

History/Religious Studies 230; Jewish Studies 231  
Fall, 2015  
MW 11:00-11:50, Vilas 4028  
Sections: 301 - W 3:30-4:20, Humanities 2111  
302 - W 12:05-12:55, Humanities 2131  
303 - W 1:20-2:10, Humanities 2131  
304 - W 2:25-3:15, Humanities 2221  
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## **BRAIDED HISTORIES: JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, ISLAM**

One Abraham, three faiths. This course offers a braided history of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, whose relationships have been both close and vexed, and whose practitioners have simultaneously acknowledged their kinship as “Children of Abraham” while to magnifying their differences.

The following readings are required and are available at the University Bookstore:

Karen Armstrong, *A History of God: The 4,000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*  
F. E. Peters, *Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: Vol. 1: From Covenant to Community*  
*Vol. 2: The Word and the Law and the People of God*

Additional readings are available in E-Reserves at the College Library. You can find E-Reserves in your MyUW account. For information, see <http://www.library.wisc.edu/college/services-at-college/reserves/>.

### **Course Webpage on Learn@UW**

The syllabus, lecture outlines, and other materials are available at Learn@UW (<https://learnuw.wisc.edu/>). You will need your NetID and password to enter. Please check the site routinely for materials and news.

### **Writing-Intensive Course**

History/Religious Studies 230/Jewish Studies 231 is a writing-intensive course aiming to promote your compositional skill as well as enhance your knowledge of the Abrahamic religions. You will pen something most weeks, although the majority of the assignments will be quite brief.

### **Assignments**

You should begin the week’s reading assignment by the beginning of each week’s lectures and complete it before your discussion section. You are expected to attend and participate in all section discussions. The major written assignments consist of two 3-4-page papers and a final 5-6-page paper. Papers must be typed and doubled-spaced; they are due in lecture at the beginning of class on the **Mondays** indicated. Please note that you have two sets of two options; you must choose either Option 1.1 or 1.2 *and* either Option 2.1 or 2.2. Minor assignments are due on the **Wednesdays** indicated; they too must be typed, doubled-spaced. Page 5 *infra* lists the paper topics, minor assignments, and due dates. Please include your section number along with your name at the top of the first page of all assignments. The TA will assess the papers and final exam, and I will assess the minor assignments.

### **Paper Presentation and Writing Aids**

Papers should follow the guidelines for presentation set out in the Style Sheet on my webpage ([http://faculty.history.wisc.edu/cohen/style\\_sheet.pdf](http://faculty.history.wisc.edu/cohen/style_sheet.pdf)) as well as the Course Materials section of the course page in Learn@UW. The Writing Aids section of my webpage provides examples of A papers and exemplary fifty-word sentences (<http://history.wisc.edu/cohen/writing.html>).

### Rewrite Policy

You may rewrite either or both of the major paper assignments. To initiate the process, you must inform your TA of your decision to rewrite by the end of the next class session after he and I return the original version. Schedule a meeting with him to discuss the changes to be made. Rewriting cannot lower your grade (nor can changing your mind about handing in a revised paper), but it does not by itself guarantee a higher one; to raise the grade, you must *substantially rework the essay*, following my comments *and* initiating your own improvements too. You will ordinarily receive one week after the meeting in which to rewrite. When you submit the new essay, the old draft (plus any separate sheet of comments) *must* accompany the new version. If a rewrite does receive a higher grade, you will be credited with that grade, not an average of the two marks. For an example of an original paper and its rewritten version, see <http://history.wisc.edu/cohen/writing.html>.

### Grading

Simplicity itself. The two major papers and class participation each count for 20% of the final grade. The final paper counts for 40%. Class participation will be evaluated on a combination of attendance and quality of discussion (which is not identical to quantity). The minor assignments will be ungraded, but failure to turn them in will lower your class participation grade.

### Classroom Comportment

After much soul-searching, I have decided to ban computers (except mine). Research shows that you will learn more by listening and taking notes selectively than by trying to type as much as you can. Too, how many times have you really been using your screen to watch YouTube, catch *Game of Thrones*, or check your online dating service? I thought so. Also, cell phones must be turned off; tweet on your own time.

### Disability Statement

This course is set up to include persons with disabilities. Please let me know if you need accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or assessments to enable your full participation. I will attempt to maintain confidentiality of the information you share with me.

### Academic Conduct Statement

I expect you to conform to the highest standards of academic integrity and conduct; for the University's policy on such matters, see <http://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/academic-integrity/>. For help in understanding what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it, see the Writing Center's site, <http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html>. The TA and I will also discuss these issues. If you have any questions at all about what constitutes proper conduct, I would be happy to speak with you.

Date	Lectures and Assignments
Sept. 2	Thinking About the Abrahamic Traditions
7	[Labor Day – no class]
9	Ancient Israel: Politics and God
	<b>Reading:</b> Armstrong, <i>History of God</i> , 3-39 <b>Minor Assignment:</b> #1
Sept. 14	Tanakh
[Rosh Hashanah]	

Date	Lectures and Assignments
16	Jews in the Greco-Roman World  <b>Reading:</b> Armstrong, <i>History of God</i> , 40-78; Peters, <i>Judaism, Christianity, and Islam</i> , 1.3-61
21	Second Temple Judaisms
23	The Greek Background to Christianity [Yom Kippur; Eid al-Adha] <b>Reading:</b> Peters, <i>Judaism, Christianity, and Islam</i> , 1.62-114 <b>Minor Assignment:</b> #2
28	Jesus
30	The New Testament  <b>Reading:</b> Armstrong, <i>History of God</i> , 79-106; Peters, <i>Judaism, Christianity, and Islam</i> , 1.115-81 <b>Minor Assignment:</b> #3
Oct. 5	Rabbinic Judaism  <b>Paper Option 1.1 Due</b>
7	Constructing Christianity  <b>Reading:</b> Armstrong, <i>History of God</i> , 107-31; Peters, <i>Judaism, Christianity, and Islam</i> , 2.157-86, 1.316-40
12	Early Jewish-Christian Relations
14	The Church and the Empire  <b>Reading:</b> Peters, <i>Judaism, Christianity, and Islam</i> , 1.249-99
19	Constantinople and Rome  <b>Paper Option 1.2 Due</b>
21	Muhammad  <b>Reading:</b> Armstrong, <i>History of God</i> , 132-69; Peters, <i>Judaism, Christianity, and Islam</i> , 1.182-248
26	The Qur'an
28	Abraham in the Three Traditions  <b>Reading:</b> Peters, <i>Judaism, Christianity, and Islam</i> , 2.3-71, 237-39; Gen. 21-22; Gal. 4.21-5.1; Qur'an 37.99-122 <b>Minor Assignment:</b> #4
2	Religion, Politics, and the Early Islamic State

## Date

## Lectures and Assignments

Nov. 4 Shi`ism

**Reading:** Peters, *Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, 1.341-95

9 Islam: Theology and Law

**Paper Option 2.1 Due**

11 Medieval Encounters I: The Crusades

**Reading:** Armstrong, *History of God*, 170-208; Peters, *Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, 3.263-327

16 Medieval Encounters II: Dhimmi and Al-Andalus

18 Mysticisms

**Reading:** Armstrong, *History of God*, 209-56; Peters, *Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, 2.143-44, 328-82

**Minor Assignment: #5**

23 The Second Great Schism

**Paper Option 2.2 Due**

25 The Enlightenment

**Reading:** Armstrong, *History of God*, 257-345

30 Reform and Revival in Islam and Judaism

Dec. 1 Religion in America I: The Revolutionary Settlement of Religion

**Reading:** Frank Lambert, *Founding Fathers ...* 236-64; Edwin Gaustad, *Neither King nor Prelate*, 141-58; Matthew Harris and Thomas Kidd, *The Founding Fathers and the Debate Over Religion*, 40-50

**Minor Assignment: #6**

7 Religion in America II: Jews and Muslims in Christian America

9 Modern Encounters

**Reading:** Armstrong, *History of God*, 346-99

14 The Abrahamic Present

18 **Final Paper Due**

## Paper Topics

In writing these essays, you should draw on the lectures, discussions and class readings (*particularly the primary sources*), making specific statements firmly rooted in the evidence, using quotations whenever applicable, and evaluating the arguments of all “authorities” (including me). You may of course draw on materials from outside the course but are not required to do so. You may choose another topic if the suggested ones bore, fatigue or disorient you, but you must consult with your TA *before* so proceeding.

- Option 1.1 - **Due October 5.** Considering the positions contemporaries took on such matters as the correct meaning of “messiah,” the functions of the Torah, and the proper requisites for inclusion within a religious community, assess the degree to which first-century Christians should be understood as members of a Jewish sect.
- Option 1.2 - **Due October 19.** Explain by what means Christianity had distinguished itself from Judaism by the end of the second century.
- Option 2.1 - **Due November 9.** Compare the Qur’an’s relationship to the Tanakh and the Bible with the New Testament’s relationship to the Old Testament.
- Option 2.2 - **Due November 23.** Analyze the circumstances under which Xn and Muslim polities roughly over the period 700-1500 tried to convert, tolerate, or extirpate members of other religions.

## Final Examination

The course does not have a final examination. The final paper is **due December 18:**

Assess how relationships to state power have helped determine how Judaism, Christianity and Islam have taken shape. For each tradition, cite at least one example (from any historical period) to support your claim.

## Minor Assignments

- #1 *Summarizing an Argument* - **due September 9:** In one sentence NOT EXCEEDING 50 words (the 51<sup>st</sup> word and its successors face a terrible fate), summarize Armstrong’s argument about how the concept of God developed in the Axial Age.
- #2 *Illuminating a Comparison* - **due September 23:** In one sentence NOT EXCEEDING 50 words (see above for implied but real threat), explain the difference between what Jews and Christians meant by the “new covenant.”
- #3 *Analyzing Documentary Evidence* - **due September 30:** In one sentence NOT EXCEEDING 50 words (you should know how to be brief by now), use the relevant documents in the Peters readings to explain the differences between Jewish and Islamic perspectives on Jesus Christ .
- #4 *Reading Documents Critically* - **due October 28:** In one sentence NOT EXCEEDING 50 words (or else...), compare the Qur’an’s self-presentation as holy scripture with either the Tanakh’s or the Bible’s.
- #5 *Clarifying a term* - **due November 18:** Based on the relevant documents in Peters (and any other information you may have), assess in one sentence NOT EXCEEDING 50 words (yadda, yadda, yadda) the meaning of the term “People of the Book” as used in the Qur’an and by various Muslim commentators.
- #6 *Comparing Historical Documents in Context* - **due December 1:** In one sentence NOT EXCEEDING 51 words (but do not let the liberalized word limit lure you into verbosity), compare the provisions for the free exercise of religion in “Constitution of Medina” (Peters, 1.216-17) with those of the South Carolina Constitution of 1778.

# A PROCLAMATION

## *Regarding Late Papers*

Whereas it may come to pass that one or more individuals, whether through dilatoriness, dereliction, irresponsibility, or chutzpah, may seek respite and surcease from escorial demands through procrastination, delay, and downright evasion;

And whereas this unhappy happenstance contributes mightily to malfeasance on the part of parties of the second part (i.e., students, the instructed, you) and irascibility on the part of us (i.e., me);

Be it therefore known, understood, apprehended, and comprehended:

That all assignments must reach us on or by the exact hour announced in class, and that failure to comply with this wholesome and most generous regulation shall result in the assignment forfeiting one half of a letter grade each day for which it is tardy (i.e., an “A” shall become an “AB”), “one day” being defined as a 24-hour period commencing at the announced hour on which the assignment is due; and that the aforementioned reduction in grade shall continue for each succeeding day of delay until either the assignment shall be remitted or its value shrunk unto nothingness. And let all acknowledge that the responsibility for our receiving papers deposited *surreptitio* (i.e., in the TA’s mailbox or under his/her door), whether timely or belated, resides with the aforementioned second-part parties (i.e., you again), hence onus for the miscarriage of such items falls upon the writer’s head (i.e., until the TAs clutch your scribbles to their breasts, we must assume you have not turned them in, all protestations to the contrary notwithstanding).

Be it nevertheless affirmed:

That the greater part of justice residing in mercy, it may behoove us, acting entirely through our gracious prerogative, to award an extension in meritorious cases, such sufferance being granted only upon consultation with us, in which case a negotiated due date shall be proclaimed; it being perfectly well understood that failure to observe this new deadline shall result in the immediate and irreversible failure of the assignment (i.e., an “F”), its value being accounted as a null set and less than that of a vile mote. And be it further noted that routine disruptions to routine (i.e., lack of sleep occasioned by pink badgers dancing on the ceiling) do not conduce to mercy, but that severe dislocations brought on by Acts of God (exceedingly traumatic events to the body and/or soul, such as having the earth swallow one up on the way to delivering the assignment) perpetrated either on oneself or on one’s loving kindred, do.

And we wish to trumpet forth:

That our purpose in declaiming said proclamation, is not foremost to terminate the wanton flouting of our didactic intentions but to encourage our beloved students to consult with us, and apprehend us of their difficulties aforehand (i.e., talk to me or the TA, baby), so that the cruel axe of the executioner fall not upon their Grade Point Average and smite it with a vengeance.

To which proclamation, we do affix our seal:

