

**UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
SUMMER 2005**

05/06/28

Scripture and Religions - RELS 347 L60

Instructor: Mr. Eli Reich
Class Time: T/R 11:00 a.m.-13:45 p.m.
Office/Hours: SS 1322/TBA
Phone: 220-3285
Email: reiche@shaw.ca

Required Texts:

1. Sandra Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture*, Second Edition, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999.
2. *Zohar: Annotated & Explained*, by Daniel C Matt, Woodstock, Vermont: SkyLight Paths, 2002.

Course Description:

Comparative study of selected scriptures and related texts in Eastern and Western religions, for the purpose of identifying how scripture functions in a range of religious settings, and to establish a basis for theoretical analysis of the nature of scripture.

Core Competencies:

Students can expect to gain a general understanding of the literary forms, themes, and social contexts of Scripture. The course will contribute to an understanding of the complex cultural processes that produced the category of Scripture, and receive a hands-on experience of the challenges and discoveries that await the patient, critical and open-minded interpreter. A variety of perspectives will be utilized, ranging from the disciplines of Religious Studies to contemporary literary theory and cultural studies. Students interested in understanding the foundations of religions and the role of literary creativity in a religious culture, as well as those with a desire to deepen their insight into the creative collective human imagination in its social context, can benefit from the course.

Course Requirements:

The course will be a combination of lectures and class discussion. The discussion in class will rest on the assumption that students have prepared the selected readings. Each student will be asked to make a ten minute presentation in class of the readings. A 10-page paper is due on August 11. Each student has to meet with me to discuss the topic chosen no later than August 4. The topic has to be submitted for approval, with bibliography, at this meeting. The paper has to reflect the approach, sources, and articles of the course. There will be a **Registrar scheduled final exam**.

Class participation is important to me – and should be to you, too. By class participation I mean: questions asked in class, responses given in class, and knowledge of readings displayed in class discussion (for which I will keep written track).

Class participation will account for 15% of the grade, presentation for 15%, topic submission for 10 %, paper for 30 % and the exam for 30 %.

Grading

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 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.

Withdrawing from courses:

Please note the information regarding withdrawals and fee refunds in the Academic Schedule of the current University Calendar.

Recording of lectures:

Recording any part of any lectures in any form must be first approved by the instructor in writing and is for individual private study only. See current Calendar, Tape recording of Lectures.

Safewalk Programme:

"You don't have to walk alone...." Call 220-5333 and a member of the Safewalk Team will walk you to your car, the LRT, or any destination on campus. Safewalk is available to all students, staff and faculty any time of the day or night. Look for the Campus Security Help Phones located throughout the University. Please don't hesitate to call!

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 SCHEDULE

Introduction:

July 5

Handout:

Hasidic tale from: *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov: The Earliest Collection of Legends about the Founder of Hasidism*, translated and edited by Dan Ben-Amos & Jerome Mintz, New York: Schocken Books, 1970.

Prehistory of Scripture:

July 7

“Buddhism”, *Anthology of World Scriptures*, edited by R. Van Voorst, 3rd edition, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, pp. 92-98.

July 12

William M. Schniedewind *How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 1-23; 118-138; 188-194.

Scripture as Discourse:

July 14 & 19

Sandra Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture*, Second Edition, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999, pp. 97-199.

Scripture as Authoritative Text:

July 19

David Stern, “On Canonization in Rabbinic Judaism,” *Homer, the Bible, and beyond : Literary and Religious Canons in the Ancient World*, edited by Finkelberg, Margalit, and Guy Stroumsa, Leiden: Brill, 2003, pp. 227-252.

Elizabeth Clark, “Creating Foundations, Creating Authorities: Reading Practices and Christian Identities,” *Religious Identity and the Problem of Historical Foundation: The Foundational Character of Authoritative Sources in the History of Christianity and Judaism*, edited by Judith Frishman, Willemien Otten and Gerard Rouwhorst, Leiden: Brill, 2004, pp. 553-572.

Scripture and Commentary:

July 21 & 26

Robert Gibbs, “Why Comment? ,” *Why Ethics? Signs of Responsibility*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000, pp. 114-129.

The Living Talmud: The Wisdom of the fathers and its Classical Commentaries, Selected and Translated by Judah Goldin, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957, p. 43.

Vincent Crapanzano, *Serving the Word: literalism in America, from the Pulpit to the Bench*, New York: New Press, 2000, pp. 2-3; 56-68.

“Rules for the Interpretation of the Torah”, *Or Hadash: A Commentary on Siddur Sim Shalom*, by Reuven Hammer, New York: Rabbinical Assembly, 2003, pp. 70-70 (Hebrew and facing English), xxvii-xxix.

Page of Hebrew Bible with commentaries.

Page of compiled (by Eli Reich) commentaries on Biblical passage.

Additional Reading For Paper:

Frank Talmage, “Apples of Gold: The Inner Meaning of Sacred texts in Medieval Judaism”, *Jewish Spirituality: from the Bible through the Middle Ages*, edited by Arthur Green, New York: Crossroad, 1987, pp. 313-355.

Scripture Spiritualized:

July 28 & Aug 2

Zohar: Annotated & Explained, by Daniel C Matt, Woodstock, Vermont: SkyLight Paths, 2002.

The Essential Lotus: Selections from the Lotus Sutra, translated by Burton Watson, New York: Columbia University Press, 2002, pp. 1-24; 80-87; 119-127.

Moses Maimonides, Guide for the Perplexed, Part III, chapter 32.

Additional Reading For Paper:

Gershom Scholem, "The Meaning of the Torah in Jewish Mysticism", On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism, New York: Schocken Books, 1965, pp. 32-86.

Scripture as Ritual and Magical Object:

Aug 4

Moses Maimonides, "Laws Concerning the Torah Scroll", The Book of Love, The Code of Maimonides, Book Two, translated by Menahem Kellner, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004, pp. 95-99; 106-110.

"Tales of the Lotus Sutra", translated by Daniel Stevenson, Buddhism in Practice, edited by Donald Lopez, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995, pp. 427-451.

"The Whole Universe as a Sutra", translated by Luis Gomez, Buddhism in Practice, edited by Donald Lopez, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995, 107-112.

Howard Schwartz, Tree of Souls: Mythology of Judaism, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 248, 275-276.

S. Y. Agnon, "The Tale of the Scribe", Twenty-One Stories, New York: Schocken Books, 1970, pp. 7-25.

Scripture and Interpretive Communities in Conflict:

Aug 9

Michael Signer, "Searching the Scriptures: Jews, Christians, and the Book", Chapter 5: Scripture, in: Christianity in Jewish Terms, editors: Tikva Frymer-Kensky et. al. , Boulder: Westview Press, 2000, pp. 85-98.

George Lindbeck, "Postmodern Hermeneutics and Jewish-Christian Dialogue: A Case Study", Chapter 5: Scripture, in: Christianity in Jewish Terms, editors: Tikva Frymer-Kensky et. al. , Boulder: Westview Press, 2000, pp. 106-113.

Scripture in Practice:

Aug 11

Kenneth Stevenson, "From the Bible to the Third Century", The Lord's Prayer: A Text in Tradition, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004, pp. 17-42, 214.

Ivan Marcus, "Honey Cakes and Torah: A Jewish Boy Learns His Letters", Judaism in Practice, edited by Lawrence Fine, Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001, pp. 115-130.

Lawrence Kaplan, "Moses Maimonides' Laws of the Study of Torah", Judaism in Practice, edited by Lawrence Fine, Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001, pp. 171-185.

Hasidic tale from: Moshe Idel, Kabbalah: New Perspectives, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985.

Secularizing Scripture:

Aug 16

Baruch Spinoza, "Of the Interpretation of Scripture", Tractatus Theologico-Politicus, translated by S. Shirley, Leiden: Brill, 1989, pp. 140-160.

Paul Ricoeur, "The "Sacred" Text and the Community," The Critical Study of Sacred Texts, edited by Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, Berkeley, 1979, pp. 271-276.

Emily Dickinson, poem.

Henry David Thoreau, "Reading", Walden, Boston, 1854.

Jacob Glatsteyn, poem, from: Jacob Glatsteyn: Selected Poetry, translated by Ruth Whitman.

Yehuda Amichai, poems.

Abba Kovner, *Scrolls of Testimony*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2001, pp. 11, 44, 104, and 115.

Franz Kafka, "Before the Law", *Metamorphosis and Other Stories*, translated and edited by Malcolm Pasley, London: Penguin Books, 1992, pp. 165-6.

Northrop Frye, "The Mythical approach to Creation", *Northrop Frye on Religion*, edited by Alvin Lee and Jean O'Grady, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000, pp. 117-132.

H. N. Bialik, "Aftergrowth", pp. 88-90.

Burton Mack, "The Fascination of the Bible", *Who Wrote the New Testament: The Making of the Christian Myth*, New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995, pp. 293-310.