



*School of Arts & Science
Humanities*

RELIGION 100
World Religions of the West
Winter 2016

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 11:30- 12, 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. *Bible*, recommended translations: *New Revised Standard Version*, *Revised Standard Version*, or *New International Version*
- c. William K. Kay, *Pentecostalism, A Very Short Introduction*.
- 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/>

Lectures (9:30 - Wednesdays). This part of the course uses the Oxtoby text as well as the scriptures of each tradition. Read actively the assigned reading before class, having the guide questions beside you, and noting the major themes of each chapter. Bring the required readings from Oxtoby or from the Bible/Qur'an to class. Oxtoby chapters are divided into sections with UPPER CASE letter headings and subsections with lower case titles. For each section and subsection, ask the following:

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

Reading the book and attending class ensures the best results. Lectures will largely follow the book's format. Questions for the quizzes and final exam reflect both the book's major themes/points and those emphasized in class and in seminars.

Seminars (9:30 or 10:30 Monday). We discuss assigned materials (mostly primary sources) – taken either from the scriptures and textbooks or emailed to you. Please hand in concise responses to the questions on the seminar readings (in the syllabus) before the seminar starts.

Media presentations: at some point in the semester, during the seminar, each student will do a brief presentation on a current event item from the media. Dates will be selected in the 1st week.

Course Content and Schedule

Course Introduction

Week 1

Seminar - January 11

Hand out syllabus/discuss course expectations

Lecture – January 13 - About Religion – Foundation Stories

and

Sources for Judaism, Christianity, & Islam

Oxtoby, pp. 24-5, 35-47, 56-58, 68-75

Judaism

Judaism originated in the 1st century at the same time as Christianity with which it and Islam share common sources, namely, the Hebrew traditions of Israel. 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 (Google this title)
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

Seminar – January 18

A. Genesis chs. 5-9. What is the point of the genealogies in ch.5? Why was a flood sent? What promises did God make after the flood?

B. Genesis ch. 11:1-9. What is the point of the story of the tower of Babel?

C. Joshua chs. 1, 6, 8. What does God want the Israelites to do to the people of Canaan? Why?

Lecture - January 20 - The Story Unfolds: Covenant, Nation & Beyond

Oxtoby, pp. 68-98

For information only - Scriptures from which I will draw for the lecture - (feel free to peruse these to get the flavor of the TaNaKh.

Genesis chs. 1-3; ch. 12:1-8; chs.16-17; chs. 21-2

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*.

For information only - Scriptures from which I will draw for the lecture - the Torah (Genesis - Deuteronomy), Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles and the Prophets. I will provide a brief chronology and summary of the 'stories.' Feel free to peruse.

Genesis chs. 16-17; chs. 21-2

Exodus 6-14, 20:1-20

Hosea chs.1-3

Jeremiah 1-2

Week 3 **Seminar - January 25**

A. Job 1, 2, 6, 7, 31, 38-42 (skim in between for interest) and **Ecclesiastes 1-4, 6, 9, 12**. What do Job and Ecclesiastes (also Google, Wikipedia and/or check the *Jewish Virtual Library* on them) tell us about fundamental religious questions (origin, meaning, and ethics)? Are their themes more universal than those of earlier writings, especially about such ideas as the covenants with Abraham and Moses, and are they surprising given what we have discussed so far?

B. From the Babylonian Talmud - CHAPTER XV, REGULATIONS CONCERNING THE TYING AND UNTYING OF KNOTS ON THE SABBATH (emailed with Judaism Files). Why might questions around the tying and untying knots occupy so much of a Rabbi's time?

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

Talmud & **Lecture January 27 - Rabbinic Judaism – Hellenism, Medieval Times**

Oxtoby, pp. 90-127

For insight into how the Talmud works (how is it like the internet?):

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

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

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>

Project Proposal – January 27

Week 4 **Seminar – February 1**

A. Jewish Observances, Oxtoby, pp. 127-141. What are the purposes of prayer, 'ritual,' circumcision, dietary restrictions, or symbolic wear (why certain 'things' are worn)? Why are festivals and feasts celebrated, and how do the rituals relate to the major themes of Judaism?

B. Mysticism, 121-7, 404-7. How does mysticism, especially the *kabbala*, fit into the Jewish tradition? Why might rabbis be uncomfortable with it?

Lecture – February 3 – Modernity’s Ups & Downs (and Zionism!!)

Oxtoby, 239-43, 141-145, 147-151

Short Quiz, beginning of class – February 3

First Set of Journals – February 3

Week 5 No Seminar – February 8 – (BC Day)

Lecture – February 10 - Judaism in our Racialized World – the State of Israel, the ‘Neighborhood,’ and Dilemmas of Identity

Oxtoby, pp 141-157, 239-43

Christianity

For Christianity, the following website links to original sources from earliest days to recent times: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook2.html>. There were many other gospels which did not become part of the New Testament. <http://aggreen.net/bible/noncanon.html>

Week 6 Seminar – February 15

A. Matthew ch. 1-2, 5, 7. What is the purpose of the genealogy in ch. 1? Why are so many reference prefaced “as it has been written?” What values and ethics are promoted in Matthew 5 and 7? Who is the target? You may want to Google ‘Sermon on the Mount’ from which this is taken.

B. Matthew ch. 25:31-46. What kind of behavior is eternally rewarded and which is punished (how and why)?

C. Hebrews ch. 11:1-3, 8-19. According to Hebrews, what is faith? How does this book see Abraham?

Take Home on Contemporary Judaism due – February 15

Lecture – February 17 - Christian Origins: From Jesus to

Church

Oxtoby, pp. 166-181

Romans 4.5, 11 (Paul’s influential view of Jews)

For information only, scriptures used in lecture. Feel free to peruse them. Matthew 1-2, 25, 27-28; Mark 1, 16; Luke 1, 2, John 1.1-18; and Acts 1-2, 9:1-31, 15:1-29

Week 7 Seminar – February 22

A. Nicene Creed (Oxtoby, p. 183). What role does the Nicene Creed play for Christians around the world? What is the importance of a creed?

B. Augustine (emailed with Christianity files), What is the significance of his views on original sin and of the divisions in the universe?

C. Justin and John Chrysostom (emailed). What might be the legacy of Justin and Chrysostom's views of Jews? Are you surprised?

Lecture – February 24 - From Church to Imperial Religion & Beyond – Orthodox & Roman Christianity (2 of 3 main traditions)

Oxtoby, pp. 181-202

Article Reviews for everyone - February 24

Week 8 Seminar – February 29

Oxtoby, pp. 199-204, 227-239

A. What is the role of sacraments and of ritual?

B. Kay, ch. 1 and 4. What is the origin of the charismatic movement? What are its main principles?

Lecture – March 2 - Roman Catholicism (con't) & Reformation Christianity (a 3rd main tradition): The Beginning of Modernity

Oxtoby, pp. 197-227, 239-50

Short Quiz, beginning of class – March 2

Week 9 Seminar – March 7

William K. Kay, *Pentecostalism, A very Short Introduction*.

1. Why is the charismatic/ Pentecostal movement so popular in our time, and among whom in particular? Is it modern or is it a throwback to an earlier time?

2. What are its major differences with mainstream Christianity, and why might the latter have trouble with it?

Answers on Kay due (5%)

Lecture – March 9 - Modern Christianity - Diversity in a Global World

Oxtoby, pp. 221-227, 239-50, 257-59, 397-99,
Revelations of St John, chs. 1, 7, 19-22

Islam

Week 10 Seminar – March 14

View of Abraham

3:65-68 – What is Abraham's true identity, according to the Qur'an?

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

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

View of Jesus

3:33-63 (see 49 – Jesus and miracles) and 4:153-159, 170-172 – How is Jesus venerated? How is it similar to/different from the Christian version of Jesus? Why might Christians not like it?

Who is Satan?

7:10-27 and 17:61-65 - Why did he become the source of evil? How are Adam and Eve portrayed on the Satan story?

Hand in Take home on Christianity – March 14

Lecture – March 16 - Origins of Islam, Formation of

Practice

Oxtoby, pp. 268-78, 297-302

From the Qur'an

View of Muhammad

61:1-7

33:40-48

View of Jews and Christians

3:84-9, 95-97

Second Journal Set – Due – March 16

Week 11 Seminar – March 21

View of Women -- read the following *suras*

4:1-35 and 2:222-242 – How does the Qur'an view marriage and divorce?

16:54-60 – What view of a girl's birth does the Qur'an reject?

9:71-2 and 33:35 – Are these passages of a 'feminist' Qur'an? See also

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

View of Paradise – read the following *suras*

52:17-27 and 56:1-56 – What is heaven like? Relate to view on women.

Modesty - read the following *suras*

7:26-31 and 24:27-33 – Is a hijab Qur'anic? What is the principle here?

Lecture – March 23 - The Issue of Succession (Caliphate),

and the Spread of Islam

Oxtoby, 283-85, 291-7, 302-5

The Awakening

History of Shi'ism

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

Week 12 No Seminar – Easter Monday

Lecture - March 30 - Islamic Law, Philosophy, and Sufism

Oxtoby, pp. 275-91

Paper/Project due for those doing this Option, March 30

Week 13 Seminar – April 4

Answer the following: Which of the 2 is more believable, and why?

What did the Pew Survey find about sharia & its relationship to Muslims around the world?

<http://www.torontosun.com/2014/03/27/allowing-sharia-law-sets-dangerous-precedent>
<http://blogs.vancouversun.com/2013/06/08/sharia-set-off-alarms-in-canada-check-the-facts/>

Answer the following: Why has the headscarf become such a hot issue? Whose identity is at stake here? Why might that be?

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

Lecture – April 6 - Modernity and Islam

Oxtoby, pp. 305-17

This is a complex topic. Consider the options presented in the chapter, especially – Reformism, Revivalism, and Secularism and think of the options in both Judaism and Christianity. How do they compare and which is likely best equipped to deal with current realities?

Short Quiz, beginning of class- April 6

Week 14 Seminar – April 11

Some issues (no hand in):

- 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

Lecture – April 13 - Wrap-up; Where are we Today?

What’s new?

-Oxtoby, pp. 399-404, ch. 8

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

Final Journals due

Semi-cumulative Final in Exam Week

Basis of Your Assessment (Weighting)

1. Written Evaluations

A. 3 Quizzes (Feb 3, Mar 2, Apr 6)	05% each	
B. 2 Take-home Assignments (Feb 15 & Mar 14)	05% each	
C. Final Exam	15%	
Total		40%

2. Paper/Project or Journal

A. Paper/Project		
Proposal (Jan 27)	05%	
Article Review (Feb 24)	05%	
Paper (Mar 30)	25%	
B. Journal		
Journal (Feb 3, Mar 16, Apr 13)	30%	
Article Review (Feb 24)	05%	
Total		35%

3. Participation

Discussion	10%	
Hand-ins	05%	
Total		15%

4. Report on Kay (Mar 7) **05%**

5. Media Presentation (date to be chosen) **05%**

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.

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.