

IPT/C5/712 (3) Sacred Texts and Oral Traditions

Instructor: Rabbi Dr. Laura Duhan Kaplan

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Office hours during term: T,W, Th 1:00-6:00 pm & by appointment

Purpose: An introduction to sacred scripture and oral narrative in four traditions: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Indigenous Traditions. For each tradition, we will read selected primary and secondary sources in order to consider the content of these sacred teachings, their history and development, techniques of transmission, interpretive practices, and cultural significance. Together, we will develop a group understanding of the meaning of the word “sacred” in the phrase “sacred texts and oral traditions.” Two field trips to see embodied traditions and three featured guest teachers will enhance our learning.

Competence Objectives: Students will be expected to learn and demonstrate the ability to:

- Summarize content and style of Tanakh, New Testament, Quran, and Indigenous Oral Narratives
- Explain and apply a variety of culturally appropriate interpretive techniques for each
- Explain the role that sacred narrative and text plays in each tradition
- Summarize how each scriptural or narrative tradition was initiated, developed and preserved
- Articulate a personal understanding of the sources of sacredness in sacred narrative

Format: Spring term 2016, Tuesdays 9:00 am - 12:00 pm, January 19, 26; February 2, 9, 16, 23; March 8, 15, 22, 29, April 5. Course activities include lecture, discussion, small group activities, and two field trips.

Field Trips:

- Tuesday January 19 (first class): Field trip to UBC Museum of Anthropology for “City Before the City” exhibition; we walk or drive together 10:30 am
- Saturday February 20, 10:00 am – 2:30 pm: Field trip to Or Shalom Synagogue, 710 E 10th Avenue, on the 9, 99, and 8 routes; short bus ride from Commercial Drive skytrain (instead of February 2 class)
- Possible additional trip TBA.

Guest speakers:

- Rev. Prof. Gerald Hobbs (February 23, 10:30am-12:00noon)
- Rev. Ray Aldred (March 15, 9:00am-12noon)
- Dr. Nasir Zaidi (March 29, 10:30am–12noon)

Identification of the levels at which the course can be taken: Certificate, Basic (Diploma/MA/M.Div) or Advanced (Th.M).

Required texts:

Background to lectures:

- Coward, Harold. *Scripture in the World Religions: A Short Introduction* (Oneworld Publications), 2000.

- Bible, any edition. Excerpts TBA.
- Tarif Khalidi, Trans. *The Qur'an: A New Translation* (New York: Viking), 2008. Excerpts TBA.

For presentation assignments:

- Occasional shorter readings drawn from the selected bibliography, to be posted on moodle.

Assignments: For all students:

- Attendance in accordance with VST policies
- Thoughtful, engaged participation in class discussion and activities
- Completion of assigned readings
- Two 750-word reflection papers demonstrating personal engagement, awareness of at least one interpretive approach, and mastery of relevant content
- One group presentation on a text or article, details and assignments on the first day of class.

Additional for Certificate-level students:

- A third reflection paper.

Additional for Basic-level students (MATS, M.Div, MAPPL, MAIS):

- A 3000-word final paper on a topic of the student's choice, demonstrating course competencies, and involving research (5 sources) beyond the assigned course readings.

Additional for Advanced-level students (Th.M.):

- A 4000-word final paper on a topic of the student's choice, demonstrating course competencies, and involving significant research (10 sources) beyond the course readings.

Prerequisites: None.

Topics (specific topics and reading assignments TBA in the syllabus):

Jan 19, Introduction; Indigenous Oral Traditions at Museum of Anthropology

Jan 26, Hebrew Bible

Feb 2, no class

Feb 9, Hebrew Bible; Student presentation

Feb 16, New Testament

Sat. Feb 20, Visit to Or Shalom Synagogue

Feb 23, Student presentation; Guest speaker Dr. Gerald Hobbs; Reflection 1 due

March 2, No Class, Reading Week

March 8, Topic TBA

March 15, Indigenous Oral Traditions; Guest speaker Rev. Ray Aldred

March 22, Quran; Student presentation

March 29, Quran; Guest speaker Dr. Nasir Zaidi

April 5, Course closing; Reflection 2 due

April 15: Paper or final reflection due for graduating students

April 22: Paper or final reflection due for non-graduating students

Selected bibliography:

Armstrong, Karen. *The Bible: A Biography* (Grove Press), 2008.

Aslan, Reza. *No God But God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam* (New York: Random House), 2005.

Berlin, Adele. *The Jewish Study Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2004.

Brettler, Marc Zvi. *How to Read the Jewish Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2005.

Brown, Brian Arthur. *Three Testaments: Torah, Gospel, and Quran* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield), 2012.

Campanini, Massimo. *The Qur'an: Modern Muslim Interpretations*, trans. Caroline Higgitt (New York: Routledge), 2011.

Cherry, Shai. *Torah Through Time: Understanding Bible Commentary from the Rabbinic Period to Modern Times* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society), 2007.

Clark, Karin and Jim Gilbert. *Learning by Designing: Pacific Northwest Coast Native Indian Art*, Vol. 2. (Raven Publishing), 2002.

Cryer, Beryl Mildred and Chris Arnett. *Two Houses Half-buried in Sand: Oral Traditions of the Hul'q'umi'num' Coast Salish of Kuper Island and Vancouver Island* (Vancouver: Talonbooks), 2007.

DeLoria, Vine. *God is Red: A Native View of Religion* (Fulcrum Publishing), 2003.

Ehrman, Bart D. *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, 4th edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2007.

Friedman, Richard Elliott. *Who Wrote the Bible?* (New York: Summit Books), 1987.

Hampton, Barbara J. *Reading Scripture Together: A Comparative Qur'an and Bible Study Guide* (Dialogue of Witness Press), 2014.

Huppig, Carol et al. *The Jewish Bible* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society), 2008.

Jenness, Diamond. "The Katzie Book of Genesis." In *The Faith of a Coast Salish Indian*, ed. Wilson Duff (Vancouver: British Columbia Provincial Museum), 1955.

Khalidi, Tarif, trans. *The Qur'an: A New Translation* (New York: Viking), 2008.

Levine, Amy Jill and Marc Brettler. *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2011.

Mir, Mustansir. *Understanding the Islamic Scripture: A Study of Selected Passages from the Qur'an* (New York: Pearson Longman), 2008.

Peters, F.E. *The Voice, The Word, The Books: The Sacred Scripture of the Jews, Christians, and Muslims* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 2007.

Pregeant, Russell. *Engaging the New Testament: An Interdisciplinary Introduction* (Minneapolis: Fortress), 1998.

Prothero, Stephen. *God is Not One* (New York: HarperOne), 2011.

Reeves, John, ed. *Bible and Qur'an: Essays in Scriptural Intertextuality* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature), 2003.

Saeed, Abdullah. *The Qur'an: An Introduction*. (New York: Routledge), 2008.

Wagner, Walter H. *Opening the Qur'an: Introducing Islam's Holy Book* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press), 2008

Zetterholm, Karin Hedner. *Jewish Interpretation of the Bible: Ancient and Contemporary*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press), 2012.