

Religion, Conflict, and Politics
RLST 110 D
Fall Semester 2012
MWF 12:00-12:50 PM

Instructor: Dr. Susan Cohen
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Office hours: MW 9:30- 11:30 AM or by appointment.
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Goals of the course:

- 1) to examine ways in which political issues have been influenced by religious convictions and beliefs, and ways in which religion and religious tradition have been influenced by political considerations.
- 2) to analyze ways and means by which specific religious interpretations and traditions have developed throughout history, been appropriated for political purposes, and utilized to validate and justify armed conflict, violence, intolerance, and prejudice.
- 3) to become acquainted with the basic principles of the three monotheistic “western” religions and to understand their historical and theological developments as they relate – or more frequently, fail to relate – to each other in the realm(s) of politics, religious tradition and interpretation, and conflict.

Course Policies:

- 1) This is a course about religion and the relationship between religion and politics. This is **NOT** a class that teaches religious doctrine or that is taught from a religious perspective. We will be examining religion, politics, and religious-political conflict in **an academic and secular setting**, and all religions, religious beliefs, and religious interpretations of events, texts, and politics will therefore **be open to questioning, examination, interpretation, criticism, and discussion**. An open mind and a willingness to examine new ideas and new methods of understanding the history of religions and the development of religious traditions are essential. **This class is not a forum for expressions of personal theology.**
- 2) Plagiarism – the presentation of others’ work as your own – is an offense punishable by expulsion. All work submitted in this class must be your own, and all references to ideas from books, articles, or other sources must be cited correctly. If you do not know how to properly reference your work, or you are in doubt whether or not you should cite material, refer to the *Student Academic and Conduct Guidelines*, or make an appointment with the professor or with your TA to discuss the problem. **Anyone found guilty of plagiarism, cheating, forgery, falsification, or any other form of academic dishonesty will fail this course and the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students.**

Required readings: *Bible*. New Revised Standard Version, HarperCollins edition.
Koran. Dawood, Trans. Penguin edition.
Dawn. Wiesel, E.
Additional readings on D2L.

Course requirements:

recitation section	20%
midterm exam	20%
essays	30% (15% each)
final exam	30%

Course Readings:

- 1) The required reading for each week is listed at the end of each week. As different people read at different speeds and learn in different ways, there is no one set reading for each lecture. Just be sure to have finished each week's reading assignment by the time you attend section each week.
- 2) The specific biblical and/or Quranic texts that will be discussed in the lectures are cited after each lecture during the week. You should come to class having already read those passages, keeping in mind the ways in which religious textual material is utilized in an academic and secular setting.

Recitation Sections:

Recitation sections will meet once a week; participation in these classes and the discussions is a central part of this course, and **attendance is required**. We understand that absences from class are sometimes unavoidable; in those situations, if you need to miss a section, please discuss your absence – **ahead of time** – with your GTA. The recitation sections represent your opportunity to discuss the material presented in class within smaller groups that are conducive to the exchange of ideas. These classes are designed to foster intelligent conversation and provoke further thought and understanding about the subject of religious studies, the relationship between religion and politics as it has developed and evolved throughout history, and to examine how these relationships often result in conflict. **It should be noted that these subjects will be examined and discussed in an academic manner – Please read, think about, and then APPLY point number one of the course policies as listed above.**

Essays:

There will **two essays**, approximately 3-5 pages, on topics raised by the class; each essay will involve specific readings and will be designed for you to integrate your understandings of the course material with the academic examination of religion as it is intertwined with politics, often resulting in conflict, both ideological and violent. These essays will be due in your recitation section in **Week 5** and **Week 11** of the semester.

Exams:

There will be **one midterm exam**, to take place during the class period, on **Friday 5 October**. The **final exam** for this course will be on **13 December** from **6:00 – 7:50 PM**. The final will be comprehensive for the semester. **You will need to bring Bluebooks for both exams!!!!**

PLEASE NOTE: There will be **NO** make-up quizzes or exams or extensions on paper assignments unless the student has made arrangements with the professor or your GTA **at least a week in advance** (and even then it may not be possible).

D2L: Course grades will be entered into D2L as they become available. Midterm section grades will be entered after Week 7 of the semester; these section grades will then be subject to change throughout the rest of the semester. If you have any questions about how you are doing in section, **ASK YOUR GTA!**

Course Schedule:

Week One:

Aug. 27: Introduction

Aug. 29: Course overview – religion and conflict and politics

Aug. 31: Scripture vs. text: reading religious writing in an academic setting (IMPORTANT!!!!)

Reading: Armstrong, Introduction, on D2L.
Wasserstein, “Preface,” on D2L
Wasserstein, The Heavenly City, on D2L

Week Two:

Sept.3: **LABOR DAY HOLIDAY. NO CLASS**

Sept 5: “Holy” war: biblical traditions
(Deut. 6-9, 12, 20; Josh. 6, 8)

Sept 7: **NO CLASS**

Reading: Collins, “Does the Bible Justify Violence?,” on D2L.

Week Three:

Sept. 10: “Holy” war and holy “mountain”: traditions of conquest and temple
(II Sam. 5-7; I Kgs. 6-9)

Sept. 12: “House on a hill”: the fall of Israel and Jerusalem as sacred
(II Kgs. 17-19, 21; Is. 31; Ps. 46, 48)

Sept. 14: “Every great house he burned down”: destruction of Judah
(II Kgs. 21, 24-25; Jer. 5, 7, 21; Lam. 2)

Reading: Cogan, “Into Exile,” on D2L. (this is a long article, I suggest that you read it in segments)

Week Four:

Sept. 17: “Anointed one”: Jerusalem, messiah, and messenger
(Is. 40, 42, 45, 62; Ps. 74, 79, 110, 132, 137; Lam. 1, 5)

Sept. 19: The return to Jerusalem, building the Second Temple
(Ez. 37:15-28; Ezra 1, 9-10; Neh. 13)

Sept. 21: Judaism and Jerusalem under Greek rule
(I Mac. 1-2; II Mac. 5:15-27)

Reading: Levine, “The Age of Hellenism,” on D2L.

Week Five:

Sept. 24: Early Christianity and traditions of Jesus in Jerusalem
(Matt. 26-28; Mk. 11; John 1-3; Ps. 22)

Sept. 26: The destruction of the Second Temple: Jerusalem, Judaism, and Rome

Sept. 28: "Son of a star": the Second Jewish Revolt

Reading: Cohen, "Roman Domination," on D2L.

FIRST PAPER DUE IN SECTION THIS WEEK

Week Six:

Oct. 1: "Chosen": messiah and Messiah
(Ps. 2; Is. 7; Zech. 9; Matt. 1; Heb. 1)

Oct. 3: Constantine, Christianity, and the cross

Oct. 5: **MIDTERM EXAM**

Reading: Armstrong, "The New Jerusalem," on D2L.

Week Seven:

Oct. 8: Christian Jerusalem, from Constantine to Islam

Oct. 10: "The straight path": Islam
(Gen. 16, 21-22; *Quran*: Exordium, The Bee, Mary, Oneness)

Oct. 12: The Holy House: Jerusalem in Islamic traditions
(*Quran*: The Night Journey, Pilgrimage)

Reading: Esposito, "Muhammad and the Quran" on D2L.
Armstrong, "Bayt al-Maqdis," on D2L.

Week Eight:

Oct. 15: "Jihad": "holy" war in Islamic traditions
(*Quran*: Women, The Table, Repentance, Mary)

Oct. 17: "Infidel": Christian "holy" war
(Deut. 7, 20; Josh. 6-8; Rom. 1, 8-9; Eph. 6)

Oct. 19: "Holy War": The First Crusade

Reading: Carroll, "The Rock of Islam," on D2L.

Week Nine:

Oct. 22: Reaction: The Muslim re-conquest of Jerusalem

Oct. 24: Jerusalem in the Muslim World

Oct. 26: Ottoman rule of Jerusalem

Reading: Wasserstein, "The Wars of the Consuls," on D2L.

Week Ten:

Oct. 29: Jewish views: the rise of Zionism

Oct. 30: Christian views: Europe, Jerusalem, and the Ottoman Empire

Nov. 2: "The Holy Land": American perspectives

Reading: Schneer, "Palestine before World War I," on D2L.

Davis, "The American Identification with the Holy Land," on D2L.

Week Eleven:

Nov. 5: "A Christmas present": Jerusalem, religion, and politics in World War I

Nov. 7: Jerusalem, Palestine, and the British Mandate

Nov. 9: The creation of Israel: Independence Day and *Al-Nakba* (The Catastrophe)

Reading: Wiesel, *Dawn*.

Wasserstein, "Jerusalem under the Mandate," on D2L.

Week Twelve:

Nov. 12: **UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY – NO CLASS**

Nov. 14: The "End of the World" Part I: American millennialism

Nov. 16: The "End of the World" Part II: millennialism

Reading: Gorenberg, "The History of the Future," on D2L.

SECOND PAPER DUE IN SECTION THIS WEEK

Week Thirteen:

Nov. 19: The "End of the World" Part III: modern millennialism

Nov. 21: **NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

Nov. 23: **NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

NO SECTION MEETINGS THIS WEEK

Week Fourteen:

Nov. 26: 1948-1967: conflict and politics in the "holy land"

Nov. 28: Perceptions: 1967 and its interpretations

Nov. 30: Bombs, bulldozers, and beliefs: modern religious terrorism

Reading: Benvenisti, "Hallowed Ground," on D2L.

Week Fifteen:

Dec. 3: The present, perceptions and problems

Dec. 5: Jerusalem in myth and reality

Dec. 7: Conclusion: Jerusalem in religion and politics past and present

Reading: Siberry, "Images of the Crusades in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," on D2L.
Gorenberg, "Avoiding the Cain Option," D2L.

Week Sixteen:

Dec. 13: **FINAL EXAM 6:00 – 7:50 PM**