

	<p><i>School of Arts &amp; Science</i> <i>Humanities</i></p> <p><b>RELIGION 100</b> <b>World Religions of the West</b> <b>Fall, 2008</b></p>
---	--

### Course 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.

### 1. Instructor Information

(a)	Instructor:	Clarence Bolt		
(b)	Office Hours:	MW, 8:30-9:20 AM, 11:30-12:20 PM Th. 4:00-4:50 PM		
(c)	Location:	Y323		
(d)	Phone:	370-3347		
(e)	Email:	cbolt@camosun.bc.ca		
(f)	Website:			

### 2. Intended Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course you 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.

### 3. Required Materials

Willard Oxtoby, ed., *World's Religions: Western Traditions*  
 Bible (New International Version or Revised Standard Version)  
 Qu/ran (Koran), Daewood  
 Deborah Ellis, *Palestinian and Israeli Children Speak*

## 4. Course Content and Schedule

The Lecture component of the course will be based on the Oxtoby text, Read the assigned reading before class. It is recommended that you make an outline that follows the structure of the text. The book is organized into chapters and each chapter into sections. The major sections of the chapter have titles in UPPER CASE letters while the subheadings are lower case. An identical format for your outline will make for easy note taking. For each section and subsection, ask the following:

1. What is the main question of this section and how is it answered?
2. What are the main and the sub- themes of this section?

Lectures will largely follow this format as well. Questions for the exams will reflect both the book's major themes and points and those emphasized in class. Tests will also include items from the list of terms and study questions at the end of each chapter. Reading the book and attending the lectures will ensure good results for the tests.

**Week 1** Introduction to Course: Definitions, Religion and Religious Studies, Assignments Explained

**Week 2** The Ancient World context  
Oxtoby, ch. 1, pp. 159-188  
**Media project Due**

**Week 3** Lecture: Formation of the Jewish Tradition  
Oxtoby, pp. 33-71  
Seminar: From the Hebrew Scriptures  
Genesis 1-9, 12, 15-19, 38  
Exodus 1-14, 19, 20:1-20  
Deuteronomy 27-30  
Joshua 1-8

**Week 4** Lecture: The Rabbinic Jewish Tradition  
Oxtoby, pp. 71-130  
Seminar: From the Hebrew Scriptures  
I Samuel 8-10  
II Samuel, 1-3  
I Kings 3, 5, 6, 12  
II Kings 17, 24-25  
Note I Chronicles 1-9 (what purpose would these chapters provide)  
Isaiah 1, 2, 6, 9:1-17, 11  
Jeremiah 1  
Ezra 1, 3, 6  
Esther  
**Project Proposal Due**  
**First Journal Entry Due**

**Week 5** Lecture: The Jewish Tradition to the Present  
Oxtoby, pp 130-157  
Seminar: [From the Hebrew Scriptures](#)  
Job 1, 2, 38-42  
Psalms 1, 8, 46, 47  
Ecclesiastes 1, 2, 4, 6, 12  
Song of Solomon

**Week 6** Test One and Presentation

**Week 7** Formation of the Christian Tradition  
Oxtoby, pp. 201-41  
Seminar: [From the Christian Scriptures](#)  
Matthew 1-8, 26-8  
Luke 1, 2  
John 1.1-18  
Acts 1, 2, 9.1-31

**Second Journal Entry Due**

**Week 8** Medieval and Protestant Christianity  
Oxtoby, pp. 241-292  
Seminar [From the Christian Scriptures](#)  
Romans 9-11  
Galatians  
James

**Article Review Due**

**Week 9** Modern Christianity  
Oxtoby, pp. 292-339  
Seminar [From the Christian Scriptures and Sources](#)  
Hebrews 10.19-12.29  
Revelations  
Augustine (extra-biblical)  
Martin Luther (extra-biblical)

**Week 10** Test Two and Presentation

**Week 11** The Formation of Islam  
Oxtoby, pp 341-383  
Seminar -- From the Qur'an, read the following *suras*:  
**Scriptures**  
1  
68 (which is considered to be the second one)  
96:1-5 (third one)  
2:80-140  
3:1-10  
**Koran and Muhammad**  
3:144

16:101-105  
25:1-13, 32-39  
73:1-5  
75:16-20  
93  
94  
**Creation**  
24:41-46  
96  
**Abraham**  
2:124-140  
3:67-71  
4:125  
14:37-9  
**Noah**  
71  
**Moses**  
20:14ff  
26:1ff  
**Commandments**  
25:66-76

### **Third Journal Entry Due**

#### **Week 12**

Spread of and Development of Islam  
Oxtoby, pp. 383-436  
Seminar: From the Qur'an

#### **Jesus**

3:36-59  
61:1-7  
4:171-2  
17:111

#### **Women**

4:1-35, 126-30  
9:71  
16:58-9  
30:21  
33:35

#### **Jihad**

25:48-57 (esp. 52)  
4:75-76  
53:29-30 (stay aloof)  
16: 106ff (dissimulation)

#### **Satan**

15:27-40  
17:61-65

#### **Jews and Christians**

98

### **Final Project due**

**Week 13**      Modern Islam  
                    Oxtoby, pp. 437-61  
                    Film

**Week 14**      Traditions in Contact  
                    Oxtoby, pp. 479-485, ch 7  
                    Seminar: Ellis (all)  
                    **Final Journal Entry due**

**Test Three** will be during the exam period, on the Thursday evening following the last class.

**\*Seminars and Readings from the Scriptures of Each Tradition.**

For weeks 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, and 12, the class will be divided into two seminar groups, one meeting at 5:00 PM, before the lecture, the other at 8:00 PM, after the lecture. The division into seminars will be made during the second class. I will attempt to accommodate your preferred choice.

Seminars will discuss the readings. Some points and guidelines about reading scriptures:

1. The scriptures used in this course are not historical works, academic treatises, analytical inquiries, or literary creations in the modern sense of these words. They are literary, written expressions of beliefs, values, teachings, lessons, and the like. Certainly one can find contained in them history, reasoned argument, and literature but they are religious expressions first of all, fundamental to the writers' existence as human beings. They record the 'deeds whereby [God] has made himself manifest.' They were writing 'religion,' not 'history,' 'philosophy,' or 'theology.'<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of history* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), pp. 12-15

2. With the above in mind, you are to take each selection and determine what is being said. Try to remove preconceived notions as much as possible. The scriptures employ various writing genres. Understanding how each genre works is vital to comprehending meaning and message. About each source, ask the following:

- Why was it written?
- What was the message to its audience?
- What was being said about God?
- What was it telling humans about how they ought to live? not to live?
- What lessons should the believer derive?

3. Remember that we are all outsiders to faiths, traditions, and belief systems not our own. Hence, because we are covering three 'religions' in this course, no matter what our personal belief and value systems, we will all be outsiders at most or all points this semester. While you do not have to share the values/beliefs of any of the traditions covered, you must recognize that the scriptures in each tradition are sacred to adherents. These readings have been chosen to provide a sense of what is meaningful to large numbers of people.

### Note on the Qur'an

For most Muslims, the Qur'an ('to read' or 'to recite' – 'a collection of things to be recited') is God's final revelation, God's single greatest sign. Behind the literal meanings and words is an infinite reservoir of divine wisdom, containing all that is needed for salvation, whether instructions for how to live or ethical principles.

Most Muslims believe that God's word(s) is written on a tablet, one that resides in God's presence. They believe that the revelations in the Qur'an, the ones revealed to Muhammad, as well as the ones revealed to Jews and Christians before him, came from this original holy source. Hence, the Qur'an confirms the teachings of the older scriptures: the laws, the prophets, and the gospels. But Qur'an's style differs from the other two 'books,' reflecting Arabic religious traditions, consisting of rhymed prose (rather than poetry) which is easy to memorize. And, for Muslims, it is the final revelation, to the final prophet, the completion of earlier revelations to earlier prophets.

The angel Gabriel is said to have revealed bits and pieces to Muhammad over many years. Muhammad went into trances before receiving these revelations, which he, because he could neither read nor write, recited to those around him. They wrote them down.

There are 114 chapters, known as *suras*. Some are long, others are short. They are not arranged chronologically but in terms of length, starting with longer the longer ones. The name for each *sura* is chosen from a word that appears somewhere at its beginning. Each *sura* has verses called *ayat* ('signs'). Twenty-nine *suras* begin with seemingly disjointed letters which may be a code or simply a filing system. From Sura 68, we read, 'By the pen and what they write.' Tariq Ramadan suggests:

...at the very moment when the creator swears 'by the pen' and confirms the necessity of the knowledge conveyed to human beings, He opens the verses with a mysterious letter, *nun*, expressing the limits of human knowledge. The dignity of humankind, conferred by knowledge, cannot be devoid of the humility of reason aware of its own limits and thereby recognizing the necessity of faith. Accepting, and accepting not to understand, the mysterious presence of the letter *nun* requires faith; understanding and accepting the unmythical statements of the verses that follow require the use of a reason that is active but necessarily – and indeed naturally – humbled. (Tariq Ramadan, *In the Footsteps of the Prophet*, pg. 31)

The Qur'an was compiled after Muhammad died. It was gathered from diverse sources such as bits of parchment, leaves, shoulder blades of camels, or memories of followers. Debate about the date of its final form ranges from two years after his death (634) to about 650, when a final version was commissioned by the Caliph Uthman, although there are unofficial versions to which scholars occasionally still refer. The Uthman version was written in a shorthand style, more as an aid to memorization than to create a modern, textually-precise version. Only consonants were written and the same letter shape could indicate more than one sound. By 705, the modern Arabic script had been created with vowels and the use of one-letter shapes per sound. Until modern times, Muslims resisted translating this Holy Book into other languages.

Even if they do not understand Arabic, Muslim children across the world continue to learn the Arabic alphabet and to sound out the words of the Qur'an phonetically. Thus, the Qur'an is both a *source* of prayer and a *prayer* in its own right, highly venerated and shelved with other books but resting in its own bookstand. Muslims generally do not buy or sell it; gifts rather than money are often offered in exchange. An aesthetic consequence of such veneration is that calligraphy is a most highly developed art form in the Islamic world.

The recitation of the Qur'an is captivating and reciters have a high status. Simply reading it for content does not do it justice or capture its significance for Muslims.

## **5. Basis of Your Assessment (Weighting)**

**1. Three tests** 45%

**2. Media Analysis** 10%

### **3. Project or Journal**

#### **A. Project**

Proposal	05%
Review	10%
Paper	20%

Or

#### **B. Journal**

Journal	25%
Review	10%

**4. Participation** 10%

- 1. Test** details will be handed out well in advance. Tests will consist of three types of questions:
  - Terms to identify based on the list given at the end of Oxtoby chapters as well as ones provided in class.
  - Short paragraph-size answers to questions on themes and issues.
  - Longer essays from a list of topics handed out before the tests.

**2. The Media Analysis** will consist of tracking religious coverage of these three western traditions in four media from September 5-12:

- a newsmagazine (a weekly),
- a newspaper (every day it is published this week),
- CBC radio newscast (one a day), and

--a television newscast (one non-CBC station every two days).

You will use the template handed out the first week. The template will require the following:

- a listing of all the stories found and a brief synopsis
- identification of which of the 3 western faiths is mentioned
- negative or positive bias (and evidence/reason for this conclusion)

### **3. Project or Journal**

#### **A. Project**

This will comprise work on a topic from the list below or one approved by me. It will focus on either

1. key concepts/movements *within* one of the traditions

or

2. historically significant *contacts among* the traditions. You are strongly advised to consult with me before starting your work and to continue to do so regularly to ensure staying on track.

For many topics, the *Encyclopedia of Religion* is a good reference work and starting point to define the topic. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* is also a great source and is on-line.

#### i. Proposal (5%) – due Week 4

Your proposal will

1. Introduce the topic (who, what, when, where, etc.). Reference/source material is critical
2. Explain the question that the paper will answer
3. Lay out the approach/style of presentation, i.e., how you propose to answer the question. Note: do not formulate a thesis at this point; theses should arise from research rather than the reverse.
4. Include a list of sources [a minimum of three books and two academic (journal) articles] specific to the topic. The sources must be listed in proper **bibliographic style**. Attach a photocopy of the title page and table of contents of each source as well as a short summary explaining why that source is appropriate for the paper.

Please note: there are times when you might not find a book completely focussed on your topic. In that case, the book's coverage of your topic must be significant. Consult with me to make that judgment. Primary sources are encouraged.

#### ii. Review of one of the articles chosen (10%) – due Week 8

You will write a review of one of the two academic articles chosen for the essay. Each review will be 300 words and consist of three paragraphs:

- paragraph one will define the theme
- paragraph two will discuss style, sources, and method
- paragraph three will give your opinion on the basis of the information in paragraphs one and two.

The complete article will be attached.

#### iii. Completed Essay (25%) – due Week 12



### Assignment Marking Conditions and Standards:

1. Each essay will be no longer than 2500 words (approx. 8 pp).
2. It will consist of a thesis, supported by evidence, analysis of alternative interpretations, and a conclusion summarizing why the chosen interpretation fits the evidence best.
3. The final submission must contain
  - a minimum of 20 footnotes documenting specific information, themes, ideas, quotes, or paraphrases
  - a title page
  - proper footnote and bibliographical style (see the Humanities web page, *History Style Guide*)
  - double spacing, with no headings and no extra space between paragraphs
  - justified margins
  - a copy of the original proposal, along with the article review
  - a second copy of the essay (one will be kept on file for five years)
4. Grammar, spelling, and syntax are critical to a good paper. Marks will be lost for deficiencies in these areas.
5. The final grade will be determined on the basis of quality of work and presentation (see 4 above), use of sources, a clear and strong thesis, consistent argument, proper transitions, and originality of approach.

## **B. Journal**

A journal is a record of personal reactions and responses over time. Subjects in journals can vary widely. An academic journal is a specialized form. It is not to be confused with a private diary. Entries in an academic journal, while personal, must be analytical, intellectual responses. They are focused on specific subjects and must meet established criteria. For this course, entries will be based on two foundations:

- the course material (that is, the texts, the readings, the lectures, and the discussions)

- previous knowledge, intuitive reactions, and feelings about the material

With respect to the latter, these must be solid, well-articulated positions. It is not adequate to say that you like or do not like something. Note that you do not have to make this a Nobel Prize-winning document. This is not a creative writing or psychology course.

You must make a minimum of two entries per week, one responding to the material assigned for the upcoming class, and a second after that class (after that material has been dealt with). Each entry should not exceed 500 words. Be precise and to the point but do not over-edit.

Your grade will be based on the following:

- engagement of material
- depth of response
- use of course material
- quality of writing (but not expected to be literary masterpieces)

The entries may be handwritten or printed but hard copies are due on the assigned dates – Weeks, 4, 7, 11, and 14.

For those choosing this option, you will also submit, by Week 11, an academic journal review. It will be based on one of your journal topics which has especially caught your interest. Consult with your instructor when you have a topic that interests you. Find an article. See 3 A ii (above) for details on how an article review should be set up.

**All work is due in class on the due date, before the class meets. Attendance for that class is mandatory. Failure to follow these rules forfeits the mark.**

**4. Participation** in classroom activities is an important component of the course. Seminar sessions as well as the last hour of non-seminar classes will be devoted to discussion of assigned readings other than Oxtoby. Seminar attendance is required. If you must miss one, your absence must be arranged/discussed with me ahead of time. Three absences will forfeit this 10% component of the course, unless prior arrangements have been made.

### **List of Possible Topics**

Variant views of Monotheism in each tradition, or contrasts between two  
Conception (nature) of God, in one, or a comparison of two  
Dead Sea Scrolls, Essenes, Qumran  
Jihad  
Formation, gathering together of the ‘Scriptures’ in each tradition, or a comparison  
Baha’i faith  
Mormonism  
Jehovah’s Witnesses  
20<sup>th</sup> c fundamentalism – in any of the three traditions or comparison of two  
Sufism  
Politics and religion in any, or comparison of two  
Free will vs. predestination in any, or comparison of two  
Relationship of one faith community to non-faith communit(y)(-ties)  
Modernism’s impact on one or a comparison of two  
Black Muslims  
How are Jews, Christians, Muslims identified (pick one)  
Kabbalism  
Wahhabism  
Shi-ism  
Shari a law  
Science/culture and faith – are they compatible –pick one tradition or compare  
Zionism  
Basis for ethics in one of the traditions (or subset) – what is appropriate behaviour and why?  
Nature of Christ, the debates, or as compared to Islam’s view of the nature of Muhammad  
Creating the Talmud  
Thinkers/philosophers/theologians’ relationship to other faiths and to secular thinkers  
Augustine  
Roman vs. Orthodox Christians

Note the dimension of time. Be sure to be clear about which time in history, which place, and about whom you are writing. **Context is crucial in writing accurate papers.**

Other

**1. Grading System**

Percentage	Grade	Description	Grade Point Equivalency
90-100	A+		9
85-89	A		8
80-84	A-		7
77-79	B+		6
73-76	B		5
70-72	B-		4
65-69	C+		3
60-64	C		2
50-59	D		1
0-49	F	Minimum level has not been achieved.	0

**Temporary Grades**

Temporary grades are assigned for specific circumstances and will convert to a final grade according to the grading scheme being used in the course. See Grading Policy at [camosun.ca](http://camosun.ca) or information on conversion to final grades, and for additional information on student record and transcript notations.

Temporary Grade	Description
<b>I</b>	<i>Incomplete:</i> A temporary grade assigned when the requirements of a course have not yet been completed due to hardship or extenuating circumstances, such as illness or death in the family.
<b>IP</b>	<i>In progress:</i> A temporary grade assigned for courses that are designed to have an anticipated enrollment that extends beyond one term. No more than two IP grades will be assigned for the same course.
<b>CW</b>	<i>Compulsory Withdrawal:</i> A temporary grade assigned by a Dean when an instructor, after documenting the prescriptive strategies applied and consulting with peers, deems that a student is unsafe to self or others and must be removed from the lab, practicum, worksite, or field placement.

Temporary grades are assigned for specific circumstances and will convert to a final grade according to the grading scheme being used in the course. See Grading Policy E-1.5 at [camosun.ca](http://camosun.ca) for information on conversion to final grades, and for additional information on student record and transcript notations.

**2. Recommended Materials or Services to Assist Students to Succeed Throughout the Course**

**LEARNING SUPPORT AND SERVICES FOR STUDENTS**

There are a variety of services available for students to assist them throughout their learning. This information is available in the College calendar, at Student Services or the College web site at [camosun.ca](http://camosun.ca).

**STUDENT CONDUCT POLICY**

There is a Student Conduct Policy **which includes plagiarism**. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the content of this policy. The policy is available in each School Administration Office, at Student Services and on the College web site in the Policy Section.