Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey  
Department of Religion, SAS  
01:840-212 Religions of the Western World  
Spring 2014

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Course Design and Procedures:  
This course explores the sacred writings, beliefs, rituals, and historical development of  
Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The textbooks used in this course are  
the scriptures of these four major western religions. The course is designed to meet the  
following SAS Core Curriculum goals:  
  h. Understand the bases and development of human and societal endeavors across  
     time and place.  
  k. Explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time,  
     including the history of ideas or history of science.  
  l. Employ historical reasoning to study human endeavors.  
  m. Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic  
     entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization  
  n. Apply concepts about human and social behavior to particular questions or  
     situations.  
  o. Examine critically philosophical and other theoretical issues concerning the  
     nature of reality, human experience, knowledge, value, and/or cultural production.

Given the comparative approach used in this course, you are urged to attend the classes  
regularly and to participate in class discussions. If you expect to miss one or two classes,  
please use the University absence reporting website:  
https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/ to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email  
is automatically sent to me.

Examinations are not cumulative and will be based on the material covered in lectures,  
as well as the textbooks, and handouts  
The final Grade will be calculated on the following basis:  
Class attendance and Participation: 10%  
First Hourly Test: 40%  
Second Hourly Test: 25%,  
Final 25%

In terms of format, the exams will consist of essay questions only. In general, no make- 
up tests are granted unless you have a valid (and documented) reason for missing a test.

Textbooks:  
I-Boyce, M. (ed.) *Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism. The University of  
II-Metzger, B.M. Murphy, R.E. (Ed.) *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the  
III-Arberry, A.J. *The Koran Interpreted*. Oxford University Press
IV- Articles on reserve at Alexander Library -Identified by “R” in the Reading List and available online.
V- e-sources (Articles from the Library’s e-sources) identified by “E” in the Reading List

**Reading List**

**Topics and Reading Assignments**

**Sessions**

**I-Zoroastrianism**

1/23, 27, 30; 2/3

**Historical Background:**
- Boyce, Chapter one and pp. 57-59
- Boyce, pp.27-33; 61 (Atash Nyayesh) 104-115
- *Handouts I&II*

**Zoroastrian Dogma:**
- Boyce, pp.34-42; 45-53

**Suffering and Salvation, Zoroastrian Eschatology**
- Boyce, pp.80-104;

**II- The Jewish Tradition**

2/6-3/10

**Background and Introduction:**
- The Bible: pp. xxxi - xxxvi (Hebrew Bible)
- “History of Judaism” R (Schmidt, R. et al: Patterns of Religion (2nd ed.) Chapter 8;
- *Handouts III& IV*

**The Documentary Hypothesis:** Story of Creation, Noah, and the Flood

- Genesis, 1:1-2:4 and 2:4-3:24;
- *Handout V, Genesis 6-10; Handout VI*

**The Patriarchs, the Covenant with Israel, and Settlement in Egypt**

- Genesis: 11-end

**Moses, Exodus, and the Journey toward the Promised Land:**
- Exodus 1-19, Exodus 26-end; Deuteronomy: 34; Numbers 12; Exodus 20-25;

**The Monarchy, Canaanite influence, and the Prophets: The Deuteronomistic History Books**

- Joshua 1-6 (and Judges1-3,11) II Kings 22-24, Amos 4,5,7,8; Hosea, 7-14; Isaiah 1-3,7 & 10; Deuteronomy 6,7,9,10. 32

**Diffusion and dynamics of religious change**


**“E”**

**Babylonian Exile and the encounter with Zoroastrianism**

- Isaiah 40-56; Daniel 7-12; Jonah (entire); Ruth (entire) II Samuel 24; I Chronicles 21; Jeremiah 1; *Handout VII*

First Hourly Examination: 3/10 (40 Points)

*** - The Christian Tradition 3/13-4/14
Background and Introduction 3/13
Schmidt, R. et al., “History of Christianity” R; The Bible, “Introduction to the
The lives of Religious Heroes
3/24, 27, 31; 4/3
The Gospel of Matthew (entire); The Acts 1, 6-10, 22&26; Galatians (entire);
Romans (entire)
Sectarian Movements: 4/7, 10
John 1, 2, 12,14; Philippians 2:5-11; Handout VIII, Handouts IX & X

Second Hourly Test 4/14 (25 Points)

IV - The Muslim Tradition 4/17-5/5
Background and Introduction: 4/17
Ayoub, M.M. “The Islamic Tradition” “R” in Oxtoby, W.G. World Religions,
Chapter five and, the Koran, 29:61-end; 112; 2 (entire)
Compilation of the Qur’an and Hadith 4/21
Handout XI,
Beliefs, Rituals and the Ideal Society: 4/24, 28; 5/1, 5
The Koran: 96:1-6; 53(entire); 29:61-end; 21; 2 (entire), 4/1-40,125-135;
{Suffering and Salvation:
The Koran: Chapter 81, 43:70-75; 55:35-75; 56:1-60}

Final Examination (25 points)