



*School of Arts & Science
Humanities*

RELIGION 100
World Religions of the West
Fall, 2014

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, & Islam, this course explores the sources, beliefs (including representative texts), & practices of these religions. The traditions of each will be studied in their cultural & political contexts from both historical & 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

3. Instructor Information

(a)	Instructor:	Clarence Bolt		
(b)	Office Hours:	MW - 10:30-12:00, Th - 4:30-5:20		
(c)	Location:	Y323		
(d)	Phone:	250-370-3347		
(e)	Email:	cbolt@camosun.bc.ca		

4. Required Materials

- a. Willard Oxtoby, ed., *World's Religions: Western Traditions, 3rd edition*
Companion website -- www.oupcanada.com/OxtobyWest3e
- b. Michael Coogan, *The Old Testament: A Very Short Introduction*
- c. *Bible*, recommended translations: *New Revised Standard Version, Revised Standard Version*, or *New International Version*
- d. *Qur'an*, recommended translation: by M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (bookstore)

The following website links to online scriptural sources:

<http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/home/>

4. Course Content and Schedule

During class time, we use the Oxtoby text, the scriptures of each tradition, and readings provided by email or links. Be sure to read assigned readings before class. Outlines for each class as well as guide questions are provided for ease of reading and note-taking. For each class, bring 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.

Oxtoby is organized into chapters and each chapter is divided into sections, each of which 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?

Reading the book and attending class ensures the best results.

Classes will largely follow the book's format. A significant amount of time is devoted to discussing both the textbook and readings (mostly primary sources) assigned for discussion. Before class, you will hand in short, concise responses to

the questions on those readings. Each student will also do one brief presentation on a 'current events' item from the media.

Questions for quizzes reflect the book's major themes/points as well as information presented and discussed in class.

Course Introduction

Week 1 Hand out syllabus and discuss course expectations

About Religion – Sources of Judaism, Christianity, & Islam. Are They Still Relevant?

Reference readings (not required, but of use!): Oxtoby, ch. 1, ch. 2, pp. 35-47, 56-58

Judaism

Judaism, the 1st of the 3 traditions covered, originated in the 1st century at the same time as Christianity with which it and Islam share sources, namely, the Hebrew traditions of Israel. In Weeks 2 and 3, we examine these sources, before examining what distinguishes Judaism from the Christianity and Islam.

Some websites to consult for information about the chronology/story of the Hebrew scriptures, also known as the TaNaKh:

1. Synopsis of Contents of the TaNaKh (the Jewish Bible), Christine Hayes
2. Two links to sites summarizing the TaNaKh
 - a. <http://www.templeisrael.com/pdfs/Adult%20Jewish%20Learning%20-%202010%20-%20Intro%20Packet%20-%20Torah%20and%20Tanakh.pdf>
 - b. http://www.myjewishlearning.com/texts/Bible/Torah/Portion_by_Portion.shtml
3. A Timeline for Jewish History
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/israeltime.html>

Week 2 The Foundation Stories for the 3 faiths: Creation, Covenant, Kings, Prophets, and Beyond

For information - background scriptures are from the Torah (5 books of Moses – Genesis - Deuteronomy), Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles and the Prophets. I will provide a brief chronology and summary of the ‘stories.’ Note that reading the text better gives you the flavour of the TaNaKh.

Readings:

For lecture

-Oxtoby, pp. 68-90 (for reference, Coogan, ch. 1-4, 8)

For discussion

-Genesis 1-3, 12:1-8, 16-17, 21-2

- Exodus 20:1-20, 32
- Hosea 1-3 and Jeremiah 1,2

On Abraham & Moses, you may want to check the following:
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/abraham.html>
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/moses.html>

Feel free to use *The Encyclopedia of Religion* or *Wikipedia*.

Questions for 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? What is the point of the story of the golden calf? What are the lessons of Hosea and Jeremiah?

Week 3 The Creation of Rabbinic Judaism - Hellenistic and Rabbinic Traditions

The following are good, concise summaries for your interest.
<http://oyc.yale.edu/sites/default/files/tanakh-synopsis.pdf>
<http://www.torah.org/learning/basics/primer/torah/bible.html>

Readings:

For Lecture

-Oxtoby, pp. 90-113

For insight into how the Talmud works:

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Talmud/talmudtoc.html>
<http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/etm/index.htm>

For Discussion

- Job 1, 2, 6, 7, 31, 38-42 (skim in between if you are interested)
- Ecclesiastes 1-4, 6, 9, 12

Check the *Jewish Virtual Library* on Job and Ecclesiastes – You may Google them and use Wikipedia.

Note: The Talmud is like the internet! How so?

Questions for discussion:

What are the main themes of the Job and Ecclesiastes passages? Are they surprising given the themes discussed so far? Are they more

universal than previous themes and the ideas of the covenants with Abraham and Moses? Why?

For Interest - Song of Solomon (check online and pick selections).
Why might this book be in the TaNaKh?

Week 4 Defining Judaism: Creating Medieval & Modern Judaism

Readings

For Lecture:

-Oxtoby, 113-127, 141-145, 404-7

For Discussion:

-(Jewish Observances) Oxtoby, pp. 127-141, Coogan, ch. 7

Questions for discussion:

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

Project Proposal

First Set of Journals

Week 5 Judaism in our Modern, Racialized World (2nd Age of Diversity) – the Dilemmas of Identity

Readings

For Lecture

-Oxtoby, pp 141-157, 239-43

For Discussion

A key contemporary Jewish issue is the relationship among the Jewish Diaspora, the Jewish community in the State of Israel, and secularization. Since the destruction of the Second Temple (70 CE), the Jewish people have lived as exiled and dispersed peoples. Today, of approximately 15 million Jews worldwide, the majority, about 6 million, live in the USA. Another 6 million live in the State of Israel

(founded 1948), with smaller communities across Europe, Southern Africa, the rest of the Americas, Australia, the Middle East, and Asia.

Since religious experience is imbedded in Jewish culture and history, it can be said that religious and non-religious elements of Judaism cannot be disentangled. Many Jews self-identify as secular or non-practicing Jews. Others are guided by Halakah, the laws for daily life. **Many, thus, see the categorization of Judaism as a religion as being problematic.** The following website contains summarizes 5 modern forms of Judaism.

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

Questions for Discussion:

Consider especially the bold section above. Of the 5 forms, which do you consider truest to Jewish history? Which best guarantees a healthy Jewish future? Or is this a non-issue? Does it matter for Jews? What is the current state of ‘being Jewish’?

Week 6 Quiz on Judaism (part take home)

Christianity

Christian Origins (week 6 con’t)

For Christianity, the following website links to original sources from earliest days to recent times: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook2.html>

Readings

For Lecture and Discussion.

- Oxtoby, pp. 166-175.
- Matthew 1-2, 25, 27-28
- Mark 1, 16
- Luke 1, 2
- John 1.1-18

Questions for 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?

For non-Canonical Gospels -
<http://aggreen.net/bible/noncanon.html>

Week 7 **From Sect to Church to Imperial Religion**

Readings:

For Lecture

-Oxtoby, pp. 175-93

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

For interest, read Romans 9-11 which lays out Paul's views of Jews, opinions that continue to influence how many Christians view Jews. For really apocalyptic views, scan (Google) the book of Revelations)

For Discussion

-Romans 4-5, 8:18-39

-Hebrews 11

-Writing from Augustine (to be emailed)

Questions for discussion:

In Romans, what does Paul argue about faith and the Christian inheritance from the Hebrew traditions?

How does the book of Hebrews define faith? What are the implications of this definition?

How do Augustine's views on original sin and of the divisions in the universe derive from the above scripture passages?

First Article Review for those doing a Journal

Week 8 **Orthodox, Roman (Catholic), & Reformation** **Christianity – the 3 Major 'Varieties'**

Readings:

For Lecture

-Oxtoby, pp. 188-221

For Discussion

-Oxtoby, pp. 199-204, 227-239

Questions for Discussion:

What is the role of ritual and of festival? Consider prayer, festivals, life rituals, etc. What is popular religion? Why did the church develop such approaches as relics, cathedrals, saints, veneration of Mary, indulgences, sacraments? Does popular religion detract from the message, from the essence of the faith?

Article Review for those doing a paper

Week 9 Divided & Diverse Christianity – Post-Reformation and Modern Christianity

Readings:

For Lecture

Oxtoby, pp. 221-227, 239-50, 257-59

Scan the Book of Revelations

For Discussion:

1. Of the following groups, which would be defined as Christian within the frameworks covered in this class: Jehovah's Witness, Seventh Day Adventist, Mormons, and Christian Science? Note origins, major ideas (those which distinguish them and give them their identity), and explain why or why not you think they fit the definition.
2. Discuss the diversity/pluralism/secularism/ecumenism issues.
3. Is modernity compatible with Christianity?

Questions for discussion:

Week 10 Tying it together - Contemporary Christianity in a World of Diversity

There will be a brief in-class quiz and a **Take-home Exercise** which will also be the basis for the remaining time of class. The focus will be on the contemporary world – and on the issue of whether or not Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are compatible with modernity. Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity may be considered.

Second Journals Set Due

Islam

Week 11 Origins of Islam, Formation of Practice, and the Issue of Succession (Caliphate)

Readings:

Lecture

Oxtoby, pp 268-78, 297-302, 283-85

History of Shi'ism

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

Discussion

View of Abraham

3:65-68

2:124-140

37:101-113

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

3:33-63

4:153-159, 170-172

5:17

17:111

View of Muhammad

61:1-7

33:40-53

3:144-148

View of Satan

7:10-27

17:61-65

View of Jews and Christians

3:84-101

4:123-126

5:56-86

Questions for discussion:

How does the Qur'an view Abraham, Muhammad, Satan, and Jesus? How about the relationship of Muslims to the other people of the book (Jews & Christians)? Compare the above views with those from other two scriptures. Account for differences/similarities.

Week 12 Islamic Law, Sufism, the Spread of Islam, & the Question of Culture

Readings:

Lecture

Oxtoby, pp. 275-97 302-5

Discussion

View of Women -- read the following *suras*

4:1-35, 123-30

2:222-242

16:54-60

9:71-2 and 33:35

View of Paradise – read the following *suras*

52:17-27

56:1-26

44:40-57

55:39-76

Modesty - read the following *suras*

7:26-31, 24:27-33

Questions for discussion:

1. How are women written about? Are there any unexpected insights that you gained? You may want to browse this site on women in Islam. Who created it?

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

2. How is paradise viewed? What kind of place is it? Does the notion of paradise have implications for the view of women?

Second Article Review for those doing a Journal Paper due for those doing the Paper Option

Week 13 Modernity and Islam

Readings:

Lecture

Oxtoby, pp. 305-17, 399-404

Discussion

Oxtoby, pp. 305-17

Osama Bin Laden and Tariq Ramadan (to be emailed)

Questions for discussion:

1. What is the modern crisis in Islam? Which of the above, Reformism, Revivalism, Secularism, best deal with that crisis?
2. Contrast and account for the views of Osama bin Laden and Tariq Ramadan.
3. What is the future of Islam and of the other 2?

These are complex topics. Consider the options presented in the chapter, especially the varieties within each of the following – Reformism, Revivalism, and Secularism. Consider the following: what is at the heart of the crisis in modern Islam, and which of the above, Reformism, Revivalism, Secularism, is likely best equipped to deal with that crisis?

A Pew Research study similar to the one on Judaism.

<http://www.pewforum.org/2013/04/30/the-worlds-muslims-religion-politics-society-overview/>

A link to an article which spins the typical view we have the other way – the headscarf issue can be an identity issue for some westerners, not just for Muslims.

<http://www.thelocal.fr/20130807/france-is-having-an-identity-crisis-over-islam>

Week 14 Wrap-up; Where are we Today? What's new?

Readings:

-Oxtoby, ch. 8

-*A Common Word*: <http://www.acommonword.com/> (JCM -Conference, 2013)

-Documents and sites collected over the semester.

Discussion

Some issues:

-Is the future of the 3 traditions in a globalizing world to convergence or to further division? Has the Internet and Social Media 'changed everything?'

-Is inter-faith dialogue possible?

- Can both pluralistic and secular approaches work?
- Any issues that are appropriate

Final Journals due

Semi-Cumulative Final in the exam period.

Basis of Your Assessment (Weighting)

1. Two quizzes 10% each
 Final 20%

2. Paper, Journal, Reviews, or Media Project
 - A. Paper
 - Proposal 05%
 - Article 05%
 - Paper 30%
 - B. Journal
 - Journal 30%
 - 2 Articles 10%

3. Participation
 - Discussion 10%
 - Hand-ins 05%

4. Media Presentation 05%

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 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	<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.

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.