

MOSES, JESUS, MUHAMMAD

Department of Religious Studies, FIU

Professor: Dr. Carlos Grenier (cgrenier@gmail.com)

Office hours: After class or by appointment

Overview: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are siblings. They each trace their origins to same figure of Abraham, share a common belief in a single God, and hold in common many sacred stories and teachings. Members of the three faith communities defined by Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad are also deeply interconnected because they lived together as neighbors for hundreds of years, in both coexistence and conflict. This course aims to explore these interconnections and examine how Judaism, Christianity, and Islam grew out of each other and continued to interact across the centuries.

Aims: Upon completion of this course, students should be able to (1) Understand the unique aspects of each of the three Abrahamic religions, (2) Recognize the common heritage and continued mutual influence of the three faiths, and (3) Become aware of the ways the three faiths reflect the societies in which they exist

Evaluation:

30% - Midterm

30% - Final

30% - Research Paper (5-9 pages)

10% - Participation

Required Texts:

Francis Peters, *The Children of Abraham*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004.

ISBN: 0691120412

Karen Armstrong, *A History of God: The 4,000 Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*.

New York: Ballantine Books, 1993. ISBN: 0345384563

August 22: Introduction, Major Themes

August 29: Religion in the Ancient Middle East and Mediterranean

Armstrong, Introduction, Ch. 1

Epic of Gilgamesh (<http://www.ancienttexts.org/library/mesopotamian/gilgamesh/>)

September 5: Abraham and the Israelites in Context

Armstrong, Ch. 2

Peters, Ch. 1

Genesis 25 (use the online Bible edition of your choice)

September 12: Moses, the Prophets and the Development of Jewish Monotheism

Armstrong, Ch. 2

Peters Ch. 2

Excerpts from *Exodus*

September 19: Jesus and the Early Christian Community

Armstrong, Ch. 3

September 26: Religion in Late Antiquity

Armstrong, Ch. 4

Short Excerpt from Augustine's *Confessions* (PDF)

Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity*, 150-187 (PDF)

October 3: The Rise of Islam

Armstrong, Ch. 5

Qur'an: Suras *Nuh* (71); *al-'Alaq* (96); *al-Ikhlās* (112); *al-Falaq* (113), *Yusuf* (12).

Compare Sura 12 with Genesis 37, 39, 42-45

Constitution of Medina (PDF)

October 10: MIDTERM

October 17: Leadership, Law, and Worship I

Peters Chs. 3-6

Examples of *tafsir* (Ibn Kathir) and *fiqh* (al-Quduri). (PDF)

Examples from Talmudic legal scholarship. (TBD)

October 24: Leadership, Law, and Worship II

Peters Chs. 3-6 (cont'd)

Readings (TBD)

October 31: A Shared Theology

Armstrong, Ch. 6.

Peters, Ch. 8.

Comparison between short excerpts of arguments for God's existence from Saadia Gaon, Avicenna, Anselm, and Maimonides (PDF).

November 7: Mysticism and Asceticism

Armstrong, Ch. 7

Peters, Ch. 7

Al-Ghazali, *The Deliverance from Error*, trans. W. M. Watt, pp. 56-68. (PDF)

Short excerpts on mystical experience from Pseudo-Dionysius, Ibn 'Arabi, Jalal al-Din

Rumi, Kabbalah, St. John of the Cross, and others. (PDF)

November 14: Medieval Interactions between the Faiths

Short excerpts on inter-faith dialogues from Council of Claremont, Usama ibn Munqidh, Konstantin Mihailovic, Martin Luther, and others (PDF).

Skype guest lecture on Islamic Spain and the idea of *convivencia*.

November 21: The Faiths in the Post-Medieval World

Readings on the Protestant Reformation, Islamic and Jewish Reformism (TBD).

November 28: The Three Faiths in the Modern World - RESEARCH PAPER DUE!

Peters Chs. 8-11

Readings TBD.

December 5: FINAL EXAM