

Rel 101 Judaism, Christianity and Islam Fall 2019

Section 2 9:30-10:45 a.m. Tues/Thurs in 227 CCC

Prof. Alice Keefe office: 489A CCC email: akeefe@uwsp.edu

Office hours: 2:00-3:00 Monday and Wednesday

1:00-2:00 Tuesday and Thursday and by appointment

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 engagement with texts and practices relating to Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Dispositions:

- Explain and employ the three step method for studying other peoples' religions: identifying and bracketing one's own worldview and biases, cultivating empathetic understanding of otherness, and responding, which may mean asking critical questions, making a comparison, or applying a theory.
- 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 posted on Canvas

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION:

Test #1	20%
Test #2	20%
Final exam	25%
10 homework writing assignments	30%
Attendance and participation	5%

EXPLANATION OF REQUIREMENTS

Two tests and a final 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 essay questions.

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.

10 homework writing assignments. These assignments 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. Due on the day indicated on the syllabus unless a change is announced.

Satisfactory homework

- should be approximately 250-350 words in length (at least one typed page)
- should respond to the prompt in its entirety
- must be typed and double-spaced
- must be relatively free of grammar and spelling errors.
- If citations are required, they must follow a standard citation style
- Handed in on the day assigned

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 answer does not address prompt, or is too brief

1 point off per class period 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.

You can do additional homework assignments (beyond required 10) for extra points. *The maximum possible score in homework category is 110 points.*

No late homework will be accepted after 4 p.m. on the last day of classes.

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”.

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 place of publication, 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).

Class attendance is required. I will take attendance in each class period, and expect you to be present.

Excessive **unexcused absences** will adversely affect your grade.

Excellent attendance: two or fewer unexcused absences = A in this category.

Good attendance: three to five unexcused absences = B in this category.

Poor attendance: six to eight unexcused absences = C in this category.

Even worse attendance: nine to ten unexcused absences = D in this category.

Failing attendance: eleven or more unexcused absences = specific failing grade calculated by following formula – $x*100/30$ in which x = number of unexcused absences.

Excused absence: An absence may be excused for reasons of illness, family emergency or a school or team related event. (This rule follows official university policy.) if you wish for an absence to be excused, you must send an email to Prof. Keefe stating the reason for your absence in advance of the absence.

Whether the absence is excused or unexcused, if you miss class, you can check the “news” section of D2L to see if you missed any important information regarding the assignment schedule. Lecture notes will usually be posted in the “contents” section of D2L. *It is not the professor’s responsibility to fill you in on what you missed if you were absent.*

Participation: This is a small enough class for everyone to participate. You are expected to come to class prepared (having completed the assignments for the day) and ready to ask questions or offer comments. Excellent participation will raise your score in the attendance/participation category.

Classroom Etiquette:

- Cell phones must be muted and put away. Please ask for special permission to have your phone on your desk in cases where it is urgent that you be available for a call.
- Laptop use in class is acceptable, though not recommended. (Studies show most students learn more effectively by taking handwritten notes.) If you are using a laptop for taking notes, you must close all social media sites and other sources of distraction.
- Do your best to get to class on time. However, sometimes circumstances intervene, and it is OK to enter the classroom late. Please come up after class to get credit for attendance.
- 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.

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>

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 6th floor of the Learning Resource Center (the Library). You can also find more information here: <http://www4.uwsp.edu/special/disability/>.