

Religions of the Middle East – Fall 2016 – Prof. Hina Azam

ISL 340.6/41425, MEL 321.26/41565, MES 342.34/41810, RS 358.15/43695

*** GC flag ***

Email: hina.azam@austin.utexas.edu

Class Times: T/Th 2:00 – 3:15

Office: CAL 506

Class Location: BUR 208

Office Hours: Tue 12:00 – 1:30 & Wed 10:00 – 11:30

Course Description

How is Christianity in Egypt different from Christianity in the U.S.? What is Zoroastrianism? Is there a relationship between Islam and the Baha'i religion? These are the types of questions that this course is intended to answer. The course will provide an overview of the religious landscape of the Middle East, with units on Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Eastern Christianity, Islam, and the Baha'i religion. Attention will be given to cosmological doctrines, scriptures, moral principles, sacred history, and liturgical practices, with considerable attention to the historical development of these traditions. This course carries a Global Cultures flag.

Course Requirements

NOTE: Modifications may be made to the course requirements during the term. Students will be notified of modifications to the syllabus either in class, via email or via Canvas. It is the student's responsibility to provide the instructor with a valid email address and to check email regularly. Registrar-held email addresses will be assumed to be valid unless the student informs the instructor otherwise. In the event that a student is absent from class, lacks internet access, or any such issue, it is the student's own responsibility to stay informed of any communications and modifications regarding the course and its requirements.

Course grades will be based on a combination of quizzes, exam, and class participation, as follows:

1 Writing Exercise (300-500 words)	= 2%
4 Tests, 15% each	= 60%
Final Exam	= 24%
Attendance	= 14%
	= 100% total

Tests and Final Exam will be based on lectures *and* readings. Make-up tests and exam will only be at instructor discretion and only if the reason is compelling and documented.

Attendance: Students are permitted *two* unexcused absences during the semester without adverse effect on their course grades. Anything beyond that may adversely affect their course grades. For extenuating circumstances, a note and/or prior permission may mitigate the effect of an absence from class. If a student arrives late to class, it is their responsibility to come to the TA after class and inform them of their presence. Repeated or significant tardiness may also adversely affect a student's attendance grade.

Extra Credit Reports: Extra credit opportunities will be available throughout the semester, in the form of approved lectures and/or events. Students may seek extra credit through attending an approved lecture/events and submitting a report of between 900-1200 words summarizing the lecture/event and ending with a reflection on that lecture/event. Reports must include complete headings, including the student name, eid, date of submission, and whether the report is meant to be "Extra Credit Report #1" or "Extra Credit Report #2." Reports must also include a title, which provides the following information: the name of the lecture/event, the

name of the speaker(s), the date of the event, and the location of the event. Reports must be submitted electronically to the instructor within two weeks of the event or the last day of classes, whichever comes first.

NOTE: Laptop use is prohibited in class.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY WARNING: Students are expected to conduct themselves with integrity in all areas related to the course. Suspected violations will be forwarded to Student Judicial Services.

Grading Rubric

<u>Average</u>	<u>Letter</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Letter</u>
93-100	A	73-76	C
90-92	A-	70-72	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
83-86	B	63-66	D
80-82	B-	60-62	D-
77-79	C+	59 and below	F

Note: Final course grades will be rounded to the nearest point, eg:

89.2 = 89 = B+

89.7 = 90 = A-

89.5 = 90 = A-

Texts/Readings

All readings below are required and will be available either at the Co-Op (in the case of textbooks) or on Canvas.

Required Textbooks, on order at the Co-Op:

- For Zoroastrianism: Mary Boyce, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*. Routledge, 2001. ISBN# 0415239036.
- For Islam: John Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 5th edition. Oxford University Press, 2015. ISBN#0199381453
- For the Baha'i religion: Peter Smith, *An Introduction to the Baha'i Faith*. Cambridge University Press, 2008. ISBN# 978-0521681070.

Required readings, available on Canvas in pdf format:

- From Hopfe and Woodward, *Religions of the World* (7th edition):
-- Ch.10, "Zoroastrianism"
- From John Hinnells, ed., *A New Handbook of Living Religions*:
-- Ch.2 "Christianity," by Andrew Walls
- From Michael Satlow, *Creating Judaism*
-- Satlow, Chs.7-8
- From *The Cambridge Guide to Jewish, History, and Culture*:
-- Ch.1 "The Hebrew Bible and the Early Period of Jewish History" by Marc Brettler
-- Ch.2 "The Second Temple Period" by Alan Segal
-- Ch.3 "The Rabbinic Movement" by Hayim Lapin
-- Ch.4 "The Jewish Experience in the Muslim World" by Norman Stillman
-- Ch.11 "Judaism as a Religious System" by Bernard Reich
-- Ch.12 "The Centrality of Talmud" by Harvey Goldberg
-- Ch.13 "Jewish Worship and Liturgy" Ruth Langer
-- Ch.14 "Jewish Private Life: Gender, Marriage, and the Lives of Women" by Judith Baskin
- From Ken Parry, ed., *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity*:
-- Ch.1, "Arab Christianity," by David Thomas
-- Ch.12, "Syriac Christianity," by Heleen Murre-van den Berg
-- Ch.15, "Eastern Catholic Christianity," by Peter Galadza
-- Ch.16, "Eastern Orthodox – Liturgical Tradition," by Graham Woolfenden
-- Ch.17, "Oriental Orthodox – Liturgical Traditions," by Bryan Spinks

Optional/Supplemental Materials, on Canvas:

- Glossary of terms from *Religions of the World*
- Timeline of Christianity in the Middle East, from *Who Are the Christians of the Middle East?*

Class Schedule

Important Dates

First day of class	Thursday 8/25
AAR Conference	Tuesday 11/22 – substitute, class will be held
Thanksgiving Break	Thursday 11/24 – no class
Last day of class	Thursday 5/7
Final exams	TBA (available online at UT Registrar's website)

Unit I: Zoroastrianism: Texts, Cosmology, Liturgy, Morality

Unit textbook: Boyce, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, plus pdfs on Canvas

#1) Thu 8/25	Course Introduction; Themes and Frameworks of Analysis; Writing Exercise	
#2) Tue 8/30	History and Institutions	
	Hopfe and Woodward, Ch.10, "Zoroastrianism" (RW), 238-259	21
	Boyce, Chs.1-2, "Background" and "Zoroaster and his teaching"	30
Writing exercise due by 11:59 of Friday 9/2 as Word attachment via email to hina.azam@austin.utexas.edu (not via Canvas): 300-500 words in response to the following prompt: How can it <i>benefit</i> Americans to study the religions of the Middle East? What is the value of studying the religions of the Middle East for <i>me</i> ?		
#3) Thu 9/1	Doctrines : Cosmology, Eschatology	
	Boyce, Chs.3, 4 and 5, "Establishing Mazda worship," "The unrecorded centuries," & "Under the Achaemenians"	46
#4) Tue 9/6	Doctrines: Morality and Ethics	
	Boyce, Ch.6, "Under the Seleucids and Arsacids"	28
#5) Thu 9/8	Liturgy and Calendar	
	Boyce, Chs.7-8, "Under the early Sasanians," "the mid Sasanian period," 101-131	31
#6) Tue 9/13	Texts and Languages	
	Boyce, ch.10, "The Caliphs," 145-162, & these sections of chs.11-14: -- 166-76 (from ch.11, "Il-khans, Rajahs, Sultans") -- 177-81 (from ch.12, "Safavids and Mughals") -- 209-12 (from ch.13) -- 218-223 (from ch.14, "In the 20 th century")	31

Unit 2: Judaism: Texts, History, Tradition, Practice

Unit readings: Pdfs on Canvas

#7) Thu 9/15	History	
	Brettler, "The Hebrew Bible and the Early History of Israel"	28
#8) Tue 9/20	Test 1 (on Zoroastrianism)	
#9) Thu 9/22	Texts and Languages	
	Segal, "The Second Temple Period"	22

Lapin, “The Rabbinic Movement” 23

#10) Tue 9/27 Doctrines: Cosmology and Institutions
Stillman, “The Jewish Experience in the Muslim World” 26
Satlow, Ch.7 “The Rise of Reason” 21

#11) Thu 9/29 Doctrines: Morality and Ethics
Goldberg, “Judaism as a Religious System” 28
Berger, “The Centrality of Talmud” 25

#12) Tue 10/4 Doctrines: Liturgy and Calendar
Baskin, “Jewish Private Life” 22
Satlow, Ch.8 “From Moses to Moses” 19

Unit 3: Eastern Christianity: Theology, Liturgy, Morality

Unit readings: Pdfs on Canvas

#13) Thu 10/6 History: Doctrinal/Sectarian and Institutional
Walls, from “Christianity,” 55-72, 78 (diagram), 105-140 54

#14) Tue 10/11 Test 2 (Judaism)

#15) Thu 10/13 History: Doctrinal/Sectarian and Institutional, continued
Thomas, “Arab Christianity,” 1-22 22

#16) Tue 10/18 Pre-Chalcedonian Divisions: Armenian and Persian
(later Assyrian and Chaldean)
Murre-van den Berg, “Syriac Christianity,” 249-268 19

#17) Thu 10/20 Post-Chalcedonian Divisions: Chalcedonian (Latin/Catholic and
Greek/Orthodox) and non-Chalcedonian (Coptic and other)
Galadza, “Eastern Catholic Christianity,” 291-318 17
Woolfenden, “Eastern Orthodox – Liturgical Tradition,” 319-338 19

#18) Tue 10/25 Liturgy, Calendar and Sacraments
Spinks, “Oriental Orthodox – Liturgical Tradition,” 339-367 28

Unit 4: Islam: Scripture, Cosmology, Liturgy, Morality

Unit readings: Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 5th edition updated

#19) Thu 10/27 History

#20) Tue 11/1 Test 3 (Eastern Christianity)

#21) Thu 11/3 Doctrines: Cosmology, Theology and Morality

#22) Tue 11/8 Texts

#23) Thu 11/10 Liturgy and Calendar

#24) Tue 11/15 Sectarian Divisions

Unit 5: Baha'i Religion: Scripture, Theology, Morality

Unit textbook: Peter Smith, *An Introduction to the Baha'i Faith*

#25) Thu 11/17 History

Smith, Chs.1-2, "Babi Movement" & "Baha'ullah/Emergence of the Baha'i Faith" 39

#26) Tue 11/22 Test 4 (Islam)

Thu 11/24 – Thanksgiving

#27) Tue 11/29 Doctrines: Cosmology, Theology, Morality

Smith, Chs.3-5, "Ministry of Abdul-Baha," "Guardianship of Shoghi Effendi," and "Universal House of Justice" 33

#28) Thu 12/1 Liturgy and Calendar

Smith, Chs.7-10, "Baha'i Texts," "Divine Knowledge and Guidance," "Being Human," and "The Baha'i Faith and other Religions" 33

Also read from Smith for Final Exam:

Smith, Chs.11-13, "Social Teachings," "Spiritual Path," and "Baha'i Law" 41

Smith, Chs.14-16, "Baha'i Administration," "Community Life," and "Baha'i Activities and the Wider World" 35

Final Exam date, time, and location TBD