



*School of Arts & Science
Humanities*

RELIGION 100
World Religions of the West
Fall 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. These traditions 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:	TuTh - 1:30-2:20, 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: for the TaNaKh (Old Testament), consider the *Jewish Study Bible* (Oxford) or Christian Bibles such as *New Revised Standard Version*, *Revised Standard Version*, or *New International Version* which will also be used for Christianity.
- 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/>

During class time, we use the Oxtoby text, the scriptures of each tradition, and readings provided by email or links. Be sure to read the assigned readings before class. Outlines for each class as well as guide questions are provided for ease of reading and note-taking. Always bring the books/sources from which we will be working to class, that is, the Oxtoby text, a Bible or Qur'an, and/or emailed/linked readings.

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.

Classes 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 the DISCUSSION readings. Each student will also make one brief presentation on a 'current event' from the media.

Questions for quizzes, take homes, and the final exam will reflect the book's major themes/points as well as information presented and discussed in class.

Course Content and Schedule

Course Introduction

Sept 8 About Religion – Foundation Stories and Sources on Which Judaism, Christianity, & Islam are Based

Reference readings (not required, but useful!)

Oxtoby, ch. 1, ch. 2, pp. 35-47, 56-58, 68-72

Syllabus and course expectations

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, Hebrew/Israelite traditions. Tonight and Next Week, we examine these sources, before examining what distinguishes Judaism from 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/israeltimeline.html>

Sept 15 More on Foundation Stories for the 3 faiths. Major Names & Key Words (Creation, Covenant, Law, Prophets, Exile, and Beyond)

Readings for the class

Oxtoby, pp. 68-98

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 - background scriptures for the lecture 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 only by reading the TaNaKh does one get its flavour.

Some Scriptures to which I will directly refer in the lecture (feel free to peruse):

Genesis chs. 1-3; ch. 12:1-8; chs.16-17; chs. 21-2
Exodus 6-14
Hosea chs.1-3, Jeremiah 1-2, Isaiah
Psalms and Proverbs, Jonah, Ruth, Esther, Daniel

Required Readings for discussion

A. Genesis chs. 5-9
B. Genesis ch. 11:1-9
C. Joshua chs. 1, 6, 8
D. Exodus 20:1-20, 32
E. Hosea 1-3

Questions on the Discussion Readings (hand in)

A. According to the text, why did God send a flood? What promises did God make after the flood?
B. What is the point of the story of the tower of Babel in Genesis 11?
C. What does God want the Israelites to do to the people of Canaan? Why?
D. What is the point of the stories in Exodus?
E. What was Hosea required to do? Why?

Sept 22

Birth of Judaism – Hellenism, Rabbis, Talmud, & Beyond

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 the Class

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>

Required Readings for discussion

A. Job 1, 2, 6, 7, 31, 38-42 (skim in between for interest) and Ecclesiastes 1-4, 6, 9, 12
B. From the Babylonian Talmud - CHAPTER XV.
REGULATIONS CONCERNING THE TYING AND UNTYING
OF KNOTS ON THE SABBATH (emailed with Course Files)

Questions on the Discussion Readings (hand in)

A. 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)? What might be the point of Job 31? Are their themes more universal than those of earlier writings, especially such ideas as the covenants with Abraham & Moses? Are they surprising given what we have discussed so far?

B. 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?

Project Proposal, September 22

Sept 29 **Modernity and its Ups and Downs – the Case for Zionism**

Short Quiz, beginning of class

Readings for the Class

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

Required Readings for discussion

Jewish Observances, Oxtoby, pp. 108-113, 127-141

Mysticism, 121-7, 404-7

Questions on the Discussion Readings (hand in)

A. What is the purpose of prayer, 'ritual,' circumcision, dietary restrictions, or symbolic wear (why certain 'things' are worn)?

B. Why are festivals and feasts celebrated, and how do the rituals relate to the major themes of Judaism?

C. How does mysticism, especially the *kabbala*, fit into the Jewish tradition?

Why might rabbis be uncomfortable with it?

First Set of Journals, September 29

Oct 6 **Judaism in our Racialized World – the State of Israel, the 'Neighbourhood' and the Dilemmas of Identity**

Readings for the class

Oxtoby, pp 141-157, 239-43

Required Readings and Questions for discussion

A key contemporary Jewish issue is the relationship among the Jewish Diaspora, the Jewish community in the State of Israel, and secularization (non-religiosity). Since the destruction of the Second Temple (70 CE), Jews have lived as exiled

and dispersed peoples. Today, of approximately 15 million people who identify as Jews worldwide, approximately 6 million live in the USA, 6 million 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 have become intertwined. In fact, many Jews self-identify as secular or non-practicing Jews. Others are guided by *Halakah*, the laws for daily life. **Is the categorization of Judaism as a religion problematic?** The following website summarizes 5 modern forms of Judaism.

http://www.myjewishlearning.com/history/Jewish_World_Today/Denominations.shtml

Here is a link to a current discussion on the two-state solution for Palestine.

<http://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/611>

Questions on the Discussion Readings (hand in)

Consider especially the bold section above.

- A. Of the 5 forms, which is truest to Jewish history, which is the most popular, and why might that be? In short, what is the current state of 'being Jewish'?
- B. Which of the 5 best guarantees a healthy Jewish future? Is this a non-issue and does it really matter for Jews? (Is this a poor question?)
- C. What is the two state Solution for Palestine? Look up what this means and consider why this is so difficult.

Christianity

Oct 13 Christian Origins: From Jesus to Church

Hand in Take-home part of Judaism

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>

The following Scriptures will be used in my presentation. Feel free, as always 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

Readings for the class

Oxtoby, pp. 166-181

Hebrews ch. 11:1-3, 8-19.

Required Readings for discussion

- A. Matthew ch. 5:1-12, 17-20, 27-48,
ch. 7:1-6
- B. Matthew ch. 25:31-46
- C. Romans chs.4-5

A. In Matthew chs. 5 and 7, which values and what kind of ethics are promoted? You may want to Google ‘Sermon on the Mount’ from which this is taken.

B. What kind of behavior is eternally rewarded and which is punished (how and why)?

C. What is Paul saying about Abraham and the meaning of circumcision and of law? How does he view Adam and Jesus, and why are these views central key to Christianity? How do these views differentiate Christianity from Judaism (and Islam too!)? Hint: think of ‘original sin.’

Oct 20

From Church to Imperial Religion and Beyond – Orthodox and Roman Christianity (the first 2 of the 3 main traditions)

Readings for the class

-Oxtoby, pp. 181-202

For interest, read Romans 9-11 which lay out Paul’s views of Jews, opinions that continue to influence Christian views of Jews.

Required Readings for discussion

- A. Nicene Creed (Oxtoby, p. 183)
- B. Augustine (emailed with Christianity files)
- C. Justin and John Chrysostom (emailed with Course files)

Questions on the Discussion Readings (hand in)

A. What role does the Nicene Creed play for Christians around the world? What is the importance of a creed?

B. What is the significance of Augustine’s views on original sin and of the divisions in the universe?

C. What might be the legacy of Justin and Chrysostom’s views of Jews? Are you surprised?

Article Review for those doing a Journal, October 20

Oct 27 **Roman (con't) & Reformation Christianity (a 3rd main tradition), plus the Beginning of Modernity**

Short Quiz, beginning of class

Readings for the class

Oxtoby, pp. 197-221

Required Readings for discussion

Oxtoby, pp. 199-204, 227-239

Questions on the Discussion Readings (hand in)

- A. What is the role of the sacraments and of ritual?
- B. What is popular religion (199-204), and, in particular, why did Medieval Christianity, both Roman and “Orthodox, advocate honoring relics and saints, building cathedrals, venerating Mary, selling indulgences, and creating sacraments? Does popular religion detract from or enhance the message, the essence of the faith?
- C. Why did the elements of popular Roman Catholic religion lead the reformers to another route? What were the reformers after?

Article Review for those doing a paper, October 27

Nov 3 **Modern Christianity - Diversity in a Global World – Pentecostalism as an Example**

Readings for the class

Oxtoby, pp. 221-227, 239-50, 257-59, 397-99,

Required Readings for discussion

William K. Kay, *Pentecostalism, A very Short Introduction*.
Revelation of St John, chs. 1, 7, 19-22

Question on the Discussion Readings (hand in)

- A. Does the apocalypticism of Revelation add to or subtract from the message of Christianity? Or, as some might say, is it the message of Christianity? Does it tie to Pentecostalism?

Report on Kay due, November 3

Islam

Nov. 10 Origins of Islam

Hand in Take home on Christianity

Readings for the class

Oxtoby, pp. 268-78

From the Qur'an

View of Muhammad

61:1-7

33:40-48

View of Jews and Christians

3:84-9, 95-97

The Awakening

Required Readings for discussion

A. 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?

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

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 the life of Jesus? Why might Christians not like it?

C. View of Satan

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

Second Journal Set - Due November 10

Nov. 17 Formation of Practice, the Issue of Succession (Caliphate), and the Spread of Islam

Readings for the class

Oxtoby, 283-85, 291-305

History of Shi'ism

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

Required Readings for discussion

A. 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>

B. View of Paradise – read the following *suras*

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

C. Modesty - read the following *suras*

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

Nov 24 **Islamic Law, Philosophy, and Sufism**

Readings for the class

Oxtoby, pp. 275-91

Required Readings for Discussion

<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/>

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

Questions on the Discussion Readings (hand in)

A. Compare the readings on sharia. How are they different? Which one is more believable, and why?

B. What did the Pew Survey find about sharia and its relationship to Muslims around the world? Note some of the related articles.

C. Why has the headscarf become such a hot issue in France? Whose identity is at stake here? Why might that be?

Paper/Project due for those doing this Option, November 24

Dec 1 **Modernity and Islam**

Short Quiz, beginning of class

Readings for the class

Oxtoby, pp. 305-17, 399-404

Required Readings for discussion

Oxtoby, pp. 305-17

Osama Bin Laden and Tariq Ramadan (to be emailed)

Pew Research study (like the one on Judaism) -
<http://www.pewforum.org/2013/04/30/the-worlds-muslims-religion-politics-society-overview/>

Questions for discussion:

- A. Contrast and account for the views of Osama bin Laden and Tariq Ramadan on how to address Islam in the modern world. What does each suggest and offer? This is a complex topic. Consider the options presented in the chapter, especially the varieties within each of the following – Reformism, Revivalism, and Secularism. Which of them is likely best equipped to deal with current realities?)
- B. What insights does the Pew research cast on the question of the future of Islam, especially in the context of modernity?

Dec 8 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 - to be handed out.

Discussion (no hand-ins tonight)

- Some issues:
- A. 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?’
 - B. Is inter-faith dialogue possible?
 - C. Can both pluralistic and secular approaches work?
 - D. Any issues that are appropriate.

Final Journals due - Cumulative Final in exam period.

Basis of Your Assessment (Weighting)

1. Written Evaluations

A. 3 Quizzes (Sept 29, Oct 27, Dec. 1)	05% each	
B. 2 Take- home Assignments (Oct. 13 & Nov. 10)	05% each	
C. Final Exam (Dec. 15)	15%	
Total		40%

2. Paper/Project or Journal

A. Paper/Project	
Proposal (Sept 22)	05%
Article Review (Oct. 27)	06%

Paper (Nov. 24)	25%
B. Journal	
Journal (Sept 29, Nov. 10, Dec 8)	30%
Article Review (Oct. 20)	06%
Total	37%
<u>3. Participation – Discussion</u>	10%
<u>4. Report on Kay (Nov. 3)</u>	08%
<u>5. Media Presentation (date to be chosen)</u>	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.