REL 100: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam

Spring 2015

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Meeting Times: MWF 11:00-11:50  
Classroom: PAC 210  
Office hours: Tues 9-11, Wed. 3-5 and by appointment

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the religious beliefs, practices, history and value systems of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. We will examine the origins, development, and spread of each tradition. This will include learning about important leaders such as Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad; analyzing selections from the sacred scriptures of the three religions and exploring the function of these scriptures in religious life. We will also look at the way each tradition is practiced in everyday life, examining religious rituals, ethical systems, and diversity within the religious tradition.

This class is meets the C2 Lower Division Humanities requirement in the Ethics, Justice, and Social Policy Pathway. It will meet several GE SLOs, such as written communication (there will be short weekly papers and two short research papers), active inquiry (everyone will undertake a research project) and diversity (we will explore multiple perspectives and viewpoints within and outside the three religious traditions).

Course Texts

Theodore Ludwig, Sacred Paths of the West, 3rd edition. (The second edition is also fine, though the assigned page numbers will be different). There are 3 copies of this text on reserve in limited loan in the library.

A number of other readings (most of the readings for the class, including the majority of readings for homework assignments) are available as .pdf or word files on Blackboard. Some days you will be required to print these readings out and bring them to class to get attendance credit for that day—these days are noted in the calendar at the end of the syllabus.

Course Requirements and Grades

Participation: 10% (100 points)  
Homework/Quizzes 18% (180 points)  
Exams: 50% (500 points)  
Research Project: 22% (220 points)

Internet access is required for this class, as all homework assignments will be turned in online.

Grading will be on a 1000 point scale. 935 or more points, A; 895-934 points, A-; 875-894 points, B+; 835-874 points, B; 795-834 points, B-; 775-794 points, C+; 735-774 points, C; 695-734 points, C-; 675-694 points, D+; 595-674 points, D; below 595, F.
PLEASE NOTE that I will not be posting grades on blackboard for items you submit a physical copy of (e.g. exams, group papers). I will give you these back in class and it is your responsibility to keep track of your grades. **The points on Blackboard only encompass items actually graded on Blackboard (i.e. homework assignments).**

**Explanation of Course Requirements**

1. **Participation (10%, 100 possible points)**

Regular attendance is essential for your success in this class. I will take attendance during the semester, and students who miss more than 3 classes will begin to lose points from their participation grade.

Your participation grade will also be based on your actual participation in class discussion. Good discussions require that participants be prepared, ask questions, make contributions to the conversation, and listen attentively to others in the class. I will also take into account your participation in small-group discussion exercises as part of this grade. If you are texting, reading Facebook or playing games on your computer, or otherwise impolite in class, this will negatively affect your participation grade.

If you regularly come in late or leave early, this will negatively impact your participation grade. If you have a serious and compelling reason to leave class early, please let me know in advance. It is your responsibility to make sure I know you were in class if you arrive after attendance has been taken.

2. **Homework and quizzes (18%, 180 possible points)**

Approximately sixteen times during the semester, we will have an interactive discussion of the readings. In order for these discussions to be successful, it is essential that everyone has read the assigned material and reflected on it. Throughout the calendar of required readings you will find HOMEWORK QUESTIONS. These questions are due by the start of class on the date they are listed in the syllabus, and should be turned in via the Blackboard assignments tool (not email). Responses to questions should be 1-3 paragraphs in length (150-250 words).

Homework questions will be worth 10 points each. If you submit an assignment late, you will receive half-credit for it—this will be true even if you are sick or have to miss class for a university-sponsored event. In both cases you should still submit the assignment by the due date online. If Blackboard goes down, email me at plennon@csuchico.edu and let me know that, and I will give the whole class an extension. The last day to submit late homework for half-credit will be **May 8**.

When I grade homework assignments, I am looking for four things: (a) Does this assignment make clear that you read the assigned material? (b) Have you attempted to answer the questions assigned? Be sure to respond to all of the questions, if there is more than one? (c) Does your response follow the rules of grammar/good writing? (d) Does your response demonstrate that you comprehended the material? You will probably not lose many (or any) points for (d) if it is clear that you have made a good-faith effort to understand the assigned reading, even if you don’t fully understand it. Please do not be tempted to find answers on Wikipedia or other websites if you don’t fully understand the readings—plagiarism may result in you failing the entire class, which is much worse than losing a point or two because you didn’t quite understand the reading.
There will also be a quiz on the syllabus worth 10 points. The syllabus quiz, which is due by 11:59 pm on January 30, is available on Blackboard under the “Homework assignments and quizzes” folder.

3. Exams  50% (500 possible exam points)

There will be three exams in this course, one for each religious tradition. The exams will have an objective component and an essay component. Part of the final exam will be comparative. Exams cannot be made up except in cases of severe illness or other significant emergencies (e.g. death in the family), and you must notify me in advance if you must miss an exam for these reasons.

Exam I, Judaism: 15% (150 points)
Exam II, Christianity: 15% (150 points)
Exam III, Islam and cumulative questions: 20% (200 points)

4. Research project  22% (220 possible points)

The research project involves researching a specific topic and writing two papers during the course of the semester.

You have two options for the research project:
(A) Scripture option: You may select a significant historical figure in the Bible or the Quran (e.g. Noah, Sarah, Joseph, Moses, David, Mary, Jesus, Muhammad, etc.) and explore how that person’s story has been interpreted in the tradition itself and in popular culture.

(B) Religious community option: You may research one of the religious traditions we’re studying in more detail by doing background research on the community and either interviewing a member or attending a service from that community. Note that you can’t study a community you are currently a member of.

Each option will involve writing a proposal and two shorter papers, described below. The first paper will be a basic overview of the beliefs and major rituals of the community you’re studying; the second paper will be a report either on a religious ritual from the community you observed, or an interview with a member of that religious community.

Calendar:

1. Interest survey to see which option you’re thinking of choosing on February 6.

2. Paper proposal, due March 6 (20 points).

The proposal should be 1-2 paragraphs long plus three sources in correct bibliographic format (MLA or APA style).

If you’re choosing the scripture option, list the person from the Quran/Bible you’ll be focusing on, the popular culture source you’ll be analyzing, and at least three sources: the passage from the Bible or the Quran; an academic/reference source on your Biblical/Quranic figure, and a review of your pop culture text (e.g. a movie review).
If you’re choosing the religious community option, list the specific religious tradition you’re studying (e.g. Sunni Islam, Presbyterian Christianity, Reform Judaism), and then either the name of the person you’re interviewing or the religious community whose service you will be observing. Remember you can’t interview immediate family members, and you can’t observe a religious service of a community you’re a member of. You should also list two sources on the religious tradition’s history and practices, such as the community or denominations’ website, and an academic source on the community, such as an encyclopedia article (see below for suggestions).

3. First paper due, March 23 (100 points), 2-4 pages.

A. If you’re doing the scripture option, your Academic and insider approaches to the story paper is due. In addition to the text from the Bible or Quran, you will need at least 2 sources for this paper: an academic/reference source on your Biblical/Quranic figure and an “insider” source on your Biblical/Quranic figure (this could be a sermon or essay by a theologian in the Jewish, Christian, or Muslim tradition). The paper should draw on your reference source to give some context for the person’s story you’re analyzing (e.g. who was King David and how was he significant in the Jewish tradition); then you should briefly summarize the actual scriptural story (e.g. explaining the battle of David and Goliath as it is described in 1 Samuel 17); and compare the story itself to the way it is interpreted by your insider source. For example, you might explain that in the Jewish rabbi’s essay on David that you found, the important point of the David and Goliath story is to illustrate that God is on the side of the weak. Be sure to cite your sources both in the text and in a works cited page. More complete guidelines are available on Blackboard.

B: If you’re doing the religious community option, your religious beliefs and practices paper is due. This paper should give an overview of your religious community’s beliefs and practices (especially those practices connected to the ritual you will be observing, or specific practices you’ll be asking about in the interview, such as dietary rules). You need a minimum of 2 sources for this paper: one insider source (e.g. the synagogue/church/mosque/denomination’s website) and an academic/reference source (this can be an encyclopedia article from a source like The Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience, a library book or a scholarly journal article). If your insider website doesn’t directly address appropriate behavior for guests attending religious services, I’d also recommend you look at Magida’s How To Be A Perfect Stranger, The Essential Religious Etiquette Handbook, which is on reserve in limited loan). Be sure to cite your sources both in the text and in a works cited page. More complete guidelines are available on Blackboard.

4. Second paper due, April 27 (100 points), 3-5 pages

A. If you’re doing the scripture option, the scriptural stories in popular culture paper is due (3-5 pages). You need at least three sources for this paper: the popular culture text itself (e.g. film, children’s book, novel) and at least two reviews of the film/book. The paper should briefly summarize the plot of the film/novel (summary should be no more than one-third of the total length of the paper), compare it to the text of the original story in the Bible/Quran, and talk about what sort of adaptations have been made and how you interpret those adaptations. For example, if you were writing on Dave and the Giant Pickle, you might talk about how the film understandably downplays the violence of the Biblical story of David and Goliath since it is intended for children, but that might also lead you to talk about broader questions about violence in the Bible. More thorough guidelines for this paper are available on Blackboard.

B. If you’re doing the religious community option, the ritual observation paper/interview paper, 3-5 pages, is due. (There are more extended guidelines for both options on Blackboard). If you choose the ritual observation paper, your paper should describe the ritual you attended, including the physical setting (such as the architecture of the church/synagogue/mosque), the elements of
the ritual (physical gestures, readings, speeches, physical gestures, etc) and the participants in
the ritual (demographics, actions, etc.) Please don’t take notes during an actual religious service!
See the guidelines on Blackboard for more information. If you choose the interview paper, you
will need to find a member of the community to interview—this doesn’t have to be the religious
leader! You will also need to get a signed informed consent statement and attach it to your paper
to get credit for it. There is a set of suggested interview questions available on Blackboard,
though feel free to add to them. The paper should summarize your interview with the religious
community member and include a few paragraphs on what you learned from the interview.

Some sources for research:

A. For the religious community option
On our class Blackboard page, under “Resources for the research project,” there are many
sources, such as a list of local Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities, if you’re looking for
one to visit.

The reference section of the library contains many excellent sources on religion; I especially
recommend starting with the Encyclopedia of American Religions (Reference BL 2530 U6 M443
1993); the Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience (Reference BL 2525 E53 1988)
or the Encyclopedia of Religion (reference section BL 31 E46 1987). For guidelines on what to
expect during a religious service, a good introduction is Arthur Magida, How to Be a Perfect
Stranger, which is available on reserve in limited loan.

For online sources, you may use the community’s own website or the official denominational
website, but any other websites require permission from the instructor. Many sites are very
unreliable or written from the perspective of people hostile to the religious traditions they
describe, so it is important that you check with the instructor before using websites as major
sources.

You can access many scholarly journals online through the library website here:
http://www.csuchico.edu/lref/guides/rbn/index.htm Academic Search, the ATLA Religion
Database, and JSTOR are both generally good sources for material on religion. Please be sure
that you look at journal articles rather than book reviews!

A good place to find short online films about different American religious groups is
www.thearda.com --especially their youtube channel; the direct link is
http://www.thearda.com/learningcenter/learningResources/youtubep.asp?ID=72&g=Jewish&t=Vid
eo%201,%20pt.%201&v=00jqC2d9DzA#Watch

B. For the scripture option:

In selecting a popular culture text, here are some movies dealing with people/stories from the
Bible and the Quran:

Movies connected to people or stories from the Bible and the Quran
• Noah (The 2013 film which draws on Biblical and rabbinic accounts of Noah’s story)
• Evan Almighty (roughly based on the Biblical Noah story)
• Joseph, King of Dreams (Joseph—an animated film based on the Biblical story of
Joseph)
• Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat (musical based on the Biblical story of
Joseph)
• The Ten Commandments (Moses—based on the Biblical story of Moses)
• Prince of Egypt (Moses—animated film based on the Biblical story of Moses)
• Exodus: Gods and Kings (the 2013 film based on the Biblical story of Moses)
• Kings (TV series roughly based on the stories of Saul, David and Jonathan)
• Kingdom of Solomon (an Iranian film based on the Quranic story of Solomon)
• Jonah: A Veggie Tales Movie (an animated film based on the Biblical story of Jonah)
• Monty Python’s Life of Brian (a satirical film about a man often mistaken for Jesus)
• Godspell (a musical roughly based on the Gospel of Matthew)
• Passion of the Christ (Jesus + various other New Testament figures)
• Jesus Christ Superstar (An American musical about Jesus, Judas, Peter, Mary Magdalene)
• Jesus of Montreal (Jesus)
• Last Temptation of Christ (Jesus, Mary Magdalene—based on a novel by a Greek Orthodox author which is roughly based on Biblical accounts of Jesus’ life)
• Saint Mary (an Iranian film based on the Quranic version of Mary’s life)
• The Message (based on the prophet Muhammad’s life)
• The Messiah (an Iranian film based on the Quranic version of Jesus’ life)

For film reviews, I’d suggest starting at www.metacritic.com, though for more obscure films you may need to look at religious blog sites. For classic films, you may be able to find reviews at the Journal of Religion and film website here: http://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/jrf/

For resources on the scriptures themselves, here are some sources:

• Biblegateway.com (for different translations of the Bible)
• Quran.com (for an online translation of the Quran)
• The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Books of the Bible (Reference BS 440. O93 2011)
• The Interpreter’s Bible (Reference BS 491.2 I55)
• Encyclopedia of the Quran (Reference, BP 133.E53 2001)
• The Quran, An Encyclopedia (Reference BP133.Q87)
• Bart Ehrman, Introduction to the New Testament (on reserve in limited loan; go to http://opac.csuchico.edu/search/r and enter “Lennon” or “RELS 100” to find the call number, and then give it to the circulation desk and tell them it’s on reserve. You can check this out for 2 hours).
• John Kaltner, Ishamel Instructs Isaac: An Introduction to the Quran for Bible readers on reserve in limited loan; go to http://opac.csuchico.edu/search/r and enter “Lennon” or “RELS 100” to find the call number, and then give it to the circulation desk and tell them it’s on reserve. You can check this out for 2 hours.

General Guidelines for writing assignments

• Students are required to keep a copy of all written assignments submitted to me, and to resubmit written work if I request it.

• Please submit homework assignments through the appropriate Blackboard assignments tool, not through campus email or Blackboard email. Either attach your assignment (as a Word document or a pdf) or click on “write submission” and type directly into that box. Please don’t submit your homework in the comment field!
• All written assignments that you turn in hard copies of (e.g. the group papers) should be typed, double-spaced, on standard 8 1/2 by 11 paper. Margins should be one inch on all sides. Please use a 12 point font. All assignments should include your name, class and section number, the day the assignment is due, and the title of your paper. A title page is not necessary. All assignments must be stapled! If you turn in an assignment in which the pages are not stapled together, I accept no responsibility for lost pages. Please do NOT turn in assignments in binders or plastic covers.

• All assignments should be accompanied by a bibliography or works cited page, in addition to citations you use in the text. Also, I may require you to submit some papers to Turnitin.com. If I do this, there will be a link to Turnitin on the Blackboard class page.

• Any instance of plagiarism or other academic dishonesty (e.g. copying someone else’s test) will result in an “F” for the course and a report of academic misconduct submitted to Student Judicial Affairs. If you borrow the ideas of others in composing your written work, they must be cited; if you borrow the words of others, they must be enclosed in quotation marks and cited. If you have any doubts as to whether or not something needs to be cited, play it safe and cite it—or ask me about it. Any standard citation format (MLA, APA, etc.) is fine.

• Please note that material from the internet is still someone else’s work, and must be cited appropriately! If you are unsure of how to do this properly, consult the following website: http://www.csuchico.edu/engl/Links/style_guide.html

• If you are having health or work problems or personal crises which might tempt you to plagiarize, please talk to me. In some cases, I may be able to make accommodations for your situation; in other cases, I may advise you to take the late penalty (half credit for homework assignments or 20% off other papers). Students who plagiarize on more than one occasion will be expelled from the university. In the long run, it is far better to receive a lower grade (or even a failing grade) than to jeopardize your entire academic career.

Americans with Disabilities Act
If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know this as soon as possible (within the first two weeks of the semester). Please also contact Accessibility Resource Center (530-898-5959, Student Services Center 170, arcdept@csuchico.edu) as they are the designated department responsible for approving and coordinating reasonable accommodations and services for students with disabilities. ARC will help you understand your rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act and provide you further assistance with requesting and arranging accommodations.

Course Calendar and Required Readings
• Please note that this schedule is subject to change if necessary.
• “Ludwig” refers to Theodore Ludwig, Sacred Paths of the West
• “Blackboard” refers to essays available on Blackboard Learn.

PLEASE NOTE: ALL READINGS AND HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY THE DAY THEY ARE LISTED ON THE SYLLABUS.
INTRODUCTION

1/21: Introduction to the Class
Syllabus Quiz. (Available on Blackboard) You have until January 30 to complete this, since people will be adding and dropping for the first two weeks, but I strongly suggest you take it today while the information is still fresh in your mind.

1/23: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: Similarities and Differences
Homework Assignment: Bring a passport size photo of yourself (e.g. a color copy of your driver’s license/student ID). You won’t get this back.

1/26: Studying Religion: A Religious Studies Approach
Reading: Ludwig 3-25.

1/28: Methods and ethical considerations in studying religion

Homework question: According to the readings, what are some important ethical issues to keep in mind when you’re studying people as part of a research project? (Write about a paragraph on this)

REMEmber that homework assignments are always due the date they are listed, so this question is due on January 28 by the start of class, not the class afterward. Turn it in via Blackboard.

1/30: Abraham in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Syllabus quiz must be completed by 11:59 p.m. today.
Readings: Biblical and Quranic passages on Abraham (Blackboard)

Homework question: Write 2-3 sentences on each of these questions: (1) What are some important events in the life of Abraham? (2) What similarities and differences did you see in the Biblical and Quranic accounts of the life of Abraham?

NOTE: Be sure to bring the readings with you to class today (a printout or a laptop).

2/2: Scripture and its interpretation in History: Lecture
Reading: James Kugel, “Samuel and Saul,” (Blackboard).
Film: Dave and the Giant Pickle

2/4: Scripture and its interpretation in history: Discussion
Readings: Accounts of King David, especially the David and Goliath story, from scripture and later traditions (Blackboard)

Homework question: The film we watched gave a Christian interpretation of the David and Goliath story; today’s readings gives the Biblical and Quranic versions of that story, as well as some later Muslim and Jewish interpretations of that story. (1) How does the film compare to the biblical account of the story? Why do you think the filmmakers made the changes they did? (1-2 paragraphs). (2) Pick at least 2 of the other perspectives in today’s readings or the Feb. 2 reading and compare them to the biblical version of the story: what similarities and differences do you see? (1-2 paragraphs)

NOTE: Be sure to bring today’s readings to class, either printed out or on a laptop.
UNIT ONE: JUDAISM


2/11: Torah and Talmud: Foundations for Jewish law and ethics
Reading: Ludwig, 134-140; Jacob Neusner, “The essentials of rabbinic literature,” (Blackboard)
Homework question: Why, according to the Mishnah and Talmud, does “an eye for an eye” not literally mean “an eye for an eye”? How does the Jewish tradition suggest the issue of personal injuries should be settled? Turn this in via Blackboard.

2/13: Film on Jewish ritual
Reading: Ludwig, 127-134.

Homework question: How, according to Greenberg, does the Sabbath embody fundamental Jewish values? What does it teach Jews about how to live? (Note that “Shabbat” is Hebrew for Sabbath, the Jewish day of rest). Turn this in via Blackboard.

2/18: Varieties of Judaism I. Reading: Ludwig, 106-114, Lis Harris, Selections from Holy Days: The World of A Hasidic Family (Blackboard).

2/20: Varieties of Judaism II
Be sure to bring the Furman reading and the Pittsburgh Platform to class with you.
Homework question: Why did yarmulkes become a controversial issue in the Reform synagogue? How does the debate over yarmulkes described in the Furman essay connect to basic values in the Reform Jewish tradition?

2/23: Varieties of Judaism III
Reading: Samuel Heilman, “Orthodoxy in an American Synagogue,” (Blackboard)

Readings: Letty and Abigail Pogrebin, “You are a Woman” meant ‘You do the dishes’” (Blackboard).
Homework question: What experiences drove Letty Pogrebin from the practice of Judaism? Why did she return? What does her story tell us about changing status of women in Conservative Judaism in the 1950s and today?

2/27: Judaism Exam.

UNIT TWO: CHRISTIANITY

3/2: Origins and Sacred Story: Jesus.
Reading: Ludwig, 143-150. Optional: The Gospel of Mark (Recommended if you don’t know much about the life of Jesus). (Blackboard)
Film: Frontline: From Jesus to Christ, part 1
3/4: Stories about Jesus, Paul, and the early Christian Community

Homework questions: 1. What do we learn about Jesus from these readings? (About one paragraph) 2. How do the characterizations of Jesus differ in the non-canonical and canonical accounts of his life? (All the readings are canonical except the Infancy Gospel of Thomas).

Note: Be sure to bring today’s readings to class, either printed out or on a laptop.

3/6: Scripture and early institution building in Christianity
Reading: Ludwig 151-159

3/9: Christianity East and West
Reading: Ludwig, 157-159.

Reading: Ludwig 179-186; Jean Comby, “The Development of Worship and the progress of evangelization,” (Blackboard)

3/13: Christians and conflict. Film: The crusades
Reading: Ludwig 159-161.

3/23: The origin of the Protestant Reformation: Luther’s revolt. RESEARCH PAPER 1 Due today
Reading: Reading: Ludwig, 161-166; 173-178; “Luther’s Protest Against Indulgences;” “Jesus v. the Pope;” “Stout Martin Luther” and “I Will Not Recant” (Blackboard).


Homework question: How and why has Christian worship changed throughout Christian history? In responding to this question, you must talk about the “ritual revolution” (Protestant Reformation) and at least one other period of Christian history described in the essay.

Reading: Charles Finney, “Conversion to Christ;” Mary Jo Weaver, “Modern American Christianity.”(Blackboard)

Homework question: Pick one of the new branches of Christianity in America Weaver discusses and write a paragraph about what was distinctive about it.

3/30: Varieties of Christianity in America
Reading: “New Forms of Christianity in America” (Blackboard)

4/1: Contemporary controversies in Christianity: Gender and sexuality.
Reading: Angela Bonavoglia, “The Revolt of the Benedictines” (Blackboard); Ludwig, 165-166, 186-193. Optional reading: “Selections from The Inclusive Language Lectionary” (Blackboard); “Christians and the Political Order” (Blackboard)

4/3: Christianity Exam

UNIT THREE: ISLAM

4/6: Origin and Sacred Story: Muhammad.
Readings: Ludwig, 196-204; Diana Eck, “American Muslims: Cousins and Strangers.” (Blackboard).
4/8: Early Muslim history
Readings: Ludwig, 204-207.

4/10: The Quran
Readings: Ludwig, 220-229; Selections from “Approaching the Quran;” Robert E. Van Voorst, “Islam” (Blackboard)
Homework question: The readings from "Approaching the Quran" are all passages from some of the earliest revelations to Muhammad. What are 2 or 3 themes/ issues discussed in these passages? Do they tell us anything about Islam or the Muslim community? (Also: be sure to bring the readings to class, printed out or on a laptop, though you can omit the introductory material in "Islam" if you’re printing them out.)

4/13: The Quran in Muslim belief and practice.
Readings: Hesham Hassaballa, “What the Quran Really Says about violence (Blackboard)


4/17: Pilgrimage in Muslim Life: The Hajj.
Readings: Reshma Memon Yaqub, “Hajj: The journey of a lifetime;” Malcolm X, excerpts on the hajj from his autobiography, (Blackboard)
Homework question: For both Yaqub and Malcolm X, the hajj was a peak experience in their lives. What does each author have to say about how the hajj embodies core ethical principles in Islam? How did it change their lives?

4/20: Shariah: the foundation for Muslim law and values.
Readings: Ludwig, 207-211; 238-244; Case Study for the Discussion of Shariah (Blackboard)
Homework question: We will do an in-class exercise on the “Case Study for the Discussion of Shariah” that will count for your homework points. Be sure to read it over before coming to class, and be sure to print it out and bring it to class. If you miss class you can submit responses to the questions in the reading on Blackboard for half-credit.

Readings: Hasan, “Sufism: A Rich Mystical tradition” and Irving Karchmar, excerpts from “Master of the Jinn." (Both on Blackboard); Optional: “Sufism: Biographies of Sufi Women” (Blackboard); Ludwig 209-221.
Homework question: The first reading is a general overview of Sufism; the second is from a novel about Sufi mystical experience; it tells the story of an initiation of a woman into a Sufi order, during which many stories are told that illustrate the ideals of Sufi life Based on these two selections, what seem to be some of the values of Sufism?

4/24: Islam and the modern world: Shi'ism
Readings: “Religion and the Political Order in Islam” (Blackboard).


4/29: Gender and Islam
Reading: Asma Gull Hasan, “American Muslim Women: Between Two Worlds; "My Body is My Own Business " (Blackboard).
Homework question: (Note that the Hasan reading has two parts; the part that deals with hijab is mainly in the section called “Hijab in America: Why Westerners won’t understand.” Also note that the second essay is actually by Naheed Mustafa, though it is excerpted in a book by Ann Braude.) What stereotypes do most Americans have about women wearing hijab? What are
some of the defenses and criticisms of hijab, according to the readings? Can wearing hijab be a feminist act?

5/1: Islam, colonialism, and modernity.

5/4: Israeli-Palestinian relations: Promises.

5/6: Israeli-Palestinian relations: Promises

5/8: Promises discussion

**Homework question:** What are some of the arguments made by the children in the film (Daniel and Yarko, the Israeli twins; Faraj and Sanabel, the two Palestinian children living in the Deheishe refugee camp; Moishe, the Jewish boy living in the Occupied territories settlement; Schlomo, the Jewish boy attending Yeshiva; and Mahmoud, the Palestinian boy who lives in Jerusalem) make for their position on whose land Israel/Palestine should be? Based on the children’s positions and interactions, what do you think are the possibilities for a peaceful resolution?

5/11: FINAL EXAM in the regular classroom at noon.

**This syllabus is subject to revision if necessary.**