

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF ARTS, DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
Course Outline – Fall 2010

Course: RELS 201 L01 “World Religions - Western”

Time: TR 9:30-10:45am

Professor: Dr. D. Shantz

Office Hours: TR 11:00am-12:00pm or by appt.

Office: SS 1326

Telephone: 403-220-3283

e-mail: dshantz@ucalgary.ca

Textbooks

Theodore M. Ludwig. *The Sacred Paths of the West, Third Edition*. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006.

Ninian Smart and Richard D. Hecht. (ed.) *Sacred Texts of the World: A Universal Anthology*. New York: Crossroad, 1982.

The Qur'an. A New Translation. Tr. M.A.S. Abdel Haleem. Oxford: Oxford University, 2005.

Course Description:

This course provides a general introduction to the study of world religions and to the major religions in the Western world: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Class time will be devoted to lectures and discussion of assigned readings.

Core Competencies

- 1) The student should gain knowledge of and appreciation for the teachings, scriptures, and way of life of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
- 2) The student will develop skills in critical thought, reading, writing, and oral expression of ideas.

Self-Directed Study

Students are responsible for independent learning from the assigned readings.

Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned reading.

Learning Assessment

1) Class members are expected to keep up with assigned reading and to participate in Thursday **class discussions**. Bring *Sacred Texts of the World* to Thursday classes.

2) There will be a **Mid-Term Exam** based on assigned reading and lectures.

Date: Thursday, October 14. (30%)

3) Write a 1,500 word **Historical Analysis** of *The Qur'an* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2005) according to the Guide provided in this syllabus. Due in class: Tuesday, Nov. 30. (30%)

4) There will be a Registrar administered **Final Exam** based on the whole course. (40%)

Late assignments or essays will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made or a valid medical certificate is submitted. Any incomplete assignment or essay will be awarded a mark of F for that component of the course.

Grading Scale

A numerical mark will be given for each course requirement. A letter grade will be assigned on the following number and letter grade scheme:

A+	100 - 96	A	95 - 90	A-	89 - 85
B+	84 - 80	B	79 - 75	B-	74 - 70
C+	69 - 65	C	64 - 60	C-	59 - 55
D+	54 - 53	D	52-50	F	Under 50

N.B. All written assignments will be graded with regard to both form and content.

Academic Honesty:

Plagiarism is not tolerated at the University of Calgary and has serious consequences. Your essays/presentations must be your own work and inadequate referencing may be seen as plagiarism. Please see the relevant sections on Academic Misconduct in the current University Calendar. If you have questions about correct referencing, please consult your instructor.

Academic Accommodation:

If you are a student with a disability who requires academic accommodation and you have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 403-220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. Once registered, please discuss any upcoming tests/examinations with the instructor two weeks before the scheduled date.

Gnosis:

Gnosis is the Religious Studies Student Club. For membership or more information please email: gnosis@ucalgary.ca or visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~gnosis>.

Course Outline:

<i>Week</i>	<i>Assigned Reading and Class Content</i>
1 (Sept. 14 & 16)	Ludwig, <i>The Sacred Paths</i> , pp. 3-25; N. Smart, <i>Sacred Texts of the World</i> , “Introduction,” pp. xi-xv. Introduction to World Religions: reasons for studying religion; defining religion; key dimensions of world religions; Religion east and west; current trends
2 (Sept. 21 & 23)	Ludwig, pp. 95-114; <i>Sacred Texts of the World</i> ; pp. 49-58 Slides of Dachau.

History of Judaism: Beginnings, Transformations, the Modern Age
Reform, Orthodox, Conservative movements; the Holocaust;
Christian Attitudes to Judaism

3 (Sept. 28 & 30) Ludwig, pp. 115-126; *Sacred Texts of the World*; pp. 59-64

Jewish Worlds of Meaning: Monotheism; the Path of Torah

4 (Oct. 5 & 7) Ludwig, pp. 127-142; *Sacred Texts of the World*; pp. 65-73

Jewish Practices and the Good Life

5 (Oct. 12 & 14) *Sacred Texts of the World*; pp. 74-79, 85f.

Jewish Scriptures and Talmud

Mid-term Exam

6 (Oct. 19 & 21) Ludwig, pp. 143-166; *Sacred Texts of the World*; pp. 93-98

The Christian Story: Foundations, Transformations, Struggle with
Modernity; Christian Denominations

7 (Oct. 26 & 28) Ludwig, pp. 167-178

Christian Worlds of Meaning; Creeds and Doctrines

8 (Nov. 2 & 4) Ludwig, pp. 179-195; *Sacred Texts of the World*; pp. 109-111

Christian Practices and Sacraments; the Good Life

9 (Nov. 9) *Sacred Texts of the World*; pp. 99-108, 118-123

Christian Scriptures

November 11-14, Reading Days

10 (Nov. 16 & 18) Ludwig, pp. 196-219; *Sacred Texts of the World*, pp. 130-135,
160-164, 174-176

The Story of Islam: The Prophet and the Book; the Spread of
Islam; Muslims in the World Today; Muslims, Christians, & Jews

11 (Nov. 23 & 35) Ludwig, pp. 220-229; *Sacred Texts of the World*; pp. 142-149

Muslim Worlds of Meaning; the Straight Path

12 (Nov. 30 & Dec. 2) *The Qur'an. A New Translation*. Tr. M.A.S. Abdel Haleem.

Muslim Scriptures; class discussion of *The Qur'an*

Historical Analysis due

13 (Dec. 7 & 9) Ludwig, pp. 230-246; *Sacred Texts of the World*, pp. 150-158; 172f.

Muslim Practices and the Good Life; the Five Pillars

Guide to Analysis of Historical Texts

Your Purpose: To understand the document in its various contexts through pursuing all relevant historical relations bearing on the text. The following questions should be asked:

I What are the Context and Social Matrix of the Document?

1. What antecedent social, political and intellectual conditions explain why the document was written?
2. What individual or group produced the text? What social and theological perspective do they represent?
3. For what audience and social class was it written?

II What are the Obvious Features of the Document?

1. What are the literary genre and purpose of the text?
2. What subject and life-issues are addressed?
3. What main theme or idea is expressed? (Is there repetition of key thoughts?)
How is the theme developed?
4. What program and vision does the treatise promote?

III What is the Contextual Significance of the Language and Ideas?

1. Are there difficulties of Language and Thought?
 - a) Determine the definition of key words or phrases used at the time.
 - b) Identify literary or personal references and allusions.
 - c) Provide explanations of difficult ideas and arguments.
 - d) Interpret literary images and figures of speech.
2. What were the Social Impact and Role of the Document?
 - a) Consider the relation of the document's ideas to social-economic issues and trends at the time.
 - b) What social groups found these ideas attractive and promoted them?

c) What contemporary social interests (class, experience, role, gender, generation) does the document most obviously serve to reflect and to legitimate?

3. What other Contemporary Historical Relations bear upon the Document?

a) Consider the relation of the document to the author's life experience.

b) Consider the relation of the document's ideas to the rest of the author's views and writings.

c) Consider the document's relation to similar writings and programs at the time by other thinkers and leaders.

4. What Past Historical Relations bear upon the Document?

a) What past traditions have been influential? Are any past writings quoted?

What Biblical books/passages are referred to most often?

b) Note "illuminating parallels" with similar documents from the past. How is this text similar? How is it unique?

c) Determine whether the document reveals new ideas, values or institutions.

Does it provide new solutions to old problems, or raise new problems and questions?

IV What is the Future Significance of the Document?

1. What "social effects" have the treatise and its vision had upon later history?

"Believing strongly in the divine revelation of one's own religion, one can still recognize that its beliefs and practices emerged in history as human efforts to give form and substance to that revelation. As human products, religious beliefs, practices, and institutions are always in need of critical scrutiny. Their *effects*, not merely their intentions, must be acknowledged and examined." (Margaret Miles, "Becoming Answerable for What We See," p. 473)

2. What value does the work have for us today? Does it offer "fruitful proposals for living a richly human life"? (M. Miles)

V Recommended Bibliography

Richard Marius. *A Short Guide to Writing about History*, 2nd ed. New York: HarperCollins, 1995.

Margaret R. Miles, "Becoming Answerable for What We See: 1999 AAR Presidential Address." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. Vol. 68, #3 (September 2000), pp. 471-485.