide specific examples from each of the seminar sources.

1. **The Scriptures**
2. **The interview with Elie Wiesel, and**
3. **The excerpt from film *The Book of Life***

You do not need to cite your sources, however. But if you wish to provide a citation, it is enough to make a footnote inside parentheses at the end of the sentence eg. (Job 4:17) and (Wiesel interview) and (Tree of Life).

The paper **must also have** an introduction and thesis statement, body, and conclusion. Here's model for the thesis statement you're welcome to use:

“This paper explores how I would respond to a life crisis by comparing my own belief system with those of the biblical Job and Elie Wiesel. Un/like Job and Wiesel, I would...”
(now you briefly summarize what you would do similarly or differently)

ii) Pentecostalism Book Chapter Review

15 percent

Length: Minimum 500 words

This book chapter review takes places on Week 9. You will write a summary of two book chapters, in addition to supplementary material on Pentecostalism. For content, go to the D2L course site, My Tools, Content, Week 9. You will need to

- a) Read chapters 1 and 4 of the *Pentecostalism* book
- b) Read the assigned scriptures for the seminar
- c) Watch the Pentecostal church service (link provided)

iii) Women in Islam Short Paper

15 percent

Length: Minimum 500 words

This short paper overlaps with the Week 13 Seminar. Read the material for the seminar and write a short paper. The guiding questions for your paper are posted under Week 13 on the course D2L site.

In the paper, you will Compare Samina Ali’s description of Islamic views on woman with passages selected from the Qur’an. In what ways might they be similar or different?

As before, make sure to provide specific examples from video and the scripture readings. You do not need to cite them, however. But if you wish to provide a citation, it is enough to make a footnote inside the text at the end of the sentence where it is referenced eg. (Qur’an 4:13) and (Ali TEDx Talk) or at the bottom of the page in Chicago or MLA Style. You may also include Qur’anic or Hadith passages that weren’t assigned for the class.

The paper must have an introduction and thesis statement, body, and conclusion. A model for the thesis statement could be:

“This paper discusses Samina Ali’s description of women’s roles and responsibilities in conversation with passages in the Qur’an about women. It argues that...” (i.e. list here what are the key similarities and differences?)

iv) Research Paper

25 percent

Length: Minimum 5 pages (approximately 1250 words)

The research paper is intended to be a longer, more in-depth investigation of an important religious topic or question.

Select a topic from the list at the end of the course outline or create one of your own (Please consult with me first if you would like to do the latter).

Also note that **only 2 students are permitted to write on the same topic**. For this reason, it is essential that you confirm your selection with me in advance.

In this assignment, you need to consult and engage **a bare minimum of 3 full-length (at least 12-page) academic articles or books**. Also, **make significant use of sacred scriptures**. Other sources considered

divinely inspired and exegetical works for comparative analysis are acceptable. "Official" religious websites and journals may be useful. I will be providing more instructions in class as we move further into the semester.

A Very Basic Checklist for the Research Paper:

1. Was my essay topic approved by the instructor?
2. Is the paper 5 pages in length, double spaced?
3. Is there a bibliography on a separate page?
4. Is there a title page?
5. Did I provide citations? Are they formatted in Chicago Style Referencing?
6. What is my thesis statement?
7. Does the paper follow the thesis statement? In other words, is it organized to answer the question you proposed and summarized at the beginning?

Key instructions for all written assignments

All assignments must be in hard copy, single-sided, double-spaced, paginated, written in a standard 12-point font (such as Calibri), and use normal (1 to 1.25 inch) margins.

Please do not forget to spell-check your assignments.

There must also be a title page that includes the name of your assignment, your name and student ID, my name, course code, and date submitted. And it must be affixed with a staple. Papers are to be handed in to me at the beginning of class.

The essays are to be written in paragraph form. They should contain:

1. A clear **introduction** that presents the general topic and then outlines your own argument
2. A **body** organized into paragraphs that support the thesis—each having its own supporting argument backed up by evidence, analysis of that evidence and ideally, consideration of alternative interpretations. Choose sources that enable you to write this type of thoughtful and balanced paper.
3. A **conclusion** that summarizes the argument and the evidence you used to support it

The research paper will be evaluated according to a three-point criterion:

- Referencing your sources with footnotes and bibliography (10%)
- Writing style and organization (30%)
- Supporting evidence and analysis (60%)

Late Policies and Submitting Your Assignments

Assignment due dates are firm, and assignments must be submitted on the due date or they will be considered late. **Late assignments will be penalized at five (5) percent per day to a maximum of one week**, after which they will no longer be accepted. Problems with computers, flash drives, or a dog on a paper or laptop diet will not be accepted. This being said, please do not hesitate to contact me if you're having problems understanding or writing the assignments.

Advice on Writing a Strong Paper

The essays are more than a summary of the evidence and interpretations of other authors. You must write in your own words and develop your own answer to the question chosen. Your answer may agree with the interpretation of another author; if so, you must still say what evidence persuaded you that their interpretation was accurate. A good essay will recognize that scholars may have applied different methods or based their conclusion on alternative sources. There might even be multiple answers to the question that you are addressing. Be open to the possibility of a more nuanced response.

The quality of your writing matters a great deal and marks will be deducted for poor organization, grammar errors, or frequent spelling errors. To ensure correct spelling and syntax (sentence structure), do not rely too heavily on spell checkers and grammar checkers. It can be helpful to ask another person to read it over. Also beneficial is to read your own work out loud to yourself. Doing this can help you identify confusing or incorrect expression. Lastly, please try to avoid “casual speak” in order to communicate at an academic level.

Using Quotations and Footnotes:

In developing your arguments, you will necessarily be depending on and sometimes borrowing evidence from others. When you quote directly the words of another author, you must put those words between quotation marks (“...”) and cite the exact source of the quotation in a footnote. Equally important, paraphrasing and borrowing ideas must be handled in the same fashion as direct quotes. A citation is needed whenever you are utilizing another’s ideas or information that is not general knowledge. However, it is not necessarily to cite general information i.e. The Second World War began in 1939. Wayne Gretzky was born in Brantford, Ontario. Or, the Toronto Blue Jays are awful again this year. Generally speaking, try not to use a lot of quotations and avoid long ones (more than 3 lines in length).

The essay must be followed with a Bibliography on a separate sheet of paper, listing all of the sources you consulted in the assignment, whether they are quoted or not. **Formatting must be in *Chicago Style***. We will explore this in class; additionally, **you can refer to the *Chicago Style* formatting manual, called the Camosun History Department Style Guide, which is on the History Department website**. Other styles, such as APA social science format (parenthetical reference to authors in the text of the essay), will not accepted.



Important Notes on Plagiarism: All written work that you submit in REL 100 must be your own original work. You must give proper credit to borrowed ideas or quotations that you use in an essay. To falsely claim authorship of someone else’s ideas or words is called plagiarism. It is a form of theft and will automatically result in a **grade of zero**, at the very least. Similar penalties will be applied to any student who buys, borrows, or resubmits, a previous-completed paper for another course. The internet has become a popular tool for dishonest students who want to cut corners on assignments. Keep in mind that internet sources, like everything consulted in your research, must appear in the bibliography. I reserve the right to check any

assignment with plagiarism detection software. Please consult me if you are unsure about how to properly document your sources.

See the Camosun Calendar 2015-6 (pp. 32-39) for full policies and penalties with regards to plagiarism, cheating, and other unacceptable student conduct.

Course Policy on AI Software (ChatGPT, CoPilot, etc.)

This is not a technical course. All work submitted in this course must be original and created by yourself and without the aid of artificial intelligence. It is okay to use AI as a learning aid, but the sourcing of content, and the organization and expression of ideas, must be your own work. As noted earlier, spell checkers and grammar checkers are permitted.

(b) TESTS AND EXAMS

There is no midterm or final exam in REL 100 this semester.

(c) SEMINAR PARTICIPATION

(30 percent)

Participation in REL 100 is absolutely critical to the student learning experience and grade achievement. It is based exclusively on seminar involvement and, specifically, the consistency and quality of your posts and responses.

Please find the detailed instructions about how to participate in the seminar on Page 3 of the course outline.

SCHOOL OR DEPARTMENTAL INFORMATION

Religion courses are part of Camosun’s Department of Humanities. Website: <https://legacy.camosun.ca/learn/subjects/humanities/>

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

Enrolment at Camosun assumes that the student will become a responsible member of the College community. As such, each student will display a positive work ethic, assist in the preservation of College property, and assume responsibility for their education by researching academic requirements and policies; demonstrating courtesy and respect toward others; and respecting expectations concerning attendance, assignments, deadlines, and appointments.

SUPPORTS AND SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

Camosun College offers a number of services to help you succeed in and out of the classroom. For a detailed overview of the supports and services visit <http://camosun.ca/students/>.

| Support Service | Website |
|---------------------|--|
| Academic Advising | camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/academic-advising |
| Accessible Learning | camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/accessible-learning |
| Counselling | camosun.ca/services/health-and-wellness/counselling-centre |

| Support Service | Website |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Career Services | camosun.ca/services/co-operative-education-and-career-services |
| Financial Aid and Awards | camosun.ca/registration-records/financial-aid-awards |
| Help Centres (Math/English/Science) | camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/help-centres |
| Indigenous Student Support | camosun.ca/programs-courses/iecc/indigenous-student-services |
| International Student Support | camosun.ca/international |
| Learning Skills | camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/help-centres/writing-centre-learning-skills |
| Library | camosun.ca/services/library |
| Office of Student Support | camosun.ca/services/office-student-support |
| Ombudsperson | camosun.ca/services/ombudsperson |
| Registration | camosun.ca/registration-records/registration |
| Technology Support | camosun.ca/services/its |
| Writing Centre | camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/help-centres/writing-centre-learning-skills |

If you have a mental health concern, please contact Counselling to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. Counselling sessions are available at both campuses during business hours. If you need urgent support after-hours, please contact the Vancouver Island Crisis Line at 1-888-494-3888 or call 911.

COLLEGE-WIDE POLICIES, PROCEDURES, REQUIREMENTS, AND STANDARDS

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to comply with all College policy regarding academic integrity; which is about honest and ethical behaviour in your education journey. The following guide is designed to help you understand your responsibilities: <https://camosun.libguides.com/academicintegrity/welcome>
Please visit <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-1.13.pdf> for Camosun's Academic Integrity policy and details for addressing and resolving matters of academic misconduct.

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Camosun College is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging appropriate academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a documented disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) and register as early as possible. Please visit the CAL

website for more information about the process of registering with CAL, including important deadlines:
<https://camosun.ca/cal>

Academic Progress

Please visit <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2023-02/e-1.1.pdf> for further details on how Camosun College monitors students' academic progress and what steps can be taken if a student is at risk of not meeting the College's academic progress standards.

Course Withdrawals Policy

Please visit <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-2.2.pdf> for further details about course withdrawals. For deadline for fees, course drop dates, and tuition refund, please visit <https://camosun.ca/registration-records/tuition-fees#deadlines>.

Grading Policy

Please visit <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-1.5.pdf> for further details about grading.

Grade Review and Appeals

Please visit <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-1.14.pdf> for policy relating to requests for review and appeal of grades.

Medical / Compassionate Withdrawals

Students who are incapacitated and unable to complete or succeed in their studies by virtue of serious and demonstrated exceptional circumstances may be eligible for a medical/compassionate withdrawal (see [Medical/Compassionate Withdrawals policy](#)). Please visit <https://camosun.ca/services/forms#medical> to learn more about the process involved in a medical/compassionate withdrawal.

Sexual Violence

Camosun is committed to creating a campus culture of safety, respect, and consent. Camosun's Office of Student Support is responsible for offering support to students impacted by sexual violence. Regardless of when or where the sexual violence occurred, students can access support at Camosun. The Office of Student Support will make sure students have a safe and private place to talk and will help them understand what supports are available and their options for next steps. The Office of Student Support respects a student's right to choose what is right for them. For more information see Camosun's Sexualized Violence Policy: <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-2.9.pdf> and camosun.ca/services/sexual-violence-support-and-education.

To contact the Office of Student Support: oss@camosun.ca or by phone: 250-370-3046 or 250-370-3841

Student Misconduct (Non-Academic)

Camosun College is committed to building the academic competency of all students, seeks to empower students to become agents of their own learning, and promotes academic belonging for everyone. Camosun also expects that all students to conduct themselves in a manner that contributes to a positive, supportive,

and safe learning environment. Please review Camosun College's Student Misconduct Policy at <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-2.5.pdf> to understand the College's expectations of academic integrity and student behavioural conduct.

Looking for other policies?

The full suite of College policies and directives can be found here: <https://camosun.ca/about/camosun-college-policies-and-directives>

Changes to this syllabus: Every effort has been made to ensure that information in this syllabus is accurate at the time of publication. The College reserves the right to change courses if it becomes necessary so that course content remains relevant. In such cases, the instructor will give the students clear and timely notice of the changes.

RESEARCH PAPER LIST OF TOPICS

You must select your own essay topic on the D2L course site by going to My Tools → Groups → Research Paper Sign-up. A maximum of 3 students may write on the same one. Alternatively, you may also propose a topic to me.

1. Judaism: You are (an orthodox, reform, or conservative) Jew and trying to convince a (orthodox, reform, or conservative) Jew that the Law is/is not binding for the lives of all Jewish people.
2. What does it mean to be "cultural Jew" and how does this designation and practice challenge conventional definitions of "religion?"
3. What are the key differences between Roman Catholic and Protestant forms of Christianity? What common ground have the two branches found in recent ecumenical discussions and what on what issues do they retain distinct views?
4. Christianity: Discuss whether or not recent religious movements, such as Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science, 7th Day Adventism, or whomever (pick your group) fit the definition of being Christian.
5. Islam: argue whether or not, in your mind, Sunni, Sufi and Shi'ite Islam should be considered complimentary or distinct belief systems.
6. You are a practicing Jew/Christian/Muslim and you're trying to explain to an atheist, a Jew, Christian, or a Muslim what you believe.
7. Compare and contrast how the three major monotheistic religions view the person of Jesus Christ.
8. It's not over until..." How do each of the three major monotheistic religions view the afterlife? Have these interpretations changed or varied over time?
9. Have a Nice Doomsday: Select two apocalyptic cults or branches from one of the major religious traditions that have emerged since the mid-1800s and are driven by a strong sense of impending apocalypse. (If you would like to choose one not profiled in the textbook, please consult with me first). Compare and contrast the tradition(s) and contexts (political, cultural, social) from which they emerged, and consider key similarities and differences and why they might exist.
10. How does a person live a virtuous life? Identify and compare Jewish, Christian, and Muslim answers to this question.
11. In the three major monotheistic faiths, how does God interact with His created world and humanity in particular?
12. How might a Jew/Christian/Muslim's view of the afterlife influence the manner that she lives her life?
13. Eschatology: Compare how Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions approach the subject of the "end times."
14. Compare and contrast the types of covenants that exist between God and humans in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam

15. Compare the phenomenon of miracles in Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. Consider how they are a manifestation of God's presence and activity, the individuals who produce them, and what role they play in each tradition's belief system.
16. What foods are permitted in Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, respectively? What is the theological basis for dietary observances in each tradition eg. how are they connected to faith, submission, and religious worldview in each case?
17. How do each of the three monotheistic faiths approach the subject of dating and/or courting? What is the scriptural and traditional basis for these teachings and practices? Why might they differ from one another?
18. What are the roles, significance and boundaries ascribed to sex and gender in each tradition?
19. How do the three traditions approach the issue of war and conflict? (You may consider either or both historical and contemporary examples). On what Scriptures, interpretations and traditions are these views based?
20. How has one (or more than one) of the religions we're studying approached the issue of sickness? Why do people become ill and how does this relate to their connection to God?
21. Disaster and Catastrophe: How do the three religions we're studying view the question of disasters and catastrophes? What is God's role in these events and what are humans called to do in response?
22. Conversion: How does someone convert to Judaism, Christianity, and/or Islam? Who is eligible for conversion? What process do they go through? And what is the result?
23. Conversion Stories: Explore the before/after stories of people who have converted to a) Judaism b) Christianity and/or c) Islam. Compare these experiences to what is taught in each tradition's scriptures. You may focus on one, two, or all three Western religions.