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# MW 605 Religious Studies for Christian Mission I: Judaism and Islam

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## RELIGIOUS STUDIES FOR CHRISTIAN MISSION I: JUDAISM AND ISLAM

MW 605 Fall, 1998 (3 hrs.). A. H. Mathias Zahniser, instructor. Office (MC313) Hours: W 1300 - 1500. Phones: 858-2218 and 858-4434 (home). Email: mathias\_zahniser@ats.wilmore.ky.us

### I. DESCRIPTION, OBJECTIVES AND METHOD

- A. **Catalogue Description:** An introduction to the nature and function of religion in human culture with special reference to the Judaic and Islamic traditions. Special attention is given to the relevance of the cross-cultural study of religion to Christian mission among people influenced by the three great Abrahamic traditions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. A field trip is required.
- B. **Method:** In MW 605, religious traditions are explored phenomenologically, that is, on their own terms and through their own forms, theologically, that is, in relation to the claims of Christian faith and revelation, and elenctically, that is, with a view toward providing opportunities for the Spirit to convince people influenced by these faith traditions of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8).
- C. **Course Goals.** The goals of the course are organized around **three primary areas of inquiry, learning and expression:** (1) religious studies; (2) the Jewish and Islamic religious traditions; and (3) an elenctic approach to evangelization.
1. **The Cross-Cultural Study of Religion**
    - 1.1 Students will know of some of the basic terms, techniques, and methods employed in the cross-cultural study of religious traditions.
    - 1.2 Students will develop their ability to listen to others, read and/or observe what they produce with unprejudiced attention and genuine respect, regardless of their world views and resultant commitments.
    - 1.3 Students will accept the ideal of *epoché* (*methodological* suspension of the subjectivity of the interpreter in order to minimize the distortion of the essence of the religious expression being observed) as a working principle of inter-cultural understanding and communication.
  2. **The Jewish and Islamic Religious Traditions**
    - 2.1 Students will know the minimal indispensable terminology and facts associated with these religious traditions.
    - 2.2 Students will understand the distinctive features of the Abrahamic tradition (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) over against other religious traditions.
    - 2.3 Students will understand salient features of the world view and ethos of Judaism and Islam as exemplified in selected phenomena basic to their identity, and in relation to sharing the gospel with people influenced by them.
    - 2.4 Students will become aware of the satisfaction which people influenced by Judaism and Islam derive from their faith traditions.
    - 2.5 Students will become aware of the personal integration that participants realize from the performance of ritual obligations.
    - 2.6 Students will grow in spontaneous interest in learning about Jewish and Islamic

traditions, institutions, places and people.

2.7 Students will grow in a sense of common humanity with persons influenced by the Jewish and Islamic traditions.

### 3. An Elenctic Approach to Evangelization

3.1 Students will know the indispensable terminology and facts associated with an elenctic approach to evangelization.

3.2 Students will become aware of the possibilities associated with openness to the creative Spirit of God for cross-cultural communication.

3.3 Students will sharpen their interest in enabling others to know God in Jesus Christ.

3.4 Students will accept the role of elenctic witness in personal and corporate Christian life.

### 4. Theological Integration

4.1 Students will enjoy discovering a growing congruence of inner commitment and outer behavior.

4.2 Students will increase in faith in the power of the Holy Spirit to effect change in persons in spite of apparently insurmountable barriers.

## II. REQUIREMENTS, EVALUATION, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

**A. Common Readings:** The following books have been selected to give a common foundation to our knowledge:

J. H. Bavinck, *An Introduction to the Science of Missions*. Trans. David H. Freeman. Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1960. Distributed by Baker Books, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Part two is required reading and is included in your readings packet.

Crim, Keith, et al., eds. *Perennial Dictionary of World Religion*. 1990 ed.

Suzanne Haneef, *What Everyone Should Know about Islam and Muslims*. Chicago: Kazi Publications, 1982. This whole book is to be read by all students.

Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel: From its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*. Trans. and abridged by Moshe Greenberg. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960. The material to be read from Kaufmann has been included in the course packet.

Harold W. Turner, *From Temple to Meeting House: The Phenomenology and Theology of Places of Worship . Religion and Society*, 16. The Hague, Paris, and New York: Mouton, 1979. Portions of this book are required reading; these portions are included in your course packet.

Herman Wouk, *This is My God: The Jewish Way of Life*. Revised Edition. New York: Little, Brown, and Co., 1997. This book is to be read in its entirety by all students.

Zahniser, A. H. Mathias, "Close Encounter of the Vulnerable Kind: Christian Dialogue and Proclamation Among Muslims," *Asbury Theological Journal* 49/1 (Spring, 1994), 71-78. This article to be distributed by the instructor is required reading for all students.

**B.** The following **instruments of learning, means of evaluation, and vehicles for ministry** are designed to provide expressions of spiritual formation, cognitive discovery, affective response, and community and individual contributions related to the goals of the course.

1. **Interaction papers** will be required for designated readings. These papers provide an opportunity for you to practice the objective attention to the points of view of others you need to be an effective witness among people of other faiths. They also give you a chance to react to class materials from the point of view of your background and ministry perspective. They also help insure that under the pressure of time certain readings get read. These papers comprise thirty-five percent of the grade for the class. They will be

evaluated carefully using the criteria identified on page 21 of the Seminary's catalogue: A = exceptional work; B = good work; C = acceptable work; D = marginal work; and F = unacceptable or unfulfilled work. Interaction papers must be turned in before the end of class on the day they are due and cannot be made up if missed without prior arrangement with the instructor.

2. **Final integrative essay.** This essay represents sixty-five per cent of the grade for the class. In response to the article by your instructor, "Close Encounters of the Vulnerable Kind," you will write an integrative essay on the topic: Christian Witness to Jews or Muslims: A Personal View. Guidelines for your essay will be distributed. The essay may not exceed 10 pages (assuming one inch margins, double spacing, and twelve point courier font) in length, not including notes and bibliography.
3. **The field trip to Toledo, Ohio** (October 23-25 or 30-November 1) is required. Since this trip involves a significant time commitment, you are given five days off from class: September 25, October 23, and 30, and November 19, and 20.

### III. SCHEDULE FOR THE TERM

The schedule includes the assigned readings for the day on which they will be discussed. Please have the readings read by the class period for which they are assigned because the focus in the class sessions will be upon the material presented in the assigned readings, occasionally supplemented by material presented by the instructor. Assignments are made for the week beginning on the date indicated and all interaction papers should be turned in on the Tuesday of the week for which they are assigned. Interaction papers will usually be handed back on Thursday. PDWR = *The Perennial Dictionary of World Religions*, Keith Crim, ed.

#### A. Introduction to the Course

September 8: **Introduction to the Course and the Persons in it.** Special attention to course methodology and requirements.

#### B. Judaism and Islam: A Quick Preview.

September 15: **An Introduction to Judaism. Readings:** M. Fishbane, "Judaism," PDWR; Y. Shamir, "Prayer, Jewish," PDWR. Do an interaction paper over the article by Shamir. In class **video:** "Judaism: The Chosen People."

September 22 (No class on September 25): **An Introduction to Islam. Readings:** B. Lawrence, "Islam," PDWR; W. A. Graham, "Qur'an," PDWR; and F. M. Denny, "Prayer in Islam," PDWR. Comment: Articles about Judaism are done by Jews; articles about Islam are done by non-Muslims. I wonder why. Do an interaction paper only over the article by Graham. In class **video:** "There is No God But God."

#### C. The Jewish Religious Tradition.

September 29: **Torah, Tenakh and Talmud: The Scripturalization of Judaism. Reading:** Wouk, Prologue through ch. 4 and chs. 13-17; Y. Shamir, "Talmud," PDWR; and A. Lichtenstein, "Torah," PDWR. Hand in an interaction paper on Wouk chapters 13-17. I wish we had time and space to read J. Y. Fenton, "Scriptures, Sacred," PDWR. In class clip from the **video:** "Judaism: The Chosen People."

October 6: **Jewish Fasts, Feasts and Festivals. Reading:** Wouk, Chs. 5-12; A. Lichtenstein, "Calendar, Jewish," PDWR; C. R. Taber, "Food, Religious Attitudes Toward," PDWR; D. J. Schnall, "Kosher," and "Sabbath," PDWR. Hand in an interaction paper responding to

Wouk's chapter on the Sabbath. In-class reading of "The Conversion of the Jews," by Philip Roth (From *Good-bye Columbus*). In class clip from the video: "Judaism: The Chosen People."

October 13: **Modern Divisions and Movements: Roots and Realities. Reading:** Wouk, Chs. 18-22; S. Siegel, "Conservative Judaism," PDWR; K. P. Bland, "Hasidism," PDWR; M. M. Kellner, "Messiah," "Orthodox Judaism," and "Reform Judaism," PDWR; I. Fagen, "Reconstructionist Judaism, PDWR; and D. J. Schnall, and S. Bayme, "Zionism," PDWR. Do an interaction paper over the chapters by Wouk.

#### **D. The Islamic Religious Tradition.**

October 20 (No class on October 23): **Islamic Beliefs and Ritual Activities. Reading:** Haneef, Sec. I; G. D. Newby, "Allah, PDWR; W. A. Graham, "Hadith," PDWR; G. D. Newby, "Muhammad," PDWR; F. M. Deny, "Pillars of Islam," PDWR; and H. B. Partin, "Hajj," PDWR. **Video** clips from "The Five Pillars of Islam" and "There is no God but God" on the Islamic Pilgrimage (Hajj). Do an interaction paper over the chapters by Haneef.

October 23 (F) - 25 (Su) \*\*\*\*\***TOLEDO ONE** \*\*\*\*\*

October 27 (No class on October 30): **Islamic Values: the Individual in Society. Reading:** Haneef, Secs. II and III; W. A. Graham, "Shari'ah," PDWR; and R. Israeli, "Islam in China," PDWR. No interaction paper.

October 30 (F) - November 1 (Su) \*\*\*\*\***TOLEDO TWO** \*\*\*\*\*

November 3: **The Islamic Way of Life: Sects and Movements. Reading:** Haneef, Sec. IV; A. A. Sachedina, "Kharijites," and "Shi'ah," PDWR; B. Lawrence, "Sufism," PDWR; and K. Crim, "Sunni," PDWR. Comment: No interaction paper.

#### **E. The Cross-cultural Study of Religion and Christian Witness to People Influenced by Judaism and Islam.**

November 10: **The Phenomenological Method and the Christian Project. Reading:** Turner, 346-366. Today we study one of the best examples of Christian theological use of the phenomenological method. Do an interaction paper over the chapter by Turner. This chapter shows up in your packet.

November 17 (No class on November 19 and 20): **The Distinctive Characteristic of Abrahamic Religion. Reading:** Kaufmann, 21-121 and R. Bullard, "Abraham," PDWR. Today we examine an analysis that suggests the basic and distinctive feature of biblical monotheism. It helps us greatly with the elenctic question: What have you done with God?

November 23-27 \*\*\*Reading Week\*\*\*

December 1: **Between Proclamation and Dialogue: An Elenctic Approach to Christian Witness. Reading:** Bavinck, Part Two. Today we shall work on our understanding of Bavinck's "elenctic" approach to Christian witness to people of other religious traditions. Video: "The Empty Cup." Comment: No interaction paper for this week.

December 8: **Christian Witness and Major Religious Traditions: An Elenctic Approach. Reading:** Zahniser, "Close Encounter" (To be distributed). No interaction paper over this reading.

**F. Final Examination. To be taken by the student on his or her own time.**

See the discussion of the final integrative essay earlier in the syllabus under II, B, 2. Make sure you know what this is all about. The essay is due in the office of the instructor by 1700 on December 18.