

**Religions of the “Western” World
Religion 840:212:01 - Spring 2018**

Professor Debra Ballentine
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Class meetings: Monday/Thursday 12:00-1:20pm Tillett Hall 226, Livingston Campus

Office hours: Tuesdays 10:30-11:30, Loree building room 132 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:

- 1/18 Thurs Introduction to course, syllabus, textbook, online study guides
- 1/22 Mon About Religion, Read ch. 1
- 1/25 Thurs About Religion, Read ch. 1 Study Guide and Study Questions
- 1/29 Mon Religions of Antiquity, Read ch. 2
- 2/1 Thurs Religions of Antiquity, Read ch. 2 Study Guide and Study Questions
- 2/5 Mon Exam 1: Chapters 1 and 2 - About Religion and Religions of Antiquity
- 2/8 Thurs Jewish Traditions, Read ch. 3
- 2/12 Mon Jewish Traditions, Read ch. 3 Study Guide and Study Questions
- 2/15 Thurs Jewish Traditions
- 2/19 Mon No class meeting, Watch at video at home, link on Sakai
Intro to the Bible and its place within Judaism, Christianity, and Islam
- 2/22 Thurs Jewish Traditions
- 2/26 Mon Exam 2: Chapter 3 - Jewish Traditions
- 3/1 Thurs Christian Traditions, Read ch. 4

3/5 Mon Christian Traditions, Read ch. 4 Study Guide and Study Questions

3/8 Thurs Christian Traditions

3/12 and 3/15 Spring Break

3/19 Mon Christian Traditions

3/22 Thurs Exam 3: Chapter 4 - Christian Traditions

3/26 Mon Muslim Traditions, Read ch. 5

3/29 Thurs Muslim Traditions, Read ch. 5 Study Guide and Study Questions

4/2 Mon Muslim Traditions

4/5 Thurs Muslim Traditions

4/9 Mon Exam 4: Chapter 5 - Muslim Traditions

4/12 Thurs Zoroastrian Traditions, Read bonus chapter from Oxford Student Resources

4/16 Mon “Indigenous” Traditions, Read ch. 6 and Study Guide and Questions

4/19 Thurs New Religions, Read ch. 7 and Study Guide and Questions

4/23 Mon Current Issues, Read ch. 8 and Study Guide and Questions

4/26 Thurs Exam 5 on ch. 6, 7, 8, bonus chapter
Indigenous Traditions, New Religions, Current Issues, Zoroastrian Tradition

4/30 Mon Last regular class meeting; Research Workshop Essay, first draft

Finals week Research Workshop Essay, revise and review