

***Rel 101 Judaism, Christianity and Islam Fall 2020***

Section 1 9:30-10:45 a.m. Mon/Wed;

Class meets on zoom @ <https://uwsp.zoom.us/j/96636806401>

Recordings will be posted if you have to miss any of the live sessions.

**Prof. Alice Keefe**

Office hours on zoom: 11:00 - 11:30 Monday and Wednesday

2:00 – 2:30 Tuesday and Thursday and by appointment

Contact email: [akeefe@uwsp.edu](mailto:akeefe@uwsp.edu) (There is also a messaging system on Canvas, but for best results in contacting me, use the university email system. I check that frequently during weekdays.)

***COURSE DESCRIPTION:***

This course surveys of the world’s major monotheistic religions -- Judaism, Christianity and Islam -- and introduces you to the methods and perspectives used in the academic study of religion. Students will learn about the origins and historical development of each tradition, their key sacred stories and rituals, and dynamics of internal conflict and diversity within the modern world. Students will gain a solid foundation from which to think about the similarities and differences between these traditions. As well, students will practice the skill of empathetic engagement with worlds of meaning different from their own.

***EXPECTED OUTCOMES:***

Knowledge:

- Be able to identify and explain the basic concepts and vocabulary necessary for an accurate, beginning level understanding of the religious traditions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Skills:

- Exercise and improve skills in reading comprehension, written communication, information literacy and critical thinking through the completion of homework writings assignments and discussion posts

Dispositions:

- Explain and employ the three step “rules of engagement” method for studying other peoples’ religions: identifying and bracketing one’s own worldview and biases, cultivating empathetic understanding of otherness, and responding in a way that builds greater understanding and insight.
- Develop an intellectual foundation from which to explore universal human concerns about meaning, ethics, suffering, etc. by exploring how other human beings, in other times, places and religious contexts, have addressed these concerns.

***BOOKS:***

Jeffrey Brodd, et. al, *Invitation to Western Religions* (text rental)

*Night*, Elie Wiesel (purchase)

Additional readings and videos posted on Canvas

### ***CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION:***

Test #1	15%
Test #2	15%
Final exam	15%
Weekly quizzes	15%
Discussion forum posts	10%
Homework writing assignments	30%

### ***EXPLANATION OF REQUIREMENTS***

***Two tests and a final (15% each)*** will test your knowledge of material covered in lectures, readings, and assigned videos. Format for these tests may include T/F, multiple choice, short answer questions, and possible essay questions. Tests will be timed.

The final exam will include the following take home essay question:

*Consider the similarities and differences between Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Are these religions more similar than different, or more different than similar? Make an argument and support your points.*

***Weekly quizzes (15%)*** will encourage you to stay current in the course, attend or view zoom class sessions, and demonstrate knowledge of material covered each week in the course. Quizzes will be based on assigned materials with emphasis on points covered in class. Quizzes will be posted by 3 p.m. on Wednesdays and must be completed by 11:59 p.m. on Fridays. There will be 11 quizzes over the course of the semester. I will count your BEST 8.

***Discussion forum posts (10%)*** will facilitate the exchange of ideas among students and allow for conversations that go beyond the class session.

Discussion forum posts will be due by 11:59 on Friday evenings on weeks when assigned. Late posts will lose 1/2 point per day late. Drop box closes one week after due date.

Discussion posts should consist of meaningful and substantive content, ***conforming to the following criteria:***

- Posts should be approximately 50 to 100 words in length.
- Posts should reflect accurate knowledge of material under discussion.
- Posts should consist of complete and grammatically accurate sentences.
- Posts that initiate threads should raise an issue or idea to which others can respond.
- Posts that respond to existing threads should reflect thoughtful engagement with other posts on the thread, and should advance the conversation.

- Posts should avoid profanity, rants, personal attacks, or disrespect towards any group or person on the basis of religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.

Note: Criticism of any specific religious belief or practice is appropriate in the academic study of religion as long as the criticism is well supported and respectfully expressed. When making a critical point, be sure you've practiced steps #1 and #2 of the "3 Step Rules of Engagement" and that you avoid generalizations about entire groups of people. Please be aware of the religious diversity within the class, and strive to ensure that your comments are respectful of difference and contribute to an atmosphere of civil discourse.

The criteria for scoring discussion points is as follows:

**5 pts** = Thoughtful and clearly expressed entry which reflects accurate knowledge of material under discussion and advances a conversation. Meets all criteria (see above)

**4 pts** = Entry is lacking in one of the required criteria (see above)

**3 pts** = Entry is lacking in two or more of the required criteria (see above)

**2 pts** = Entry is lacking in three or more of the required criteria (see above)

**½ point off for every day late after the Friday midnight due date.**

There will be 11 discussion posts assigned over the course of the semester. ***I will count your best 8.***

***Homework writing assignments (30%)*** take the form of short essays on assigned topics. Some of these homework writings will be on "religion in the news" and will require database research on topics current in today's world. Other homework writings will ask you to reflect on an assigned video or reading.

Homework writings are due by 5:00 p.m. on the day indicated on the syllabus. Late submissions will lose ½ point per day late (including weekends). Drop box closes two weeks after due date.

Satisfactory homework will

- be approximately 250-500 words in length (at least one typed page)
- respond to the prompt in its entirety
- must be typed and double-spaced
- must be relatively free of grammar and spelling errors.
- include citations where required, and use a standard citation style
- be submitted in Canvas drop box by due date

The criteria for scoring these essays is as follows:

**10 pts** = on time and demonstrates reflection and insight on assigned materials that is significantly above average.

**9 pts** = **on time and demonstrates good, solid reflection and insight into assigned materials;**

**8 pts** = on time and demonstrates that you did the reading and thought about the question, but your answer is somewhat confused, off-target or too brief.

**5-7 pts** = on time but does not address prompt, or is too brief  
**½ point off for every day late**  
**1 point off for every three grammar errors noted**

Your final homework score will be calculated by adding up your earned points, and this total will become the % value out of 100 earned in this category. *The maximum possible score in homework category is 100 points.*

There will be 11 homework assignments over the course of the semester. ***I will count your best eight.***

***Your essential database for “religion in the news” homework is Nexis Uni. To access: Go to Library Home Page, pick online databases, pick “N” and scroll down to “Nexis Uni”. This database can search regional, national and international newspapers and magazines, and gives you full text of articles.***

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### ***Citation format***

All citations on homework must follow a standard citation format (e.g., Chicago, MLA, APA). Whatever citation format style you follow, the key information that must be included is:

- Author’s name
- “Title” of the article, in quotes
- Name of the newspaper, magazine or news outlet, in *italics* or underlined
- Date of publication
- Where located (e.g., URL address of publisher’s website, or URL address of database service used) – full URL address is not required and usually not desired.

Example 1 (Chicago style) Newspaper article accessed online from publisher website--

David Halbfinger, “Jerusalem: It’s Tense, Crowded and Can feel like a Jail,” *New York Times*, Dec. 9, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com>

Example 2 (Chicago style) Newspaper article accessed online from a database service (Nexi Uni)

David Halbfinger, “Jerusalem: It’s Tense, Crowded and Can feel like a Jail,” *New York Times*, Dec. 9, 2017. <https://advance.lexis.com>.

*For more information on citation formats, see “citing resources” page via UWSP library or Purdue OWL (online resource).*

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***Class attendance*** is not required. I will however take attendance in each class period as a way of getting to know the names of everyone and to keep track of your progress in the course.

To succeed in this class, ***you will need to attend the zoom lectures at the scheduled times or watch the recordings*** of the lectures soon after they are posted. Weekly quizzes will be based on assigned readings and material from the lectures for that week.

***Participation:*** Deep learning depends upon active participation in the learning process. Please come to class prepared (having completed the assignments for the day) and ready to ask questions or offer comments.

***Zoom Classroom Etiquette:***

- Please keep your microphone muted when it isn't needed to reduce noise distractions
- Please keep your camera on if your bandwidth allows. It is very difficult to teach or converse in front of a bunch of black screens, so it is a courtesy to your professor and fellow students to keep your camera on.
- If you cannot have your camera on, consider having a nice picture of yourself appear instead of a black screen with your name. Your picture should be professionally appropriate (avoid cocktail scenes, obscene gestures, swimsuit shots, etc.)
- Do your best to get to class on time. However, sometimes circumstances intervene, and it is OK to enter the Zoom classroom late.
- When speaking in class about matters involving religion, be aware of the religious diversity within the class, and strive to ensure that your comments are respectful of difference and contribute to an atmosphere of civil discourse.

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***Plagiarism and cheating policy:***

Plagiarism and cheating are violations of the codes of honesty and mutual respect that binds us together as a community. The minimum penalty for a violation of academic integrity is a failure (zero) for the assignment. In addition, all infractions will be reported to the university. For more information regarding the university policy on academic misconduct (plagiarism) and disciplinary procedures, please see chapter 14 of the University Handbook, located at this web page link: <http://www.uwsp.edu/admin/stuaffairs/rights/rightsChap14.pdf>. Although I cannot easily enforce this, be aware that consulting with others during quizzes or tests is cheating.

***Intellectual property rights:*** Lecture materials and recordings for Rel 101-01 are protected intellectual property at UW-Stevens Point. Students in this course may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in this class. Students may also take notes solely for their personal use. Class sessions will be recorded and posted on Zoom. You are not authorized to record my lectures without my permission unless you are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability requiring accommodation. [Regent Policy Document 4-1] Students may not copy or share lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities. Students are also prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor's express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials and recordings constitutes copyright infringement and

may be addressed under the university's policies, UWS Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and non-academic misconduct.

*Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)* is a federal law requiring educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information about UWSP's policies, check here:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADA/rightsADAPolicyinfo.pdf>

If you have a disability and require classroom and/or exam accommodations, please register with the Disability Services Office and then contact me at the beginning of the course. I am happy to help in any way I can. For more information, please visit the Disability Services Office, located on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of the Learning Resource Center (the Library). You can also find more information here: <http://www4.uwsp.edu/special/disability/>.