

**University of Calgary**  
**Faculty of Humanities**  
**Department of Religious Studies**

**RELS 201 L02 World Religions – Western**  
**Winter 2010**

**Instructor:** Craig Ginn, PhD                      **Classroom:** ST 147                      **Class time:** 10:00-10:50 MWF  
**Office/hrs:** SS 1330 11:00-12:00 MW              **Phone:** 403-220-5612                      **Email:** cwcginn@ucalgary.ca  
**Teaching Assistant:** Darryl Ferguson              **Email:** ferguson.ds@gmail.com

**Textbook and readings:**

- 1) Ludwig, Theodore M. *The Sacred Paths of the West*. Third Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2005.
- 2) Online textual sources from the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and the Qur'an. Web links will be provided.

**Course description:**

This course will provide an overview of the Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) and discuss each tradition according to its historical background, leading figures, textual tradition, institutions, practices, organization, and beliefs. Students will be guided through a close reading of select texts (in English translation) of the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and the Qur'an, and guided in the examination of revelation, historical context, and issues in exegesis. The development and fragmentation of each faith will be discussed along with a survey of its evolution during the Medieval and Modern eras. Special attention will be given to Abrahamic covenant, the office of the prophet, conquest/war, mystical traditions, anti-Semitism, coherence with modernity, and comparative study.

**Course Objectives**

1. To identify the Abrahamic legacy of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.
2. To gain an understanding of the chronological development of the western traditions.
3. To gain an understanding of the nature and development of theology and philosophy.
4. To gain an understanding of the western scriptures and approaches to interpretation.
5. To explore the development of doctrine and authority.
6. To appreciate key thinkers in the western traditions.
7. To explore the relationship between religion and state.
8. To examine schisms in the western traditions.
9. To gain skills in the comparative study of western faiths.
10. To discuss the reciprocal relationship between society and religion.

**Course requirements**

<b>Exam #1</b>	Judaism (also methods, concepts, dimensions)	Worth 25%	February 12
<b>Exam #2</b>	Christianity	Worth 25%	March 19
<b>Assignment</b>	(see options)	Worth 25%	Due April 5
<b>Final Exam</b>	Islam (also comparative)	Worth 25%	To be scheduled by registrar

**Assignment. Choose ONE of the following assignment options.**

**Option 1. *Hermeneutical Assignment.*** Select a text or brief section from the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, OR the Qur'an (a list of texts/sections will be provided in class). Describe the historical context, the specific/personal circumstance, and the audience. Is chronology important in understanding the text? What is the genre of literature? What might be the intended meaning of the author? Is the message cultural or universal? Descriptive or prescriptive? How is this text used/interpreted within the context of current religious practice, i.e. a tradition that holds to a canonical view of the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, or the Qur'an?

**Option 2. *Topical Assignment.*** Select ONE religion for your paper: Judaism, Christianity OR Islam. Select a topic related to a dimension of religion (institutional authority, ritual, architecture, doctrine, etc.) or an activity of religion (propagation, social action, political influence, holy/just war, education, music, etc.) Discuss this dimension or activity using ONE of the following themes: 1. The historical development of this dimension/activity, 2. The impact of a key individual in shaping or codifying this dimension/activity, or 3. The tension with modernity in upholding this dimension/activity.

**Assignment FAQs**

Q. What is the format? Ans. Essay format.

Q. What type of citation is required? Ans. The consistent use of any recognized citation style.

Q. How long does it have to be? Ans. Minimum length: 750 words; Maximum length: 1000 words.

Q. How much is it worth? Ans. Worth 25%.

Q. Can I use the internet for sources? Ans. Selective online sources are acceptable, such as ejournals, ebooks, and online documents offered by academic institutions and societies.

Q. What is the penalty for late assignments? Ans. Late assignments are deducted 20% per day.

**Plagiarism.** Students should be familiar with University regulations regarding academic integrity, as set down in the University Calendar.

**Technical matters.** Assignments MUST be typed in 11-12 pt font, 1.5 or double spaced, and formatted with 1" margins. A backup copy must be kept for all written work. Please staple your paper together (do not use report covers).

**Emails.** I will try to respond to emails within 48 hours. Inquiries related to exams or assignments MUST be sent no less than 24 hours before a deadline. Please identify the subject of your email in this way: Name of student, course number and lecture number, and nature of inquiry. Example: "Shirley Temple RELS 201 L02 Question related to Feb 12 lecture". I do not accept assignments via email unless approved in advance. I do not answer inquiries related to dates and deadlines. Students shall refer to the university calendar, course syllabus, and final exam schedule for schedule information. If you miss a class, please approach another student for notes. I do not email class notes.

**Academic Accommodation.** It is a student's responsibility to request academic accommodation. If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 403-220-8237. Your academic accommodation letters should be provided to your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the commencement of this course. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation.

## Grading

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

## Course Lecture Schedule

<b>Week 1</b>	Introduction to course Methods and concepts in the study of religion Dimensions of Religion
<b>Week 2</b>	Judaism: Historical background, textual tradition, institutions
<b>Week 3</b>	Judaism: Practices, organization, beliefs
<b>Week 4</b>	Judaism: Medieval period
<b>Week 5</b>	Judaism: Modern period
<b>Week 6</b>	Christianity: Historical background, textual traditions, institutions
<b>Week 7</b>	Christianity: Practices, organization, beliefs
<b>Week 8</b>	Christianity: Medieval period
<b>Week 9</b>	Christianity: Modern period
<b>Week 10</b>	Islam: Historical background, textual tradition, institutions
<b>Week 11</b>	Islam: Practices, organization, beliefs
<b>Week 12</b>	Islam: Medieval period
<b>Week 13</b>	Islam: Modern period