

## **IPT5/712 (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 2017, Tuesdays 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm, January 16, 23, 30; February 6, 13, 20, 23; March 6, 13, 20, 27, April 3. Course activities include lecture, discussion, small group activities, and one required field trip.

### **Field Trips & Guest speakers:**

- Group visit to the Ismaili Centre in Burnaby, date TBA
- Dr. Elliot Wolfson, March 27
- Rev. Ray Aldred, date TBA

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

### **Required reading:**

Please bring your own:

- Bible, any edition. Excerpts TBA.

Posted on moodle:

*Hebrew Bible:*

Rosenberg, Joel. “Bible: Narrative” in Barry Holtz, ed., *Back to the Sources* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984).

Hammer, Jill, "Midrash" in *JPS Guide: The Jewish Bible* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society), 2008.

Brettler, Marc Zvi, "Biblical Law" in *How to Read the Jewish Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2005. (for group presentation)

*New Testament:*

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

Ehrman, Bart. "Jesus, the Jewish Messiah: The Gospel According to Matthew" in *The New Testament*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn. (New York: Oxford University Press), 2007.

Osiek, Carolyn. "The Feminist and the Bible: Hermeneutical Alternatives," *HTS Theologisches Studien/Theological Studies* 53/4 (1997), 956-968. (for group presentation)

*Indigenous Traditions:*

"Katzie Book of Genesis" in Suttles, Wayne P., Diamond Jenness, and Wilson Duff, *Katzie Ethnographic Notes* (British Columbia Provincial Museum, Dept. of Education), 1956.

"Saya the First Hunter" in Suzuki, David and Peter Knudtson, *Wisdom of the Elders* (Vancouver, Greystone Books), 1992.

Aldred, Catherine. "Let Me Tell You a Story: Rejuvenating Biblical Narrative through Indigenous Language Translations," *Journal of North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies*, volume 9, 2011.

Aldred, Ray, "The Resurrection of Story." *William Carey International Development Journal* Vol 3, Issue 2: Spring 2014.

DeLoria, Vine. "Origin of Religion" in *God is Red: A Native View of Religion* (Fulcrum Publishing), 2003. (for group presentation)

*Islam:*

Prothero, Stephen, "Islam," in *God is Not One* (New York: HarperCollins, 2010).

Mir, Mustansir. "Al-Fatiha" and "Judgment Day" in *Understanding the Islamic Scripture: A Study of Selected Passages from the Qur'an* (New York: Pearson Longman), 2008.

Hampton, Barbara J., "God Heard the Boy Crying" in *Reading Scripture Together: A Comparative Bible and Quran Study Guide* (Witness Press), 2004.

Aslan, Reza. "This Religion is a Science" in *No God But God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam* (New York: Random House), 2005. (for group presentation)

**Assignments:**

For all students:

- Attendance in accordance with VST policies
- Thoughtful, engaged participation in class discussion and activities

Additional for all Certificate and Degree students:

- 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, MAIIS):

- 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.