

SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION 19: RELIGIONS OF THE BOOK  
FALL 2008

**Instructor:** Catherine Murphy  
**Office:** Kenna 323B  
**Office hours:** T/Th 1:45–3:00 p.m. and by appointment  
**Phone:** (408) 551-1909

SCTR 019.44254  
Kenna 308  
T/Th 8:00-9:45 a.m.  
**E-mail:** cmurphy@scu.edu

**Required Books:**

- The Bible, NRSV.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1989. [0-19-528380-5] [\$29.99/\$22.50]  
*If you have another copy of the Bible, you do NOT need to buy this one; you can just use the one you have.*
- 'Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an.* Beltsville, Maryland: Amana, 1996. [ISBN 0-915957-76-0] [\$13.95/\$10.45]
- S. Daniel Breslauer. *Decoding Religion in the Bible: Learning to Recognize the Diversity of Biblical Texts.* Cornwall-on-Hudson, New York: Sloan, 2007. [ISBN 1-59738-001-6] [\$38.00/\$28.50]
- John L. Esposito. *Islam: The Straight Path*, rev. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. [ISBN 0-19-518266-9] [\$39.95/\$29.95]

**Course Description**

This course introduces you to the three major religions of the Near East and West: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. It focuses especially on one religious phenomenon they all share, namely "the book," the scriptural traditions that overlap and that reflect and inform so many of the central ideas and practices of each tradition. As we study these religions, what they share and how they differ, you'll have the chance to rethink what religion is, what scripture is, and what your own beliefs are as you learn about these important traditions.

**Purpose of the Core Course in Religious Studies**

At Santa Clara University, the study of religious belief and practice in various cultural contexts (including your own) is one of the central features of the Core Curriculum. This has always been important in Jesuit Catholic education, which is why this is just the first of three Religious Studies courses you'll take with us. But it isn't about making you believe certain teachings or limiting your inquiry to one tradition. Religious Studies at Santa Clara is broader, deeper, and more analytical than you might expect. We want you to think critically about religious experiences, practices and beliefs—yours if you profess any, and those of other people. We want you to consider how these are all embedded in specific histories and cultures, and to appreciate the diversity. We hope that this will help you to negotiate a world in which religion matters, but in very different ways to different peoples.

**Learning Objectives**

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- describe at least three different approaches to the study of religion, and use these critical approaches to reflect on your own beliefs and the religious dimensions of human existence
- identify and compare the chief beliefs and practices of Islam, Christianity and Judaism, particularly their views of scripture and its interpretation, in two different global regions
- develop skills in critical thinking: especially reflection, close reading, information literacy, college-level research, and self-expression

## How to Prepare for Class

### *Reading and Study Prior to Class*

The questions and readings listed under each day's topic should be prepared before that class. They will provide the basis for our class discussion. Readings listed as "primary" are those from the past (e.g., the Bible, the Qur'an, the Mishnah), while those listed as "secondary" are from contemporary authors writing about those traditions. The best way to prepare the material is to type up your answers to the questions. These questions won't be collected, though, unless they're marked as an "Assignment" on the syllabus.

### *Where to Find the Readings*

Most of our primary readings are in the Bible and the Qur'an, which are in the bookstore and on reserve in the library (just go to the Circulation Desk, and ask for the resource you need for SCTR 19, Prof. Murphy). Most of the secondary readings will be in our other two course textbooks, Breslauer's *Decoding Religion in the Bible* and Esposito's *Islam: The Straight Path*. Occasionally, though, the reading won't be in one of those four books, but on electronic reserve (ERes) instead. You can access these essays from any computer on or off campus by going to <http://eres.scu.edu>, searching for our course by its number (SCTR 19) or the prof's name (C. Murphy), and typing our course password, "scripture" (you can also click on the ERes button on our course Web site, which takes you straight to the password page).

### *Questions, Lecture and Discussion*

Each class will begin with questions about the readings, yours for the professor and the professor's for you (there will be occasional, unannounced individual and group quizzes). There will be some lecture each day on the core material from the reading, step-by-step practice at critically reading the scriptures, and plenty of opportunities for you to seek clarification from the professor and each other. We will regularly break out into small groups for closer analysis and discussion.

## Assessment and Grading

### *Grade Components and Scale*

Class Participation (assignments 10%, oral participation 15%, small-group work 5%, attendance 5%)	35%
Quizzes & Exams (quizzes 10%, midterm 10%, final 15%)	35%
Critical Thinking Exercise (a progressive project submitted in stages)	30%

### *Scale*

93.5-100	A	86.7-89.9	B+	76.7-79.9	C+	66.7-69.9	D+
90.0-93.4	A-	83.3-86.6	B	73.3-76.6	C	63.3-66.6	D
		80.0-83.2	B-	70.0-73.2	C-	60.0-63.2	D-

### *Oral Participation & Attendance*

Class participation is a critical part of this course. It includes your informed oral remarks in class—during formal lectures, in open question periods, and during small-group work and class discussion. In order to participate, you've got to come to class (see the attendance policy below) and bring the readings, questions and assignments with you. Your informed oral comments and questions, based on your reading and reflection, are a substantial contribution to your classmates, so they count for 15% of your entire grade. Small-group work counts for 5%, and attendance 5% (25% of your grade total).

### *Assignments*

It's a good idea to prepare the "central questions" posted for each day, since these will help you to bring observations and questions to class and to review for the exams. However, you won't have to turn these in. There are, however, some central questions that are so central to the course that they will be marked as "Assignments" on the syllabus. Type these up and prepare to submit them during class; handwritten papers will not be accepted. 10% of grade.

### *Quizzes & Examinations*

There will be random, unannounced individual and group quizzes in this class to check your comprehension of the reading and to provide you some feedback on grading before the major exams. 10% of grade.

One midterm and one final exam are scheduled. They're each cumulative of material covered up to that point in the course (midterm 10% + final 15% = 30% total).

### *Critical Thinking Exercise*

One of the major assignments for the course is a progressive critical thinking exercise. This exercise is about building information literacy and developing solid research skills in the field of religious studies, while at the same time selecting a topic that allows you to explore and compare a single belief or practice across all three traditions. You can choose any topic you like; the only requirements are that it (a) address all three religions, (b) include attention to how the interpretation of scripture is brought to bear on the topic, and (c) select a time and place outside the ancient near east. You will compile the exercise in the following stages:

- |   |          |                      |
|---|----------|----------------------|
| 1. <i>Statement</i> of research question and concept for analysis | 3rd week | Thursday, October 9  |
| 2. <i>Reflection</i> on your point of view and assumptions        | 4th week | Thursday, October 16 |
| 3. <i>Report</i> on information and on sources                    | 7th week | Thursday, November 6 |
| 4. <i>Interpretation</i> and implications of information          | 9th week | Friday, November 21  |

Each stage involves the submission of a short, typed paper, and for stages 2-4 you will also be required to post your paper at [www.TurnItIn.com](http://www.TurnItIn.com) (the site will be demonstrated in class). Specific directions for each component of the exercise, along with the grading rubric, will be on the course Web site at the "Assignments" tab during the second week of class. 30% of grade.

### *Extra Credit*

Extra credit opportunities will be posted online at "Extra Credit Events" periodically throughout the quarter. To receive extra credit, attend the event, write a 2-3 page summary and evaluation, and turn it in within one week of the event. Alternatively, you could do a 2-3 page research précis of any question that comes up in class, exploring 3 professional sources to compose a response to the student's question. Directions for the paper can be found online at "Extra Credit Events." 3% of grade max, only applicable if all required assignments have been submitted.

## **Policies**

### *Attendance*

If you're sick or something comes up, please notify the professor in advance or within a week of the missed class. *Remember: You're not doing yourself or anyone else any favors if you come to class sick – you can always make up the work.* Notifying the prof means that the absence is excused; it's unexcused and counts more against your grade if you don't let the prof know. After the first excused absence, and for all unexcused absences, your attendance and class participation grades will be affected. At two or more unexcused absences (10+% of the course) your entire grade for the course begins to drop. Five unexcused absences (25% of course) will result in a failing grade. Daily roll will be taken. 5% of grade +.

### *Academic Integrity*

You are expected to collaborate to share ideas, resources, and questions, particularly team work and exam preparation. This sharing becomes cheating or plagiarism when you present as original the insights or work of another. Work on extra credit and exams is expected to be original to you, and work on the critical thinking exercise should be original to you. That does not mean that every idea and insight you write about will be your own. What it does mean is that your assignments should be guided by your insights and, when you do rely on an authority other than yourself, you note that reliance through standard footnotes and bibliography (see the "Style Sheet" at the course Web site). If you are caught cheating or plagiarizing on a required assignment, you will receive an "F" on the assignment and in the course, and the matter may also be forwarded for further action to the Office of Student Leadership and Integrity.

### *Disability Accommodation Policy*

To request academic accommodations for a disability, students must contact Disability Resources at the outset of the quarter. The Disability Resources Office is located in Benson Center, (408) 554-4111; TTY (408) 554-5445.

Wk	Date	Pages of Reading	Topic of Lecture & Discussion
1	9/23	[-]	INTRODUCTIONS, REVIEW OF SYLLABUS
	9/25	[28]	<p>THE BASICS</p> <p><u>Central Questions:</u> What is religion? What is scripture?</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Your evolving definition of religion and scripture</p> <p><u>Secondary Readings:</u> 1. Robert S. Ellwood, "Scenarios for the Real Self" and "History of Religion on Planet Earth," from <i>Introducing Religion: From Inside and Outside</i> (ERes)</p> <p>2. William A. Graham, "Introduction," from <i>Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion</i> (ERes)</p>
2	9/30	[32]	<p>THE JEWISH BIBLE &amp; ITS DIVERSE RELIGIONS</p> <p><u>Primary:</u> Psalm 139, Ecclesiasticus (= Sirach) Prologue and chapter 51; Joshua 1; 2 Kings 22-23</p> <p><u>Secondary:</u> Breslauer, <i>Decoding Religion in the Bible</i> 1-16, 21-30</p>
	10/2	[20]	<p>CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES &amp; EARLY CHRISTIANITIES</p> <p><u>Primary:</u> Matthew 5:17-20; Luke 22:14-20; 24:13-49; 2 Peter 3:14-16; Revelation 22:18-19</p> <p><u>Secondary:</u> Breslauer, <i>Decoding Religion in the Bible</i> 32-49</p> <p>⇒ <i>Choose Research/Fieldwork Partner</i></p>
3	10/7	[34]	<p>MOHAMMED, THE QUR'AN, &amp; EARLY ISLAM</p> <p><u>Primary:</u> <i>Surahs</i> 96; 68:1-16; 4:1-14</p> <p><u>Secondary:</u> Esposito, <i>Islam: The Straight Path</i> 1-31</p>
	10/9	[35]	<p>TANAK: RELIGIONS OF THE TORAH</p> <p><u>Primary:</u> Genesis 1-3; 12; Exodus 19-20; Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 5-6</p> <p><u>Secondary:</u> Breslauer, <i>Decoding Religion in the Bible</i> 52-76</p> <p>⇒ <i>Critical Thinking Exercise: Statement of research question and concept for analysis due</i></p>
4	10/14	[26]	<p>TANAK: RELIGIOUS IDEOLOGIES IN THE (FORMER) PROPHETS</p> <p><u>Primary:</u> Joshua 23-24; 1 Samuel 1-3; 2 Samuel 7; 2 Kings 17; 22-23</p> <p><u>Secondary:</u> Breslauer, <i>Decoding Religion in the Bible</i> 79-105</p>
	10/16	[31]	<p>TANAK: RELIGIONS IN THE PROPHETIC BOOKS (NEVI'IM)</p> <p><u>Primary:</u> Isaiah 1-7; Jeremiah 31:27-40; Ezekiel 1-5; 37:1-14</p> <p><u>Secondary:</u> Breslauer, <i>Decoding Religion in the Bible</i> 108-128</p> <p>⇒ <i>Critical Thinking Exercise: Reflection on your point of view and assumptions due</i></p>
5	10/21	[34]	<p>TANAK: RELIGIONS OF THE WRITINGS (KETUVIM)</p> <p><u>Primary:</u> Daniel 1-2; Job 1-3; 38-42</p> <p><u>Secondary:</u> Breslauer, <i>Decoding Religion in the Bible</i> 131-57</p>
	10/23		⇒ <i>MIDTERM EXAM</i>

Wk	Date	Pages of Reading	Topic of Lecture & Discussion
6	10/28	[28]	THE CHRISTIAN GOSPELS (IN & BEYOND THE BIBLE) <u>Primary:</u> Mark 14:1-16:8; Matthew 26-27; Luke 23; John 1-2; 18:28-19:42; Synopses 1-2 (ERes) <u>Secondary:</u> Breslauer, <i>Decoding Religion in the Bible</i> 190-207
	10/30	[36]	RELIGIONS REPRESENTED IN THE GOSPELS <u>Primary:</u> Mark 1 and 16; Matthew 1 and 28; Luke 1 and 24; John 1 and 20; Synopses 3-4 (ERes) <u>Secondary:</u> Breslauer, <i>Decoding Religion in the Bible</i> 210-35
7	11/4	[32]	TEXTING IN THE ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN: PAUL'S LETTERS <u>Primary:</u> Philippians 2; 1 Thessalonians 4-5; Galatians 1:1-6:18 (all); Romans 9-13 <u>Secondary:</u> Breslauer, <i>Decoding Religion in the Bible</i> 237-56
	11/6	[35]	APOCALYPTIC THOUGHT IN JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY & ISLAM <u>Primary:</u> Daniel 7; 9; 12; Mark 13; Revelation 19-22; <i>surahs</i> 3:55; 4:157-159; 7:187; 18:94-95; 31:34; 43:85 <u>Secondary:</u> Breslauer, <i>Decoding Religion in the Bible</i> 281-95; David Cook, "Classic Muslim Apocalyptic Literature," in <i>Contemporary Muslim Apocalyptic Literature</i> (ERes) <u>Optional:</u> David Cook, "Apocalyptic Predictions Concerning Afghanistan and the Taliban," in <i>Contemporary Muslim Apocalyptic Literature</i> (ERes, optional readings) <b>⇒ Critical Thinking Exercise: Report on information and on sources due</b>
8	11/11	[38]	BELIEF & PRACTICE IN ISLAM: THEOLOGY, SHARIAH, & WOMEN <u>Primary:</u> <i>Surahs</i> 1; 4:127-132, 136; 2:219-234; Excerpt from the Hadith of al-Bukhari (ERes) <u>Secondary:</u> Esposito, <i>Islam: The Straight Path</i> 68-100
	11/13	[28]	BELIEF & PRACTICE IN ISLAM: SHIA ISLAM AND SUFISM <u>Primary:</u> Excerpt from Rumi's poetry (ERes) <u>Secondary:</u> Esposito, <i>Islam: The Straight Path</i> 32-45, 100-114
9	11/18	[25]	THE INTERPRETATION OF THE QUR'AN IN ISLAM TODAY <u>Secondary:</u> Kathryn Johnson, "The Lessons of the Garden: An Examination of the Scriptural Legacy of Islam," from <i>Living Traditions of the Bible</i> (ERes)
	11/20	[-]	CLASS CANCELLED <i>The professor will be traveling to Boston for the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. It's recommended that you use the time you gain here to finish work on your critical thinking exercise (or just get some extra sleep!).</i>
	11/21		<b>⇒ Critical Thinking Exercise: Interpretation and implications of information due (since the prof will be out of town, please submit your paper to the Religious Studies Department Administrative Assistant, Vicky Gonzalez, between 8:00 am 5:00 pm (Kenna 323).</b>
	11/24-28		Thanksgiving Break

Wk	Date	Pages of Reading	Topic of Lecture & Discussion
10	12/2	[15]	<p>INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE IN JUDAISMS TODAY</p> <p><u>Secondary:</u> Michael A. Meyer, "Scripture in Modern Judaism," in <i>Living Traditions of the Bible</i> (ERes)</p>
	12/4	[±15]	<p>INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE IN CHRISTIANITIES TODAY</p> <p><u>Secondary:</u> The class will be divided into three groups; each group will be assigned ONE of the following traditions/readings from <i>Living Traditions of the Bible</i>, on ERes (so you only have to read one)</p> <p><i>Catholic:</i> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Scripture in the Catholic Tradition"</p> <p><i>Orthodox:</i> Demetrios J. Constantelos, "The Bible in the Orthodox Church"</p> <p><i>Protestant:</i> David C. Steinmetz, "Luther, the Reformers, and the Bible"</p>
11	12/9		⇒ <i>Final Exam, Kenna 308, 9:10 am - 12:10 pm</i>