



CAMOSUN COLLEGE
School of Arts & Science
Department of Humanities

REL-100-001
World Religions of the West
Fall 2018

COURSE OUTLINE

1. Instructor Information

(a) Instructor	Dr. Stephen Fielding
(b) Office hours	Mondays 1:00 – 3:00 or by appointment
(c) Location	Lansdowne Campus, Young Building 320
(d) Phone	250-370-3390 Alternative:
(e) E-mail	FieldingS@camosun.bc.ca
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Growing up as the kid of a railway worker, I spent my childhood moving around, from Niagara Falls to Fort Erie, Sarnia, and finally, Winnipeg. I’ve also lived in Vancouver, Toronto, and Rome, Italy. I completed my first degree at the University of Winnipeg, then a Master of Arts from Simon Fraser University, and recently finished my Ph.D. at the University of Victoria.

I have taught History and Religion at four colleges and universities and published research on a wide range of topics, including immigration, multiculturalism, sport, gender, religion, and ethnic food. My wife is from Italy (I won the lottery) and we are parents of an eight-year-old girl and ~~small-dictator~~ toddler boy.

An understanding of the world’s religious traditions, particularly their similarities and differences, is critical to the development of a person’s worldview and grasp of their place in the diverse human landscape. I am looking forward to exploring Religions of the West together this semester.

2. Intended Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, a student will be able to:

1. Explain the context/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/diversions in each tradition
6. Analyze their similarities/differences
7. Compare/contrast each religion’s view of the others
8. Evaluate their relationship to and impact on the world today

3. Required Materials

(a) Texts

1. Willard Oxtoby, ed. *World's Religions: Western Traditions*, 4th edition
2. William F. Kay, *Pentecostalism: A Very Short Introduction*
3. *The Bible*, recommended translations: *New International Version, New Revised Standard Version, or Revised Standard Version*

Optional:

The bookstore carries limited copies of a Bible containing scholarly commentary: *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha, New Revised Standard Edition*

Also, the following website links to online scriptural resources:
<http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/home/>

4. Course Content and Schedule (Subject to change by instructor)

Lectures (10:30-12:20 Tuesdays)

The instructional component of the course aims to follow the same structure as the Oxtoby textbook and draws heavily on the scriptures of the three monotheistic traditions. You are strongly encouraged to bring the required readings from the textbook and Bible or Qur'an for the week to class to assist in your engagement with the lecture material.

The questions in the two quizzes and final exam will reflect your understanding of and engagement with the lecture content, textbook, and required readings.

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. Students who do the required readings each week and attend class will gain a stronger understanding of western world religions, be more likely to enjoy the course, and be well positioned for success.

Seminars (Thursdays, 10:30-11:20 for Section A or 11:30-12:20 for Section B).

We discuss assigned materials (mostly primary sources) – taken either from the scriptures and textbooks or emailed to you. Take notes of your responses to the questions on the seminar readings (in the syllabus) and bring these for the group seminar discussions. I will collect your answers on October 25th only, but I strongly recommend bringing notes as part of your seminar preparedness.

Important Dates at a Glance

Tuesday September 4	First Day of Class
Tuesday October 2	Quiz #1
Tuesday October 23	Short Paper Due
Thursday October 25	Kay Book Response Hand-in
Tuesday November 6	Quiz #2
Tuesday November 27	Research Paper Due
Tuesday December 4	Quiz #3 and Last Lecture
Thursday December 6	Last Day of Class (a seminar)
TBA	Final Exam

*Note: There is no mid-term exam.

WEEK 1

Tues Sept. 4 Welcome to REL 100
Lecture: Religions of the Ancient World: Foundational Stories and Sources of the Monotheistic Religions ***Optional reading Oxtoby text, Ch. 1**

Thurs Sept. 6 Seminar 1: Understanding Religion
*No advanced readings
We will watch in class philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah's TED Talk, "Is Religion Good or Bad" (A Trick Question). In case you're curious, here's the URL:
https://www.ted.com/talks/kwame_anthony_appiah_is_religion_good_or_bad_this_is_a_trickquestion

Questions for Discussion:

1. What bold claim does Appiah make about "religion"?
2. How could a person be an atheist while practicing a religion?
3. What might be the problems and limits of Western definitions of "religion" and "non-religion"?
4. In the West, what "deal" was made between Christianity and science (or philosophy) during the 19th Century and exists to this day?
5. How and why might the belief systems, structure and practice of religion differ between time periods, places, and people groups?

WEEK 2

Tues Sept. 11 Lecture: Judaism Part 1: Chosen People, Covenant, and Nation

***Lecture Readings Oxtoby text Ch. 3 (for Weeks 2-5)**

Thurs Sept. 13 Seminar 2: Creation, Flood, Restoration

Read: Origins -- Genesis 1-11

Abraham called, commissioned and tested --Genesis 12, 17, 22

Questions: 1. What do the Creation and Flood accounts teach us about the nature of a) God, b) humanity c) human relationships with one another, and d) God's relationship with humanity? How does the book of Genesis make the connection between the origins of the world, the first humans, Abraham (the father of the Hebrew people) and the Hebrew nation?

WEEK 3

Tues Sept. 18 Lecture: Judaism Part 2: Entering, Ruling, and Exile from the Promised Land. From Foundations to the Greco-Roman World, Rabbinic Judaism, and the Middle Ages

Thurs Sept. 20 Seminar 3: A Nation Set Apart:

Read: God delivers the law --Exodus 19-25, 32-34

Some examples of how to atone for sin -- Leviticus 1-4

How the Talmud works (D2L)

Babylonian Talmud Ch. XV Regulations Concerning the Tying and Untying of Knots on the Sabbath (D2L)

Oxtoby. 112 "Welcoming the "Sabbath Queen," p. 122 "The Shema" and p. 139 "The Mezuzah"

For interest: Song of Solomon (or "Song of Songs"). Why do you think this book made it into the Hebrew Scriptures?

Questions for Discussion:

1. In the Mosaic covenant, what is required of God's people and what does He promise to do in return?
2. Why has he chosen *them* out of all nations in the world?
3. What is the initial and enduring significance of the Torah to its Hebrew recipients?
4. Why do Sabbath observances occupy such a central importance in Judaism?
5. Why has the Shema remained the most revered and practiced prayer in all forms of Judaism?

WEEK 4

Tues Sept. 25 Lecture: Judaism Part 3: Pressures and Promises in the Modern Period (1492 to present), and the Zionist Movement

Thurs Sept. 27 Seminar 4: Wisdom Literature, Poetry, Theodicy

Read: Job 1-2, 6-7, 31, 38-42 and Epilogue (feel free to skim rest of book)
Psalm 5-6, 23, 73, 139
Proverbs 5-6.
Ecclesiastes 1-4, 12
Holocaust survivor, Nobel Peace Prize winner and professor Elie Wiesel on God (also on D2L)
<https://crownheights.info/general/2897/elie-wiesel-on-his-beliefs/>

Optional: Scene from movie *Tree of Life* (2011) as reinterpretation of Job's final conversation with God <https://vimeo.com/37256937>

Questions for Discussion:

1. What lessons can be drawn from the story of Job? (i.e. Why do bad things happen to good people? And why does God allow it?).
2. Why do you think Job ultimately accepts his circumstance when God replies?
3. Taken together, what do these passages tell us about fundamental religious questions (origins, meaning of life, human ethics)?
4. To what extent are these matters universal or specific to the nation of Israel and Jewish people?
5. And finally, how does Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel reconcile his faith with the horrors experienced at Auschwitz?

6. According to the Psalmist(s), what is the spiritual link between God and those who seek him?
7. In Proverbs, how are wisdom and folly personified? In both Psalms and Proverbs, how does the acquisition and practice of wisdom relate to keeping Israel's covenant with God and what ultimately becomes of those who do good or evil?

WEEK 5

***QUIZ #1**

Tues Oct. 2 Lecture A. Judaism Part 4: The Holocaust, its Legacy, and the State of Israel
Lecture B. Christianity Part 1: The Life and Teachings of Jesus

***Lecture Readings Oxtoby text Ch. 4 (for weeks 5-8)**

Thurs Oct. 4 Seminar 5: Wheat among the Weeds: The Kingdom of Heaven is Like...

Read: Life of Jesus Christ – Gospel of Matthew 1-13.
Theme of Light into the Darkness – John 1, 3:1-21

Questions for Discussion:

1. What is the significance of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount? (Matthew 5-7)
2. Why does he give a list of those who are "blessed"?
3. What is his mission?
4. What Greek concepts do you see being applied in John 1?
5. Why does Jesus often introduce a statement by saying, "As it is written..." ?

WEEK 6

Tues Oct. 9 Lecture: Christianity Part 2: Jesus Christ and His Early Followers

Thurs Oct. 11 Seminar 6: The Early Church

Read: Life of Jesus Christ – Matthew 15, 20-23, 25-28
On Faith – Hebrews 11
On Peculiarity of Figure of Christ – I Corinthians 1:18-31

Questions for Discussion:

1. What is the "kingdom of heaven" that Jesus continually speaks of during his ministry?
2. What are the implicit invitations and warnings imbedded in his teachings?
3. According to Matthew, why is Jesus at odds with the teachers of the law (the Pharisees and Sadducees)?
4. According to the book of Hebrews, what is faith? What is the connection between the new movement of Jesus Christ followers and the Jewish past?
5. What made Jesus an atypical hero of Antiquity, according to 1 Corinthians?
6. Why do you think the new movement grew in spite of heavy persecution?

WEEK 7

Tues Oct. 16 Lecture: Christianity Part 3: From Persecuted Church to Rome's Imperial Religion and Beyond (Orthodox and Roman Catholicism)

Thurs Oct. 18 Seminar 7: Sacraments and Ritual

Read: Pauline Scriptures

Living by the Spirit -- Galatians 5: 16-26

On Sin, Salvation, and a New Community – Ephesians 2, Romans 3-5, 12-14:13

"How St. Augustine Invented Sex," *The New Yorker*, June 19, 2017 (D2L, skim)

www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/06/19/how-st-augustine-invented-sex

Criticism of Augustine's view of Original Sin and its impact on Christian

history (D2L) <http://www.vision.org/visionmedia/article.aspx%3Fid%3D227>

BBC "Original Sin" (D2L)

http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/beliefs/originalsin_1.shtml

The Nicene Creed, adopted 325 CE (D2L)

<https://www.crcna.org/welcome/beliefs/creeds/nicene-creed>

Questions for Discussion:

1. What does Paul instruct early believers about a) sin and b) salvation?
2. What is the relationship between the new faith and the Mosaic law?
3. How are Christians instructed to live as a community and in society?
4. Why were creeds, such as the Apostles Creed and Nicene Creed, so important in the early church and afterward?
5. How did St. Augustine frame human sexuality as a matter of original sin? How have his writings influenced the history of western Christianity?

WEEK 8 ***SHORT PAPER DUE**
Tues Oct. 23 Lecture A: Christianity Part 4: Reformation Christianity and Roman Catholicism
 after the Protestant Reformation (1517-)
 Lecture B: Christianity Part 5a: Recent Movements and a Global Faith

Thurs Oct. 25 Seminar 8: The Charismatic Movement

Read Kay, Chapters 1 and 4) ***HAND IN RESPONSE BEFORE CLASS**
 Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost – Acts 2, 4:32-7
 Spiritual Gifts – 1 Corinthians 12: 1-11; 14:1-12 and 14:22-25

Questions for Discussion:

1. How has the modern charismatic/Pentecostal movement interpreted the biblical passages about manifestations of the Holy Spirit? How are they practiced?
2. What are the movement's major differences with mainstream Christianity? Why do you think there is so much diversity within the movement itself?
3. Why is the charismatic/Pentecostal movement so popular around the world? Do you think it appeals to particular cultures and/or groups more than others?
4. The modern charismatic/Pentecostal movement invokes the early church as its spiritual model. How might the two contexts be similar or different?

WEEK 9
Tues Oct. 30

Lecture A: Christianity Part 5b: Recent Movements and a Global Faith

Lecture B: Islam Part 1: The Birth of Islam and Formation of Practice

***Lecture Readings Oxtoby Text Ch. 5 (for weeks 9-12)**

Thurs Nov. 1 Seminar 9: Key Teachings of Islam

Readings from the Qur'an:

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?

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 strongly disagree?

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

61:1-7 and 33:40-48 – View of Muhammad

3:84-97 – View of Jews and Christians

WEEK 10
Tues Nov. 6

QUIZ #2

Lecture: Islam Part 2: The Sunni-Shi'ite Split over Succession and the Spread of Islam

Thurs Nov. 8 Seminar 10: Understanding Islam

Readings from the Qur'an

9:1-60 and 55 What is the role of *jihad*? In what ways is this re/interpreted today?

History of Shi'ism (D2L)

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

Questions for Discussion:

1. Why do you think Islam grew in spite of early resistance?
2. Why is the issue of succession so important in the history of Islam? And why did it result in conflict and splits?
3. What reasons does the author of this historical sweep give for Shi'ism's various successes and defeats over time? According to him, what qualities made a good or bad imam/ruler?

WEEK 11

Tues Nov. 13 Lecture: Islam Part 3: Islamic Law, Philosophy, and Sufism

Thurs Nov. 15 Seminar 11: Muslim Views on Women and Paradise

Readings from the Qur'an

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> (D2L)

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

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

Answer the following: Why has the headscarf become such a hot issue in Europe and especially France during the past two decades? What is the struggle really about and whose identity is at stake here?

<https://www.thelocal.fr/20170314/french-firms-told-they-can-ban-the-muslim-headscarf-at-work>

WEEK 12

Tues Nov. 20 Lecture: Islam Part 4: Modernity and Islam

Thurs Nov. 22 Seminar 12: Explaining Current Challenges. Explaining the Past.

Read: Condensed version of Bernard Lewis, "What Went Wrong," *The Atlantic*, January 2002 (D2L)

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2002/01/what-went-wrong/302387/>

Book Review of Lewis' *What Went Wrong*, by Imad-ad-Dean Ahmad, Minaret of Freedom Institute (An Islamic think tank in Bethesda, MD) (D2L) <http://www.minaret.org/lewis.pdf>

Re-read Oxtoby pp. 305-317

Questions for Discussion:

1. According to Lewis, why have countries in the Muslim world lost the leading position they once had in the realm of politics, science, and culture? Do you agree with him? Why do you think his research and claims were controversial?
2. What alternative explanations might account for the discrepancy between these countries and those in the West?.
3. Answer the following: Which article do you find most convincing?
4. Consider the options presented in Oxtoby's chapter—especially Reformism, Revivalism, and Secularism—and think about the comparative options in both Judaism and Christianity. How do they compare and which is likely best equipped to deal with current realities?

5. Optional: What did the Pew Survey in the second article discover about Muslim attitudes toward aspects of Sharia Law around the world? How do you explain the great variations? Do you think the “alarm bells” set off in Canada (or other western democracies) are warranted?

<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>

WEEK 13

Tues Nov. 27

***RESEARCH PAPER DUE**

Lecture: The Present Situation. Critical Issues and the Three Great Monotheistic Faiths

Thurs Nov. 29

Seminar 13: The Present and Future of the Three Great Traditions
No readings. Film and Discussion

WEEK 14

Tues Dec. 4

***QUIZ #3**

Lecture: “It’s the End of the World as we Know it...” (And I feel fine?). Apocalyptic Religion, Recent Movements, and Secularization

Lecture Readings Oxtoby Text Ch. 7 (for weeks 13-14)

Thurs Dec. 6

Seminar 14: Have a Nice Doomsday.

Read text and watch short clips for the different religious traditions (D2L)

<https://www.history.com/topics/religions-on-the-end-of-the-world>

Excerpt from *Have a Nice Doomsday* by Nicholas Guyatt (D2L)

The Economist, Charting Trends in Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic Fiction (D2L)

<https://www.economist.com/prospero/2017/04/12/charting-trends-in-apocalyptic-and-post-apocalyptic-fiction>

Research an apocalyptic movement that has emerged over the past century—its origins, basic beliefs, and history. Share what you learned with your seminar group in the space of 2 minutes.

Further Questions for Discussion:

1. Why do you think most world religions contain teachings about the end of the world, a final conflict, and judgment?
2. 50 million Americans believe that the end of the world will happen during their lifetime. What factors (eg. history, geography, culture, economic, etc.) can account for this remarkable statistic?
3. According to *The Economist*, apocalyptic scenarios continue to fascinate modern audiences in the realms of fiction and everyday belief. What is the relationship between End Times religious-based movements and the world events described in the article?
4. Many unconventional religions (some considered cults) have emerged over the past century, each premised on the expectation of an apocalypse. How have these movements borrowed from traditional religions and the surrounding culture in the formation of their beliefs?

5. Basis of Student Assessment (Weighting)

Grade Breakdown

Short Paper	10 percent
Research Paper	20 percent
Quizzes x3 (10 percent each)	30 percent
Final Exam	20 percent
Participation (including 5% for Kay review):	15 percent
Media Presentation	5 percent

a) Short Paper (10 percent)

In this course, you will write a short paper (**3 pages in length, double spaced**), selecting a topic from the list at the end of the course outline. The goal of the shorter paper is to develop early competence in the research and analysis of religious concepts by forming well-structured arguments about a key topic. You will need to consult and cite **a) a minimum of 2 academic articles, each 10+ pages in length**, and **b) make significant use of sacred scriptures, other sources considered divinely inspired, and exegetical works for comparative analysis**. You may also consult websites or publications of “official” religious organizations (representing an institution—consult me if you’re not sure) for more insight into a religious tradition.

b) Research Paper (20 percent)

The research paper is intended to be a longer, more in-depth investigation of an important religious topic or question. You may select a topic from the list or create one of your own (Please consult with me first if you would like to do the latter). The research paper is to be **6-7 pages in length**. In this assignment, you need to include and engage **a minimum of 4 academic articles** (alternatively, a book can count as 2 articles). As in the short paper, it will be important to **make significant use of sacred scriptures, other sources considered divinely inspired, and exegetical works for comparative analysis**. “Official” religious websites and journals may also be useful. I will be providing more instructions in class during the semester.

Key instructions for all written assignments

All assignments must be in hard copy, single-sided, double-spaced, paginated, written in a standard 12-point font (such as Calibri), and use normal (1 to 1.25 inch) margins. Please do not forget to spell-check your assignments.

There must also be a title page that includes the name of your assignment, your name and student ID, my name, course code, and date submitted. And it must be affixed with a staple. Papers are to be handed in to me at the beginning of class.

The short paper and research paper will each be evaluated according to three-point criteria:

- Referencing your sources with footnotes and bibliography (10%)
- Writing style and organization (30%)
- Supporting evidence and analysis (60%).

The essays are to be written in paragraph form. They should contain:

1. A clear **introduction** that presents the general topic and then outlines your own argument
2. A **body** organized into paragraphs that support the thesis—each having its own supporting argument backed up by evidence, analysis of that evidence and ideally, consideration of

- alternative interpretations. Choose sources that enable you to write this type of thoughtful and balanced paper.
3. A **conclusion** that summarizes the argument and the evidence you used to support it

Late Policies and Submitting Your Assignments

Assignment due dates are firm and assignment must be submitted to me in class on the due date or they will be considered late. **Late assignments will be penalized at five (5) percent per day to a maximum of one week**, after which they will no longer be accepted. No extensions will be considered except in cases of documented medical, psychological, or family emergency. If your paper is late because of illness or emergency, you will need a doctor's note to waive the penalty. Problems with computers, flash drives, or a dog on a paper or computer keyboard diet will not be accepted. However, please do not hesitate to see me if you're having problems understanding or writing the assignments.

Advice on Writing a Strong Paper

The essays are more than a summary of the evidence and interpretations of other authors. You must write in your own words and develop your own answer to the question chosen. Your answer may agree with the interpretation of another author; if so, you must still say what evidence persuaded you that their interpretation or conclusion was accurate. A good essay will recognize that different scholars may have applied different methods or alternative sources. There may even be multiple answers to the question that you are addressing.

The quality of your writing matters a great deal and marks will be deducted for poor organization, grammar errors, or frequent spelling errors. To ensure correct spelling and syntax (sentence structure), do not rely too heavily on spell checkers and grammar checkers. It can be helpful to ask another person to read it over. Also beneficial is to read your own work to yourself out loud. Doing this can help you identify confusing or incorrect expression. Please try to avoid "casual speak" and make sure to cite others' ideas or information that is not general knowledge.

Using Quotations and Footnotes:

In developing your arguments, you will necessarily be depending on and sometimes borrowing evidence from others. When you quote directly the words of another author, you must put those words between quotation marks ("...") and cite the exact source of the quotation in a footnote. Try not to use a lot of quotations and avoid long ones. Quote an author when you think his or her ideas are essential to convey the exact meaning of what they said. If you paraphrase another author, or borrow their idea, you must also acknowledge this in a footnote. However, it is not necessarily to cite general knowledge i.e. The Second World War began in 1939. Wayne Gretzky was born in Brantford, Ontario. Or, the Toronto Blue Jays are awful this year.

The essay must be followed with a Bibliography on a separate sheet of paper, listing all of the sources you consulted in the assignment, whether they **are quoted or not**. **Formatting must be in Chicago Style**. We will explore this in class; additionally, **you can refer to the Chicago Style formatting manual, called the Camosun History Department Style Guide, which is on the History Department website**. Other styles, such as APA social science format (parenthetical reference to authors in the text of the essay), will not be accepted.

An Important Note on Plagiarism: All written work that you submit in History 108 must be your own original work. You must give proper credit to borrowed ideas or quotations that you use in an essay. To falsely claim authorship of someone else's ideas or words is called plagiarism. It is a form of theft and will automatically result in **a grade of zero** at the very least. Similar penalties will be applied to any student who buys, borrows, or resubmits, a previous-completed paper for another course. The internet has

become a popular tool for dishonest students who want to cut corners on assignments. Keep in mind that internet sources, like everything consulted in your research, must appear in the bibliography. I reserve the right to check any assignment with plagiarism detection software. Please consult me if you are unsure about how to properly document your sources.

See the Camosun Calendar 2015-6 (pp. 32-39) for full policies and penalties with regards to plagiarism, cheating, and other unacceptable student conduct.



c) Quizzes (3 x 10 percent = 30 percent)

There will be 3 quizzes during the semester to mark the closing of sections on Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, respectively. They will take place at the beginning of class and require 30 minutes to complete. I will provide instructions a week in advance of each quiz.

d) Final Exam (20 percent)

Religions of the West concludes with the final exam during the formal examination week. It will be semi-cumulative and 2 ½ hours in length. Students will choose from a limited selection of short identification questions and two essays. I will provide a detailed review during the last week of instruction.

e) Participation (15 percent)

The academic study of Religion is most interesting and relevant when discussed and debated. Students are welcome to ask questions and provide insightful comments during the lectures and I will engage them as time permits. Students will meet for 50 minutes every Thursday for group discussions (called "seminars," as mentioned earlier) based on that week's readings. You have already registered for one of the two afternoon time slots. In the classroom, I will assign you to a small seminar group. Students will read the questions provided on D2 and/or the course outline and, using critical thinking, come to class prepared to debate the arguments and evidence from the material they read and consider one another's interpretations on the topic.

Your participation mark will be based primarily on the seminars, though involvement in the lectures is also encouraged. You will be graded on a 3-point criteria:

- a) attendance
- b) the frequency of your contributions to the discussion
- c) the quality of these contributions

To participate well means demonstrating that you read the assigned materials carefully, that you have identified the key points of the articles, and that you are prepared to discuss your ideas in a small-group setting.

My role in the seminars is mostly as an observer. I will move around the room and listen in on groups, take notes on students' participation, and occasionally interject with a comment or question. Feel free to ask me a question if your group is mulling over a topic or stuck on it. I encourage you to make the most of these seminars because they are much more interactive and inclusive than the lectures and the participation grade is a large portion of your final mark.

Lively and rewarding seminars require the contribution and participation of all group members. Keep in mind, though: while spirited debate will be encouraged, any form of disrespect for your classmates will not be tolerated.

Note: Students who miss more than three seminars will forfeit their entire participation mark.

i) Media Presentation (5 percent of Participation Mark)

Every weekly seminar, one or two students will give a brief presentation before the seminar group (about half the class) of a recent news event of religious significance. First, summarize the news event for the class and why it's significant—using a small amount of media if you wish—and then connect it to the content and concepts that we're studying in this course. Consider the historical roots of the event, the parties involved and what's at stake, its complexity, and what belief systems are under real or perceived threat. You might also make an educated guess at how the matter will proceed in the future. The media presentation constitutes part of your overall participation grade. There will be a sign-up sheet during class.

6. GRADING SYSTEMS <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/index.html>

The following two grading systems are used at Camosun College:

1. Standard Grading System (GPA)

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
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2. Competency Based Grading System (Non GPA)

This grading system is based on satisfactory acquisition of defined skills or successful completion of the course learning outcomes

Grade	Description
COM	The student has met the goals, criteria, or competencies established for this course, practicum or field placement.
DST	The student has met and exceeded, above and beyond expectation, the goals, criteria, or competencies established for this course, practicum or field placement.
NC	The student has not met the goals, criteria or competencies established for this course, practicum or field placement.

Temporary Grades

Temporary grades are assigned for specific circumstances and will convert to a final grade according to the grading scheme being used in the course. See Grading Policy at <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/index.html> for 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.

7. College Supports, Services and Policies



Immediate, Urgent, or Emergency Support

If you or someone you know requires immediate, urgent, or emergency support (e.g. illness, injury, thoughts of suicide, sexual assault, etc.), **SEEK HELP**. Resource contacts @ <http://camosun.ca/about/mental-health/emergency.html> or <http://camosun.ca/services/sexual-violence/get-support.html#urgent>

College Services

Camosun offers a variety of health and academic support services, including counselling, dental, disability resource centre, help centre, learning skills, sexual violence support & education, library, and writing centre. For more information on each of these services, visit the **STUDENT SERVICES** link on the College website at <http://camosun.ca/>

College Policies

Camosun strives to provide clear, transparent, and easily accessible policies that exemplify the college's commitment to life-changing learning. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the content of College policies. Policies are available on the College website at <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/>. Education and academic policies include, but are not limited to, Academic Progress, Admission, Course Withdrawals, Standards for Awarding Credentials, Involuntary Health and Safety Leave of Absence, Prior Learning Assessment, Medical/Compassionate Withdrawal, Sexual Violence and Misconduct, Student Ancillary Fees, Student Appeals, Student Conduct, and Student Penalties and Fines.

Short Paper and Research Paper List of Topics.

1. Judaism: You are (an orthodox, reform, or conservative) Jew and trying to convince a (orthodox, reform, or conservative) Jews that the Law is/is not binding for the lives of all Jewish people.
2. What does it mean to be "cultural Jew" and how does this designation and practice challenge conventional definitions of "religion."
3. What are the key differences between Roman Catholic and Protestant forms of Christianity? What common ground have the two branches found in recent ecumenical discussions and what on what issues do they retain distinct views?
4. Christianity: Discuss whether or not recent religious movements, such as Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science, 7th Day Adventism, or whomever (pick your group) fit the definition of being Christian.
5. Islam: argue whether or not, in your mind, Sunni, Sufi and Shi'ite Islam should be considered complimentary or distinct belief systems.
6. You are a practicing Jew/Christian/Muslim and you're trying to explain to an atheist, a Jew, Christian, or a Muslim what you believe.
7. Compare and contrast how the three major monotheistic religions view the person of Jesus Christ.
8. It's not over until..." How do each of the three major monotheistic religions view the afterlife? Have these interpretations changed or varied over time?
9. Have a Nice Doomsday: Select two apocalyptic cults or branches from one of the major religious traditions that have emerged since the mid-1800s and are driven by a strong sense of impending apocalypse. (If you would like to choose one not profiled in the textbook, please consult with me first). Compare and contrast the tradition(s) and contexts (political, cultural, social) from which they emerged, and consider key similarities and differences and why they might exist.
10. How does a person live a virtuous life? Identify and compare Jewish, Christian, and Muslim answers to this question.
11. In the three major monotheistic faiths, how does God interact with His created world and humanity in particular?
12. How might a Jew/Christian/Muslim's view of the afterlife influence the manner that she lives her life?
13. Eschatology: Compare how Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions approach the subject of the "end times."
14. Compare and contrast the types of covenants that exist between God and humans in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam