

Religions of the “Western” World
Religion 840:212:02 - Fall 2017

Professor Debra Ballentine
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Class meetings: Tuesday/Friday 9:50-11:10 on CAC in Milledoler 100

Office hours: Fridays 11:15-12:15 CAC or by appointment

Course description: This course covers the religious beliefs, practices, and sacred writings of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Course goals: (1) to introduce students to the academic study of religion; (2) to facilitate students’ understanding of how Religious Studies fits within the Humanities; (3) to provide students with models for critical analysis of religious texts and ideas; (4) to exhibit what students can learn from engaging in historical and social analysis of particular religious studies data sets, in this case the historical developments of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam

Course objectives: Students will be able to (1) explain the academic study of religion; describe the role of religious studies within the Humanities; distinguish critical academic religious studies from confessional practice of religious traditions; (2) select relevant data from primary texts of multiple religious traditions; (3) find reliable academic and scholarly resources for the study of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim texts; (4) recognize indications of particular socio-political circumstances within the historical developments of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam; (5) describe continuity and innovation among Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions

SAS Core Code: HST, SCL, AHo

Explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time, including the history of ideas or history of science; Employ historical reasoning to study human endeavors; Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization; Apply concepts about human and social behavior to particular questions or situations.

Required Textbook:

Willard G. Oxtoby and Amir Hussain, *World Religions: Western Traditions*, 4th ed; with Student Study Guides, free online access from Oxford University Press

http://www.oupcanada.com/higher_education/companion/religion/9780199002870/student_resources.html

We will adhere to the University’s Policy on Academic Integrity

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/resources-for-students/>

Course requirements:

- 10% Participation: attendance, low-stakes reading quizzes, in-class discussion questions
- 15% Exam 1: About Religion and Religions of Antiquity, Chapters 1 and 2
- 20% Exam 2: Jewish Traditions, Chapter 3
- 20% Exam 3: Christian Traditions, Chapter 4
- 20% Exam 4: Muslim Traditions, Chapter 5
- 10% Exam 5: Indigenous Traditions, New Religions, Current Issues, Zoroastrian Tradition, Chapters. 6, 7, 8, bonus chapter
- 5% Research Workshop Essay: Students will compose a brief essay, primarily in class

Provisional schedule, topics, and readings:

- 9/5 Tues Introduction to course, syllabus, textbook, online study guides
- 9/8 Fri About Religion, Read ch. 1
- 9/12 Tues About Religion, Read ch. 1 Study Guide and Study Questions
- 9/15 Fri Religions of Antiquity, Read ch. 2
- 9/19 Tues Religions of Antiquity, Read ch. 2 Study Guide and Study Questions
- 9/22 Fri No class meeting, Watch at video at home, link on Sakai
Intro to the Bible and it's place within Judaism, Christianity, and Islam
- 9/26 Tues Exam 1: Chapters 1 and 2 - About Religion and Religions of Antiquity
- 9/29 Fri Jewish Traditions, Read ch. 3
- 10/3 Tues Jewish Traditions, Read ch. 3 Study Guide and Study Questions
- 10/6 Fri Jewish Traditions
- 10/10 Tues Jewish Traditions
- 10/13 Fri Exam 2: Chapter 3 - Jewish Traditions
- 10/17 Tues Christian Traditions, Read ch. 4

10/20 Fri	Christian Traditions, Read ch. 4 Study Guide and Study Questions
10/24 Tues	Christian Traditions
10/27 Fri	Christian Traditions
10/31 Tues	Exam 3: Chapter 4 - Christian Traditions
11/3 Fri	Muslim Traditions, Read ch. 5
11/7 Tues	Muslim Traditions, Read ch. 5 Study Guide and Study Questions
11/10 Fri	Muslim Traditions
11/14 Tues	Muslim Traditions
11/17 Fri	Exam 4: Chapter 5 - Muslim Traditions
11/21 Tues	No class meeting: change of designation day to Thursday classes
11/22 Wed	Change of designation day to Friday classes; Zoroastrian Traditions, Read bonus chapter from Oxford Student Resources
11/24 Fri	No class meeting: Thanksgiving break
11/28 Tues	“Indigenous” Traditions, Read ch. 6 and Study Guide and Questions
12/1 Fri	New Religions, Read ch. 7 and Study Guide and Questions
12/5 Tues	Current Issues, Read ch. 8 and Study Guide and Questions
12/8 Fri	Exam 5 on ch. 6, 7, 8, bonus chapter Indigenous Traditions, New Religions, Current Issues, Zoroastrian Tradition
12/12 Tues	Last regular class meeting; Research Workshop Essay, first draft
Finals week	Research Workshop Essay, revise and review