



**CAMOSUN COLLEGE**  
**School of Arts & Science**  
**Department of Humanities**

**REL-100-D01**  
**World Religions of the West**  
**Winter 2021**

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

---

The course description is available on the web @ <http://camosun.ca/learn/calendar/current/web/rel.html>

□ Please note: This outline will not be kept indefinitely. It is recommended students keep this outline for their records, especially to assist in transfer credit to post-secondary institutions.

---

### **1. Instructor Information**

<b>(a) Instructor</b>	Dr. Stephen Fielding
<b>(b) Office hours</b>	By email or scheduled video chat on Tuesdays 1:00-2:00 and Thursdays 1:00-2:00, or by appointment
<b>(c) Location</b>	n/a
<b>(d) Phone</b>	250-370-3390 (messages only) <b>Alternative:</b> _____
<b>(e) E-mail</b>	FieldingS@camosun.bc.ca
<b>(f) Website</b>	<a href="http://camosun.ca/learn/school/arts-science/bios/Fielding-Stephen.html">http://camosun.ca/learn/school/arts-science/bios/Fielding-Stephen.html</a>

Growing up in a railway family, 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 Bachelor's degree at the University of Winnipeg, followed by a Master of Arts from Simon Fraser University and Ph.D. from 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 and we are parents of a 10-year-old girl and ~~little stinker~~ 5-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 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. Required Materials

1. Roy C. Amore, Amir Hussain, and Willard G. Oxtoby, *A Concise Introduction to World Religions*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.
2. William F. Kay, *Pentecostalism: A Very Short Introduction*
3. *The Bible*, recommended translations: *New International Version (NIV)*, *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 in depth scholarly commentary: *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha, New Revised Standard Edition*

### 4. Course Content and Schedule

**Lectures:** The lectures will appear on D2L course site as a PowerPoint slideshow with a combination of video, audio and text every Tuesday at 11:30 am

**Seminars:** Each week, students must upload their first seminar contribution every Thursday before 11:59 pm (midnight). Next, they will respond to others' posts before Friday evening at 11:59 pm (midnight).

The lectures aim to follow a similar structure to the textbook and they draw heavily on the scriptures of the three monotheistic traditions. It should also be noted that the course delivery format is asynchronous, meaning that it is not in real time. However, "visits" from local religious leaders may take place live, in which case they will be recorded for students who wish to view them at a later time.

Read actively the assigned textbook readings for each lecture, ideally with your own guide questions beside you (the questions that you consider as you read the material and the ones I provide you for each week's seminar discussion), and always be aware of the major themes of each chapter. These are listed in the textbook on the first page of every chapter. Students who do the required readings each week and view the lectures will gain a stronger understanding of western world religions, be more likely to enjoy the course, and be well positioned for success.

My role in the online seminar discussions is primarily as an observer and occasional moderator, if required. I read and thoughtfully consider every post and might contribute my own comments from time to time.

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

#### **Detailed Instructions about the Seminars**

The seminar component of the course is critically important to the student (and instructor) learning experience, which is reflected in its weighting as 30 percent of your final grade. During the seminars, you will discuss and sometimes debate the assigned seminar materials. These are mostly primary sources taken from the scriptures, or other media made available on D2L. As part of your seminar preparedness, I strongly recommend that you first read the preset questions on D2L and then explore the readings themselves.

General Seminar Format: The Seminar includes the following

- a) Your own reaction to that week's readings
- b) Response to 2 of the pre-set questions on D2L. This is done at the same time as a)
- c) Response to 2 other students' threads posted the previous night

\*Note: Students who miss three or more seminars will forfeit their entire participation grade

### **Order of Participation:**

**All postings should be made in the “Discussion” link for that day’s page (in Content). Your Thursday postings start a thread; the ones for the next day are responses to other students’ threads.**

#### **Thursday before 11:59 pm (midnight)**

1. Contribute your initial “first impressions” response to the readings. It must be at least 100 words in length. Some suggested questions to guide your response include: What did you learn? What surprised you? How is the story, idea, value, claim, belief or practice in this passage similar or different to those in other religious traditions?
2. Answer two (2) of the prescribed questions I’ve provided on D2L. Each one must be a minimum of 50 words

\*Note: there are three (3) weeks when a short paper on the seminar topic is due at 11:59 pm on Thursday. On these weeks, you will not have to post responses for the other students..

#### **Friday before 11:59 pm (midnight)**

3. React/add to two (2) other student’s threads from the day before. Your response can be to their initial “first impressions” post and/or to their answers to the prescribed questions. Each of your responses must be a minimum of 50 words

**What you should do:** In your online seminar responses, provide thoughtful consideration of the scriptures and other sources you read, communicated effectively to the other students. You are welcome to mention what was interesting, clear or unanswered, and what made (or did not make sense) to you. Don’t worry: if something doesn’t seem to make sense to you, there are probably other students feeling the same way. Everyone is on a learning path here.

In your posts, feel free to include your own questions for other students, as long as they relate to the material. Great dialogue and debate always starts with a thought-provoking question. Next, remember that “comparison” is one of the highest forms of analysis. I strongly encourage you to look for similarities and differences in the great Western religious traditions, and perhaps also consider how they compare and contrast to the western secular society in which we live. As we move further into the semester, you will be better able to compare themes in one religious tradition (eg. the afterlife, what it means to be virtuous, views on food, the nature of God, how a follower should live, the nature of sin, etc.) with ones we’ve already studied.

**What you should not do:** Do not give a mere congratulatory response to other students’ contributions, such as “Jenny, you did a great job and clarified everything for me.” This is a poor attempt at participation, akin to a Facebook “like.” The result will be a very poor grade. Make sure that you write an informed response that adds richness to the discussion or debate. It’s okay to compliment someone (because many of you will have fascinating things to say!), but be sure to follow this virtual high-five with your own contribution to the discussion. Also, try to avoid “going into the weeds,” so to speak. Keep on topic. It is okay to meld some personal experience into your postings, but first speak to the assigned reading material. For your participation mark, you are assessed primarily on the quality of your interpretations and grasp of the course readings.

### **Important Dates at a Glance**

Tuesday January 12 @ 11:30 am      First Online Lecture Released

Thursday February 4 @ 11:59 pm      Crisis and the Human Response Short Paper Due

Thursday March 18 @ 11:59 pm *Pentecostalism* Book Review of Chapters 1 and 4 Due

Thursday April 8 @ 11:59 pm

Women in Islam Short Paper Due

Tuesday April 13 @ 11:59 pm

Research Paper Due

Saturday April 17 @ 11:59 pm

Religions of the West Short Reflective Paper Due

## Lecture and Seminar Schedule (subject to change)

### WEEK 1 For Week 1 Lecture, Read Textbook Chapter 1

Jan. 12 Lectures:

**1. Welcome to REL 100**

**2. Religions of the Ancient World: Foundational Stories and Sources of the Monotheistic Religions**

Jan. 14/15 Seminar 1: Understanding Religion \*No advanced readings

What to do:

Thursday before 11:59 pm (midnight)

1. Contribute your initial response to the /video. Minimum 100 words

2. Select and answer 2 of the prescribed questions from D2L Minimum 50 words each.

Friday before 11:59 pm (midnight)

3. React/add to another student's initial response from the day before.

Minimum 100 words

4. Select 2 threads started by other students and add your own contribution to the threads. It can be to their initial response and/or answers to the prescribed questions. Minimum 50 words each.

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](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"? In other words, why does he say, "There is no such *thing* as 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 2

**\*The Reading to Guide the Week 2-5 Lectures is Textbook Chapter 4**

Jan.19      **Lectures:**  
                  **Judaism Part 1: Chosen People, Covenant, and Nation**

Jan. 21/22    **Seminar 2: Creation, Flood, Restoration**

Readings:

The origin of everything, in anticipation of Israel -- Genesis 1-11  
Abraham called, commissioned, and tested -- Genesis 12, 17, 22

\*Follow same submission instructions as last week--first posts due Thursday by 11:59 pm and responses by Friday at 11:59 pm.

Questions for Discussion:

1. What do the Creation and Flood accounts teach about  
a) God's nature, b) humanity c) human relationships with one another,  
and d) God's relationship with humanity? (Spend some time on this)
2. Why do you think there is a Flood account in Genesis?
3. In the book of Genesis, how are the origins of the world, the first humans, Abraham (the father of the Hebrew people), and the Hebrew nation linked together?

## WEEK 3

Jan. 26      **Lectures:**  
                  **1. Judaism Part 2: The Promised Land from Entry to Exile. Jewish Foundations to the Greco-Roman World, Rabbinic Judaism, and the Middle Ages**

**2. Judaism Part 3a: Pressures and Promises in the Modern Period (1492 to the present), and the Zionist Movement**

Jan. 28/29    **Seminar 3: A Nation Set Apart**

\*Follow the same submission instructions as for previous weeks.

Readings:

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 4

Feb. 2      **Lectures:**  
                  **Judaism Part 3b: Pressures and Promises in the Modern Period (1492 to the present), and the Zionist Movement**  
                  **Judaism Part 4: The Holocaust, the State of Israel, and their Legacy**

Feb. 4      **Seminar 4: Wisdom Literature, Poetry, Theodicy**  
                  **\*CRISIS AND THE HUMAN RESPONSE SHORT PAPER DUE THURSDAY FEBRUARY 4 AT 11:59 PM (see instructions in Section 5)**

\*Note: Due to the short paper, you do not have to post seminar responses to the other students.

Readings:

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 talks about God (also on D2L)  
<https://crownheights.info/general/2897/elie-wiesel-on-his-beliefs/>

Optional: Scene from director Terrence Malick's film *Tree of Life* (2011), a reinterpretation of Job's final conversation with God  
<https://vimeo.com/37256937>

Questions (number 6 is mandatory; the others are for consideration):

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 Jewish people?
5. How does Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel reconcile his faith with the horrors experienced at Auschwitz? Are you surprised at his reaction?
6. In comparison to Job and/or Elie Wiesel, how would you respond a massive crisis? Would belief and faith be helpful in a time of struggle? Why or why not?

## WEEK 5

Feb. 9 **VISIT FROM RABBI LOUIS SUTKER OF CONGREGATION EMANU-EL SYNAGOGUE**

Feb. 11-12 **Seminar 5: Why the Jews?**

Watch Rabbi Ben Spiro's Video: Rabbi Ben Spiro, "Why the Jews?"  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dIDHbA3Afsc>

Questions for Discussion:

1. Consider the reasons Rabbi Spiro gives for the scapegoating of Jewish people. Which of these accusations stands out to you the most? Why?
2. In your view, why have Jewish people been historically subject to exclusion, expulsion, discrimination, and sometimes elimination?
3. Can you identify a modern conspiracy about Jews? How is it similar or different to historical accusations and machinations?
4. Can you recall hearing a stereotype about Jewish people?
5. What is the situation of Jewish people in the world today?

## WEEK 6 READING BREAK

## WEEK 7

**\*The Reading to Guide the Week 7-10 Lectures is Textbook Chapter 5**

Feb. 23 **Lecture:**  
**Christianity Part 1: The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ**

Feb. 25-26 **Seminar 7: Wheat among the 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 8

Mar. 2 **Lectures:**  
**Christianity Part 2: Jesus Christ and His Early Followers**

## Christianity Part 3: From Persecuted Church to Rome's Imperial Religion and Beyond (Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism)

### Mar. 4-5 **Seminar 8: 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, Philippians 2:1

11

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 the books of 1 Corinthians and Philippians?
6. How are followers instructed to model their lives on the example of Jesus?

## WEEK 9

### Mar. 9 **VISIT FROM REV. JOSH WILTON OF THE TABLE ANGLICAN CHURCH**

### Mar. 11-12 **Seminar 9: Salvation, 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-](http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/06/19/how-st-augustine-invented-sex)

[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](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 10

Mar. 16      **Lectures:**  
                   **Christianity Part 4: Reformation Christianity and Roman Catholicism after the Protestant Reformation (1517-)**  
                   **Christianity Part 5: Recent Movements and a Global Faith**

Mar. 18      **Seminar 10: The Charismatic Movement**

**\*PENTECOSTALISM BOOK REVIEW DUE THURSDAY AT 11:59 pm (see instructions in Section 5)**

\*Note: Due to the short paper, you do not have to post seminar responses to the other students

Read: *Kay Pentecostalism: A Very Short Introduction*, Chapters 1 and 4 only.  
 From the Bible:  
 The 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 (select three for your review)

1. What are the possible advantages and disadvantages of a form of religion that emphasizes personal spiritual experiences?
2. How has the modern charismatic/Pentecostal movement interpreted the biblical passages (see above) and the example of the early church when it comes to their beliefs in the Holy Spirit and how it works through people?
3. What are the movement's major differences with more mainstream Christianity? Why do you think there is so much diversity within the movement itself?
4. 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?

## WEEK 11

**\*The Reading to Accompany the Week 11-14 Lectures is Textbook Chapter 6**

Mar. 23      **Lecture:**  
                   **Islam Part 1: The Birth of Islam and Formation of Practice, Parts a) and b)**

Mar. 25-6    **Seminar 11: Exploring the Key Teachings of Islam**

Readings from the Qur'an and Questions for Discussion (combined):

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 12

Mar. 30 **Lecture:**  
**Islam Part 2: The Sunni-Shi’ite Split over Succession, and the Spread of Islam**

Apr. 1-3 **Seminar 12: Struggle and Schism**

\* Note that April 2 is Good Friday. You can submit your responses on April 3 instead.

Readings from the Qur’an and Questions for Discussion (combined)

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>

Optional: “How Modern Mathematics Emerged from a Lost Islamic Library,”  
 by Adrienne Bernhard, BBC Future, December 7, 2020  
<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20201204-lost-islamic-library-maths>

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 13

Apr. 6 **Lectures:**  
**Islam Part 3: Islamic Law, Philosophy, and Sufism**  
**Islam Part 4: Modernity and Islam**

Apr. 8 **Seminar 13: Muslim Views on Women and Paradise**

**\*WOMEN IN ISLAM 2-PAGE SHORT PAPER DUE AT 11:59 PM  
(see instructions in Section 5)**

\*Note: Due to the short paper, you do not have to post seminar responses to the other students

Questions for Discussion:

1. Compare Samina Ali's description of Qur'anic views on woman and what you read in the passages below from the Qur'an. In what ways might they be similar or different?

Readings and Questions for Consideration

1. Watch Samina Ali's TEDx Talk <https://tedxuniversityofnevada.org/speakers/samina-ali/>

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

3. 16:54-60 – What view of a girl's birth does the Qur'an reject?

4. 9:71-2 and 33:35 – Are these passages of a 'feminist' Qur'an?

5. 52:17-27 and 56:1-56 – View of Paradise. What is heaven like? Relate to view on women.

6. 7:26-31 and 24:27-33 – About Modesty. Is a hijab Qur'anic? What is the principle here?

Optional: 7. 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-](https://www.thelocal.fr/20170314/french-firms-told-they-can-ban-the-muslim-headscarf-at-work)

[headscarf-at-work](#)

**WEEK 14**

Apr. 13 **\*RESEARCH PAPER DUE AT 11:59 PM**

**VISIT FROM IMAM ISMAIL NUR OF MASJID AL-IMAN MOSQUE**

Apr. 17 **RELIGIONS OF THE WEST SHORT REFLECTION PAPER DUE  
SATURDAY AT 11:59 PM**

**Seminar 14: Reflection on World Religions of the West**

No additional readings:

\*Both the short paper and discussion posts are required this week.

**5. Basis of Student Assessment (Weighting)**

**Grade Breakdown**

Crisis and the Human Response Short Paper	10 percent
<i>Pentecostalism</i> Short Book Chapter Review	10 percent
Women in Islam Short Paper	10 percent
Seminar Participation	30 percent
Research Paper	25 percent
Religions of the West Short Reflection Paper	15 percent

\*In this course there is no midterm exam and no final exam

## **(a) Assignments**

### **i) Crisis and the Human Response Paper      10 percent    \*Due Feb. 4 at 11:59 pm**

#### **Length: Minimum 500 words**

This paper overlaps with the Week 4 Seminar. Read the seminar material and write a short paper. Your paper will focus on question 6 for that week, which is:

In comparison (or contrast) to the biblical Job and Elie Wiesel, respectively, how would you respond a massive crisis? Would belief and faith be helpful to you in a time of struggle? Why or why not?

You are also welcome to consider the other discussion questions as well, but these are optional. Make sure to provide specific examples from the readings of how Job and Elie Wiesel and their beliefs. You do not need to cite them, however. But if you wish to provide a citation, it is enough to make a footnote inside the text at the end of the sentence where it is referenced eg. (Job 4:17) and (Wiesel interview) or at the bottom of the page in Chicago or MLA Style.

The paper must have an introduction and thesis statement, body, and conclusion. A model for the thesis statement could be:

“This paper explores how I would respond to a life crisis by comparing my own belief system with those of the biblical Job and Elie Wiesel. Un/like Job and Wiesel, I would...”  
(here you briefly summarize what you would do similarly or differently)

### **ii) Pentecostalism Book Chapter Review      10 percent    \*Due Mar. 18 at 11:59 pm**

#### **Length: Minimum 500 words**

This book chapter review overlaps with the Week 10 Seminar. Read only chapters 1 and 4 of the *Pentecostalism* book and the assigned scriptures for the seminar, then write a summary of the Pentecostal movement that answers the four (4) seminar discussion questions in a fluid, paragraph format.

### **iii) Women in Islam Short Paper      10 percent    \*Due April 8 at 11:59 pm**

#### **Length: Minimum 500 words**

This short paper overlaps with the Week 13 Seminar. Read the material for the seminar and write a short paper. The guiding questions for your paper are posted under Week 13 on the course D2L site.

In the paper, you will Compare Samina Ali's description of Islamic views on woman with passages selected from the Qur'an. In what ways might they be similar or different?

As before, make sure to provide specific examples from video and the scripture readings. You do not need to cite them, however. But if you wish to provide a citation, it is enough to make a footnote inside the text at the end of the sentence where it is referenced eg. (Qur'an 4:13) and (Ali TEDx Talk) or at the bottom of the page in Chicago or MLA Style. You may also include Qur'anic or Hadith passages that weren't assigned for the class.

The paper must have an introduction and thesis statement, body, and conclusion. A model for the thesis statement could be:

“This paper discusses Samina Ali’s description of women’s roles and responsibilities in conversation with passages in the Qur’an about women. It argues that...” (i.e. list here what are the key similarities and differences?)

#### **iv) Research Paper**

**25 percent**

**\*Due April 13 at 11:59 pm**

##### **Length: 5 pages (approximately 1250 words)**

The research paper is intended to be a longer, more in-depth investigation of an important religious topic or question.

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 three (3) students are permitted to write on the same topic**. For this reason, it is essential that you confirm your selection with me in advance.

In this assignment, you need to consult and engage **a minimum of three (3) academic articles or books**. It must also **make significant use of sacred scriptures**. Other sources considered divinely inspired and exegetical works for comparative analysis are acceptable. “Official” religious websites and journals may be useful. I will be providing more instructions in class as we move further into the semester.

##### **A Very Basic Checklist for the Research Paper:**

1. Was my essay topic approved by the instructor?
2. Is the paper 5 pages in length, double spaced?
3. Is there a bibliography on a separate page?
4. Is there a title page?
5. Did I provide citations? Are they formatted in Chicago Style Referencing?
6. What is my thesis statement?
7. Does the paper follow the thesis statement? In other words, is it organized to answer the question you proposed and summarized at the beginning?

#### **v) Religions of the West Reflection Paper**

**15 percent**

**\*Due April 17 at 11:59 pm**

##### **Length: 3 pages (approximately 750 words)**

This short reflection paper takes the place of a test and requires students to identify what new perspectives and understandings they gained after studying western world religions. Providing specific examples from the lectures, scriptures, student discussions, and other readings, they will explain why (or why not) their initial impressions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam changed or did not change as a result of taking the course.

##### **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 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

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%)

### **Late Policies and Submitting Your Assignments**

Assignment due dates are firm, and assignments must be submitted 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 may 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 contact 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 REL 100 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.

### **(b) Tests and Exams**

There are no tests and exams in this course.

### **(c) Participation                      30 percent**

Participation in REL 100 is absolutely critical to the student learning experience and grade achievement. It is based exclusively on seminar involvement and, specifically, the consistency and quality of your posts and responses.

Please find the detailed instructions about how to participate in the seminar near the top of Section 4 in the course outline.

## **6. Grading System**

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

## **7. Recommended Materials to Assist Students to Succeed Throughout the Course**

n/a

## 8. 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, Student Ancillary Fees, Academic Integrity, Grade Review & Appeals, Student Misconduct and Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities, and Student Penalties and Fines.

## A. 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

### 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.

## B. 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.

## RESEARCH PAPER LIST OF TOPICS

**Please confirm your topic with me before proceeding. A maximum of 3 students may write on the same one. Alternatively, you may also propose a topic to me.**

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?
20. How has one (or more than one) of the religions we're studying approached the issue of sickness? Why do people become ill and how does this relate to their connection to God?
21. Disaster and Catastrophe: How do the three religions we're studying view the question of disasters and catastrophes? What is God's role in these events and what are humans called to do in response?
22. Conversion: How does someone convert to Judaism, Christianity, and/or Islam? Who is eligible for conversion? What process do they go through? And what is the result?
23. Conversion Stories: Explore the before/after stories of people who have converted to a) Judaism b) Christianity and/or c) Islam. Compare these experiences to what is taught in each tradition's scriptures. You may focus on one, two, or all three Western religions.