

# **REL 101: Judaism, Christianity, & Islam**

## **Description**

The history of the sibling faiths of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam spans four thousand years and practitioners can be found across the globe. We will trace the historical development of monotheism from the ancient world to the twenty-first century, focusing on the interplay between text, culture, faith, and practice.

## **Learning Objectives**

By taking this course, students will:

1. Read closely, think critically, and write effectively about important people, texts, and doctrines in the foundation and development of Western monotheism.
2. Begin to communicate with peers from different backgrounds and cultures about perennial questions concerning the human condition.
3. Expand your awareness of your own beliefs, especially where your values or expectations may or not be shared by others, sometimes even between varieties of similar faith or culture.

## **Instructor**

Dr. Ryan T. O'Leary

Email: [roleary@uwsp.edu](mailto:roleary@uwsp.edu)

## **Schedule**

Rooms 126 in Marshfield & 191 in Wausau

**Lecture:** Monday, 10:00 – 10:50 AM in both Marshfield & Wausau

### ***Discussion Sections:***

- M01: Wednesday, 10:00 – 10:50 AM in Marshfield
- W01: Friday, 10:00 – 10:50 AM in Wausau

## **Electronics Policy**

Computers, tablets, and cellphones are not permitted in this class. Exemptions to this rule will be made only with official accommodations allowing the use of electronic devices.

## **Reading List**

### **Text Rental**

Jeffrey Brodd, et al, *Invitation to Western Religions*

### **Electronic Reserve on Canvas**

*Selections from the Hebrew Bible*

- ✓ Genesis 1 – 17
- ✓ Exodus chapters 1 – 3 & 19 - 22
- ✓ Isaiah 1 – 6
- ✓ Ezekiel 1 – 5 & 33 – 37

*Selections from the New Testament*

- ✓ Mark 1 – 4, 11 – 12, & 15 – 16
- ✓ Matthew 5 – 7
- ✓ Acts 1 – 9

*Selections from the Quran*

- ✓ Surah 14, “Abraham”
- ✓ Surah 35, “The Creator”

Bart D. Ehrman, “The Beginnings of Christian Scripture”

Richard S. Westfall, “The scientific revolution of the seventeenth century: the construction of a new world view”

### **Films Available Through UWSP Library Online Access via Films on Demand**

*Inside the Koran*

*Intelligent Design vs. Evolution*

*A Life Apart: Hasidism in America*

*Sex and the Wailing Wall: The Battle of the Sexes at the Holiest of Sites*

*Waiting for Armageddon: The Evangelical Community and Biblical Prophecy*

## Evaluation & Grading

The definition of an A student is one who not only does A work on exams, but who also comes to class prepared at least 90 percent of the time. In other words, each category of course work is important. To earn a particular grade, you must meet or exceed the standard for every category, as listed on the table below.

Course Grade	Attendance	Discussion Assignments	Exams
A	≥ 90% average	≥ 90% average	≥ 90% average
B	≥ 80% average	≥ 80% average	≥ 80% average
C	≥ 70% average	≥ 70% average	≥ 70% average
D	≥ 60% average	≥ 60% average	≥ 60% average
F	< 60% average	< 60% average	< 60% average

**Attendance:** In this class attendance and participation are necessary to achieving our learning outcomes. However, I know that sometimes absences are unavoidable. As such, you have three “free” absences before your grade is affected. (Each absence will cost 3.33% of your grade in the category.) If for any reason you need to miss a significant part of the course, it is your responsibility to work out appropriate accommodations with the instructor.

**Online Discussions:** Academic excellence requires coming to class prepared and ready to take responsibility for one’s own learning. Each week that “Discuss Online” is listed on the schedule there will be a discussion assignment due before our discussion sections. For each discussion, you should do one of two things:

1. Post a thoughtful answer to the discussion question.
2. Reply to at least two of your classmates’ answers or replies.

Whichever you chose, contributions to online discussions should do all of these:

1. Engage with the ideas, history, or themes presented in the reading.
2. Directly quote the reading.
3. Provide thoughts or questions that add to the conversation.

**Exams:** There will be two exams—a midterm and a final exam. You will be asked to identify important people, texts, and doctrines in the foundation and development of Western monotheism, and to show that you understand their roles in the relevant traditions. Each exam will be open-book and cumulative.

**Extra Credit:** Throughout the semester you will have opportunities to earn extra credit by attending events or workshops, doing additional reading, et cetera. Each extra credit opportunity you complete will add one grade level in your lowest category.

**Late Work Policy:** Late assignments will be accepted with a penalty of 5 points per day the assignment is late deducted from any points the assignment earns.

## **REL 101 Course Schedule**

### **Week 1: January 23 – 27**

Discussion: Invitation to Western Religions

- ✓ "What Religions Do," and "Dimensions of Religions," pages 10 – 21

## **PART ONE: ANCIENT ORIGINS & MEDIEVAL CONTACTS**

### **Week 2: January 30 – February 3**

Lecture: Invitation to Western Religions

- ✓ "Judaism," and "The Teachings of Judaism," pages 119 – 128

Discussion: Required Reading from Canvas

- ✓ Genesis chapters 1 – 9, 12, & 15 – 17

Discuss Online #1

### **Week 3: February 6 – 10**

Lecture: Required Reading from Canvas

- ✓ Exodus chapters 1 – 3 & 19 - 22

Discussion: Required Reading from Canvas

- ✓ Isaiah chapters 1 – 6
- ✓ Ezekiel chapters 1 – 5 & 33 – 37

Discuss Online #2

### **Week 4: February 13 – 17**

Lecture: Invitation to Western Religions

- ✓ "The History of Judaism" (read through "The Conflict between Judaism and Christianity"), pages 128 – 137

Discussion: Required Reading from Canvas

- ✓ Mark chapters 1 – 4, 11 – 12, & 15 – 16
- ✓ Matthew chapters 5 – 7
- ✓ Acts chapters 1 – 9

Discuss Online #3

### **Week 5: February 20 – 24**

Lecture: Invitation to Western Religions

- ✓ "Christianity," pages 177 – 179
- ✓ From "Paul and the Mission to the Gentiles" through "Christianity and Other Religions," pages 184 – 197

Discussion: Required Reading from Canvas

- ✓ Bart D. Ehrman, "The Beginnings of Christian Scripture"

Discuss Online #4

### **Week 6: February 27 – March 3**

Lecture: Invitation to Western Religions

- ✓ "The History of Christianity," pages 197 – 209

Discussion: Required Reading from Canvas

- ✓ Surah 14, "Abraham"

Discuss Online #5

### **Week 7: March 6 – 10**

Lecture: Invitation to Western Religions

- ✓ "Islam," and "The Teachings of Islam," pages 235 – 254

Discussion: Film

- ✓ *Inside the Koran*

Discuss Online #6

### **Week 8: March 13 – 17**

Lecture: Invitation to Western Religions

- ✓ "The History of Islam" (read through "Later Islamic Empires"), pages 254 – 262

Discussion: Required Reading from Canvas

- ✓ Surah 35, "The Creator"

Discuss Online #7

### **Week 9: March 20 – 24—Spring Break!**

**Week 10: March 27 – 31**

Lecture: Study and Review

Discussion: Midterm Exam

Midterm Exam in Discussion

**PART TWO: MODERN CHALLENGES**

**Week 11: April 3 – 7**

Lecture: Invitation to Western Religions

- ✓ "Religions in the Modern World" and "An Academic Approach to the Study of Religions," pages 21 – 27

Discussion: Required Reading from Canvas

- ✓ Richard S. Westfall, "The scientific revolution of the seventeenth century: the construction of a new world view"

Discuss Online #8

**Week 12: April 10 – 14**

Lecture: Invitation to Western Religions

- ✓ Read from "The Modern Era" through "Women and Judaism," pages 142 – 152

Discussion: Film

- ✓ *Sex and the Wailing Wall*

Discuss Online #9

**Week 13: April 17 – 21**

Lecture: Invitation to Western Religions

- ✓ "Judaism as a Way of Life," (read through "Shavuot"), pages 152 – 158
- ✓ "The Sabbath," pages 160 – 161
- ✓ "Life Cycle Events," "Other Sacred Practices," and "Conclusion," pages 161 – 171

Discussion: Film

- ✓ *A Life Apart: Hasidism in America*

Discuss Online #10

**Week 14: April 24 – 28**

Lecture: Invitation to Western Religions

- ✓ "Christianity in the Modern World," pages 209 – 218
- ✓ "Christianity as a Way of Life" and "Conclusion," pages 218 – 229

Discussion: Film

- ✓ *Waiting for Armageddon: The Evangelical Community and Biblical Prophecy*

Discuss Online #11

**Week 15: May 1 – 5**

Lecture: Invitation to Western Religions

- ✓ "New Religious Movements" and "What is 'New' About New Religious Movements?" pages 291 – 293
- ✓ "Alternative Christianities and their Offshoots," pages 298 – 309
- ✓ "The New Atheism" and "Conclusion," pages 325 – 329

Discussion: Film

- ✓ *Intelligent Design vs. Evolution*

Discuss Online #12

**Week 16: May 8 – 12**

Lecture: No Reading

Discussion: Study and Review

**Week 17: Final Exam**

Final Exam

Tuesday May 16

10:15 AM – 12:15 PM

Rooms M126 & W191

## Concerns & Resources

Being a Pointer means going to class regularly, doing your work outside of class, and asking for help if there are questions or concerns.

[Academic Success](#): Your full-time job at UW-Stevens Point is *to be a student*. Being successful depend a lot on how much effort and time you invest. It also asking questions or finding support if you feel lost. We have an amazing [Tutoring-Learning Center](#) if you want to learn how to be a better student or need subject-specific help.

[Disability Services](#): UW-Stevens Point is committed to supporting students with disabilities the academic and other accommodations, plus the auxiliary aids necessary to ensure your success. To learn more, check out their [site](#) or visit them in Albertson Hall, room 609 (library building).

[Academic Misconduct](#): Copying off someone's test, plagiarism, claiming credit for work that is not yours, and all other forms of academic misconduct are not tolerated at UW-Stevens Point. If a student is confused about what exactly academic misconduct is, there is information available regarding rules and procedures for the [process](#). You can also visit with your faculty or learn how to cite the work of others at the [Writing Lab](#).