



Master Course Syllabus

For additional course information, including prerequisites, corequisites, and course fees, please refer to the Catalog: <https://catalog.uvu.edu/>

Semester: Spring

Year: 2025

Course Prefix: PHIL

Course and Section #: 1610 001

Course Title: Introduction to Western Religions

Credits: 3

Course Description

For students majoring in humanities related disciplines and other students interested in the academic study of religion. Presents the comparative study of the history, ritual, "theology," and ethical beliefs of the major western religions including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Baha'i, and nontraditional religious belief in the western world. Explores similarities and differences between them by examining the primary sources and sacred texts along with the unique beliefs and practices of each tradition.

Course Attributes

This course has the following attributes:

- General Education Requirements
- Global/Intercultural Graduation Requirements
- Writing Enriched Graduation Requirements
- Discipline Core Requirements in Program
- Elective Core Requirements in Program
- Open Elective

Other: *Click here to enter text.*

Instructor Information

Instructor Name: Kenneth R. White

Student Learning Outcomes

A course in Western religions would seem, by definition, to treat material rather familiar to students studying at a college in the West. However, though many Westerners may believe that they have a firm understanding of the religions that form a part of what is known as the 'Western tradition,' there are certainly fundamental aspects of these that are likely less than familiar to the non-practitioner. This course will primarily treat the larger of the Western religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. These traditions have connections that underscore a common heritage, while exhibiting particular and striking differences that distinguish them to a very great extent. Readings will include selections from primary sources, chosen for being representative of the philosophy, theology and practice of the religions they represent. It is hoped that the class meetings will serve as times for open examination and discussion on a variety of religious points of doctrine and practice

Course Materials and Texts

John Corrigan, et.al., *Jews, Christians, Muslims: A Comparative Introduction to Monotheistic Religions*

M.A.S. Abdel Haleem, transl., *The Qur'an (Oxford World's Classics)*

Abraham Cohen, *Everyman's Talmud: The Major Teachings of the Rabbinic Sages*

Michael Collins, *The Story of Christianity: 2000 Years of Faith*

Course Requirements

Course Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Policy

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: [I reserve the right to make discretionary changes to the course format as presented in this syllabus.]

Attendance & Participation: Regular class attendance and participation is expected of all students. To facilitate participation, students should have assigned readings completed before the day of discussion in class, in accordance with the schedule outlined below. Students will be called on during class, and participation in discussions will be advantageous. Due to the nature of the material, it is advisable for students to keep up with the readings to gain the most benefit from classroom activities.

Quizzes & Research Paper: There will be regular quizzes on the sections covered. Additionally, a **research paper (10 pages)** will be required, the topic to be decided in consultation with the instructor. Students will submit the topic of the paper according to the schedule shown below. Grading will be based on performance, including deductions for late and incomplete assignments. Be aware from the outset that grades must be earned, and that substandard work will merit a substandard grade.

Biography Project: The Biography Project is to be accomplished in two stages. It will first involve your choosing an historical individual, active in the religious history of one of the religions studied. Your choice must be approved by me in writing. It is necessary, therefore, for students to submit to me a document containing the name of the person of interest, and a short paragraph outlining his or her accomplishments. This document is due in class as indicated on the schedule. Secondly, you will write a full, yet concise, **biography** of the person (**10 pages**). The biography should be a critical analysis of the person's life and accomplishments, and of your own creation. Copying biographical information from a book or Wikipedia or other internet sites or AI isn't much of a project and requires no skill on your part.

PAPER GUIDELINES: Both the research paper and the biography should conform to the following:

MLA format (see the following site for specifics:

<https://www.scribbr.com/mla/formatting/>); a **thesis statement** at the beginning outlining the theme of the paper; **body of the paper** with subsections where appropriate;

citations indicating author & page of source used for information in the paper; a **conclusion** summing up and echoing the direction of the paper as outlined in the thesis

statement; a **works cited page** (bibliography) in MLA format, including approximately 3-5 sources (a guideline) indicating where the student obtained information for

the content of the paper. **Proposals** for both the theme paper and the biography should be submitted on the respective dates indicated on the schedule below.

EVALUATION:

Attendance, Class Participation: 10%

Initial Impressions: 5%

Map Exercise: 5%

Biography Project: 20%
Tests (Total of seven: 5% each): 35%
Theme Paper (Proposal 5% / Final Version 20%): 25%

Required or Recommended Reading Assignments

See General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture below

General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture or Discussion

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

Week Content Readings Quizzes, Papers, etc.

1/7,9 Introduction to Western Religion Jews, Christians, Muslims, Preface

1/14,16 Monotheistic Religions

ZOROASTRIANISM

1/21,23 JUDAISM *Early History* ET Foreword, Preface ZOR Quiz (1/21)

JUDAISM *The Second Temple Period* ET Ch. I (I-VI); Ch. II (II, IV)

1/28,30 JUDAISM *Enter the Romans* ET Ch. III (I,II,III); Ch. IV (II,III) **RESEARCH PAPER**

PROPOSAL DUE (1/28)

JUDAISM *Jews Under Islam & Christianity* ET Ch. V (I,II,III,IV,V); Ch.VI(I,II) JUD Quiz 1 (1/30)

2/4,6 JUDAISM *The Modern Period* ET Ch. VII (I-VIII); Ch. VIII (I,II)

JUDAISM *Life Cycle Events* ET Ch. IX (I,IV,V); Ch.Xa (I, II,IV)

2/11,13 JUDAISM DISCUSSION ET Ch. Xb (VI,IX,XI); Ch. XI(I-IV) JUD Quiz 2 (2/11)

CHRISTIANITY *Origins* MAP EXERCISE DUE

(2/13)

2/18,20 CHRISTIANITY *Authority in the Early Church* SOC 7-55

CHRISTIANITY *Development of Orthodoxy* SOC 56-79

2/25,27 CHRISTIANITY *Practice* SOC 80-103

CHRISTIANITY *Eastern Orthodoxy* SOC 104-127 CHR Quiz 1 (2/27)

3/4,6 CHRISTIANITY *Medieval Christianity* SOC 128-153

CHRISTIANITY *Early Modern Period* SOC 154-171 **BIOGRAPHY**

PROPOSAL DUE (3/6)

3/10-15 *SPRING BREAK*

3/18,20 CHRISTIANITY *Modern Era* SOC 172-229

CHRISTIANITY DISCUSSION CHR Quiz 2 (3/20)

3/25,27 ISLAM *Scripture & Tradition* Q Intro-Section 3 **RESEARCH PAPER**

ISLAM *Monotheism* Q Sec 4-7 **DUE (3/25)**

4/1,3 ISLAM *Authority* Q Sec 8-13

ISLAM *Worship & Ritual* Q Sec 14-23

4/8,10 ISLAM *Ethics* Q Sec 24-34 ISL Quiz 1 (4/8)

ISLAM *Material Culture* Q Sec 35-50

4/15,17 ISLAM *Religion & Political Order* Q Sec 51-114

ISLAM DISCUSSION ISL Quiz 2 (4/17)

4/22 BAHAI' *BIOGRAPHY DUE*

Book Abbreviations: ET: *Everyman's Talmud* SOC: *The Story of Christianity* Q: *The Qur'an*

Required Course Syllabus Statements

Generative AI

The Department of Philosophy and Humanities recognizes that Artificial

Intelligence and Natural Language Processing Tools are largely accessible to students and will be used by many in higher education for the foreseeable future. However, the skills taught in the humanities are unique. We aim to educate students in the careful reading of texts, the development of rigorous writing skills, the analysis and use of arguments, and to foster the thoughtful application of each of these skills in students' personal and social development. Research has not yet determined what bearing the use of AI tools in the classroom will have upon the successful acquisition of these skills.

Therefore, at this time, online learning support platforms (like ChatGPT or Google Bard) may not be used for course assignments in our department except as explicitly authorized by the instructor. Any assignment or content composed by any resource other than the student (whether human or digital) must be attributed to the source through proper citation. Unacknowledged use of online learning support platforms is a form of scholastic dishonesty and will be treated as such.

Some of our language has been adapted from the University of Minnesota

Using Remote Testing Software

This course does not use remote testing software.

This course uses remote testing software. Remote test-takers may choose their remote testing locations. Please note, however, that the testing software used for this may conduct a brief scan of remote test-takers' immediate surroundings, may require use of a webcam while taking an exam, may require the microphone be on while taking an exam, or may require other practices to confirm academic honesty. Test-takers therefore shall have no expectation of privacy in their test-taking location during, or immediately preceding, remote testing. If a student strongly objects to using test-taking software, the student should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to determine whether alternative testing arrangements are feasible. Alternatives are not guaranteed.

Required University Syllabus Statements

Accommodations/Students with Disabilities

Students needing accommodations due to a permanent or temporary disability, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions may contact UVU [Accessibility Services](#) at accessibilityservices@uvu.edu or 801-863-8747.

Accessibility Services is located on the Orem Campus in BA 110.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing students requesting ASL interpreters or transcribers can contact Accessibility Services to set up accommodations. Deaf/Hard of Hearing services can be contacted at DHHservices@uvu.edu

DHH is located on the Orem Campus in BA 112.

Academic Integrity

At Utah Valley University, faculty and students operate in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Maintaining an atmosphere of academic integrity allows for free exchange of ideas and enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential. Our goal is to foster an intellectual atmosphere that produces scholars of integrity and imaginative thought. In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged and UVU students are expected to produce their own original academic work.

Faculty and students share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at UVU. Students have a responsibility to promote academic integrity at the university by not participating in or facilitating others' participation in any act of academic dishonesty. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their [rights and responsibilities](#). In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, assessments, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Likewise, instructors are responsible to clearly state expectations and model best practices.

Further information on what constitutes academic dishonesty is detailed in [UVU Policy 541: Student Code of Conduct](#).

Equity and Title IX

Utah Valley University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age (40 and over), disability, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth, or pregnancy-related conditions, citizenship, genetic information, or other basis protected by applicable law, including Title IX and 34 C.F.R. Part 106, in employment, treatment, admission, access to educational programs and activities, or other University benefits or services. Inquiries about nondiscrimination at UVU may be directed to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights or UVU's Title IX Coordinator at 801-863-7999 – TitleIX@uvu.edu – 800 W University Pkwy, Orem, 84058, Suite BA 203.

Religious Accommodation

UVU values and acknowledges the array of worldviews, faiths, and religions represented in our student body, and as such provides supportive accommodations for students. Religious belief or conscience broadly includes religious, non-religious, theistic, or non-theistic moral or ethical beliefs as well as participation in religious holidays, observances, or activities. Accommodations may include scheduling or due-date modifications or make-up assignments for missed class work.

To seek a religious accommodation, a student must provide written notice to the instructor and the Director of Accessibility Services at accessibilityservices@uvu.edu. If the accommodation relates to a scheduling conflict, the notice should include the date, time, and brief description of the difficulty posed by the conflict. Such requests should be made as soon as the student is aware of the prospective scheduling conflict.

While religious expression is welcome throughout campus, UVU also has a [specially dedicated space](#) for meditation, prayer, reflection, or other forms of religious expression.