Preliminary Syllabus:
Abraham’s Children: Interfaith Relations among Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Middle Ages

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Course Description
This course is an introduction to relations among Jews, Christians and Muslims in the Middle Ages. We will explore the different settings in which this interaction took place, ranging from the experience of Jews as minorities in Christian Europe and the Muslim societies of Spain and the Near East, to the meetings between Christians and Muslims in war and peace in the Mediterranean and in Europe. We will study various issues including: perceptions of minorities, inter-religious polemic and exchange, the impact of external cultures on religious identities, conversion, missionizing, and religious violence.

Course Objectives
To gain a basic understanding of the chronology, culture and complexity of medieval society.
To be introduced to the basic historical literature dealing with the subject of interfaith relations.
To learn how to read medieval sources critically taking into account questions of context, intention, and audience.
To challenge the myth of a static animosity among the three groups while at the same time avoiding the counter-myth of a romanticized pluralism.
To consider how contemporary issues influence our understanding of history, particularly that of relations among the monotheistic faiths.

Assessment
The grade for the class will largely be based on regular and engaged participation (50%) in seminar discussion, class presentations (10%) and a final research paper (40%).

Readings selected from the following books: (and other articles)
Wickham, Inheritance of Rome
Abulafia, The Great Sea
Malkiel, Reconstructing Ashkenaz
Lewis, Cultures in Conflict
Elukin, Living Together, Living Apart: Rethinking Jewish-Christian Relations in the Middle Ages
Lewis, Jews in Islam
Toland, Saracens
Gruen, Diaspora
Goodman, Rome and Jerusalem
Biale, Cultures of the Jews
Davis, Trickster Travels
Kessler, Jewish-Christian Relations
Fredriksen, Augustine and the Jews
Dursteler, Venetians in Constantinople
Menocal, Ornament of the World
Schedule

Day 1
9:00-10:30
Course introduction: issues in studying the Middle Ages, particularly interfaith relations in the Middle Ages, and questions of evidence, interpretation and intention.

10:45-12:00
Framing lecture: The Evolution of Judaism and Christianity in Late Antiquity

1:30-3:30
Discussion: Jews and Christians amidst the Greeks and Romans

3:50-5:30
Discussion: Jews and the Christian Roman Empire

Day 2
9-10:30
Framing lecture: End of Roman Empire, the formation of Germanic kingdoms, and the rise of Islam

10:45-12:00
Discussion: Jews in the early medieval Mediterranean worlds of Christianity

1:30-3:30
Discussion: Jews and Christians in Muslim societies of the Early Middle Ages

3:50-5:30
Planning a research paper: online sources, reference material, primary sources

Day 3
9:00-10:30
Framing Lecture: Medieval Europe: Religious culture, authority and the Crusades

10:45-12:00
Discussion: Jews and Christians in medieval societies: persecution, co-existence, tolerance

1:30-3:30
Discussion: The idea and reality of convivencia in Christian Spain, Jerusalem, Constantinople

3:50-5:30
Disputation Exercise
Day 4
9:00-10:30
Framing lecture: Early Modern Europe: confronting Islam and the expulsions of the Jews

10:45-12:00
discussion: Jews and Christians and the conflict between Spain and the Ottomans

1:30-3:30
discussion: Christian Hebraism and *converso* identities

3:50-5:30
Trip to Watkinson Library Rare Book Collection, Trinity College

Day 5
9:00-10:30
Framing lecture: Issues, Questions, and Future Study

10:45-12:00
discussion: *Merchant of Venice*

1:30-3:30
presentations: research paper proposals

3:50-5:30
Early dinner and concluding discussion