

**Scripture and Tradition 19: Religions of the Book
Winter 2009**

Section:	TR 11:50-1:35	Room: Kenna 218
Instructor:	Dr. Matthew Whitlock	
Office:	Kenna 309	ERes/Angel Password:
Office Hours:	Tue/Thur 9:00-11:00	
Phone:	(408) 551-3000 ext. 4275	Email: mwhitlock@scu.edu
	(408) 628-8016	mattgwhit@juno.com

Course Description:

This course explores “the books” and traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. We begin with an exploration of the books: the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and the Qur’an. We ask essential questions about how they were written, compiled, and heard. We then examine how diverse traditions and interpretations developed along with and from these books. We conclude the course by entering into this interpretive conversation, asking what these diverse layers of interpretation tell us about these books and about ourselves.

Role of this Course in Religious Studies and the Core Curriculum:

Religious Studies: This course is in Area 1, Scripture and Tradition. It focuses on sacred texts and their interpretations. It is an introductory course that gives you tools and methods for (1) understanding sacred texts in their original historical contexts and (2) appreciating their literary artistry. It also gives you an appreciation for how various traditions and interpretations developed with/from these texts.

Core Curriculum: This is an introductory level course in the University Core Curriculum. It aims to push you beyond the usual questions of believing and not believing. It exposes you to a diversity of historical contexts, traditions, and interpretations. Through this exposure, you will sharpen your own interpretive skills, challenge your own perspective with a plurality of perspectives, and negotiate your own meaning with a multiplicity of meanings.

Learning Objectives:

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

- identify the diverse traditions and interpretations in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam
- interpret texts from the Hebrew Bible, New Testament, and Qur’an in light of their historical contexts
- explain the literary shape and artistry of texts from the Hebrew Bible, New Testament, and Qur’an

Texts and Course Materials:

Required:

James L. Kugel. *The Bible as It Was*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997. [ISBN 0-674-06941-2] **BAIW**

John L. Esposito. *Islam: The Straight Path*, rev. 3rd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. [ISBN 0-19-518266-9] **ISP**

Saint Mary's Press College Study Bible. Winona, Minnesota: Saint Mary's Press, 2007. [ISBN 978-0-88489-907-5] **SMSB**

'Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali. *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*. Beltsville, Maryland: Amana, 1996. [ISBN 0-915957-55-8] **MHQ**

How to Prepare for Each Class

Questions drive this class. Einstein said: "The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery every day. Never lose a holy curiosity."

For the first part of the course, come prepared to ask questions about each reading. Also, questions for each reading will be provided. They will help you focus on the critical points of each reading. They will also be the basis for our class discussion. The best way to prepare is to type up your questions and answers. These questions and answers will be collected occasionally to make sure you are keeping up with the reading.

For the second part of the course, you will be required to submit questions about the ancient texts we are reading. These questions will be the basis of our discussions about these ancient texts. These questions will be collected at the start of each class. You can also email these questions to me up to two hours before class. More will be said about these questions as we embark on the second part of our course.

How You Will Be Assessed

Grading Scale

93-100	A	77-79	C+	67-69	D+
90-92	A-	73-76	C	63-66	D
87-89	B+	70-72	C-	60-62	D-
83-86	B				
80-82	B-				

Grade Components

Class Participation 30% (15% oral participation; 10 % preparation; 5% attendance)

Midterm and Final 35% (15 % midterm; 20% final)
Course Paper 35% (10% preparation; 25% final paper)

Course Paper

Beginning the second half of the course, you will take steps towards creating a final paper (see course schedule). This paper is 25% of your grade. The steps are worth 10%. You will also be required to make an appointment with me to discuss the paper.

The paper will focus on a passage from the Torah (your choice) and how the three “religions of the book” interpret it.

Policies

Attendance

If you are sick or an emergency comes up, please notify me in advance or within a week of the missed class. You are not doing yourself or anyone else any favors if you come to class sick-you can always make up the work. Notifying me means that the absence is excused; it's unexcused and counts more against your grade if you don't let me 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. Attendance is 5% of grade.

Academic Integrity

You are expected to collaborate to share ideas, resources, and questions. This sharing becomes cheating or plagiarism when you present as original the insights or work of another. Work on study guide questions, exams, and the paper is expected to 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. 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.

Course Outline:

The course is divided into two parts, providing both breadth and depth. The first part provides a broad overview of the three “religions of the book.” We will survey the historical backgrounds, literature, and interpretive communities of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

The second part provides an opportunity to delve deeper into the literature and traditions of these religions and their books. For each class, we will examine a story that all three religions have told, retold, or interpreted. Through this examination, we will come to a deeper understanding of each religion.

Course Schedule and Readings

Readings and assignments are due on the dates listed below.

Wk	Date	Topic	Readings/Assignments
1	01/06	Class Overview “Religions of the Book”	<i>Big Fish</i>
	01/08	The Hebrew Bible and the History of Judaism	“What are the Hebrew Bible and the Old Testament?” [ERes] Explore the “Timeline for the History of Judaism” <a href="http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc
e/History/timeline.html">[http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc e/History/timeline.html] SMSB 2036-39
2	01/13	The Hebrew Bible and Interpretation	BAIW 1-23 (read the Preface!) Listen to the Hebrew Bible in its original language [http://shma-israel.org/torah.php]
2	01/15	The Hebrew Bible, Its Interpretations, and Its Interpreters	BAIW 24-49 (skim 567-616, “Terms and Sources”)
3	01/20	The New Testament and the History of Christianity	“From Pompey to Bar Cochba,” pp. 1243-52 in the <i>New Jerome Biblical Commentary</i> [ERes]

Timeline from Raymond Brown's
Introduction to the New Testament [handout]

- | | | | |
|---|-------|---|---|
| 3 | 01/22 | The New Testament, Its Interpreters | “The Nature and Origin of the New Testament,” <i>Introduction to the New Testament</i> [ERes]

Listen to the NT in its original language
[http://www.helding.net/greeklatinaudio/greek/] |
| 4 | 01/27 | The Qur’an Era and Its Interpretations | ISP 1-31 (including intro and preface)

Handout: Chronology and Themes of the <i>Surahs</i> |
| 4 | 01/29 | The History of Islam and Its Interpreters | ISP 32-67

Listen to the Qur’an in its original language
[http://www.jannah.com/quran/flash/] |
| 5 | 02/03 | The History of Islam and Its Interpretations | ISP 68-114 |
| | | Midterm Review | |
| 5 | 02/05 | Midterm | |
| 6 | 02/10 | Creation Stories | BAIW 55-64
-Genesis 1:1-2:4a
-John 1:1-5
- <i>Surahs</i> 1:1-7; 13:38-39; 96:1-5 |
| | | Joining the Interpretation: Questioning the Stories | |
| 6 | 02/12 | Adam and Eve | BAIW 67-82
-Genesis 2:4b-3:24
-Romans 5:12-14
- <i>Surah</i> 20:116-128 |
| | | Paper Requirements | Three questions

Begin to look for a topic for your paper |

- 7 02/17 The Trials of Abraham BAIW 165-178
 -Genesis 12:1-3; 16:1-6; 21:9-21
 -Galatians 4:21-31
 -*Surahs* 2:122-129; 3:95
- Three questions
- Turn in topic proposal for your paper
- 7 02/19 Dinah and Justice BAIW 233-244
 -Genesis 34:1-30
 -Matt 5:38-48; Rom 12:17-21; Rev 18:1-24
 -*Surahs* 2:190-193; 4:76, 95; 9:1-16, 29
- ISP 253-271
- Three Questions
- 8 02/24 Jacob and Esau BAIW 199-214
 -Genesis 25:19-34
 -Hebrews 11:20-21; 12:15-17
 -*Surah* 2:130-141
- Three Questions
- Paper: Summary of Questions and Passages
- 8 02/26 Joseph BAIW 247-262
 -Genesis 50:15-21
 -Acts 7:8-18
 -*Surah* 12:1-111
- Three Questions
- 9 03/03 Moses and the Exodus BAIW 311-329
 -Deuteronomy 18:9-18
 -Acts 3:11-26; John 14:16
 -*Surah* 7:157
- Three Questions
- Paper: Outline
- 9 03/05 David -2 Sam 7:1-17
 -Matthew 1:1-17

-*Surah* 38:15-26

“David” in *Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations* [ERes]

“David” in *Encyclopedia of the Qur’an* [ERes]

Three Questions

10 03/10 Messianism and
Apocalypticism

-Daniel 7:1-78; 9:25-26
-Luke 2:8:18; Luke 21:25-28
-*Surahs* 4:153-162; 9:30-31

Fitzmyer, “The Term Messiah,” *The One Who Is to Come* [ERes]

“Jesus” in *Encyclopedia of the Qur’an* [ERes]

Three Questions

10 03/12 Women of the Book

-1 Sam 2:1-10
-1 Sam 2:1-10 Targum Handout
-Luke 1:27-56
-*Surah* 3:35-54

ISP 235-241

Three Questions

Class and Final Review

Paper Due

11 03/19 Final Exam

Kenna 218

1:30-4:30 P.M.