

School of Arts & Science Humanities

RELIGION 100 World Religions of the West

Fall, 2009

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 9:00-10:00, TuTh 1:30-2:20, Th 4:30-5:20	
(c)	Location:	Y323	
(d)	Phone:	370-3347	
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(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

- a. Willard Oxtoby, ed., World's Religions: Western Traditions
- b. CoursePack
- c. *Koran*, (Daewood edition is available in the bookstore)
- d. Bible (New International Version or Revised Standard Version)
- e. Deborah Ellis, Palestinian and Israeli Children Speak.

The following website links to online scriptural sources:

http://www.usc.edu/schools/college/crcc/engagement/resources/texts/

4. Course Content and Schedule

The Lecture component of the course will be based on the Oxtoby text, with occasional excursions into the CoursePack or the various scriptures. 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 the book's format. Questions for the quizzes and the final exam will reflect both the book's major themes/points and those emphasized in class. They will 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.

The Seminar component of the course is for discussion of materials assigned for those sessions. Please note that one seminar group meets on Tuesday, the other on Thursday. For each session, there are assigned readings, mostly from primary sources from the traditions. You will hand in short, concise responses to the questions on the seminar readings before the sessions start.

Week 1 Lecture One – Sept. 8

Introduction: Definitions, Religion/Religious Studies

Lecture Two – Sept. 10

The Ancient World Context Oxtoby, ch. 1

Seminar -- Assignments Explained

Week 2 Lecture One -- Sept. 15

Zoroastrianism Oxtoby, pp. 159-188

Lecture Two – Sept. 17

The Formation of Judaism – Origin Accounts Oxtoby, pp. 33-50 Background scriptures for the lecture Genesis 1-4, 6-8, 12, 15-17, 21-2 Joshua 1-8

Seminar: From the Hebrew Scriptures

Exodus 1-7, 19, 20:1-20, 32

Deuteronomy 27-30

Questions to ponder for the seminar discussion:

What do the Creation, flood, Abrahamic, Exodus, and Conquest accounts say about the relationship between God and 'his people?' What is meant by the idea of 'covenant?'

Media Selection due September 17

Week 3 Lecture One – Sept. 22

The Formation of Judaism – Kings, Prophets, and Beyond

Oxtoby, pp. 50-71

Background scriptures for the lecture:

Joshua 1-6

Judges 1-2

I Samuel 3, 8-10, 16

I Kings 5, 12

II Kings 17, 24-25

Note I Chronicles 1-9 (what purpose would these chapters provide)

Lecture Two – Sept. 24

Rabbinic Judaism Emerges Oxtoby, 71-91, CoursePack 1. Literature of the Oral Torah

Seminar: From the Hebrew Scriptures

Isaiah 1, 9:1-17, 11

Jeremiah 1

Ezra 1, 3

Questions to ponder for the seminar discussion:

Bearing in mind the answers to the questions from the previous seminar, how do the prophets connect to the themes of 'god's people' and 'covenant?' What is the underlying purpose of the prophets?

Week 4 Lecture One – Sept. 29

Rabbinic Judaism (con't)
Oxtoby, 71-91, CoursePack 1 repeated

Lecture Two – October 1

Medieval Judaism

Oxtoby, pp. 71-111

Seminar: From the Hebrew Scriptures

Job 1, 2, 38-42

Psalms 1, 8, 46, 47

Ecclesiastes 1, 2, 4, 6, 12

Song of Solomon

Questions to ponder for the seminar discussion:

What are some of the main themes of these passages? Are these themes surprising given the themes discussed in the previous seminars? Are they more universal?

Project Proposal Due October 1

First Journal Entry Due October 1

Week 5 Lecture One – Oct. 6

Judaism in the Contemporary World Oxtoby, pp 130-157, CoursePack 2, Essence of Judaism

Lecture Two – Oct. 8

Special Presentation

Seminar: Jewish Observances

Oxtoby, pp. 111-130

Questions to ponder for the seminar discussion:

What is the purpose of 'ritual?' How do these Judaic rituals connect with the themes we have covered so far in this course?

Week 6 Lecture One – Oct. 13

Christian Origins – New Testament

Oxtoby, pp. 201-14

Background scriptures for the lecture:

Matthew 1-8, 26-8

Luke 1, 2

John 1.1-18

<u>Lecture Two – Oct. 15</u>

Quiz on Judaism

Seminar: From the Christian New Testament

Matthew 1-8, 26-8

Luke 1, 2

John 1.1-18

Questions to ponder for the seminar discussion:

How do the accounts introducing the 'gospel' (define this word) differ? Why could that be?

Week 7 Lecture One – Oct 20

Forming the Christian Tradition

Oxtoby, pp. 214-23, CoursePack 3, Tertullian

Background scriptures for the lecture:

Acts 1, 2, 9.1-31

Romans 9-11

<u>Lecture Two – Oct. 22</u>

Imperial Christianity

Oxtoby, pp. 223-244, CoursePack 4, Augustine

Seminar: From the Christian Scriptures

Galatians 3-6

James

Questions to ponder for the seminar discussion:

Do James and Paul contradict each other? Construct a defense of both positions (imagine that you are each). Can both positions be accommodated in Christianity or are they fundamentally different?

Second Journal Entry Due October 22

Week 8 Lecture One – Oct. 27

Medieval Christianity

Oxtoby, pp. 241-269

Lecture Two – Oct. 29

The Protestant Reformation Oxtoby, 269-285, 289-92

Background scriptures for the lecture:

Hebrews 10:19-12:29

Seminar: Reformation Writings Luther, CoursePack 5

Questions to ponder for the seminar discussion:

What is Luther's criticism of the church? Can both the Catholic and Lutheran positions be accommodated in the church? Think of the Galatians/James discussion.

Article Review Due October 29

Week 9 Lecture One – Nov. 3

Modern Christianity Oxtoby, pp. 285-305

Lecture Two - Nov. 5

Modernity and Christian Response Oxtoby, 305-313

Seminar: Two Modern Responses

Fundamentalism -- Evangelicalism vs Atheism, Dawkins vs Hagee. Details about sources will follow. Dawkins' book, *The God Delusion*, is on the web (Google Books). Hagee has a homepage.

Questions to ponder for the seminar discussion:

What is 'fundamental' to each man's position? What makes them different/similar?

Week 10 Lecture One – Nov. 10

Contemporary Christianity Oxtoby, pp. 313-339

<u>Lecture Two – Nov. 12</u>

Quiz on Christianity

Seminar: Open Discussion

Week 11 Lecture One – Nov. 17

The Formation of Islam

Oxtoby, pp 341-368, CoursepPack 6, *The Collection of the Qur'an* Background scriptures for the lecture:

Scriptures

1

3:1-10

Qur'an and Muhammad

3:144

16:101-105

25:1-13, 32-39

Creation

24:41-46

96

<u>Lecture Two – Nov. 19</u>

The Caliphate, the Spread of Islam, and Splits in the Community Oxtoby, pp. 368-83, 421-37

Seminar -- From the Qur'an, read the following *suras*:

Abraham

2:124-140

3:67-71

4:125

14:37-9

Noah

71

Moses

20:14ff

26:1ff

Commandments

25:66-76

Questions to ponder for the seminar discussion:

Compare the passages above with what you know from the Old Testament. How different/similar are the Jewish and Qur'anic texts? How do you account for that?

<u>Students doing the Journal option -- Third Journal Entry and Article Review Due Nov. 19</u>

Week 12 Lecture One – Nov. 24

Islamic Law

Oxtoby, pp. 383-394

Background scriptures for the lecture:

Jihad

25:48-57 (esp. 52)

4:75-76

53:29-30 (stay aloof)

16: 106ff (dissimulation)

<u>Lecture Two - Nov. 26</u>

Islam and Related Traditions – Philosophy and Theology Oxtoby, 394-420

Seminar: From the Qur'an

Jesus

3:36-59 61:1-7

4:171-2

17:111

Satan

15:27-40

17:61-65

Jews and Christians

5:56-86

Women

4:1-35, 126-30

9:71

16:58-9

30:21

33:35

Questions to ponder for the seminar discussion:

How does the Qur'an view Jesus and Satan? How does it see the relationship of Muslims to the other people of the book (Jews and Christians)? How are women written about?

Final Project due Nov. 26

Week 13 Lectures One and Two – Dec. 1 and 3

Modernity and Islam Oxtoby, pp. 437-61

Seminar: From the Course Pack 7, Religion and Political Order

Questions to ponder for seminar discussion:

Contrast and account for the views of Sayyid Qutb and Seyyed Hossein Nasr. Why is the role of sharia so controversial, especially for contemporary women?

Week 14 Lecture One – Dec. 8

Traditions in Contact/Conflict Oxtoby, pp. 479-485, ch 7

<u>Lecture Two – Dec. 10</u>

Wrap-up

Seminar: Ellis (all)

Questions to ponder for the seminar discussion:

Who/what is responsible for this state of affairs? Do you find room for hope?

Final Journal Entry due Dec. 10

Cumulative Final in the exam period.

*Seminars and Readings from the Scriptures of Each Tradition.

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

- 1. Scriptures 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.'
- 2. With that in mind, as you read each section, try to determine what is being said. 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 selection, 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 should the believer walk away with?
- 3. 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 belief and value systems, we will all be outsiders at most or all points this semester. Even if you do share the values/beliefs of any of these traditions, 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 the 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, because he could neither read nor write, he 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:

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

...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 unmysterious 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 around 650, when a final version was commissioned by the Caliph Uthman, although there are also 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. Two quizzes 10% each **Final** 20%

2. Media Project, Paper, or Journal

A. Project 40%

Or

B. Paper

Proposal 05% Review 10% Paper 25%

Or

C. Journal

Journal 30% Review 10%

4. Participation 20%

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

2. Media Project, Paper, or Journal

A. Media Project ('scrapbook' and analysis -Due December 3.

How we see or understand 'religion' is shaped by what we read/see in books and media. Media are often 'quick and dirty;' that is, they respond immediately (often superficially) to issues and events.

This assignment will examine the manner in which a selected group of media approaches 'religion.'

<u>The method</u> – you will collect items from various media and organize them in a scrapbook (folder, portfolio). You will analyze the material you have found.

- i. **FIVE MARKS**. By **September 17**, you will have selected media from the following groups. Please include links where applicable. For each, ascertain ownership.
 - a. 2 news magazines (MacLeans and one US weekly –Time or Newsweek)

Or

Two newspapers

b. 2 blogs – one western and one Islamic

Or

- 2 television network websites one western and one Islamic
- ii. From each medium, pick out <u>all</u> stories which have a religious theme (western religions), make significant reference to one of the 3 western traditions, and/or comment on religion generally.

For each story you can either copy/clip the whole piece or briefly summarize it. In all cases, include the following:

- --the article (story) or summary
- -- the medium used, link if appropriate
- -- the date of the issue
- -- the page # (if applicable) of the story
- --the bias (not everything has a bias or point of view there is no unbiased story).

For <u>TEN MARKS</u>, by October 20, you will hand in what you have collected thus far.

iii. The final submission, a scrapbook and an analysis, is due by <u>December 3</u>. You will hand in all articles <u>(TEN MARKS)</u>, those previously returned to you as well as the ones collected since October 20.

For **FIFTEEN MARKS**, answer the following:

- a. How is each tradition presented/treated in each?
- b. Who is the target audience of each medium?
- c. Who owns/controls each one of the media?
- d. List and briefly explain three major new insights you gained from this exercise.

B. Paper

The paper will be on a topic from the list below or one approved by me. It will focus on either

- a. key concepts/movements within one of the traditions or
- b. historically significant *contacts among* the traditions.

You must consult with me before starting your work and should 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 October 1

Your proposal will

- a. Introduce the topic (who, what, when, where, etc.). Reference/source material is critical.
- b. Explain the question that the paper will answer.
- c. 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.
- d. 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 book and the first page of the article. Explain briefly why each 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 October 29

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 (argument, thesis, main point)
- --paragraph two will discuss style, sources, and method of argument
- --paragraph three will give your opinion on the basis of the information in paragraphs one and two.

The complete article will be attached or a direct link provided.

iii. Completed Essay (25%) – due November 26

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.

C. 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 Governor-General Award-winning document. This is neither a creative writing nor a 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. **Due dates are – Oct. 1, Oct. 22, Nov. 19, and Dec. 10.**

For those choosing this option, you will also submit, by **Nov 12**, an academic journal review. It will be based on one of your journal topics which has especially caught your interest. Please note the following:

- --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. You must include a Bibliographical citation, double space, and justify the margins.

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

20th 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	В		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** or information on conversion to final grades, and for additional information on student record and transcript notations.

Temporary Grade	Description	
I	<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.	
IP	In progress: 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.	
CW	Compulsory Withdrawal: 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** 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.

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.