

Rutgers University Dept. of Religion (732-932-9641) Spring 2010
840:212:01 Religions of the Western World TF 2 (9:50-11:10) SC 220/CAC

Instructor: Dr. James Pavlin **Office:** Loree Bldg. 130/DC **Office Hours:** T 11:30-12:00 and Th 12:00-12:30, or by appointment **Email:** jdpavlin@rci.rutgers.edu

Course Description: The purpose of the course is to introduce the student to the academic study of religion by focusing on the monotheistic religions of the Near Eastern and Western traditions. After reviewing current methodologies and concepts related to the study of religion, the course will focus on the scriptures, beliefs and practices of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Each religion will be studied with particular attention paid to readings of primary sources related to origins and historical developments in terms of theology, philosophy and mysticism.

Required Texts:

Ludwig, Theodore M. *The Sacred Paths of the West*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education Inc., 2006.

Van Voorst, Robert E. *Anthology of World Scriptures: Western Religions*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2007.

Website Resources:

Early Christian Writings: <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/>

Early Jewish Writings: <http://www.earlyjewishwritings.com/>

Feminist Sexual Ethics Project: <http://www.brandeis.edu/projects/fse/index.html>

International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World: <http://www.isim.nl>

Into His Own: <http://www.virtualreligion.net/iho/index.html>

Islam and Islamic Studies Resources: <http://www.uga.edu/islam/home.html>

Religion Online: <http://www.religion-online.org/>

Synoptic Primer: <http://www.virtualreligion.net/primer/index.html>

Virtual Religion Index: <http://www.virtualreligion.net/vri/index.html>

Course Requirements:

1) Attendance and Participation Policy: Students are expected to attend each class on time and contribute to class discussions. Attendance will be taken for each class. Not counting the first day's class, students are permitted one unexcused absence. After that, any unexcused absences may result in a reduction of the student's final grade based on my discretion. Students who encounter any extended problem with absences, for example, for medical, family emergency, or religious reasons, must inform me in writing (email acceptable) about the reason and duration of the absence. Decisions on excused absences will be made on a case-by-case basis.

The use of lap tops is permitted only for purposes related to the course. All cell phones, iPods, and any other such technology is strictly forbidden during class. Violation of this policy will result in your being requested to leave the class and receiving an unexcused absence.

2) Quizzes (25% of final grade): Multiple choice or essay quizzes will occur on a regular basis to test the students' grasp of ideas and concepts under discussion. The quizzes can be either in class or take home. There will be no make-ups for the in class quizzes. Students who miss one-quarter or more of the quizzes will lose a corresponding percentage from the overall quiz grade.

3) Three tests (each test is 25% of final grade): The tests will have a multiple choice section and an essay section. The multiple choice questions will be based on the key terms and concepts at the end of each chapter or section in both textbooks. The students must understand these terms in the context of the readings and class discussions. The essay questions will be based on the discussion questions at the end of each chapter in the Ludwig book. Make up exams will be given to students having an excused absence. The student must contact me immediately upon returning to class so that arrangements can be made with the department secretary, who will proctor the exam.

Grading Policy: All final grades will be calculated according to the Rutgers' grading system. Letter grades and numerical grades on a scale of 100 to 65 will be converted to the point system as follows: 4.0 = A (100-90), 3.5 = B+ (89-85), 3.0 = B (84-80), 2.5 = C+ (79-75), 2.0 = C (74-70), 1.0 = D (69-65), 0.0 = F (64 and below). An incomplete ("T" grade) for this course will not be given unless the student consults with me about the reason for not completing the course work on time.

Course Outline and Reading Assignments:

1/19 Introduction

1/22 Perspectives on the Religious Path, Ludwig, Ch. 1

1/26 Beginnings of the Human Religious Adventure, Ludwig, Ch. 2
Western Scriptures among the World's Religions, Van Voorst, Ch. 1
Quiz

1/29 Religions of Ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia and Greece, Ludwig, Ch. 4

2/2 Zoroastrian Tradition, Ludwig, Ch. 5
Zoroastrianism, Van Voorst, Ch. 2
Quiz

2/5, 9, and 12 Jewish Sacred Story and Historical Context, Ludwig, Ch. 6
Judaism, Van Voorst, ch. 3, pp. 37-50
2/12 Quiz

2/16 and 19 Jewish Worlds of Meaning, Ludwig, Ch. 7
Judaism, Van Voorst, Ch. 3, pp. 51-65

2/23 and 26 Ritual Practices and the Good Life for Jews, Ludwig, Ch. 8
Judaism, Van Voorst, Ch. 3, pp. 66-78
2/26 Quiz

3/2 Test One (essay question based on Ludwig, chap. 7)

3/5, 9, 12 Christian Sacred Story and Historical Context, Ludwig, Ch. 9
Christianity, Van Voorst, Ch. 4, pp. 83-97
3/12 Quiz

3/16 and 19 Spring Break

- 3/23 and 26 Christian Worlds of Meaning, Ludwig, Ch. 10
Christianity, Van Voorst, Ch. 4, pp. 98-110
- 3/30 and 4/2 Ritual Practices and the Good Life for Christians, Ludwig, Ch. 11
Christianity, Van Voorst, Ch. 4, pp. 111-125
4/2 Quiz
- 4/6 Test Two** (essay question based on Ludwig, chap. 10)
- 4/9, 13, and 16 Muslim Sacred Story and Historical Context, Ludwig, Ch. 12
Islam, Van Voorst, Ch. 5, pp. 129-140
4/16 Quiz
- 4/20 and 23 Muslim Worlds of Meaning, Ludwig, Ch. 13
Islam, Van Voorst, Ch. 5, pp. 141-157
- 4/27 and 30 Ritual Practices and the Good Life for Muslims, Ludwig, Ch. 14
Islam, Van Voorst, Ch. 5, pp. 158-163
4/30 Quiz
- 5/12 Wednesday 8am Test Three** (essay question based on Ludwig, chap. 13)