

Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey
Department of Religion, SAS
01:840-212 Religions of the Western World
Spring 2014

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Course Design and Procedures:

This course explores the sacred writings, beliefs, rituals, and historical development of Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The textbooks used in this course are the scriptures of these four major western religions. The course is designed to meet the following SAS Core Curriculum goals:

- h. Understand the bases and development of human and societal endeavors across time and place.
- k. Explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time, including the history of ideas or history of science.
- l. Employ historical reasoning to study human endeavors.
- m. Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization
- n. Apply concepts about human and social behavior to particular questions or situations.
- o. Examine critically philosophical and other theoretical issues concerning the nature of reality, human experience, knowledge, value, and/or cultural production.

Given the comparative approach used in this course, you are urged to attend the classes regularly and to participate in class discussions. If you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website:

<https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

Examinations are not cumulative and will be based on the material covered in lectures, as well as the textbooks, and handouts. The final Grade will be calculated on the following basis: Class attendance and Participation: 10% First Hourly Test: 40% , Second Hourly Test: 25%, Final 25%

In terms of format, the exams will consist of essay questions only. In general, no make-up tests are granted unless you have a valid (and documented) reason for missing a test.

Textbooks:

I-Boyce, M. (ed.) *Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism. The University of Chicago Press 1990, ISBN 0-226-06930-3*

II-Metzger, B.M. Murphy, R.E. (Ed.) *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha. Oxford University Press, ISBN: 0-19-528411-9*

III-Arberry, A.J. *The Koran Interpreted*. Oxford University Press

IV- Articles on reserve at Alexander Library -Identified by “R” in the Reading List and available online.

V- e-sources (Articles from the Library’s e-sources) identified by “E” in the Reading List

Reading List

Topics and Reading Assignments

Sessions

I-Zoroastrianism

***1/23, 27, 30;
2/3***

Historical Background:

Boyce, Chapter one and pp. 57-59

Boyce, pp.27-33; 61 (Atash Nyayesh) 104-115

Chosky, J.K. “Zoroastrianism” in Encyclopedia of Religion, 2nd. Edition Vol.14, pp.9988-1008 **E**

Handouts I&II

Zoroastrian Dogma:

Boyce, pp.34-42; 45-53

Suffering and Salvation, Zoroastrian Eschatology

Boyce, pp.80-104;

II- The Jewish Tradition

2/6-3/10

Background and Introduction:

2/6

The Bible: pp. xxxi - xxxvi (Hebrew Bible)

“History of Judaism” **R** (Schmidt, R. et al: *Patterns of Religion* (2nd ed.)

Chapter 8;

Handouts III & IV

The Documentary Hypothesis: Story of Creation, Noah, and the Flood **2/6, 10**

Genesis, 1:1-2:4 and 2:4-3:24;

Handout V, Genesis 6-10; Handout VI

The Patriarchs, the Covenant with Israel, and Settlement in Egypt **2/13**

Genesis: 11-end

Moses, Exodus, and the Journey toward the Promised Land:

2/17, 20

Exodus 1-19, Exodus 26-end; Deuteronomy: 34; Numbers 12; Exodus 20-25;

The Monarchy, Canaanite influence, and the Prophets: The Deuteronomistic History Books **2/24**

Entry “E1” in Encyclopedia of Religion, 2nd. Ed (**E**)

Joshua 1-6 (and Judges 1-3,11) II Kings 22-24, Amos 4,5,7,8; Hosea, 7-14; Isaiah 1-3,7 & 10; Deuteronomy 6,7,9,10. 32

Diffusion and dynamics of religious change

2/27

“Diffusion” in: International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, 1968 Ed. Sills, D. **“E”**

Babylonian Exile and the encounter with Zoroastrianism

3/3, 6

Isaiah 40-56; Daniel 7-12; Jonah (entire); Ruth (entire) II Samuel 24; **I**

Chronicles 21; Jeremiah 1; *Handout VII*

Entry “Angels” in Encyclopedia of Religion, 2nd. Ed (**E**)

First Hourly Examination: 3/10 (40 Points)

<i>III - The Christian Tradition</i>	<i>3/13-4/14</i>
Background and Introduction	<i>3/13</i>
Schmidt, R. et al, "History of Christianity" R ; The Bible, "Introduction to the New Testament" and "The Narrative Books" pp. III-X	
The lives of Religious Heroes	
	<i>3/24, 27, 31; 4/3</i>
The Gospel of Matthew (entire); The Acts 1, 6-10, 22&26; Galatians (entire); Romans (entire)	
Sectarian Movements:	<i>4/7, 10</i>
John 1, 2, 12,14; Philippians 2:5-11; <i>Handout VIII, Handouts IX & X</i>	

Second Hourly Test 4/14 (25 Points)

<i>IV- The Muslim Tradition</i>	<i>4/17-5/5</i>
Background and Introduction:	<i>4/17</i>
Ayoub, M.M. "The Islamic Tradition" " R " in Oxtoby, W.G. World Religions, Chapter five and, the Koran, 29:61-end; 112; 2 (entire)	
Compilation of the Qur'an and Hadith	<i>4/21</i>
<i>Handout XI,</i>	
Beliefs, Rituals and the Ideal Society:	<i>4/24, 28; 5/1, 5</i>
The Koran: 96:1-6; 53(entire); 29:61-end; 21; 2 (entire), 4/1-40,125-135;	
{Suffering and Salvation:	
The Koran: Chapter 81, 43:70-75; 55:35-75; 56:1-60}	

Final Examination (25 points)