This course provides an overview of the three formative religions of the West: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. We will cover the history, literature, thought and experience of believers in each tradition. We will approach them in chronological order, with Judaism first and Islam last. Their sacred texts -- the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament and the Qu’ran -- will all be presented as human productions, grounded in history and culture.

I. REQUIRED TEXTS:

Fieser and Powers, *Scriptures of the West* (McGraw Hill)

Michael Fishbane, *Judaism: Revelation and Traditions* (HarperCollins)

Sandra Frankiel, *Christianity: A Way of Salvation* (HarperCollins)

Frederick Denny, *Islam and the Muslim Community* (HarperCollins)

II. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

Midterm Exam -- 20%

Book Review -- 20%

Visitation Projects -- 30%

Final Exam -- 30%

1. The **midterm and final exams** will be a combination of short answer, identification, multiple choice and essay.

2. For the **book review**, you must **review** one book of 200 or more pages that deals with Judaism, Christianity, or Islam. I will provide a list of appropriate books early in the quarter, and a list of requirements for your review. If you would like to review a book that is not on my list, please see me about it first. Please choose a book dealing with the religion with which you are least familiar. Books that cover more than one religion are also appropriate. **Due Tues. of week 7.**

3. For the **religious service project**, you must attend the services of two religions which are not
your own, or with which you are least familiar. I will provide a more detailed handout early in the
quarter. Due Tues. of weeks 3 and 10.

I use a traditional grading scale for all papers, exams, and the final grade: 93-100=A; 90-92=A-; 88-
89=B+; 83-87=B; 80-82=B-, etc.

All papers are due on the due date; any papers turned in late will be penalized except in
extraordinary circumstances which must be documented.

All grades can be discussed with me, but only up until one week after the grade has been given.

III. SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND READING ASSIGNMENTS:

(Please note that all readings are due that week. We will spend time discussing them in class. If you haven’t read them,
class time will not be as productive.)

Wk 1
Tu: Overview of Course Requirements; What is Religion?; Important Concepts for this Course; Ancient Mesopotamian
Religion.
Readings: Fishbane - Preface, Chronology and Introduction (pp. 1-24)
"Scriptures" - pp. 27-36
Th: The Children of Abraham; Film – "Jerusalem: the Heavenly City."

Wk 2
Tu: The Hebrew Bible -- Patriarchs and Judges
Readings: Fishbane - Judaism as an Ideological System (pp. 25-82)
"Scriptures" - pp 36-69
Th: The Hebrew Bible -- Kings to Exile

Wk 3
Tu: Greeks and Romans, Varieties of Judaism, and the Rise of Rabbinic Judaism
Readings: Fishbane - Judaism as a Ritual System (pp. 83-113)
"Scriptures" - pp. 69-86
Visitation Project One Due
Th: Judaism and Christianity; Medieval Judaism

Wk 4
Tu: Early Modern Judaism, the Holocaust, Modern Judaism and Current Challenges Readings: Fishbane - Jews and
Judaism in Modern Times (pp. 114-140); Frankiel - Introduction (pp. 1-5); "Scriptures" - pp. 87-95
Th: The Roots of Christianity

Wk 5
Tu: Jesus in the Gospels
Readings: Frankiel - Historical Development of Christianity (pp. 6-56)
"Scriptures" - pp. 95-118
Th: Midterm
Wk 6
Tu: The Self-Definition of Christianity -- Paul and alternative Christianities
Readings: Frankiel - Structures of the Christian Life (pp. 57-89)
"Scriptures" - pp. 118-146
Th: Medieval Christianity

Wk 7
Tu: The Reformation
Readings: Frankiel - Dynamics of Christian Life and Conclusions (pp. 90-126)
Book Review Due
Th: Modern Christianity and Current Challenges

Wk 8
Tu: Mohammed and Early Islam
Readings: Denny - Chronolgy, Introduction and Historical Development of Islam (pp. 3-39)
"Scriptures" - pp. 147-173
Th: The Qu’ran and the Hadiths

Wk 9
Tu: Pillars of Islam
Readings: Denny - The Structures of Muslim Life (pp. 40-76)
"Scriptures" - pp. 173-197
Th: Sufism and Shi’ism

Wk 10
Tu: Modern Islam and Current Challenges
Readings: Denny - Muslim Institutions and Islam in Today’s World (pp. 77-129)
Visitation Project Two Due
Th: Exam Review
Final Exam – Tuesday, June 16, 8:00-11:00 a.m.