



*School of Arts & Science
Humanities*

RELIGION 100
World Religions of the West
Fall, 2012

What is hateful to yourself, do not to your fellow man. That is the whole of the Torah and the remainder is but commentary. Go and study.

Rabbi Hillel (ca. 30 BCE - 10 CE)

The holy books say one thing about a religion, the people who believe in and practice that religion do quite another. Trying to understand the difference between official religion, defined by the religious virtuosi, and the believed and practiced religion of the faithful defines a central problem in making sense of religion as we see it in today's world.

Jacob Neusner, *The Way of the Torah*

'People of the Book, let us arrive at a statement that is common to all: we worship God alone, we ascribe no partner to Him, and none of us takes others beside God as lords.'

Qur'an 3:65

The beliefs of each that it possesses the one true revelation and special covenant and, in the cases of Christianity and Islam, that it supersedes earlier revelations and has a universal mission, have been stumbling blocks to religious pluralism and tolerance.

John Esposito, *The Future of Islam*

1. Course Description and Intended Learning Outcomes

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.

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

2. Instructor Information

(a)	Instructor:	Clarence Bolt		
(b)	Office Hours:	MW – 11:00-12:00, TuTh -- 1:30-2:20, Th -- 4:30-5:20		
(c)	Location:	Y323		
(d)	Phone:	370-3347		
(e)	Email:	cbolt@camosun.bc.ca		

3. Required Materials

- a. Willard Oxtoby, ed., *World's Religions: Western Traditions*, 3rd edition and companion website -- www.oupcanada.com/OxtobyWest3e (handy for studying for class and for tests)
- b. Michael Coogan, *The Old Testament: A Very Short Introduction*
- c. *Bible*, recommended editions, New Revised Standard Version, Revised Standard Version (here's one online <http://www.bibleontheweb.com/Bible.asp>) or the New International Version
- d. *Qur'an*, recommended edition by M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (available in the bookstore)

The following website also links to online scriptural sources:

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

4. Course Content and Schedule

The Lecture component is based on the Oxtoby text and the scriptures of each tradition. Read the assigned reading before class. I will provide an outline for each lecture for ease of note-taking as well as provide guide questions for each of the traditions. For each lecture and seminar, make sure that you bring to class the books/sources from which we will be working, either a Bible or a Qur'an when we are using them (most every class), and a copy of the lecture outline that I emailed you the previous week.

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. 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 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 (mostly primary sources) assigned for those sessions. Please note that one seminar group meets on Tuesday, the other on Thursday. You will hand in short, concise responses to the questions on the seminar readings before they start. Each student will do a brief presentation on an item from the media.

Course Introduction

Week 1

Lecture One – Sept. 4

About Religion - the Waves of Religious Experience

Oxtoby, ch. 1

Lecture Two – Sept. 6

Some Ancient World Understandings and Terms

Oxtoby, (from ch.2) pp. 35-47, 56-58, Coogan, chs. 1, 3

Seminar – Introduction to Course

Expectations

Work Explained

Judaism

Judaism is the first of the 3 traditions we will cover. It originated in the 1st century at the same time as Christianity. Its sources are the Hebrew traditions of Israel. During Weeks 2 and 3, we will examine these sources, used also by Christianity and Islam, before looking at the elements that distinguish it from the other 2.

Here are some websites that you may want to consult for information about the chronology/story of the Hebrew TaNaKh

1. Google: **Synopsis of the Contents of the TaNaKh (the Jewish Bible), Christine Hayes**

2. Another link to a site summarizing the TaNaKh

<http://www.templeisrael.com/pdfs/Adult%20Jewish%20Learning%20-%202010%20-%20Intro%20Packet%20-%20Torah%20and%20Tanakh.pdf>

3. A link to a site summarizing the Torah

http://www.myjewishlearning.com/texts/Bible/Torah/Portion_by_Portion.shtml

4. A Timeline for Jewish History

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/israeltime.html>

Week 2

Background scriptures for these lectures come from the Torah (5 books of Moses – Genesis through to Deuteronomy). Feel free to browse through them. I will give a brief chronology, but reading is the best way to catch the flavor of the TaNaKh.

Lecture One -- Sept. 11

Hebrew Background to Judaism (& the other two!!)

Oxtoby, pp. 68-78, Coogan, ch. 2

Lecture Two – Sept. 13

Formation of Judaism – Origin Accounts & Older Traditions

Oxtoby, pp. 78-84, Coogan, ch. 4

Seminar: From the Hebrew Scriptures, Coogan, ch. 4

Genesis 1-3, 12:1-8, 21-2

Exodus 6, 14, 20:1-20, 32

Questions for the seminar discussion:

What do the Creation, Abraham, and Exodus accounts say about the relationship between God and 'his people?' What is 'covenant?' What about Ishmael and Isaac?

Week 3

Background scriptures for the lectures include Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings and Chronicles and the Prophets. For interest, you may want to check Hosea 1-3 and Jeremiah 1&2 as well as the book of Esther. As with the previous lectures, browsing through the writings will give you a flavor of the scriptures.

Lecture One – Sept. 18

The Formative Period of Judaism – Captivity & Definition (Kings, Prophets, and Beyond)

Oxtoby, pp. 85-90, Coogan, ch. 8

Lecture Two – Sept. 20

Hellenistic Judaism

Oxtoby, 90-98 (Background scriptures here include Ezra and Nehemiah. Do a web search on them)

Seminar: From the Hebrew Scriptures

Coogan, ch. 10

Job 1, 2, 38-42 (skim in between if you are interested – chs. 29-31, e.g, contain Job's self-vindication)

Ecclesiastes 1-4, 6, 12

Song of Solomon (check online and pick selections)

Questions for the seminar discussion:

What are the main themes of these passages? Are they surprising given the themes discussed in the previous seminar? Are they more universal? Why might this be?

Choice for major project by September 20

Week 4 **Lecture One – Sept. 25**

Rabbinic Judaism

Oxtoby, 98-113

For insight into how the Talmud works, browse the following:

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Talmud/talmudtoc.html>

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/etm/index.htm>

Lecture Two – Sept 27

Differentiation: Medieval Judaism and Beyond (Classical Judaism)

Oxtoby, pp. 113-127

A *Kabbalah* site: <http://www.jewfaq.org/kabbalah.htm>

Seminar:

Jewish Observances

Oxtoby, pp. 127-141

Coogan, ch. 7

Questions for the seminar discussion:

What is the purpose of ‘ritual?’ How do these Judaic rituals connect with the major themes of Judaism?

Project Proposal Due Sept. 27

First Journal Entry Due Sept. 27

Week 5 **Lecture One – Oct. 2**

Judaism in the Contemporary World (2nd Age of Diversity)

Oxtoby, pp 141-157, 239-43

Lecture Two – Oct. 4

Modern Dilemmas – Identity in a Racialized World

Oxtoby, 141-157

Seminar: A key issue for Jews today is the relationship among the Jewish Diaspora, the Jewish community in the State of Israel, and increasing secularization. Since the destruction of the Second Temple (70 CE), the Jewish people have lived as an exiled and dispersed community. Today, of approximately 14 million Jews worldwide, the majority, about 6 million, live in the USA. About 5 million live in the State of Israel (founded 1948), with smaller communities across Europe, Southern

Africa, Middle and South America, Australia, the Middle East, and Asia.

Since religious experience is deeply imbedded within Jewish culture and history, it is often argued that the religious and non-religious elements within Judaism cannot be disentangled. Many who identify themselves as Jewish see themselves as secular, or non-practicing, Jews. Many other Jews are guided by Halakah, the laws for daily life. **While Judaism is frequently described as a religion, many within the tradition see this categorization as problematic.** The following website contains brief summaries of 5 modern forms of Judaism.

<http://judaism.about.com/od/denominationsofjudaism/p/branches.htm>

For the seminar (to hand in), briefly answer the following: Consider especially the bold sections above. Of the 5 main current forms (see site), which is truest to Judaism's history? Which best paves the way for a healthy Jewish future? Or is this a non-issue? Does it matter for Jews?

Week 6

Lecture One – Oct. 9

Quiz on Judaism (part take home) and
Introduction to Christianity

Seminar: From the Christian New Testament
Matthew 1-2, 25, 27-28
Mark 1, 16
Luke 1, 2
John 1.1-18

Questions for the seminar discussion:
How does each one introduce the 'gospel' (define this word)?
Do you notice a different tone? What is it for each, and why might that be?

Christianity

Christian traditions evolve at the same time as those of Judaism. They are concurrent responses to Hebrew foundations that take conflicting directions. We will examine why they could not remain under the 'same roof' but developed their own interpretations of God's relationship to humanity.

For the study of Christianity, the following is a website that links to original sources from earliest days to the recent times:

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook2.html>

Week 6 Lecture Two – Oct. 11 **Christian Origins – New Testament**

Oxtoby, pp. 166-175.

For non-Canonical Writings rejected or lost

<http://aggreen.net/bible/noncanon.html>

Background scriptures for the lecture:

Same as seminar

Seminar: From the Christian New Testament

Matthew 1-3, 25, 27-28

Mark 1, 16

Luke 1, 2

John 1.1-18

Questions for the seminar discussion:

How does each introduce the 'gospel' (define this word)? Why do they differ?

Week 7 Lecture One – Oct 16 **From Sect to Church**

Oxtoby, pp. 175-81, 227-239

Scriptures for the lecture:

Acts 1-2, 9:1-31, 15:1-29

Romans 9-11

Lecture Two – Oct. 18 **Imperial Christianity**

Oxtoby, pp. 181-193

Seminar: From the Christian Scriptures

Romans 4-5, 8:18-39

Hebrews 11

Writing from **Augustine (to be emailed)**

Questions for the seminar discussion:

What is Paul arguing about faith and about the inheritance from the Hebrew traditions? How do Augustine's views on original sin and of the divisions in the universe derive from the above scripture passages?

Week 8

Lecture One – Oct. 23

Roman (Catholic) Christianity – So-called Medieval Period

Oxtoby, pp. 191-209

Lecture Two – Oct. 25

The Protestant Reformation

Oxtoby, 209-227

Seminar:

Reformation Writings (to be provided)

Luther on James and letter to Weller

Calvin

Council of Trent's list of Prohibited Books

Questions for the seminar discussion:

Why did Luther have trouble with the book of James?

Summarize and evaluate Luther's prescription for Weller's (Google Jerome Weller) depression. What is Calvin's view of salvation? What criteria did the Council of Trent provide the Catholic Church for approving books?

Article Review Due October 25

Week 9

Lecture One – Oct 30

Modernity and Christianity

Oxtoby, pp. 239-49

Scan the Book of Revelations

Lecture Two – Nov. 1

Contemporary Christianity in a World of Diversity

Oxtoby, 249-59

Seminar: What is the biggest issue/challenge facing a Christian in the modern era, in 2012? Please develop your answer in 3 well-developed paragraphs, explaining the topic, the key issue for Christians, and how this may play out. **To be handed in for 5 marks.**

Second Journal Entry Due Nov. 1

Week 10 **Lecture One – Nov. 6**
Quiz on Christianity

Seminar: Note: there is a seminar.
It will be the introduction to Islam. Make sure you have your Qur'an with you. See below for what we will cover. You will not have to prepare for this class. Simply be there, participate, ask questions, and take notes.

Be prepared to compare Qur'anic notions with those of the TaNaKh and Christian scriptures.

Islam

As the third set of traditions borrowing heavily from Hebraic roots, Islam arises after the other two have broadly defined themselves. These traditions sees themselves as based on the final revelation of God to Muhammad, the final prophet in a long list of prophets that include major Jewish and Christian figures such as Adam, Noah, Moses, and Jesus.

Week 10 **Lecture Two – Nov. 8**
Origins of Islam

Oxtoby, pp 268-78

Background scriptures for the lecture:

Introduction to the Qur'an -- read the following *sura*

1

96 (considered the first revelation to Muhammad)

View of Scriptures -- read the following *sura*

3:1-10

5:15,16

10:11-17

Relationship between Qur'an & Muhammad -- read the following *suras*

3:144-148

16:98-105

25:1-13, 32-39

Seminar:

View of Human creation

22:5

23:12-15

View of Abraham -- read the following *suras*

2:124-140

3:65-68

37:83-112

View of Noah -- read the following *sura*

11:25-49

71

View of Moses -- read the following *suras*

20:9-98 (note 87ff)

26:10-68

Some other *TaNaKh* and Christian figures

38:1-5

Compare Qur'anic notions with those of the TaNaKh and Christian scriptures.

Week 11 Lecture One – Nov. 13

Formation of Practice & the Issue of Succession (Caliphate)

Oxtoby, pp. 297-302, 283-85

History of Shi'ism

http://www.iranchamber.com/religions/articles/history_of_shiism.php

Lecture Two – Nov. 15

Islamic Law

Oxtoby, pp. 278-83

Seminar:

View of Muhammad

61:1-7

52:29-49

34:40-53

36:1-12

View of Jesus -- read the following *suras*

3:33-67

5:17

4:153-159, 4:170-172 and 79:109-120

17:111

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yeR_fU1acjM

on The Muslim Jesus

View of Satan -- read the following *suras*

7:10-27

17:61-65

View of Jews and Christians -- read the following *sura*

3:84-99

4:123-126

5:56-86

Questions for the seminar discussion:

How does the Qur'an view Muhammad, Satan, and Jesus?

How does it see the relationship of Muslims to the other people of the book (Jews and Christians)?

Students doing the Journal option -- Article Review Due Nov. 15

Week 12 **Lecture One – Nov. 20**

Sufism and the Question of Culture

Oxtoby, pp. 281-3, 285-91, 302-5

Lecture Two – Nov. 22

The Spread of Islam

Oxtoby, pp. 291-97

Seminar

View of Paradise – read the following *suras*

38:50-52

44:40-57

47:15

52:17-27

55:39-76

56:1-26

82

View of Women -- read the following *suras*

2:221-242

4:1-35, 127-30

9:71,72

16:54-9

24:27-33

33:35

Questions for the seminar discussion:

How is paradise viewed? What kind of place is it? How are women written about? You may want to browse this site on women in Islam. Who created it?

<http://www.islamfortoday.com/women.htm>

Final Project due Nov. 22

Week 13 Lectures One and Two – Nov. 27 & Nov. 29

Modernity and Islam

Oxtoby, pp. 305-17

Background scriptures for the lecture:

View of *Jihad* -- read the following *suras*

2:189-195

4:71-76

16: 105ff (dissimulation)

25:48-57 (esp. 52)

Seminar: Modernity and Islam

Questions for seminar discussion:

Contrast and account for the views of Osama bin Laden and Tariq Ramadan. Who are they?

Media Project for those choosing it due Nov. 29

Week 14 Lecture One and Two – Dec. 4 and Dec. 6

Wrap-up on Islam; what's new?

Oxtoby, ch. 7, pp. 388-89, 397-407, 409-12, 416-18,

Oxtoby, ch. 8

Seminar:

Round table discussions on major issues raised by the 3 traditions.

Book Review and (for those choosing it) due Dec 4

Final Journal Entry due Dec. 6

Cumulative Final in the exam period.

5. Basis of Your Assessment (Weighting)

1. Two quizzes 10% each

Final 15%

Presentation on

Week 9 05%

2. Choice of Paper, Journal, or Reviews (chosen by Sept. 20)

A. Paper

Proposal 05%

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------|
| Review | 10% |
| Paper | 25% |
| Or | |
| B. Journal | |
| Journal | 30% |
| Review | 10% |
| Or | |
| C. Reviews | |
| 3 Article Reviews | 18% |
| Book Review | 16% |
| Media | 6% |
|
 | |
| 3. Participation | 15% |
|
 | |
| 4. Media Presentation | 05% |

1. Quiz/Final details will be handed out well in advance. Use the Guide Questions emailed to you for major themes. The quizzes may consist of 4 types of questions:

- Terms to identify** based on the list given at the end of Oxtoby chapters.
- Short paragraph**-size answers to questions on themes and issues.
- Longer essays** requiring synthesis of main themes and issues.
- Take home** options.

2. Paper, Journal, Or Reviews

By September 20, choose one of the following three options – hand in a card or email me on your choice.

A. Paper

The paper, **due November 22**, will be on a topic from the list below or one approved by me. It may focus on

- key concepts/movements/people within one of the traditions or
- offshoots or sects/cults deriving from these tradition
- contacts among the traditions, whether it be of major groups or individuals
- encounters with non-western traditions
- an evaluation of the works/books of a major figure within a tradition
- or any topic arranged after consultation with me

Please consult with me before starting your work and do so regularly to stay on track.

Step 1. Proposal – Due Sept. 27

By September 27, you will submit a proposal (annotated bibliography) with a list of sources, a minimum of **3 books** and **2 academic articles**, specific to the topic.* If you want to vary these numbers to include fewer books and more articles, put together a list and consult me before handing in the assignment. You may also include primary

material. Feel free to consult with me to negotiate what you may want to include and how you may want to construct your essay.

The submitted proposal will look like this:

a. Paragraph with Topic Proposal

This paragraph will

--introduce the topic (who, what, when, where – not how or why)

--explain which question that the paper will answer

--lay out the approach/style of presentation.

There is no need to formulate a thesis at this point. Theses should be generated by research rather than the other way around.

Before choosing books or articles, use reference works to define the topic, such as the *Encyclopedia of Religion*, *Catholic Encyclopedia* (online), *Encyclopedia of Islam*, *Encyclopedia of the Qur'an Online*, or other similar encyclopedias (even Wikipedia)]. Reference works must not be part of your bibliography. They are important to define a topic, but sources for the essay must be academic books/articles focussed on the topic or primary sources from the traditions. The site *Judaica*, e.g., is a good point of access to Jewish sources. Look for Bibliographies of sources, either in print or on-line (such as the following – one of the best):

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook2.html>

b. Bibliography (examples)

Author. *Title*. Place: Publisher, Date.

e.g. a book

Ellis, Deborah. *Three Wishes, Palestinian and Israeli Children Speak*. Toronto: House of Anansi, 2004

e.g. an article

LaViolette, Forrest. "Missionaries and the Potlatch." *Queen's Quarterly* 58 (1951):237-51.

Entries must be alphabetical, double-spaced, and second-line indented. Consult the *History Style Guide* for direction.

Suggestions for finding books and articles:

Using the **Camosun library**, find **six books** and four articles either completely devoted to your topic or with substantial references to it. If you have difficulty finding these numbers, you may wish to widen your topic or select a different one. Since content may not live up to what the titles suggest, it is helpful to look up more titles than you need, locate them in the stacks or on-line, skim them for content, and then select those that best fit the topic. [Camosun has an e-books collection]. Feel free as well to scan the bibliographies of the books you choose to find additional useful sources. This is using the research skills of those who have come before you!!

C. Once you have settled on books and articles, write out a summary that will:

Explain why your choices will help create an essay on the topic. Usefulness/value is determined by both the work's content (primary or secondary) and, where applicable, the author's use of the material.

Your mark will be determined by both the work's usefulness and your assessment of why it is so. Do not simply say that you liked 'it' or that 'it' covered the topic. Try to figure out the

deeper themes and meaning to explain why the work is useful. This summary may be written beneath the bibliographic entry.

To find articles, use indexes such as JSTOR and EBSCO. Academic journal articles are peer-reviewed and well documented (footnotes and bibliography). *National Geographic*, news magazines, *Life*, *Reader's Digest*, and such popular magazines **are not** appropriate. **Articles must be from respected and established periodicals.**

Attachments

1. a photocopy of the title page; and the table of contents of each book
2. the 1st page of the articles.

Papers will only be considered if a proposal is submitted. Late work is not accepted without permission. Maintain regular communication with me to keep things on track.

Step 2 -- Article Review (a sample will be provided)

By October 25, 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.

Include a full bibliographic citation as well as attach the complete article (or a direct link). Failure to follow these instructions will mean the return of the review.

Step 3 –The Essay

The paper, **due November 22**, will meet the following Conditions and Standards:

1. It will be no longer than 2500 words (approx. 7-8 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. It must contain
 - title page
 - double spacing, with no headings and no extra space between paragraphs
 - justified margins
 - minimum of 20 end/footnotes documenting specific information, themes, ideas, quotes, or paraphrases
 - proper end/footnote and bibliographical style (see the Humanities web page, *History Style Guide*)
 - copy of the original proposal, along with the article review
 - a second copy of the essay emailed to the instructor (one to be kept on file for 5 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 is based on the quality of work and presentation (see 4), use of sources, a clear/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. A journal for this course is a specialized type and is not to be confused with a private diary. Entries, while personal, must be analytical, intellectual responses, focused on specific subjects and meeting established criteria. They will be based on two foundations:

- the course material (texts, readings, lectures, and discussions)
- previous knowledge, intuitive reactions, and feelings about the material

Your entries must be solid, well-articulated positions. It is not adequate to say that you like or do not like something. This does not have to be award-winning writing. Religion 100 is neither a creative writing nor a psychology course.

You will make a minimum of **2 entries per week**, one responding to the material assigned for the upcoming classes, and a second after the week's classes have been held. In short, you are responding to material before and after it has been dealt with in class. Entries 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 (not expected to be literary masterpieces)

Entries may be handwritten or printed but hard copies are due on the assigned dates.

Due dates are – Sept. 27, Nov. 1, and Dec. 6.

For those choosing this option, you will submit, by **Nov. 15**, an academic journal review, from a list of articles provided by the instructor. See **Paper Step 2** (above) for details on writing a review. Include a Bibliographical citation, double space between sentences, 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.

C. Reviews and Media

Instead of a paper or journal, the student may choose to do 3 articles reviews, a book review (on the *Tenth Parallel: Dispatches From the Fault Line Between Christianity and Islam*, by Eliza Griswald), and a small scrapbook on media treatment of an issue covered by the course.

The 3 article reviews will follow the format above, and will be worth 6 marks each. The **first is due on the last class of September, the second on the last class of October, and the third on the last class of November.**

The review on Eliza Griswald's book will consist of an analysis of a review of her book and answering a number of questions to be provided ahead of time. It is **due Dec. 4.**

The third part of this assignment is the choice of a topic for which you will select one media entry per week, print it, and put it into a scrapbook. You will write a brief analysis

of no more than 500 words noting what insights you gained on the topic. What views did you have before you started, and how have these been impacted by what you collected? The media from which you may draw are mainstream media – major newspapers, news magazines, networks (CBC, BBC, Aljazeera, etc.)

This is due November 29.

3. Participation in classroom activities is an important component of the course. Seminar sessions will be devoted to discussion of assigned readings. Attendance is required. If you must miss one, your absence must be arranged/discussed with me ahead of time. More than 3 absences will reduce the marks for this component of the course, unless prior arrangements have been made. You will hand in short, concise responses to the questions on the seminar readings before they start as a passport into the seminar.

4. Media Presentation

For each seminar, one student will present a news item on a religious topic, for the week prior to the seminar, from any media. Be prepared, to present a (very) brief summary of the story and why it caught your attention. A short written summary will be handed in. Each student will sign up for a seminar media presentation during the first week.

List of Possible Paper Topics (for these or any other topic, consult me)

Dead Sea Scrolls, Essenes, Qumran	Maria TV
Jihad	Hagarism
Baha'i faith	Voice of Unity (Muslim Youth organization –online)
Mormonism	99 names for God in Islam
Jehovah's Witnesses	Atheism in Indonesia
Sufism	Pesantren or Pondok Pesantren
Black Muslims	Salafism
Kabbalism	Dubai as modern city
Wahhabism	Doha Debates
Shi-ism	Amina Wadud, Muslim feminist
Zionism	Female Rabbis or Imams
Augustine	Hijab (in all of its forms)
Roman vs. Orthodox Christians	Dispensationalism
Creation versus evolution	
Eschatology	
Pietism	
Abdullahi An-Na'im	

Sharia law in a particular place, time

20th c fundamentalism – in any of the three traditions or comparison of two

Science/culture and faith – are they compatible –pick one tradition or compare two

Thinkers/philosophers/theologians in any of the tradition (browse through the text)

Sects and denominations within any of the traditions (see lists in text)

Compare Islam in two countries with dominant Muslim populations

Islam in the west (Europe, Canada, US – see Bibliography of Esposito, *The Future of Islam*)

Christianity in China, South Korea, Africa

Pluralism vs secularism

Multi-culturalism and religion

Televangelism in either Christianity or Islam (Amr Khaled or Abdullah Gymnastiar)

West-Islamic World Dialogue (named C-100) Also produces *Islam and the West, Annual Report on the State of Dialogue*

Alliance of Civilizations

Amman Message (Jordanian initiative)
 “A Common Word between us” (Pope Benedict initiative after his ill-fated Regensburg Speech)
 Institute for Global Engagement
 Gallup World Polls
 Gender (LGBTQ) issues in any of the faiths
 Cow’s head protest in Malaysia and subsequent reactions
 Saudi Housewife Hissa Hilal in poetry contest with a poem on Ad Hoc Fatwas
 Saudi House of Peace – Christians trying to convert Muslims

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

1. Grading System

Percentage	Grade	Description	Grade Equivalency	Point
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 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.

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	<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.
CW	<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.

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.

Notes on the Scriptures of Each Tradition.

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.'^a

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, and in what genre?
- 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 not share the values/beliefs of any of these traditions, recognize that the scriptures in each tradition are sacred to adherents. Readings have been chosen to provide a sense of what is meaningful to large numbers of people.

4. There is no such thing as a perfect translation of scriptures. Hence, no particular translation of any of the traditions is assigned for this class. However, some translations do a better job of scholarship with the available texts.

Notes on the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures

The Hebrew scriptures are known as the TaNaKh. I have not assigned any particular translation. Because Christians use the Hebrew scriptures and add a few of their own, combined Hebrew and Christian texts make the most sense. Below are recommendations for such.

Most recommended: The **New Revised Standard Version** has become the standard academic translation of the Bible for many Jewish, Christian and non-religious Bible scholars. It is based on the best original texts available. Other recommended versions include the **Revised Standard Version**, **New International Version**, **New American Bible** (with the *revised New Testament*), **New American Standard Bible**, **Modern Language Bible**.

Acceptable but not recommended: The **King James Version** (Authorized Version) uses 400-year-old English, which is partially resolved by the **New King James Version**. Their New Testaments are based on slightly different Greek texts from those used for most modern translations. The **Jerusalem Bible** (which also contains apocryphal books), **Good News Bible** (Today's English Version), and **New English Bible** are less literal.

Not suitable: Paraphrases (not translations) include the **Living Bible**, **Amplified Bible**, **The Message**, and **Barclay's Bible**. The **Douay-Reims Bible** is a Catholic translation of a Latin translation rather than a direct translation from the Greek or Old Testament Hebrew.

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

Notes 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, containing all that is needed for salvation, whether instructions for how to live or ethical principles. Most believe that God's word(s) is written on a tablet, one that resides in God's presence. The revelations in the Qur'an, 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. Its style differs from the other 2 'books,' reflecting Arabic religious traditions, consisting of rhymed prose (rather than poetry) which is easy to memorize.

There are 114 chapters, known as *suras*. They are not arranged chronologically but in terms of length, starting with 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.

Even if they are not Arabic, Muslim children across the world learn the Arabic alphabet and to sound out the Qur'an's words phonetically. It is, thus, both a *source* of prayer and a *prayer* in its own right, highly venerated and 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 veneration is that calligraphy is a highly developed art form in the Islamic world.

The recitation of the Qur'an is captivating and reciters have a high status. As is true of all scriptures for all religious traditions, simply reading it for content does not do it justice or capture its significance for followers.