Hartford Seminary
DI 636 Images of Jesus in Christian and Muslim Sacred Writings Online Course
Fall 2016
Preliminary Syllabus

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Course Timeframe:
42 hours of structured but asynchronous online learning commencing 9/6/2016 and concluding 12/10/2014, with all activities to be completed by 12/19/2016. The course’s Canvas website will serve as the hub for all course activities. Enrollees should plan to spend three hours per week on course activities in addition to time spent reading assigned material and preparing essays for submission. (A total commitment of nine hours per week will suffice for most students.)

Course Description:
Drawing on canonical scriptures (the Bible and the Qur’an), in conversation with other primary and aided by 19th, 20th, and early 21st century images and critical investigations, we will study the birth, mission, death, resurrection, and eschatological role of Jesus in Christianity and Islam—and the closely related matter of the life and status of his mother Mary. While this is a course in comparative theology, attention will also be given to the role of Jesus and Mary in personal and communal piety. As an online graduate seminar, this course will involve a variety of modes of online presentation and interaction. Substantial reading and writing will be expected. Auditors are welcome with the proviso that they complete all readings in order to participate fully in online discussions.

NOTE: This course is designated “DI” (dialogue), but (if requested) can fulfill “SC” (scripture) distribution requirements.

Goals and Objectives
This course is designed to help students achieve Hartford Seminary’s Master of Arts Program Learning Outcomes. Doctoral students are expected to engage the material more deeply.

Specifically, students who participate fully in this course will be able (as demonstrated through online discussion and written work) to:

1) List a number of the Christian and Muslim “images” of Jesus, describing several in detail, identifying their textual sources, and distinguishing their theological implications;

2) Differentiate between the styles and genres of the “Jesus material” in the New Testament, the non-canonical Gospels of James and Thomas, the Qur’an, and the Hadith, and compare similar passages;
3) State and explain several of the present concerns of “Jesus Studies”, comparing the work of at least two Christian and two Muslim scholars in this field;

4) Paraphrase and compare what Christian tradition and Islamic scripture and tradition say about the birth and childhood of Mary Mother of Jesus;

5) Paraphrase and distinguish between the narratives of the birth of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew, the Gospel of Luke, the (non-canonical) Gospel of James, and the Qur’an—comparing their theological implications;

6) Contrast accounts and interpretations—both within the Christian and Muslim traditions and between them—of death of Jesus and his present and future role; Explain and compare the roles of Jesus and his mother Mary in Christian and Islamic personal and communal piety.

**Assessment Expectations**
All students are expected to complete each reading assignment and to participate in related online activities—which may include watching or listening to a lecture, answering a question posed by the instructor, commenting on another student’s work, or even taking a short quiz.

Students desiring academic credit will submit two reflective or analytical essays (approximately 1000 words each; longer if a doctoral student) at intervals during the semester. The purpose of these essays is to demonstrate the breadth and depth of one’s engagement with the material assigned during a particular module of the course.

Students desiring academic credit will submit a summary essay (3500 – 6000 words; longer if a doctoral students) entitled “Jesus as a Gulf and a Bridge with Regard to Christian-Muslim Understanding,” giving particular focus to some aspect of this theme. This project should be an exercise in comparative theology, demonstrating depth of understanding of both Christian and Muslim sacred texts and scholarly sources, and the range of points of view within each religion-community, and should be presented in proper academic form. (An alternative project, such as a PowerPoint lecture, may be negotiated with the instructor.) Students will post an abstract of their research on the course website, as direct. This assignment is due December 19.

All papers and projects, including the written component of a PowerPoint presentation (or other approved project) are to accord with the standards for academic papers posted on the Hartford Seminary website.

All papers and projects must accord with Hartford Seminary’s stated policy regarding the citing of sources. *Plagiarism is to be avoided!*

**Grades** will be calculated as follows:

- Online participation: 75%
- Short essays on reading assignments: 10% (5% per essay)
- Final paper: 15%

**Attendance Policy**
Participation in all online components is expected; failure to engage the website for an entire week is considered an “absence” and will affect one’s final grade.
Required Reading

Additional short items provided by the instructor.

Highly recommended for students with little prior knowledge of the basics of Islam:

Highly recommended for students with little prior knowledge of the basics of Christianity:

Highly recommended for everyone: