

Rutgers University Dept. of Religion (732-932-9641) Winter Session 2011
840:212:01 Religions of the Western World MTWHF (9:00-12:00) SC 206/CAC

Instructor: Dr. James Pavlin **Office:** Loree Bldg. 130, DC; email: jdpavlin@rci.rutgers.edu
Office Hours: after class or by appointment

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://religion.rutgers.edu/iho/>

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

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

Synoptic Primer: <http://religion.rutgers.edu/nt/primer/>

Virtual Religion Index: <http://religion.rutgers.edu/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): Short answer essay quizzes will occur on a regular basis to test the students' grasp of ideas and concepts under discussion. The quizzes could be either in class or take home. There will be no make ups for the in class quizzes. Take home quizzes must be made up within three days of the original assignment. Students who miss one-third or more of the quizzes will lose one full letter grade from the quiz portion of their 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.

Course Outline and Reading Assignments:

12/24 (first session) Perspectives on the Religious Path, Ludwig, Ch. 1
Western Scriptures among the World's Religions, Van Voorst, Ch. 1

(second session) Beginnings of the Human Religious Adventure, Ludwig, Ch. 2
Quiz

12/27 (first session) Religions of Ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia and Greece, Ludwig, Ch. 4

(second session) Zoroastrian Tradition, Ludwig, Ch. 5
Zoroastrianism, Van Voorst, Ch. 2
Quiz

12/28 Jewish Sacred Story and Historical Context, Ludwig, Ch. 6
and 12/29 Judaism, Van Voorst, ch. 3, pp. 37-50
Quiz

12/30 Jewish Worlds of Meaning, Ludwig, Ch. 7
Judaism, Van Voorst, Ch. 3, pp. 51-65

1/3 Ritual Practices and the Good Life for Jews, Ludwig, Ch. 8
Judaism, Van Voorst, Ch. 3, pp. 66-78

1/4 (first session) **Test One** (essay question based on Ludwig, chap. 7)

1/4 (second session) Christian Sacred Story and Historical Context, Ludwig, Ch. 9
and 1/5 Christianity, Van Voorst, Ch. 4, pp. 83-97
Quiz

1/6 Christian Worlds of Meaning, Ludwig, Ch. 10
Christianity, Van Voorst, Ch. 4, pp. 98-110

1/7 Ritual Practices and the Good Life for Christians, Ludwig, Ch. 11
Christianity, Van Voorst, Ch. 4, pp. 111-125

1/10 (first session) **Test Two** (essay question based on Ludwig, chap. 10)

1/10 (second session) Muslim Sacred Story and Historical Context, Ludwig, Ch. 12
and 1/11 Islam, Van Voorst, Ch. 5, pp. 129-140

Quiz

1/12 Muslim Worlds of Meaning, Ludwig, Ch. 13
Islam, Van Voorst, Ch. 5, pp. 141-157

1/13 Ritual Practices and the Good Life for Muslims, Ludwig, Ch. 14
Islam, Van Voorst, Ch. 5, pp. 158-163

1/14 (first session) **Test Three** (essay question based on Ludwig, chap. 13)