

RELIGIONS FROM THE MIDDLE EAST

This page is still under construction and is liable to change

SPRING 2015
RELIGION 116

<u>Texts</u>	<u>Course Description</u>	<u>Grading</u>
<u>Schedule</u>	<u>The Term Paper</u>	<u>Guided Reading</u>

REQUIRED READING:

THIS ENTIRE WEBPAGE IS REQUIRED READING. Read it carefully and thoroughly.

Willard Oxtoby, Amir Hussain, and Roy C Amore (eds.) World Religions: Western Traditions. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, Fourth Edition, 2014.

RECOMMENDED READING:

*Karen Armstrong, A History of God. New York, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994.
The Bible. (Any version will do but I recommend the New Revised Standard Version, especially the Oxford Annotated Bible. Alternatively the New American Bible is also recommended.)*

John H. Hayes, Introduction to the Bible.

Bruce Metzger and Michael Coogan (eds.), The Oxford Companion to the Bible.

Mary Boyce, Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices.

Paul Kriwaczek, In Search of Zarathustra.

The Qu'ran (Koran).

Gershom Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism.

Luther Martin, Hellenistic Religion.

Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, The Contemporary Islamic Revival.

Lindsay Jones (ed.), The Macmillan Encyclopedia of Religion (second edition).

John Hinnells, A New Handbook of Living Religions.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will be a study of the histories, narratives, rituals, and scriptures of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and other traditions from the Middle East, with special attention to Judaism and Islam in the twentieth century. The course will be divided into six sections:

(1) Ancient Middle Eastern Traditions, including religions of the Greco-Roman Empire and the Zoroastrian tradition;

(2) Judaism;

(3) The Christian Tradition;

(4) The Islamic Tradition;

(5) Indigenous Traditions; and

(6) The Contemporary Situation.

Guided Reading: The assigned reading must be done before the classes and class will involve discussion of the reading as well as explanatory lectures from the professor. Students will be asked to answer guided reading questions questions before class and to be ready to respond to those questions in class. It is part of the Guided Reading Assignments that students should ASK as well as answer questions in class. Make a note of anything that you do not understand and be prepared to raise those questions in class. See the first week's questions, for example.

GRADING:

Grades will be based on a total of 500 possible points:

There will be six quizzes, one on each section of the course. There will be one term paper of approximately 3,000 words, whose topic must be determined by the end of March (although sooner is better). There will be a final examination whose form will be discussed during the course. Attendance to the classes is required, as is participation in class discussions.

Attendance and participation will be graded. The grading distribution will be as follows:

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Each worth</i>	<i>Total Worth</i>
<i>Quizzes</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>180</i>
<i>Term Paper</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>120</i>	<i>120</i>

<i>Examination</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Attendance and Participation</i>			<i>100</i>
<i>TOTAL POINTS</i>			<i>500</i>

Attendance

You must attend classes. Failure to do so might lose up to 20% of your grade points. NO absences are regarded as "excused." If a student misses class because of sickness or bereavement, or for athletic, employment, or other educational purposes this still could damage their progress in the class. All absences will be recorded and after three, all students will have to assure the instructor that their absence was unavoidable, that they have made up for it appropriately, and that their performance in the class has not suffered.

Academic Integrity

(see p. 68 of the Student Handbook)

*Westminster College as an institution and I as an individual both pursue a strict policy of academic honesty. Plagiarism: **leading your reader or listener to believe that what you have written or said is your own work, when, in fact, it is not, will be treated severely.** But always remember that while using someone else's work without declaring your source is dishonest, doing the same thing and citing the source is good scholarship! Books must be cited in the correct bibliographic style ([see here](#)) and personal sources can also be cited. Your instructor reserves the right to use the plagiarism software at Turnitin.com.*

SCHEDULE:

This class will meet on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 10:30 to 11:30 in Patterson Hall 105.

I will be available in my office in Patterson Hall 336 MWF from 11:30 until 12:30, and TTr from 3:30 until 4:30.

<i>Week: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15</i>
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Click the number to see the week,

Week 1: Introduction.

Mon. 1/12 Introduction to the course. Reading: Foreword and Preface from World Religions: Western Traditions (hereafter WRWT).

*Wed. 1/14 Willard Oxtoby's "Personal Invitation" (handout available on My Westminster).
[See Guided Reading.](#)*

Here is a useful link for relevant [Maps.](#)

Fri. 1/16 Preamble: "About Religion" by Amore and Hussain. [See Guided Reading.](#)

*Week 2. Ancient Middle Eastern Traditions,
including religions of the Greco-Roman and Persian Empires.*



Additional reading material for this section of the course is web-based document on Greco-Roman Religions:

*[The Eleusinian Mysteries and the Mysteries of Dionysus and Orpheus.](#) Additional Reading:
[See Guided Reading.](#)*

Wed. 1/21 Reading: WRWT Chapter Two, pages 28 - 48. [See Guided Reading.](#)

Some Religions of the Roman Empire: Mithraism and Gnosticism.

Additional Reading: [Later Religion of the Greco-Roman Empire.](#) [See Guided Reading.](#)

Also you can see [On Gnosticism](#) and [Mithraism One](#) and [Mithraism Two](#) for some extra background information.

Fri. 1/23 Reading: WRWT Chapter Two, pages 48 - 72. [See Guided Reading.](#)

Week 3. Zoroastrianism.



Mon. 1/26 Reading: Willard Oxtoby on the Zoroastrian Tradition (available as a handout on My.Westminster) pages 159 - 178.

[See Guided Reading.](#)

Wed. 1/28 Reading: Willard Oxtoby on the Zoroastrian Tradition, pages 178 - 195. [See Guided Reading.](#)

See also: Professor Rennie on Zoroastrianism (handout on My.Westminster).

Fri. 1/30 Quiz #1: Ancient Middle-Eastern Traditions.



Week 4. Section Two: Judaism.

Mon. 2/2 Reading: Chapter Three, pages 76 - 83. [See Guided Reading.](#)

[Click here for information on the Hebrew Bible.](#)

[Click here for a list of important dates in the Biblical History of Israel.](#)

Wed. 2/4 Reading: Chapter Three, pages 83 - 91. [See Guided Reading](#) and see the class handout on My Westminster on the Documentary Hypothesis for information on the J, E, P, and D traditions

Fri. 2/6 Reading: Chapter Three, pages 91 - 98. [See Guided Reading](#) and [here for information on the Hebrew Prophets.](#)

Week 5. Judaism, continued.

Mon. 2/9 Reading: Chapter Three, pages 98 - 111. [See Guided Reading.](#)

Wed. 2/11 Reading: Chapter Three, pages 111 - 116. [See Guided Reading.](#)

Fri. 2/13 Reading: Chapter Three, pages 116 - 125. [See Guided Reading.](#)

Week 6. Judaism, continued.

Mon. 2/16 Reading: Chapter Three, pages 125 - 140. [See Guided Reading.](#) [Jewish High Holidays on the web.](#)

Wed. 2/18 Reading: Chapter Three, pages 140 - 147. [See Guided Reading.](#)

Fri. 2/20 Quiz #2: Judaism.



Week 7. Section Three: Christianity.

Mon. 2/23 Reading: WRWT Chapter Four, pages 150 - 163. [See Guided Reading.](#)

Click [here](#) for more information on the priority of the Gospel of Mark and other related information and [here](#) for the seasonal year.

For more information see the handouts on My Westminster on the Historical Jesus, the Christian Liturgy, and the symbol of the fish.

Wed. 2/25 Reading: Chapter Four, pages 163 - 178. [See Guided Reading.](#)

Fri. 2/27 Reading: Chapter Four, pages 178 - 190. [See Guided Reading.](#)

Week 8. Christianity, continued.

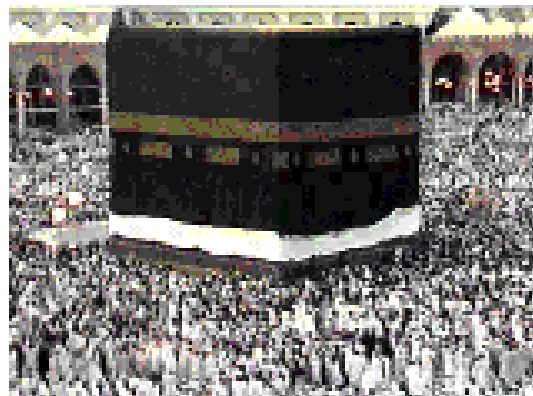
Mon. 3/2 Reading: Chapter Four, pages 190 - 200. [See Guided Reading.](#)

Wed. 3/4 Reading: Chapter Four, pages 200 - 226. [See Guided Reading.](#)

Fri. 3/6 Quiz #3: The Christian Tradition

Spring Break; Saturday March 7th to Sunday March 15th

Week 9. Section Four: Islam.



See [this website](#) for access to the Qur'an and [here](#) for other Muslim resources and [this website](#)

for the recitation of the Qu'ran.

Mon. 3/16 Reading: Chapter Five, pages 230 - 238. [See Guided Reading.](#)

Wed. 3/18 Reading: Chapter Five, pages 238 - 249. [See Guided Reading.](#)

Fri. 3/20 Reading: Chapter Five, pages 249 - 258. [See Guided Reading.](#)

Week 10. Islam, Continued.

Mon. 3/23 Reading: Chapter Five, pages 258 - 272. [See Guided Reading.](#)

Wed. 3/25 Reading: Chapter Five, pages 272 - 282. [See Guided Reading.](#)

Fri. 3/27 Reading: Chapter Five, pages 282 - 292. [See Guided Reading.](#)

Week 11. Islam, continued.

Mon. 3/30 Video: The Legacy of a Prophet.

The topic of your term paper must be determined and approved by the professor by this date.

Wed. 4/1 Video: The Legacy of a Prophet, continued.

Easter Break; Thursday April 2nd to Monday April 6th

Week 12. Section Five: Indigenous Traditions.

Tue. 4/7 MONDAY CLASSES MEET TODAY

Quiz #4: The Islamic Tradition.

Wed. 4/8 Reading: Chapter Six, pages 298 - 309. [See Guided Reading.](#)

Fri. 4/10 Reading: Chapter Six, pages 309 - 324. [See Guided Reading.](#)

You must submit an annotated bibliography for your term paper by today.

This should contain at least five appropriate references.

Week 13. Indigenous Traditions, Continued.

Mon. 4/13 Reading: Chapter Six, pages 324 - 344. [See Guided Reading.](#)

Wed. 4/15 Reading: Chapter Six, pages 344 - 361. [See Guided Reading.](#)

Fri. 4/17 Quiz #5: Indigenous Traditions.

*Week 14. Section Six: New Religions and Movements
The Contemporary Situation.*

New Religion and Movements

Mon. 4/20 Reading: Chapter Seven, pages 364 - 379. [See Guided Reading.](#)



Wed. 4/22 Reading: Chapter Seven, pages 379 - 400. [See Guided Reading.](#)

Current Issues.

Fri. 4/24 Reading: Chapter Eight, pages 404 - 420. [See Guided Reading.](#)

Today is the last day that you can hand in a draft of your term paper to be checked.

Week 15. Pluralism.

Mon. 4/27 Quiz #6: The Contemporary Situation.

Wed. 4/29 Reading: John Hick, "Religious Pluralism," available as a Handout on

My. Westminster.

See [these notes](#) on John Hick's argument and read "Pluralism Pleas," also available as a Handout on My. Westminster.

(The latter is a short essay largely based on Prof. Rennie's paper, [Myths, Models, and Metaphors.](#))

Fri. 5/1 Final class. Closing Discussion. Instructions for the final examination. Student Assessments of the course.

Today is the deadline for your term paper.

Finals period May 4th through 8th

Monday through Friday.

The final will be a take home examination that covers the whole semester's work. All questions will be drawn from the set of questions already posed in the quizzes.

The Completed Take-Home Final Examination is due by e-mail by 4:30 on Friday May 8th

Term ends Friday, May 8th.

For essential vocabulary, see Oxtoby's "End-of-Chapter Glossaries," for example on pages 26, 61, 158, and 261.

SOME NOTES ON THE TERM PAPER,

All students will submit a typewritten or word-processed critical essay of 10-12 pages (double spaced, that is about 3,000 words). This paper is due in on Friday, May 1st.

You are required to obtain the approval of the instructor for your paper topic by Monday, March 30th.

You are required to submit an annotated bibliography for your paper by Friday, April 10th. This should contain at least five appropriate sources with a brief (no more than 50 words)

description of the contents of each source. You must have at least as many print sources as you have Internet sources!

Papers cannot be accepted after the due date (Friday, May 1st).

You may hand in a rough draft of your paper to be checked anytime up to Friday April 24th.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS OF AN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY.

These are not reports but argumentative essays: that is to say they are editorialism rather than journalism--your own views are as essential as knowledge of your subject material. The standard of your technical writing as well as your accuracy and argument will be taken into consideration. To that end, here is a short list of common avoidable writing errors which should help you to avoid simple mistakes which will otherwise reduce your grade.

- 1. Papers must have a title which states the topic of your essay. In order to maintain the focus on Religions from the Middle East as the topic of this course your papers should be entitled "Religions from the Middle East: . . ." with your topic or focus following the colon. Papers must be submitted as e-mail attachments.*
- 2. You must have a thesis, argument, and a conclusion. "Thesis" is defined as "a proposition laid down or stated, especially as a theme to be discussed or proved" (Oxford English Dictionary). You must explain to your reader why you believe that your thesis is correct, and clearly state the conclusion of your thought. This is mainly to help you to focus your thoughts.*
- 3. The arguments and research which support your thesis should make the main body of the essay.*
- 4. Source material (books, but don't forget articles in journals and encyclopedias, even newspapers and personal interviews) should be integrated into your argument as evidence, example, or illustration. You MUST document the sources of all quotations, statistical information, and paraphrased material.*
- 5. Your conclusions must be clearly stated. They can be negative as well as positive. Don't*

worry if you find that your original thesis is insupportable. As long as your conclusion is based on your research negative results areas valuable as positive ones. Just re-write your introduction to reflect your results.

6. You must give a separate list of sources (entitled "References" or "Bibliography" or "Works Cited") at the end of your paper. In alphabetical order give the full name of each author, surname first, then first name, followed by the title of the work. Book and journal titles should be italicized (underlining should be avoided and used only if italics are not available, as in hand- or typewritten manuscripts). Article titles should be in quotation marks. Details of publication must be included. For example:

Batson, C. Daniel and W. Larry Ventis. *The Religious Experience*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.

Ferré, Frederick. "The Definition of Religion." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 38, no.1 (1970): 3-16.

Fieser, James (Ed.), *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/>, July 10th, 1996.

(For Internet sources the minimum required information is author name, URL --that is the "http://filename/etc.htm"--and the date you took it from the Internet.

In-text citations can then be given in the form: (Author, page number) or, if the same author has more than one work listed in your bibliography, (Author year, page number). Thus: (Batson and Ventis, 62) or (Ferré 1970, 14) or (Fieser 1996, no page number).

REMEMBER: You must have at least as many print sources as you have Internet sources!

Your bibliography does not count as part of your length (3,000 words as stated above).

PLEASE ASK ME IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT ANY OF THIS!

BACK

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