



CAMOSUN COLLEGE
School of Arts & Science
Department of Humanities

REL-100-001
World Religions of the West
Fall 2019

COURSE OUTLINE

1. Instructor Information

(a) Instructor	Dr. Stephen Fielding
(b) Office hours	Mondays and Wednesdays 1:00-2:15, or by appointment
(c) Location	Lansdowne Campus, Young Building 320
(d) Phone	250-370-3390 Alternative:
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(f) Website	http://camosun.ca/learn/school/arts-science/bios/Fielding-Stephen.html

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 9-year-old girl and ~~little monster~~ almost 4-year-old boy.

An understanding of the world’s religious traditions, particularly of 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 tradition
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*, 5th edition or 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* (NIV available in the bookstore)
4. *The Qur'an*, trans. Muhammed Abdel Haleem (available in the bookstore)

Optional:

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

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

Lectures (Mondays 2:30-4:20)

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.

The questions in the 3 quizzes and final exam will reflect your understanding of and engagement with the lecture content, textbook, and seminar readings.

Read actively the assigned readings before class, having the guide questions beside you (yours or the ones provided in the textbook), and note the major themes of each chapter. 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. 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.

On certain occasions during the semester, leaders from local religious communities (i.e. rabbi, pastor, imam) will visit the class. These are often a highlight of the course because they generate interactive and personable discussions with a practicing expert in the faith. As such engagements are arranged, the lecture schedule and content will change accordingly.

Seminars (Wednesdays, Section A 2:30-3:20, Section B 3:30-4:20).

We discuss assigned materials (mostly primary sources) – taken from the scriptures, textbooks, or other readings on D2L. Make notes of your responses to the questions on the seminar readings (found on D2L or in the syllabus). I strongly recommend bringing notes as part of your seminar preparedness.

Important Dates at a Glance

Monday September 9	First Day of Class
Monday October 7	Quiz #1
Monday October 14	No class -- Canadian Thanksgiving
Monday November 4	Quiz #2
Wednesday October 30	Kay Book Chapter Review
Monday November 11	No class – Remembrance Day
Monday November 25	Research Paper Due
Monday December 2	Quiz #3 and Last Lecture
Wednesday December 4	Last Day of Class (a seminar)
TBA	Final Exam

*Note: There is no mid-term exam.

Lecture and Seminar Schedule (subject to change)

WEEK 1

September 4 Seminar 1: Welcome to REL 100

*Lecture Readings for Weeks 2-5, Oxtoby text Ch. 3, Optional reading Ch. 1

WEEK 2

September 9 Lecture A: Religions of the Ancient World: The Foundational Stories and Sources of the Monotheistic Religions

Lecture B: Judaism Part 1: Chosen People, Covenant, and Nation

September 11 Seminar 2: Understanding Religion *No advanced readings
In class, we will watch philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah's TED Talk, "Is Religion Good or Bad" (A Trick Question). If you'd like to view it in advance, here's the URL:

https://www.ted.com/talks/kwame_anthony_appiah_is_religion_good_or_bad_this_is_a_trick_question

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. According to Appiah, what "deal" was made between Christianity and science (or philosophy) in the West during the 19th Century and still exists to this day? Do you agree that there is such a "separation"? Might there be exceptions?
5. How and why might the belief systems, structures, and practice of religion differ between time periods, places, and people groups?

WEEK 3

September 16 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

September 18 Seminar 3: Creation, Flood, Restoration

Read: Origins – Genesis 1-11
Abraham called, commissioned, and tested – Genesis 12, 17, 22

Questions for Discussion:

1. What do the Creation and Flood accounts teach us about the nature of a) God b) humanity c) human relationships, and d) God's relationship with humanity?
2. Do you read a story of divine intent and destiny in the book of Genesis? How does the book bring together the origins of the world, the first humans, Abraham (the father of the Hebrew people) and the Hebrew nation?

WEEK 4

September 23 Lecture: Judaism Part 3: Pressures and Promises in the Modern Period (1492 to present), and the Zionist Movement

September 25 Seminar 4: 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. What is God’s delivery of the Law so important to the Hebrew/Jewish people? Why has he chosen *them* from all nations in the world?
3. Why is there so much focus in the Law on holiness and atonement for sins?
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 5

September 30 Lecture: Judaism Part 4: The Holocaust, its Legacy, and the State of Israel
Video: Rabbi Ben Spiro, “Why the Jews?”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dIDHbA3Afsc>

October 2 Seminar 5: 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), a 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. How does Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel reconcile his faith with the horrors experienced at Auschwitz? Are you surprised at his reaction?

If you have time:

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 6
October 7

QUIZ 1 JUDAISM (first part of class)
Lecture: Christianity Part 1: The Life and Teachings of Jesus

Lecture Readings for weeks 6-9, Oxtoby text Ch. 4

October 9 Seminar 6: Wheat among Weeds: The Kingdom of God is Like...

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

Questions for Discussion:

1. In the book of Matthew, how does Jesus authenticate his status as the Messiah?
2. What is the significance of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount? (Matthew 5-7)
3. Why does he give a list of those who are "blessed"? What does it mean to be blessed?
4. How does John chapter 1 sketch a broad picture of history? In this cosmic framework, who is Jesus and what is his mission?
5. Why does Jesus often introduce a statement by saying, "As it is written..." ?
6. What cautions does Jesus give his followers in Matthew 11-13? Why might this have been included in the gospel?

WEEK 7
October 14

Canadian Thanksgiving—No Class

October 16

Seminar 7: Jesus and the Early Christians
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. Consider again, what is the "kingdom of heaven/God" that Jesus continually speaks of during his ministry? Have this week's scriptural readings changed your interpretation?
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)? Was the tension between them inevitable?
4. According to the book of Hebrews, what is faith? What is the connection between the new movement of Jesus 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 8
October 21

Lecture A: Christianity Part 2: Jesus Christ and His Early Followers
Lecture B: Christianity Part 3: From Persecuted Church to Rome's Imperial Religion and Beyond (Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism)

October 23

Seminar 8: Sacraments and Ritual

Read: Paul the Missionary and His Scripture
Living by the Spirit – Galatians 5:16-26
On Sin, Salvation, and a New Community – Ephesians 2, Romans 3-5, chapter 12:1 to chapter 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 Jewish Law? Are they compatible?
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 early Christianity 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 9

October 28

Lecture A: Christianity Part 4: Reformation Christianity and Roman Catholicism after the Protestant Reformation (1517-)
 Lecture B: Christianity Part 5: Recent Movements and a Global Faith

***Lecture Readings for weeks 10-14, Oxtoby Text Ch. 5**

October 30

Seminar 9: The Charismatic Movement

Read: *Kay Pentecostalism: A Very Short Introduction*, Chapters 1 and 4 only. ***HAND IN BOOK RESPONSE BEFORE CLASS**
 Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost – Acts chapter 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? What do these manifestations look like in practice?
2. What are the movement's major differences with more mainstream Christianity? Why do you think there is so much diversity within the movement itself?
3. Why has the charismatic/Pentecostal movement become 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 10

November 4

QUIZ #2 CHRISTIANITY (first part of class)

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

November 6

Seminar 10: Exploring the Key Teachings of Islam

Readings from the Qur'an and Questions for Discussion:

- 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 and 4:153-159 and 170-172 – How is Jesus venerated? How is it similar to or 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 11

November 11 Remembrance Day—No Class

November 13 Seminar 11: Struggle and Schism

Readings from the Qur'an and Questions for Discussion

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

Sunnis and Shia: The Ancient Split, BBC

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-16047709>

"The Sunni-Shia Divide," Council for Foreign Relations

<https://www.cfr.org/interactives/sunni-shia-divide#!/sunni-shia-divide>

Further Questions for Discussion:

1. Why do you think Islam grew in spite of early resistance?
2. Why is the issue of succession to the Prophet so important in the history of Islam? And why do you think it resulted in conflict and splits?
3. Describe the current situation in the Middle East. How has the 1,400 year old Sunni-Shia split become a critical fault line for political control?
4. What are the main differences and tensions between Sunni and Shi'ite Islam? Do you think they are reconcilable?

WEEK 12

November 18 Lecture: Islam Part 1b: The Birth of Islam and the Formation of Practice

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

November 20 Seminar 12: Muslim Views on Women and Paradise

Readings from the Qur'an and Questions for Discussion

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?

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>

In class, we will introduce our discussion by watching Samina Ali's TedX Talk

<https://tedxuniversityofnevada.org/speakers/samina-ali/>

WEEK 13

November 25 ***RESEARCH PAPER DUE**

Lecture A: Islam Part 3: Islamic Law, Philosophy, and Sufism

Lecture B: Islam Part 4: Modernity and Islam

November 27 Seminar 13: 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 do you find most convincing—Lewis' work or Imad-ad-Dean Ahmad's review of it?

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 in 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 14

December 2 **QUIZ #3 ISLAM**

Lecture: It's the End of the World as we Know it (And I Feel Fine?): Apocalyptic Religion, Doomsday Cults, and Modern Anxiety

December 4 Seminar 14: Overlap and Divergence: A Class Discussion about the Three Great Monotheistic Traditions (no advanced readings)

5. Basis of Student Assessment (Weighting)

Grade Breakdown

Quiz 1	10 percent
Quiz 2	10 percent
Quiz 3	10 percent
Research Paper	25 percent
Media Summary	5 percent

Participation (incl. 5% for Kay book review):	15 percent
Final Exam	25 percent

a) Research Paper (25 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 at the end of the course outline or create one of your own (Please consult with me first if you would like to do the latter). Also note that **only 2 students are permitted to write on the same topic**. For this reason, it is essential that you confirm your selection with me in advance. The research paper is to be **6-7 pages in length**. In this assignment, you need to consult and engage **a minimum of 4 academic articles** (alternatively, a book can count as 2 articles). 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 as we move further into 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 research paper will be evaluated according to a three-point criterion:

- 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 laptop diet will not be accepted. This being said, 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 was accurate. A good essay will recognize that scholars may have applied different methods or based their conclusion on alternative sources. There might even be multiple answers to the question that you are addressing. Be open to the possibility of a more nuanced response.

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 out loud to yourself. Doing this can help you identify confusing or incorrect expression. Lastly, please try to avoid “casual speak” in order to communicate at an academic level.

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. Equally important, paraphrasing and borrowing ideas must be handled in the same fashion as direct quotes. A citation is needed whenever you are utilizing another’s ideas or information that is not general knowledge. However, it is not necessarily to cite general information i.e. The Second World War began in 1939. Wayne Gretzky was born in Brantford, Ontario. Or, the Toronto Blue Jays are awful again this year. Generally speaking, try not to use a lot of quotations and avoid long ones (more than 3 lines in length).

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 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.

b) 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 approximately 30-45 minutes to complete. I will provide a detailed review a week in advance of each quiz.

c) Final Exam (25 percent)

Religions of the West concludes with a final exam during the formal examination week. It will be 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.

d) Participation (15 percent, including 5% for hand-in review of Kay's book, *Pentecostalism*, *see October 30 on schedule)

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 Wednesday 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:

- i) attendance
- ii) the frequency of your contributions to the discussion
- iii) 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 significant portion of your final mark.

Lively and rewarding seminars require the contribution and participation of all group members. Keep in mind, though: while spirited and open 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.

e) Media Summary (5 percent)

Every weekly seminar, one or two students will each give a brief presentation before the group (about half the class) of a recent news event with religious significance. First, the student will summarize the news event for the class, explain why it's significant—using a small amount of media to support you 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, 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 be un/resolved in the future. The media presentation constitutes 5 percent of your overall grade. There will be a sign-up sheet during class.

6. Grading System

- Standard Grading System (GPA)
- Competency Based Grading System

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

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.

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
15. Compare the phenomenon of miracles in Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. Consider how they are a manifestation of God’s presence and activity, the individuals who produce them, and what role they play in each tradition’s belief system.
16. What foods are permitted in Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, respectively? What is the theological basis for dietary observances in each tradition eg. how are they connected to faith, submission, and religious worldview in each case?
17. How do each of the three monotheistic faiths approach the subject of dating and/or courting? What is the scriptural and traditional basis for these teachings and practices? Why might they differ from one another?
18. How are the roles, significance and boundaries ascribed to sex in each tradition?
19. How do the three traditions approach the issue of war and conflict? (You may consider either or both historical and contemporary examples). On what Scriptures, interpretations and traditions are these views based?

*You may also propose a topic to me