

## **Hist272B1: Religion in History**

University of Alberta  
Winter 2010  
Friday 9.00-11.50.  
Room: T B 90

Instructor: Dr. Tony Maan  
Office: Tory Building Room 2-78  
Office hours: Fridays 12.30-13.30, or by appointment  
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### **Course Description:**

This course is an exploration of the three main western religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) in their respective historical contexts. Although we will consider an overview of each from their beginnings to the present day to reconstruct a broad framework, we will also investigate more specifically the essential intellectual components of each (often common features shared by each), and the sacred texts, geographical sites, rituals, symbols, and social formations through which these components take material and social form. Taking the theme of religions interaction with human culture as a guide through the course material, we will conclude the course with an extended analysis of three historical case studies to discern and explore the relationship between religion and social, political, economic and sectarian developments and events. The classes will comprise of lecture, visual imagery, and class discussion based on the readings.

### **Course Objectives:**

Students will:

1. Gain knowledge and understanding of the three main western religions in history over the course of their respective origins until today.
2. Obtain an understanding of the critical issues in the study of religion in history.
3. Develop their ability to use the historical method.
4. Improve analytical thought as they read and critique historical writing.
5. Develop their verbal and written communication skills.

### **Required Texts:**

1. Livingston, Jonathan C. *Anatomy of the Sacred – An Introduction to Religion* (Sixth Edition). Upper Saddle River: Pearson-Prentice Hall, 2009.
2. Super, John C. And Briane K. Turley. *Religion in World History*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
3. Course Pack Reader

### **Course Assignments and Evaluation:**

Midterm exam: 20%  
Final Exam: 35%  
Research paper: 35%  
Participation and Progress: 10%

## Research Paper:

Choose category A or B. The paper should be approximately 2,500 words (10 pages), and written on a topic approved by the instructor. The paper should demonstrate (1) interaction and integration of primary and secondary sources, (2) a cogent argument including orderly and balanced development of material using proper English grammar and spelling and (3) use of proper form and documentation using Chicago Manual Style. This paper must be made originally and specifically for this course, and not be a reproduction of work submitted by the student in another course or program of study in the university or elsewhere (cf. Academic Integrity below). A paper proposal is due in written form no later than **February 12**. The paper is **due March 26**. Late papers are penalized 10%, and are not accepted after the final day of class. Extensions are granted only under extraordinary circumstances, and must be approved by the instructor prior to the due date.

Category A. An academic analysis of rituals, sacred texts, institutions, beliefs and behaviour (individual and social) of a particular western religion in a limited and specific historical context. The paper will use primary sources where pertinent, and secondary sources to explore the nature and role of the particular religion as it pertained to public and social contexts. Examples would include: Maccabean Judaism; Islam and/or Christianity in the Crusades; Puritans in the 17<sup>th</sup> century England or America; American Fundamentalism and the Scopes 'Monkey' trial; Jews in a certain period of European history (medieval, early modern, modern); Islamic Fundamentalism in 20<sup>th</sup> century Iran; Luther's Wittenberg or Calvin's Geneva; a period in the Ottoman Empire; Palestine and Israel since 1948; 20<sup>th</sup> century Northern Ireland; Witchcraft in early modern Europe or New England; Mormonism; one form of the Inquisition.

Category B. A historical book review on a book selected from the list below. The focus of the review will be an analysis of the religion in question and its historical context, with particular attention to its relationship to political, or economic, or cultural/social entities (depending on the interpretive themes discussed in the book). Cf. the U of A History Department's guidelines for writing a Historical Book Review, available through the University History and Classics website.

Armstrong, Karen. *A History of God – The 4,000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (1993).

Benedict, Philip. *Christ's Church Purely Reformed – A Social History of Calvinism* (2002).

Bright, John. *A History of Israel* (1981).

Cahill, Thomas. *Desire of the Everlasting Hills – The World Before and After Jesus* (1999).

Cahill, Thomas. *How the Irish Saved Civilization* (1995).

Frankel, Jonathan and Steven J. Zipperstein (eds). *Assimilation and Community: the Jews in nineteenth-century Europe* (1992).

Gibbs, Nancy and Michael Duffy. *The Preacher and the Presidents: Billy Graham in the White House* (2007).

Josephus, Flavius. *The Essential Writings (Jewish Antiquities; The Jewish Wars)* (First century CE)  
Trans. Paul Maier (1988).

Lassner, J. *Islamic Revolution and Historical Memory* (1986).

Prothero, Stephen. *American Jesus – How the Son of God became a National Icon* (2003).

Robinson, Chase. *Empire and Elites after the Muslim Conquest: The Transformation of Northern Mesopotamia* (2000).

Smith, Anthony. *Chosen Peoples – Sacred Sources of National Identity* (2003).

Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1906).

Ottoman Empire

## Academic Integrity:

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are urged to be familiar with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at [www.ualberta.ca/secretariat/appeals.htm](http://www.ualberta.ca/secretariat/appeals.htm)) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic honesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

#### Plagiarism:

No student shall submit the words, ideas, images, or data of another person as the student's own in any academic writing, essay, thesis, project, assignment, presentation or poster in a course or program of study.

#### Cheating:

No student shall in the course of an examination, obtain or attempt to obtain information from another student or other unauthorized source, and give or attempt to give information to another student.

No student shall represent another's substantial editorial or compositional assistance on an assignment as the student's own work.

No student shall submit in any course or program of study, without the written approval of the course instructor, all or a substantial portion of any academic writing, essay, thesis, research report, project, assignment, presentation or poster for which credit has previously been obtained by the student or which has been or is being submitted by the student in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.

#### Misrepresentation of Facts:

No student shall misrepresent pertinent facts to any member of the University community for the purpose of obtaining academic or other advantage.

#### Participation in an Offence:

No student shall counsel or encourage or knowingly aid or assist, directly or indirectly, another person in the commission of any offence under this ethical code of academic integrity.

### **Academic Aid**

Writing Assistance, Learning Resources, and Exam Strategies: Contact the Academic Support Centre, 2-703 Student Union Building (SUB), 492-2682.

[www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/academicsupport](http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/academicsupport), email:academic.support@uss.ualberta.ca

Students who require accommodations in this course due to a disability affecting mobility, vision, hearing, learning or mental or physical health are advised to discuss their needs with Specialized Support and Disability services, 2- 800 Student's Union Building, 492-3381.

[www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/cc/SSDS](http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/cc/SSDS)

A record of 100% class attendance is expected and strongly recommended as an integral part of the best possible results. Students are responsible for material covered in classes that they miss.

## **Schedule**

### **January 8:**

Introductory Class

Fundamental Questions:

- a. What is Religion?
- b. The persistence of religion: Why are Humans religious – *homo religiosus*?
- c. Why Study Religion?
- d. Issues and Challenges for the student of religion

Review of the Syllabus

Readings: Livingston, Chapter 1

### **January 15:**

The persistence of religion in history; The Holy ‘Other’: *Mysterium Tremendum*.

Primary forms of value and expressions in the practices of religion: sacred texts, sacred rituals, sacred sites.

Religion and society: some institutional and communal forms of religion in society; reciprocal relationship.

Readings: Reader: P. Berger, “The Desecularization of the World: a Global View”; L. Kolakowski, “The Revenge of the Sacred in Secular Culture”; Rudolph Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*. Livingston, Chapters 5, 7  
Super and Turley, Chapters 3 and 4

### **January 22**

Common Components of Religious Belief Systems:

Deity and Cosmogony: Concepts of the Divine and Ultimate Reality, Origins of natural and social order

The Human Problem and Theodicy: interpretations of the human condition and the problem of evil

Readings: Livingston, Chapters 8,9,10

### **January 29**

Common Components of Religious Belief Systems (continued):

Ethics and Morality; constructs of salvation and liberation, eternity and afterlife.

Readings: Livingston, Chapters 12 and 13; Reader, Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*.

### **February 5**

A history of Judaism

Readings: Reader, portions of Old Testament *Exodus*; and P. Hyman, “The Social Contexts of assimilation: village Jews and city Jews in Alsace.”

### **February 12**

A history of Christianity

Readings: Reader, portions of the New Testament, the *Gospels* and *Hebrews*; and R. Dunch “Beyond Cultural Imperialism: Cultural Theory, Christian Missions, and Global Modernity”

**February 19** – No Class (Reading Week)

### **February 26**

A history of Islam

Readings: Reader, portions of the *Quran*, on the prophets, on God’s commands; Abdullahi A. An-Na’im, “Political Islam in National Politics and International Relations”

### **March 5**

Case Study: Judaism – Dissent, Exodus, Conquest, and the ‘Promised Land’

Readings: Super and Turley, Chapter 6

### **March 12**

Case Study: The early Islamic conquests – the first century of expansion

Readings: Super and Turley, Chapter 5 and 7

### **March 19**

Case Study: Seventeenth-century Dutch Republic - Calvinism and Capitalism

Readings: Super and Turley, Chapters 8, 9, 10

### **March 26**

### **Paper Due**

Religion and the Modern world; the sacred and the secular

Readings: Livingston, Chapter 14 and 15; Reader, C. Fasolt, "History and Religion in the Modern Age." *History and Theory* (2006) and M. Cladis, "Modernity in Religion: a Response to Constantin Fasolt's 'History and Religion in the Modern Age.'" *History and Theory* (2006).

**April 2** - No Class (Good Friday)

**April 9**

Review, video clips, and discussion