School of Theology and Ministry
Seattle University
Spring 2012

Religions of the Book: Scripture in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam

Course Information

Course Number: STMM 593-01
Day and Time: Wed 1:30-4:20
Room: HUNT 160

Instructor Information

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Office: STM Adjunct Office
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 4:20-5:30

Course Description

This course presents an introduction to the historical environment and central traditions of the Hebrew Bible, New Testament and Qur'ān. We will study each sacred text in terms of its contents, confessional and historical-critical theories of its development and canonization, relationship to the other sacred texts, and significance to modern interpreters. We will pay special attention to the relationship of each canon to the other Abrahamic scriptures and the maternal and paternal figures: Hagar, Sarah, and Abraham that both unite and divide the three.

Course Website

- This syllabus, the assignments, course PowerPoints, Prezis and links are available on the course website at https://angel.seattleu.edu/angel/

Texts and Materials

Required Books

- Attridge, Harold W. *The Harper Collins Study Bible: Fully Revised & Updated***.** HarperOne, 2006.
- Haleem, M.A.S. Abdel (Translator). *The Qur'an.* Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Lodahl, Michael. *Claiming Abraham: Reading the Bible and the Qur'an Side by Side*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2010.
- Trible, Phillis and Letty M. Russell. *Hagar, Sarah and Their Children: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives*. Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.
- Aslan, Reza. *No god but God: The Origins and Evolution of Islam*. Delacorte Books, 2011.

Facebook Account
Please take time to establish a Facebook account if you do not already have one. Weekly participation in our class Facebook group contributes to your Class Participation score. If you are concerned about privacy, feel free to establish your account under an alternate email address and alias as long as the class is clear on who you are. To join the group, go to Facebook type in "STM Religions of the Book 2012" and request to join.

Text Messaging
Recommended but not required – if you can, please bring your phone to class! Texting is necessary to conduct some in-class polls and exercises.

Course Goals and Objectives

1. Students will achieve familiarity with the contents of the Hebrew Bible, New Testament and Qur'ān.

2. Students will improve their understanding of the history behind a wide sweep of Hebrew Bible, New Testament and Qur'ānic texts, and develop an understanding of the original audiences of these texts in their historical (social, political, religious) contexts.

3. Students will improve in their ability to interpret a sacred text in terms of its genre and context, as well as identifying its importance for ancient and modern audiences.

The above course goals and objectives will be achieved through reading large portions of the Hebrew Bible, New Testament and Qur'ān, placing these sacred texts in their historical and literary contexts, and close reading and interpretation of specific scriptural texts pertaining to our class topics and themes.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will improve in their ability to read scriptural texts critically.

Assessment of Learning Outcome number 1 will be conducted on the basis of the students' critical interaction with scriptural texts in the course of class sessions and the student's use of scriptural texts in the Final Paper.

2. Students will increase in awareness of their own social location/ assumptions/ hermeneutics as they engage the text in their own lives, their communities, and the larger world.

Assessment of Learning Outcome number 2 will be conducted on the basis of the student's weekly Reflection Assignments and ability to articulate an awareness of their own social location/ assumptions/ hermeneutics as they engage texts in the Final Paper.

Course Requirements

Class Participation – 20% of final grade

Having completed the weekly reading and writing assignments (described below), please come to class prepared to engage in active and thoughtful discussion of the week's materials. Class participation is scored on the basis of:

1. **Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all class sessions. Failure to attend does not exempt students from assignment deadlines. If an absence is unavoidable, advance notification is essential to arrange for an alternative route to make up the course material. In the case of an emergency which causes an absence, contact the instructor as early as possible. If you are unavoidably absent, besides contacting the instructor, you must arrange for your study-partner to share class notes and review the contents of the class with you.

2. **Preparation and Participation:**
   a. In class: each day I ask that you bring your Bible, Qur'an and the text we have read for the class. I expect your focused engagement in group discussion.
   b. Online: I ask that you participate substantially in our class Facebook Group at least once a week – I have placed a *reminder* on Mondays in the syllabus. Please share articles, images or links that pertain to our readings/ discussion topics, or pose ideas and questions for the class to comment on and consider. "Substantial" participation means that you have either posted a link/discussion thread or commented on one each week. "Liking" a post is insufficient.
   c. Reading assignments: The syllabus lists reading assignments pertinent to the week's topics. Each week there will be a brief list of questions corresponding to the week's reading, posted ANGEL. Use these questions to guide your reading and be prepared to discuss them in class.

Course Blog/Journal – 15% of Final Grade

Each student will create, and routinely update, a course blog or journal that details the experience of engaging the class material, especially the Site Visits and Plunge Project (see below). This reflection needs to be electronic/online, so that it is viewable by the other class members. It can be public (like a blog) or internal to the class, using a site like Storify. I expect that you will be updating your journal several times a week – checking in as you read, experienced, and plan. Once a week, please link your journal to the course Facebook group so that the other class members will be reminded and able to view your most recent updates/entries. Each student should make an effort to read the other student's blog/journal at least once a week. Positive and constructive feedback is encouraged.

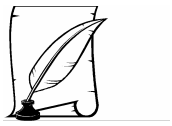
Site Visits – 15% of Final Grade

Between April 4 and May 23, students will visit a Jewish, a Christian and a Muslim prayer or worship service and write up a reflection on their experiences on the basis of questions listed on the Site Visit Assignment Sheet, distributed Wednesday, April 4. Reflections will be posted on your course blog/journal.

Plunge Project - 25% of Final Grade

The plunge project is designed to encourage students to deeply, experientially and respectfully explore particular Jewish and Muslim religious practices. This is explained in detail on the Plunge Project Assignment Sheet, distributed March 28. The Plunge Project involves choosing a topic among the ones provided, writing a research paper on that topic and forming a plan for your "plunge," journaling the process of your "plunge," and writing a summary and review paper. The Research Paper is roughly 5-6 pages long and is due on April 18, counting for 20% of the project grade. The project summary, 2-3 pages long, is due on May 23 and will be returned on May 30.

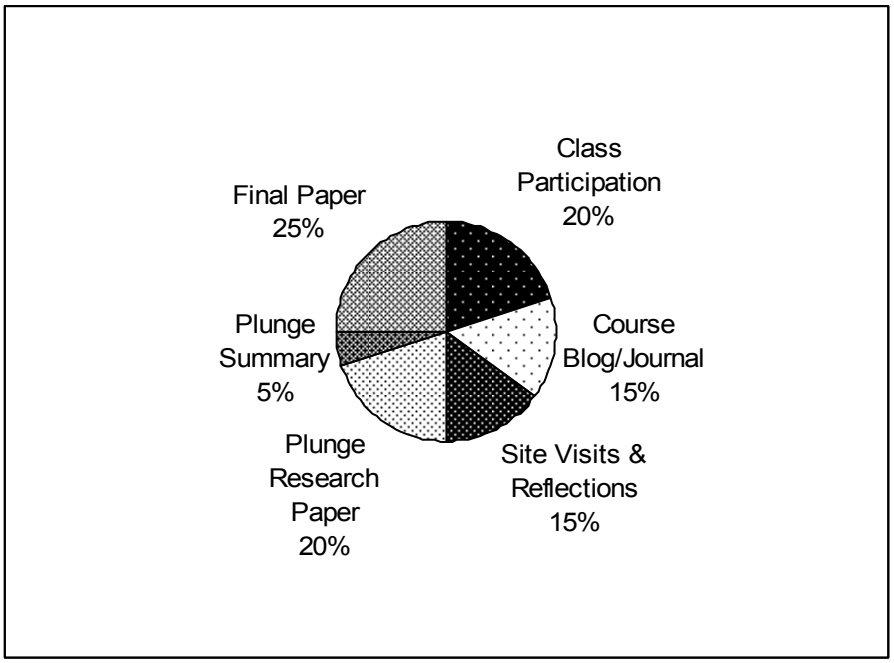
Final Paper– 25% of final grade



The 8-10 page Final Paper is due May 30, 2012 at the beginning of class.
The specifics of the Final Paper will be discussed in class and on the Final Paper Assignment Sheet, distributed Tuesday May 2.

Grading Weight

Class Participation	20%	Plunge Project Research Paper	20%
Course Blog/Journal	15%	Plunge Project Summary & Review	5%
Site Visits & Reflections	15%	Final Paper	25%



Grading Scale

Seattle University uses the following system of grading to indicate the level of individual student achievement. Each letter grade has a quality point value assigned for the grade achieved. Graduate students are expected to maintain a B (3.0) average. The quality point value is assigned to each letter grade as follows:

A	4.0	Superior Performance
A-	3.7	
B+	3.3	
B	3.0	Good Performance
B-	2.7	
C+	2.3	
C	2.0	Minimal Performance in courses applicable to graduate degree *(STM students must repeat STMM 553 and certain required courses.)*
C-	1.7	Courses graded C- or below will not count toward graduate degree or certificate
D+	1.3	
D	1.0	Poor Performance
D-	0.7	
F	0.0	Failing

Policies

Attendance: Please refer to "Course Requirements," above.

Deadlines: Late work will be penalized unless explicit arrangements have been made between student and instructor.

Academic Honesty: The School of Theology and Ministry strictly adheres to the Academic Policy concerning Academic Honesty as published in the Seattle University Student Handbook.

Disability: If you have, or think you have, a disability (including an "invisible disability" such as a learning disability, a chronic health problem, or a mental health condition) that interferes with your performance as a student in this class, you are encouraged to discuss your needs and arrange support services and/or accommodations through Disabilities Services staff in the Learning Center, Loyola 100, (206) 296-5740.

Schedule of Classes and Assignments:

	DATE	SUBJECT	READING ASSIGNMENT
Week One	**March 28**	**Introduction; Syllabus**	No reading due. **1 Samuel 16-17** (in class) Distributed: Plunge Project Assignment Sheet Other assignments: ▪ Post in Facebook Group ▪ Purchase books (if you have not already) ▪ Decide on focus for your Plunge Project ▪ Begin blog/journal
Week Two	**April 4**	**Abraham, Torah and Gospel; Introduction to the Hebrew Bible**	Reading assignment due: o Brettler chapters (posted on ANGEL) o Loadhal Introduction and chapters 1-2, p. 1-44 o "Scriptural Authority in Early Judaism" in Living Traditions of the Bible: Scripture in Jewish, Christian and Muslim Practice, John C. Reeves **[ANGEL]** p. 63-84 o **Surah 21** Distributed: Site Visit Assignment Sheet Other assignments: ▪ Post in Facebook Group ▪ Continue Plunge Project research and preparation ▪ Update your blog/journal (more than once?) ▪ Engage the blogs/journals of your classmates
Week Three	**April 11**	**Creation and Revelation; The New Testament**	Reading assignment due: o Loadhal chapters 3-4, p. 45-78 o Galambush chapter (ANGEL) o **Genesis 1:1-2:4** o **Enuma Elish excerpt** (ANGEL) Other assignments: ▪ Post in Facebook Group ▪ Continue Plunge Project research and preparation ▪ Update your blog/journal ▪ Engage the blogs/journals of your classmates

Week Four	**April 18**	**Humanity and Command; Noah, Nuh, and Sinai**	Reading assignment due: o Loadhal chapters 5-8, p. 79-136 o **Genesis 2:4-3:24;** o **Genesis 5:28-9:29** o **Surah 7. 1-58** o **Surah 11** Other assignments: ▪ Post in Facebook Group ▪ Update your blog/journal ▪ Engage the blogs/journals of your classmates ▪ **Plunge Project RESEARCH PAPER DUE**
Week Five	**April 25**	**The Qur'ān; Jahiliyyah**	Reading assignment due: o Introduction to Haleem's Qur'ān o Aslan chapters 1-3, p. 1-45 o The Hebrew Bible and the Quran: The Problem of the Jewish 'Influence' on Islam, Michael E. Pregill **[ANGEL]** p. 643-659 o **Surah 1** o **Surah 96** o **Surah 16** Returned: Plunge Project Research Paper Other assignments: ▪ Post in Facebook Group ▪ Update your blog/journal ▪ Engage the blogs/journals of your classmates
Week Six	**May 2**	**Mecca, Medina**	Reading assignment due: o Aslan chapters 4-9, p. 46-114 o "Christian and Muslim Fundamentalism" in A Christian View of Islam, Thomas F. Michel, SJ **[ANGEL]** p. 90-107 o **Judges 4:1-5:31** o **1 Corinthians ch 10 and 14;** o **1 Timothy 2:8-15** o **Surah 2.221-242** Other assignments: ▪ Post in Facebook Group ▪ Update your blog/journal ▪ Engage the blogs/journals of your classmates

Week Seven	**May 9**	**Blessing?** **Allegory**	Reading assignment due: o Trible and Russell chapters 1-3, p. 1-100 o **Genesis 12 and 26** o **Galatians 4** o "The Oral and Written Torahs" in *One Scripture or Many? Canon from Biblical, Theological and Philosophical Perspectives,* Benjamin Sommer **[ANGEL]** p. 108-150 Other assignments: ▪ Post in Facebook Group ▪ Update your blog/journal ▪ Engage the blogs/journals of your classmates
Week Eight	**May 16**	**Jewish, Christian Muslim, and Womanist Interpretations**	Reading assignment due: o Trible and Russell chapters 4-7, p. 101-184 o **Exodus 1:1-17:7** Other assignments: ▪ Post in Facebook Group ▪ Update your blog/journal ▪ Engage the blogs/journals of your classmates
Week Nine	May 23	**Mary and Jesus** **Plunge Culmination/ Discussion** 	Reading assignment due: o Loadhal chapters 9-10, p. 137-170 o **Surah 19** o **Luke chapter 1** o **Protoevangelium of James** (ANGEL) Other assignments: ▪ Post in Facebook Group ▪ Update your blog/journal ▪ Engage the blogs/journals of your classmates ▪ **Plunge Project SUMMARY & REVIEW DUE**
Week Ten	May 30	**Trinity and Apocalypse** **Sharing of Final Paper Work** 	Reading assignment due: o Loadhal chapters 11-12 and "Closing," p.171-208 o **Revelation 4:1-13:18** Returned: Plunge Project Summary and Review Other assignments: ▪ Post in Facebook Group ▪ Update your blog/journal ▪ Engage the blogs/journals of your classmates ▪ **FINAL PAPER DUE** ▪ Come to class prepared to give a 5 minute presentation of your Final Paper topic and findings.

Class at a Glance:

Sunday	*Monday*	*Tuesday*	*Wednesday*	*Thursday*	*Friday*	*Saturday*
March 25 Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary	***26***	***27***	***28*** ***First Class!***	***29***	***30***	***31***
April 1 Palm Sunday	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5*** Maunday Thursday	***6*** Good Friday Pesach (at nightfall)	***7*** Lazarus Saturday Pesach
8 Easter Palm Sunday (Orthodox) Pesach	***9*** Pesach	***10*** Pesach	***11*** Pesach	***12*** Pesach	***13*** Holy Friday (Orthodox) Pesach	***14*** Pascha (Orthodox) Pesach (until dark)
15	***16***	***17***	***18***	***19***	***20***	***21***
22	***23***	***24***	***25***	***26***	***27***	***28***
29	***30***	***May 1***	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***
6	***7***	***8***	***9***	***10***	***11***	***12***
13	***14***	***15***	***16***	***17*** Ascension of Jesus	***18***	***19***
20	***21***	***22***	***23***	***24*** Ascension of Jesus (Orthodox)	***25***	***26***
27 Pentecost	***28***	***29***	***30 Last Class!***	***31***	***June 1***	***2***

Key: **Assignment Distributed……** **Papers Due……..** **Facebook Post Reminder…..**

Site Visit Time Span **Assignment Returned……..**