

**Religious Studies 234/Integrated Liberal Studies 234/History 223**

**GENRES OF WESTERN RELIGIOUS WRITING**

Spring 2012

Tues & Thurs, 1:00-2:15 p.m., 2080 Grainger Hall

Lecturer

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Office hours: Tues, 11 a.m.-12 noon; Wed, 9-10 a.m.; and by appt

Teaching Assistants

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This course introduces some key aspects of Jewish, Christian, and Islamic thought and historical experience by exploring a range of texts from antiquity to the modern era. We begin by considering major themes in the sacred scriptures of each religion—themes conveyed via such literary genres as narrative, law, prophecy, gospel, epistle, apocalyptic, and poetry—with a focus on ways in which later texts interact with earlier ones. The middle unit of the course examines different approaches, in the medieval and early modern periods, to knowing and experiencing the divine. We will consider how monotheistic thinkers drew on Greek ideas about reason and knowledge, and we will read bits of philosophical theology, mystical writing, and polemical treatises on the nature of religious and intellectual authority. In the final course unit we will read two spiritual autobiographies and a novel to explore relationships among religious tradition, identity, and the search for meaning in the modern world.

As we encounter a variety of writings from across many centuries, we will seek to discover both commonalities and divergences among Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. We will probe continuities and ruptures within each religious tradition, and we will consider Jewish, Christian, and Islamic texts and experience comparatively. While no background is required, the course does not aim to give a full survey of these religious systems. If you are looking for an overview of one or more of them, the following books, which are on reserve at College Library, provide useful starting points:

Nicholas de Lange, *An Introduction to Judaism*, 2d ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2010)

Alister E. McGrath, *Christianity: An Introduction*, 2d ed. (Blackwell, 2006)

Bernard Lewis and Buntzie Ellis Churchill, *Islam: The Religion and the People* (Pearson, 2008)

**Course Requirements**

As a Communication B course, this class will demand that you write a lot. Your writing will receive constructive criticism, and two major assignments will require you to respond to this feedback by rewriting your essays. You will also make two brief oral presentations and you must participate actively in discussion section each week. Oral and written assignments and class discussions will be based on course readings. You must therefore complete each week's required readings *before* your Thursday section meeting. Your final grade will be determined as follows:

- Active participation in discussion section 15%
- Two short (three- to four-minute) oral presentations 10%
- Five response papers of 350-380 words (about one typed page) each 10%

- One paper of 1100-1400 words (three to four pages) 10%
- One paper of 1800-2200 words (five to six pages), including a first draft, peer review comments, and a revised draft 20%
- One paper of 3000-3400 words (eight to nine pages), including a first draft, peer review comments, and a revised draft 35%

The first paper, due on February 14, will deal with readings from the Hebrew Bible. A first draft of the second paper, on the New Testament and/or Qur'an, will be due on March 6. You will receive constructive feedback from your TA and two other classmates by March 13, and your revised draft will be due on March 22. The third longer paper will focus on readings from the final unit of the course and will include an independent research component. A first draft is due on May 1, peer review comments by May 8, and the final version on May 14. Details about each essay assignment will be given closer to the due dates.

Attendance in both lecture and discussion section is required and counts towards your class participation grade. Attendance will be taken periodically in lecture and at every section meeting. If you become ill or face an emergency that prevents you from attending class, please notify your TA beforehand.

### **Classroom Conduct**

Please arrive to class on time and silence any phones or computers before our session begins. Once class has started, please refrain from texting, surfing the web, reading newspapers, etc., and give your full attention to matters at hand. You may use a laptop in class to take notes or access documents used in class discussion; you may not use a computer or other electronic device for purposes unrelated to class. Please bring a copy of the relevant reading to each lecture and discussion meeting. You are encouraged to ask questions and make comments during lecture.

### **Writing Center**

You are urged to take advantage of the excellent free-of-charge services offered by the UW Writing Center. The Writing Center holds workshops on various topics related to academic writing. You can also schedule a one-on-one appointment with an instructor to get help with a specific writing assignment or feedback on a draft you've already written. The Writing Center is located in 6171 Helen C. White Hall and at several satellite sites across campus. To find out more, stop by for a visit, call 263-1992, or check out [www.wisc.edu/writing](http://www.wisc.edu/writing). You are also advised to familiarize yourself with The Writer's Handbook, <http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/>, which provides helpful guidance on a range of common issues faced in writing academic papers.

### **Academic Honesty**

You are expected to adhere to UW's standards for academic honesty and integrity. Penalties for academic misconduct, including plagiarism and other forms of cheating, range from failing an assignment or a course to being expelled from the university. For university policies concerning academic misconduct, see <http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html>. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it, please speak with me, your TA, or consult [http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/QPA\\_plagiarism.html](http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html).

## Course Texts

The following books are available for purchase at the University Bookstore, 711 State Street, and from other local and online vendors. Copies have also been placed on reserve at College Library.

The Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version (Oxford UP, 1989)  
The Qur'an, trans. M. A. S. Abdel Haleem (Oxford UP, 2010)  
Dorothy Day, *The Long Loneliness* (HarperOne, 1997 [orig. 1952])  
Muhammad Asad, *The Road to Mecca* (Fons Vitae, 2005 [orig. 1954])  
Chaim Potok, *The Chosen* (Ballantine, 2003 [orig. 1967])

If you prefer, you may use another scholarly translation of the Jewish and/or Christian Bibles. Paraphrases or other loose translations are not acceptable for our purposes in this course. If you have questions about the suitability of a particular translation, please ask.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

NOTE: Reading assignments marked with an asterisk (\*) are posted on our Learn @UW course webpage.

Jan 24 Course Introduction

### I. Scriptural Traditions: Themes in the Tanakh, the New Testament, and the Qur'an

Jan 26 Torah (I)

Reading: Genesis 1-4, 6-9, 11-13, 15:1-18:15; 21-22, 25, (skim 27-33), 37, 39-50

Jan 31 Torah (II)

Feb 2 Former Prophets

Reading: Exodus 1-7, 11-20, 32; Leviticus 16, 23; Deuteronomy 1-6, 27-34; Joshua 1-6, 1 Samuel 8; 2 Samuel 5, 7, 11-12; 1 Kings 3, 8, 11; 2 Kings 22-25

Feb 7 Latter Prophets

Feb 9 Jesus and the Gospels (I)

Reading: Hosea 1-3; Isaiah 1:1-2:4; 9:1-7, 11, 40, 52-53; Jeremiah 30-33; Matthew (entire), Luke 1-3

Feb 14 Jesus and the Gospels (II)

Feb 16 Paul and Eschatology

Reading: John 1-4, 8, 12-21; Romans (entire); 1 Corinthians 15; Revelation 1, 21-22

*Paper 1 due February 14 in lecture*

Feb 21 Rabbinic Judaism and the Talmud

Feb 23 Muhammad and the Qur'an

Reading: \*Selections from the Talmud; the Qur'an 1, 2, 53, 81-83, 86-88, 96, 102-104, 107, 112

*Wed, Feb 22, 7 p.m.: Viewing (for extra credit) of Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet*

Feb 28 The Qur'an: Themes (I)

Mar 1 The Qur'an: Themes (II)

Reading: The Qur'an 3, 4, 5:109-120, 12, 14, 19, 21, 23

## **II. Approaching God with Mind and Heart: Revelation, Reason, and Religious Authority**

Mar 6 Revelation and Greek Philosophy

Mar 8 Philosophical Theology

Reading: \*Selections from Ibn Sina (Avicenna), Ibn Rushd (Averroes), and Maimonides

*First draft of paper 2 due March 6 in lecture*

Mar 13 Mysticism (I)

Mar 15 Mysticism (II)

Reading: \*Selections from Hildegard of Bingen and Julian of Norwich

*Paper 2 peer review comments due March 13 in lecture*

*Wed, Mar 14, 7 p.m.: Viewing (for extra credit) of Vision: From the Life of Hildegard von Bingen*

Mar 20 The Question of Authority

Mar 22 Towards Modernity

Reading: \*Selections from Martin Luther, Galileo Galilei, René Descartes, and Immanuel Kant

*Revised paper 2 due March 22 in section*

## **III. Religious Tradition, Identity, and the Search for Meaning in the Modern World**

Mar 27 Spiritual Autobiography as a Genre

Mar 29 New Directions in Christianity

Reading: \*Selections from St. Augustine, *Confessions*; start reading Dorothy Day, *The Long Loneliness*

--SPRING BREAK--

Apr 10 Dorothy Day

Apr 12 Film: *Don't Call Me a Saint*

Reading: Dorothy Day, *The Long Loneliness* (entire)

Apr 17 Islam and Modernity

Apr 19 Muhammad Asad

Reading: Muhammad Asad, *The Road to Mecca*, 1-217

Apr 24 Film: *A Road to Mecca*

Apr 26 Film: *A Road to Mecca*, cont.

Reading: Muhammad Asad, *The Road to Mecca*, 218-375

May 1 New Directions in Judaism

May 3 Chaim Potok

Reading: Chaim Potok, *The Chosen*, 11-150

*First draft of paper 3 due May 1 in lecture*

May 8 *The Chosen*

May 10 Conclusion

Reading: Chaim Potok, *The Chosen*, 151-284

*Paper 3 peer review comments due May 8 in lecture*

*Revised paper 3 paper due in your T.A.'s mailbox by 12:00 noon on Monday, May 14*