

Religions of the Western World - Religion 102 (CRN 42012)
Spring 2015, March 31 – June 4
Tuesday/Thursday 10:00 - 11:20 A.M. - Albany Campus NSH-109

INSTRUCTOR

David Buttrick

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Office Hours: TBD

Email: davidbuttrick@hotmail.com. **Short questions only; please allow 24 hours for a response.**

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course presents an introduction to the kindred Abrahamic faiths of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. We will proceed by way of historical survey, thus highlighting the role of tradition and the ongoing interpretation of tradition; similarity, divergence and interaction between the faiths; and the historical context underlying modern controversies. This class meets LBCC Cultural Diversity Perspective requirements.

COURSE OUTCOMES

Diligent students can expect to:

- Be able to explain the core concepts and institutions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, their similarities and differences.
- Acquire experience reading and interpreting religious texts, especially scripture.
- Be able to explain how and why beliefs and practices change over time.
- Understand reasons why people believe and practice certain religion(s) rather than another, a combination, or none.
- Appreciate how religious thinkers have used reason to illuminate revealed faith.
- Gain literacy in cultures not their own.
- Account for contributions made by Abrahamic religions to modern civilizations.
- Develop critical thinking, close reading, note-taking and academic writing skills.

PREREQUISITES

None, though Reading 90 and Writing 115 or above are highly recommended.

COURSE FORMAT

Our class will meet for 80 minutes each Tuesday and Thursday morning. Most of our class time will be lecture and discussion. Participation is highly encouraged and will be rewarded with extra credit (see below). Slide presentations and guest speakers can also be expected. Tests and written assignments will be largely based upon classroom lectures. Therefore **it is very important to attend all classes.**

COURSE MATERIALS

There is one **recommended** textbook:

McKay, John P., et al., Understanding Western Society, Vol. 1: A Brief History - From Antiquity to Enlightenment, Bedford/St. Martins, 2011. ISBN: 9780312668884. This should be available

at the LBCC bookstore. It is also on reserve for this class at the LBCC library.

There is one **required** textbook:

Peters, F.E., [A Reader on Classical Islam](#). Princeton University Press, 1993. ISBN: 9780691000404. This useful book is available at the bookstore. It can also be viewed online for free through LBCC library's Ebrary link.

Additional **required** reading assignments, mostly from primary source documents, will be uploaded to the cloud via GoogleDocs and shared with you via email. The documents are also accessible through my LBCC instructor website.

EXPECTATIONS

Please **attend each class**. Lectures and lecture notes are your primary learning tools. Please **arrive on time and do not leave early**. This is basic for success in any professional endeavor, academic or otherwise. Please **take good notes during lectures and discussions**. Assignments and tests can and will be drawn from any classroom exchange. Textbook reading is helpful, but not a substitute for lecture notes. In accordance with LBCC policy, please **do not use phones, computers, or other electronic devices in class**. We should be able to set aside 80 minutes of our day away from these things. Please **ask and answer questions and make comments during class**. We will all appreciate a lively classroom! This is also the best way for me to know what topics need further review. Of course, please keep these questions and comments relevant to the material, and free of chauvinism and offensive language. Please **complete all reading and writing assignments**. Even if you feel you are not "getting" the material, simply showing up to class and plowing through the work will help to ensure a passing grade. Please **contact me if you are having difficulty** in our class. My job is to help you learn.

CLASS RESOURCES

As a means towards our goal of improving note-taking, this class will feature a **note-sharing pool**. Each class session I will assign one or two students the job of scanning and sharing their class notes with me for one **extra-credit** point. I will then forward the notes to the rest of the class. **THIS IS NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR ATTENDING CLASS** - the point is not to replace our own notes, but to gain some ideas for better note-taking skills.

This class features a **tutor**, for those who would like some help understanding and reviewing the material. Inquire at the Student Help desk, upstairs in the library.

This class requires a lot of writing, including two larger papers. For help, check out the **writing center**, also upstairs in the library.

Students who may need **accommodations due to documented disabilities**, or who have medical information which I should know, or who need special arrangements in an emergency, should speak with me during the first week of class. If you think you may need accommodation services, please contact Center for Accessibility Resources, 917-4789.

EVALUATION (Note: more information to be distributed in class)

- Three in-class **quizzes** are worth 5 points each. The lowest score quiz (or one missed quiz) will be dropped.
- Six **short essays** linking the class lectures with the assigned reading, are due at regular

intervals. Worth 3 points each, the lowest score assignment (or one missed assignment) will be dropped.

- A **take-home midterm** will be posted **Wednesday, May 6** and is **due Thursday, May 7** before the end of class. It is worth 15 points.
- One **scriptural exegesis paper** and one **personal encounter paper**, each worth 15 points, are **due Tuesday, April 28 and Tuesday, June 2 respectively** (I will accept early work). The latter paper **requires a visit** to two worship services in the area, so please plan ahead.
- The **final exam** on **Tuesday, June 9** is worth 22 points.

Grading: 90% or above = A, 80-89% = B, 70-79% = C, 60-69% = D, 59% or below = F

Written work may be submitted to me in class or sent electronically. Please be aware that under normal circumstances **written assignments, quizzes, etc. must be turned in on schedule** to receive credit. Exceptions can be made for severe medical or personal emergencies to be judged at my discretion. In such cases, please contact me as soon as possible.

In terms of **extra-credit**, there are **3 class participation** points available at my discretion. The **two short essays** due May 28 and June 4 are extra-credit. Scheduled participation in the **note-sharing** pool will earn one point for each occasion.

A note on **plagiarism**: for the purposes of this class, plagiarism is defined as a portion of student work which uses an **outside source's words without quotation AND attribution**. Plagiarism is a cardinal academic sin **with or without intent**: a first offence will result in a lowered grade for the assignment. Subsequent offences will incur greater punishment.

PROVISIONAL WEEK-BY-WEEK SCHEDULE -- SUBJECT TO CHANGE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Before Class</u>	<u>In Class</u>	<u>Assignments, etc. Due</u>
March 31, Tue <u>Session #1</u>	Read through syllabus	Introductions; housekeeping; syllabus review; what are we studying; the religion(s) of Abraham: key themes	
April 2, Thu <u>Session #2</u>	<u>McKay</u> : 8-20, 36-42 <u>Online</u> : Near Eastern religious/literary texts	Religions of Egypt and Mesopotamia; First Temple Period history and Israelite society	
April 7, Tue <u>Session #3</u>	<u>Online</u> : Biblical materials	The Hebrew Bible; the God of the Israelites	Short Essay #1 Due

April 9, Thu <u>Session #4</u>	<u>McKay</u> : 46-51, 78-81, 86-94, 101-105 <u>Online</u> : Hellenistic, apocalyptic literature	Second Temple Period; Persian, Greek, Roman influences	
April 14, Tue <u>Session #5</u>	Study for Quiz <u>McKay</u> : 118-128, 138-141, 150-161 <u>Online</u> : New Testament documents	Quiz #1 ; The Gospel: life, teachings, and earliest interpretations of Jesus	Short Essay #2 Due Quiz #1
April 16, Thu	<u>RELAX...</u>	<u>NO CLASS!</u>	
April 21, Tue <u>Session #6</u>	<u>Online</u> : Rabbinic and early patristic documents	Church and Synagogue: parting and definition	
April 23, Thu <u>Session #7</u>	<u>McKay</u> : 166-176, 185-193 <u>Online</u> : Late patristic and conciliar documents	Christianity in late antiquity	Short Essay #3 Due
April 28, Tue <u>Session #8</u>	Study for Quiz <u>Online</u> : Film: <i>Ushpizin</i> ; Rabbinic documents	Quiz #2 ; Guest speaker: mitzvot and Jewish holidays	Quiz #2 Exegesis Paper Due
April 30, Thu <u>Session #9</u>	<u>McKay</u> : 198-204 <u>Peters</u> : TBA	Muhammad and the Quran	Short Essay #4 Due
May 5, Tue <u>Session #10</u>	<u>Peters</u> : TBA <u>Online</u> : Hadith and related documents	Formation and Expansion of Islam	
May 7, Thu <u>Session #11</u>	<u>McKay</u> : 269-276, 279-285, 301-307, 313-317, 339 <u>Peters</u> : TBA <u>Online</u> : Aquinas, Sufi poetry	Medieval world, part 1: popular piety, scholasticism, legalism, mysticism	Midterm Due in Class
May 12, Tue	<u>McKay</u> : 241-257	Medieval world, part	

<u>Session #12</u>	<u>Online</u> : Crusade materials	2: church and state, inquisition, crusade	
May 14, Thu <u>Session #13</u>		Guest speaker: Islamic law and sciences	Short Essay #5 Due
May 19, Tue <u>Session #14</u>	<u>McKay</u> : 335-338, 358-367, 384-413 <u>Online</u> : Luther, etc.	Christian schism, Reformation, Counter-Reformation	
May 21, Thu <u>Session #15</u>	Study for Quiz <u>McKay</u> : 422-437, 443-445, 474-476 <u>Online</u> : De Las Casas, Francis Xavier, etc.	Colonialism and missions; Protestant developments	Short Essay #6 Due Quiz #3
May 26, Tue <u>Session #16</u>	<u>McKay</u> : 488-503, 515-517 <u>Online</u> : Jefferson, Darwin, Pascal, hasidic stories	Scientific revolution and the Enlightenment; liberal thought and revivalism	
May 28, Thu <u>Session #17</u>	<u>Online</u> : Modern Church documents, apologetical and militant works	Twentieth century: social criticism, ecumenism and fundamentalism	Short Essay #7 Due (Extra-credit)
June 2, Tue <u>Session #18</u>		Guest Speaker: Christian religious life in the modern world	Encounter Paper Due
June 4, Thu <u>Session #19</u>		Contemporary issues; Wrap-up and review.	Short Essay #8 Due (Extra-credit)
June 9, Tue <u>Exam Period</u> 9:30 - 11:20		Final Exam in regular classroom 9:30 - 11:20	Final Exam 9:30 - 11:20