

**RELIGIONS OF THE WESTERN WORLD**  
**840:212:01**  
**Monday/Thursday 11:30am-12:50pm**  
**College Avenue Campus, Campbell Hall A3**  
**Fall 2016**

**Instructor:** Hilit Surowitz-Israel

**Office Hours:** Tuesday 11am-12pm, Loree 116 (or by appointment)

**E-mail:** hilit@rci.rutgers.edu

**Course Description:**

This course examines the beliefs, practices, and sacred writings of Judaism, Islam, Christianity, and indigenous traditions.

**Objectives:** By the conclusion of the course participants should be able to:

- Understand the bases and development of human and societal endeavors across time and place.
- Explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time, including the history of ideas or history of science.
- Demonstrate familiarity with major themes, practices, and sacred writings of major western religious traditions,
- Demonstrate familiarity with the various methodologies and approaches in the study of religions, and
- Demonstrate familiarity with major trends and themes in the development and intersection of western religious traditions.

The **Required Text** for the course:

Textbooks are available at the Rutgers Bookstore, a Barnes & Noble College Bookstore.

❖ Willard G. Oxtoby and Amir Hussain, *World Religions: Western Traditions*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2014).

❖ Articles and primary sources will be available on SAKAI.

❖ Other readings or media may be assigned during the course of the semester.

**Attendance & Participation**

Students are expected to attend each class on time. Attendance will be taken at each class meeting. You are permitted three unexcused absences. Following the third unexcused absence 1/3 of a letter grade will be deducted for each unexcused absence. Students who encounter any extended problem with absences, for example, for medical or family emergencies, or religious reasons, must inform me in writing about the reason and duration of the absence. Decisions on excused absences will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Short quizzes may be given. There will be no make-ups for in-class quizzes or exams.

Student participation is an integral component for the success of this class. Course participants will be expected to arrive to class on time, and prepared to discuss the assigned readings. **Please bring assigned readings to class as we will frequently consult the text, particularly the primary sources.** Participation not only means asking questions and involving oneself in the classroom discussion, it also means actively listening to others.

### **Requirements:**

### **Requirements & Grading System:**

\*\*\*Please note, this is the grading scale that I will use for this class:

100-92 A, 91-87 B+, 86-80 B, 79-77 C+, 76-70 C, 69-60 D, 59-below F.

- ❖ Participation, attendance, in-class assignments (5%)
- ❖ Exam I (25%)
- ❖ Exam II (25%)
- ❖ Exam III (Final Exam, not cumulative) (25%)
- ❖ Final Essay (5-7 pages) (20%)- Due on December 5<sup>th</sup> in-class (no extensions)
- ❖ All students MUST discuss their final paper with my by 11/15 and receive topic approval.

\*\*\* Students must complete all course requirements in order to receive a passing grade

**Written work** will be graded on the basis of content, clarity of argument, quality of writing, and how well it analyzes the material and answers the questions. Written work, except for that which is a classroom assignment, must be typed (double-spaced, 12 pt. font), and spell-checked. One letter grade per day will be deducted for late papers unless you have a written medical excuse.

### **Classroom Policies:**

❖ Plagiarism and cheating will be penalized according to the full extent of University policy. Please consult Rutgers University's *Policy on Academic Integrity for Undergraduate and Graduate Students*:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml#plagiarism>

❖ Students with disabilities who require accommodations should provide me with their "accommodation letter" from the Office of Disability Services as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Please consult the website of the Office of Disability Services for further information:

[http://sas.rutgers.edu/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=135&Itemid=117](http://sas.rutgers.edu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=135&Itemid=117)

❖ Note that I do not accept assignments submitted by email. All assignments must be submitted in hard-copy on the day that they are due.

- ❖ Evaluations will cover all course material, even if it is not specifically covered in class.
- ❖ Syllabus is subject to change.

## **•Schedule•**

### **Week 1**

#### **Thursday 9/8**

- Introduction and review syllabus

### **Week 2**

#### **Monday 9/12**

- Chapter 1, About Religion, pp. 4-24

#### **Thursday 9/15**

- Chapter 3, Jewish Traditions, pp.76-92

### **Week 3**

#### **Monday 9/19**

- Chapter 3, Jewish Traditions, pp. 92-106
- Video with questions

#### **Thursday 9/22**

- Chapter 3, Jewish Traditions, pp. 106-120
- Maimonides *Principles of Faith* (SAKAI) – please bring to class

### **Week 4**

#### **Monday 9/26**

- Chapter 3, Jewish Traditions, pp. 120-142

#### **Thursday 9/29**

- TBA

### **Week 5**

#### **Monday 10/3 – NO CLASS**

- film with guided questions

**Thursday 10/6**

- **Guest Speaker: Rabbi Esther Reed, Rutgers Hillel**

**Week 6**

**Monday 10/10**

- EXAM I (in-class)

**Thursday 10/13**

- Chapter 4, Christian Traditions, pp. 150-168
- Matthew 1
- Matthew 5-7
- Romans 5
- Luke 21-24

**Week 7**

**Monday 10/17**

- Chapter 4, Christian Traditions, pp. 168-184

**Wednesday 10/20**

- Chapter 4, Christian Traditions, pp. 184-190
- Medieval primary sources (SAKAI)

**Week 8**

**Monday 10/24**

- Chapter 4, Christian Traditions, pp. 190-200
- Martin Luther 95 Theses

**Wednesday 10/27**

- Chapter 4, Christian Traditions, pp. 200-207
- Dorothy Day, *Loaves and Fishes* (SAKAI)
- Black Elk excerpts (SAKAI)

**Week 9**

**Monday 10/31**

- Chapter 4, Christian Traditions, pp. 207-220
- Vatican II primary Sources
- excerpts from *The Book of Mormon* including First Vision

**Wednesday 11/3**

- **Guest Speaker: Rev. Seth Kaper-Dale, The Reformed Church of Highland Park**

**Week 10**

**Monday 11/7 – EXAM II**

**Wednesday 11/10**

- Chapter 5, Muslim Traditions, pp. 230-249
- Koran, Suras 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 87
- suggested reading Sura 22

**Week 11**

**Monday 11/14**

- Chapter 5, Muslim Traditions, pp. 249-267
- in-class short film: *Women in Islam*

**Tuesday 11/17**

- Chapter 5, Muslim Traditions, pp. 267-277
- **Guest Speaker: Imam Kaiser Aslam, Muslim Chaplain, Center for Islamic Life at Rutgers University**

**Week 12**

**Monday 11/21**

- Chapter 5, Muslim Traditions, pp. 277-292
- in-class film: *The Koran and the American Dream*

**Tuesday 11/22**

- Chapter 6, Indigenous Traditions, pp. 298-310
- excerpts from *Black Elk Speaks*
- excerpts from *Watunna*

**Thursday 11/24 – NO CLASS**

**Thanksgiving holiday**

## **Week 13**

### **Monday 11/28**

- *Spirits for Sale* (you must watch this at home prior to class-it will be available to you electronically)

- Chapter 6, Indigenous Traditions, pp. 310-333

### **Wednesday 12/1**

- Chapter 6, Indigenous Traditions, pp. 333-355

## **Week 14**

### **Monday 12/5**

- Final Paper Due in class, at the beginning of class (no extensions)

## **Week 15**

### **Monday 12/8**

- Chapter 8, Current Issues, pp. 404-420

### **Wednesday 12/12**

- Exam III