

HI-539 Interrogating Abraham: Examining Intersections between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam

Fall semester, 2024
Tuesdays, 5:00-6.50 (plus asynchronous elements)

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Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have often been called the Abrahamic Religions, as they all claim the Patriarch Abraham. To what extent do these three faiths identify with him, define him, and share him? This course will use an interdisciplinary approach to problematize the Abrahamic identities of early Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities, their views of the Patriarch, and how such identities have guided and affected past and contemporary inter-communal relations. Attention will be given to how sacred scripture, contemporary literature and film shapes and provide meaning for relations today.

Course Objectives: At the end of the course, students will

1. Articulate one's own scriptural/theological position in contemporary interreligious relationships.
2. Understand the scriptural and traditional sources of Abraham as a locus of identity for Jews, Christians, and Muslims.
3. Describe examples of past Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communal relationships.
4. Evaluate resources on interreligious relationships through literature, film, and dialogue documents.

These course objectives meet the following Program Outcomes:

Master of Arts in Interreligious Studies Learning Outcomes:

1. Articulate your own worldview or religious belief system while empathically and respectfully engaging people whose worldviews, religious practices, and religious beliefs differ from your own
3. At the level needed to take part in substantive dialogue, demonstrate knowledge of the roles of the scriptures and sacred texts of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
 2. Explain and differentiate between various methods of historical and contemporary scriptural interpretation by adherents, paying attention to both the differences within and differences between religions.
4. At the level needed to take part in substantive study, demonstrate knowledge of the theological and legal traditions within Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
 1. Identify and explain the major tenets and religious worldviews of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.
5. Express your ideas and perspectives clearly in oral and written communication.
 1. Write sustained, coherent arguments or explanations in clear academic English, with well-formed sentences and paragraphs.

For the **Interreligious and Islamic Studies Specialization**, this course meets the requirements as an elective.
For the **Ministerial Studies Specialization**, this course meets the requirements for the *Beliefs and Practices*.
For the **Master of Arts in Chaplaincy**, this course meets the requirements as an elective.

Doctor of Ministry Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the larger social and cultural dynamics affecting religious life and organizations in the 21st century and their implications for ministry settings.
- Demonstrate the knowledge, capacities, and willingness to respectfully engage the religious pluralism of contemporary American society through exposure to the teachings of other faiths and those who practice those faiths.

Learning Strategies:

This course will be hybrid Synchronous. The instructor will be located at HIU with students present in the classroom, and distance students joining remotely. There will be additional asynchronous requirements for all students each week with instructor interaction, including online discussions, reviews of response papers, or instructional videos, in addition to the required weekly reading and preparation.

Course Assumptions:

1. The study of historical encounters is instructive and important for current and future relationships.
2. Positive relationships between religious communities are possible, but take intentionality, persistence and patience.
3. Ministry within all religious communities is done in an inter and intra-religious context.
4. Encounter and dialogue is a given component that need not abandon faith claims and can provide guidelines for mutual and respectful interaction.

Hartford Values for Collaborative Teaching and Learning:

- Showing mutual appreciation and respect for others—modeling the privilege to learn from and partner with each other.
- Engaging in cross-disciplinary content and teaching
- Paying attention to the whole personhood of another – history, race, religion, knowledge, gender, and rank
- Demonstrating how to disagree respectfully and well
- Embodying mutuality – Learning to construct ideas and skills and experiences together

Required Texts:

Levine, Amy-Jill, and Marc Zvi Brettler. *The Bible with and without Jesus: How Jews and Christians Read the Same Stories Differently*. New York, NY: HarperOne, an imprint of HarperCollins, 2020. [ISBN 978-0-062-56016-2]

Peters, F.E. *The Children of Abraham: Judaism, Christianity, Islam*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2018. [ISBN 978-0-691-18103-5]

Selections from: Silverstein, Adam J. and Guy G. Stroumsa eds. Blidstein, Moshe. *The Oxford Handbook of Abrahamic Religions*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2015. [ISBN 978-0-199-69776-2]

Trible, Phyllis, ed. *Hagar, Sarah, and Their Children: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 2006 [ISBN 978-0-664-22982-5; ASIN B00931ET02]

PLUS one fiction or non-fiction book or film on pages 7-8 below.

Recommended Texts: (for papers)

Cohen, Mark R. *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008. [ISBN 978-0-691-13931-9]

Feiler, Bruce. *Abraham: A Journey to the Heart of the Three Faiths*. New York: Harper, 2005. [ISBN 978-0-060-83866-9]

Freidenreich, David M. *Jewish Muslims: How Christians Imagined Islam as the Enemy*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 2023. [ISBN 978-0-520-34471-6]

Glick, Leonard B. *Abraham's Heirs: Jews and Christians in Medieval Europe*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1999. [ISBN 978-0-815-62779-1]

Goodman, Martin, et al. *Abraham, the Nations, and the Hagarites: Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Perspectives on Kinship with Abraham*. Brill, 2010. [978-9-004-18843-3]

Levenson, Jon D. *Inheriting Abraham: The Legacy of the Patriarch in Judaism, Christian and Islam*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2014. [ISBN 978-0-691-16355-0; ASIN: B0091XBKWY]

Looney, Chris. *A Vanished World: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Medieval Spain*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. [ISBN 978-0-19-531191-4]

Menocal, Maria Rosa. *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain*. New York: Little Brown and Co., 2003. [ISBN 978-0-316-16871-7]

Course Assignments and assessment:

Assignment	Due Date(s)	Course Outcomes fulfilled by assignment	% of course grade
1. Weekly Class preparation (required reading and video material on Canvas) and contribution in discussions	Participation will be assessed at the mid-point and end-point of the course	Course Outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 4	15%/15%
2. Critical book or film review DMin students should submit both a book and film, as well as an additional review from the recommended reading list	By 5:00 pm on the Tuesday the review is due; proposals are due by Tuesday, September 17 by 5:00 pm	Course Outcome 4	20%
3. Check-in with instructor	TBD	Course Outcomes 1 and 2	10%
4. Final Paper or Project	Proposals and working bibliography are due Dec. 3; paper due Dec. 17	Course Outcomes 1 and 3	40%

- Attend all of the synchronous sessions, and **actively participate** in class discussions, and engage the asynchronous material provided each week. Participation will be assessed at the first half of the course and again at the second half of the course. If you know you will be unable to attend a class session, please inform the professor in advance. *In the case of an absence the professor will reserve the right to ask the student for a written assignment on the required reading for that session.* (This assignment is 30% of the grade, to be graded at the mid-point and final week of the semester.)

Asynchronous material each week may include responding to a discussion prompt, writing a short reaction paper, or engaging with an additional video.

- Critical Book or Film Review:** Students should write a 600-800-word critical Book or Film Review, or post a five-minute video, of one of the books or films listed below, in consultation with the instructor. Students will sign up for a time and date to submit their review during the asynchronous weekly sessions. The written or video reviews should be posted to the course Canvas site by 5:00 pm, before the class in which they are due. A student who would like to propose a book or film not on this list should consult with the instructor. **Proposals are due to the instructor by Tuesday, 17 September by 5:00 pm.**

DMin students are required to submit both 1 book and 1 film review, as well as 1 additional critical book review from the **Recommended Reading list.**

- Check-in with instructor:** Students will schedule at least one 20-min check in with the instructor at some point in the semester to respond to questions, expectations, concerns, or for further discussion on the course.

4. **Students will write a final paper or project** that on one aspect covered in the course, that includes both historical and contemporary inter-communal identities. The paper should be 2000-3000 words MA students, and a project relating to one's ministry setting for DMin students of approx. 4,000-5,000 words. Proposals for the paper and a working bibliography should be selected in consultation with the instructor and emailed to the instructor by **Tuesday, November 19, 5:00 pm**. The final paper is due by **Tuesday, December 17** at 5:00 pm, at the latest.

Course outline:

September 3: Introduction to the Course

Overview of Written and Oral Sources of Authority

Written and Oral Sources of Authority

September 10: Midrash, Allegory and Traditions of Abraham

The Call of Abraham (Genesis 12:1-9; Romans 4:1-25; *al-Anbiyā'* 21:51-73)

September 17: Midrash, Allegory and Traditions of Isaac/Ishmael

The Inheritance of Abraham (Genesis 22:1-9; John 8: 30-59; *al-Şāffāt* 37:100-113)

Book and Film Review Proposals are due

September 24: Midrash, Allegory and Traditions of Sara and Hagar

Hagar and Ishmael (Genesis 21:1-21; Galatians 4:21-31; *al-Baqarah* 2:122-141)
Feminist and Womanist Readings of Sara and Hagar

Inter-twined Social Relationships

October 1: The “Parting of the Ways” or “the Ways that Never Parted” of the Synagoga and Ecclesia

Readings from *The Bible with and without Jesus*

October 8: The Prophet's Encounter with the “*ahl al -kitāb*” [People of the Book]

**October 15: The Cross fertilization of Medieval Philosophy (*falsafa*), Theology (*kalam*)
Science, Medicine, and Art**

Medieval Baghdad, Cairo, and Cordoba
HIU Art Exhibition – “The Holy City”

Modern Communal Identities

October 22: The Shoah & the Church

October 29: Israel/Palestine and the Effects of 1967

November 5: Dispensationalism & Christian Zionism post 1967

November 12: NO Class

Contemporary Dialogue

November 19: “Nostra Aetate” and Jewish-Christian-Muslim Dialogue

Proposal for final papers are due.

November 26: NO Class – Thanksgiving Week

December 3: “Declaration to the Jewish Community” – Jewish-Christian Dialogue

December 10: “A Common Word” -- Christian-Muslim Dialogue

December 17: Submission of final papers on Canvas Site

List of Books and Films for Reviews:

Fiction:

Abulhawa, Susan. *Mornings in Jenin: A Novel* (Bloomsbury, USA, 2010. [978-1608190461]

Ashour, Radwa. *The Woman from Tantoura: A novel from Palestine*. Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 2014. [978-9774166150]

Bakr, Salwa. *The Man From Bashmour*. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press. 2007. [9789774161094]

Brooks, Geraldine. *People of the Book*. New York: Penguin, 2008. [9780670018215]

Falcones, Ildefonso, *The Hand of Fátima*. Trans. Nick CAISTOR (London: Transworld Pub.s, 2011), [978-0552776479]

- Kurban, Said. *Ali and Nino: A Love Story*. New York: Anchor Books, 2000. [9780385720403]
Lalami, Leila. *The Moor's Account*. New York: Vintage Books, 2015. [978-0804170628]
Maalouf, Amin. *Leo Africanus*. Chicago: New Amsterdam Books, 1988. [9780393026306]
_____. *Ports of Call*. New York: Random House, 2001. [9781860464461]
Yehoshua, A. B. *A Journey to the End of the Millennium - A Novel of the Middle Ages*. Mariner Books. 2000. [978-0156011167]

Non-Fiction:

- Chacour, Elias. *Blood Brothers*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Chosen Books, 2003. [9780800793210]
David, Anthony. *An Improbable Friendship: The Remarkable Lives of Israeli Ruth Dayan and Palestinian Raymonda Tawil and Their Forty-Year Peace Mission*. Arcade Pub., 2015. [978-1628725681 hardcover; B0140EF8J4 e-book]
Davis, Natalie Zemon. *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim Between Worlds*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2006. [9780809094349]
Lagnado, Lucette. *The Man in the White Sharkskin Suit: A Jewish Family's Exodus from Old Cairo to the New World*. New York: Harper, 2008. [978-0060822187]
Power, Carla. *If the Oceans Were Ink: An Unlikely Friendship and a Journey to the Heart of the Quran*. New York: Holt Press, 2015. [978-0805098198]
Raheb, Mitri. *I am a Palestinian Christian*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995. [9780800626631]
Roden, Claudia. *The Book of Jewish Food: An Odyssey from Samarkand to New York*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997. [9780394532585]
Sabar, Ariel. *My Father's Paradise: A Son's Search for his Jewish Past in Kurdish Iraq*. New York: Algonquin Books, 2008. [9781565124905]
Shadid, Anthony. *House of Stone: a memoir of home, family, and a lost Middle East*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012. [9780547134666]
Shamash, Violette. *Memories of Eden: A Journey Through Jewish Baghdad*. London: Forum, 2008. [9780955709500]
Tolan, Sandy. *The Lemon Tree*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2006. [1596913436]

Films: (Some films are available through [Kanopy](#))

- [Fordson: Faith, Fasting, Football](#) (2011)
[Hasan and Marcos](#) (2008) (in Arabic with subtitles)
[The Imam & the Pastor](#) (2007) (available through the DTL)
[The Kingdom of Heaven](#) (2005)
[The Lemon Tree](#) (2008)
[Little Mosque on the Prairie](#) (Season One 2007)
[Malcolm X](#) (1992)
[Of Gods and Men](#) (2010)
[The Syrian Bride](#) (2004)
[The Sultan and the Saint](#) (2016)
[Where Do We Go Now?](#) (2011)

Policies and Miscellany:

Attendance: Active attendance in all classes is expected. However, if you must miss a class due to illness, family conflict or other emergency, please contact the instructor right away. *In the case of an absence the professor will reserve the right to ask the student for a written assignment on the required reading for that session.*

All written assignments should follow the normal conventions as in *Turabian: A Manual for Writers 9th ed.* (or later). Please include a title page on all papers more than one page, and make sure that your name is included below your name on the cover page. Number all pages. *The instructor reserves the right to have students re-submit an assignment for reasons of poor grammar, mistakes, or poorly written work.* For those who would like writing assistance, there are a number of good guides at: [Student Writing Resources](#).

Email Policy: The instructor will use the official Hartsem student email addresses for all communications. Please check your HIU email account regularly.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity: Academic honesty and integrity are expected of all students. Plagiarism exists when: a) the work submitted was done, in whole or in part, by anyone other than the one submitting the work, b) parts of the work, whether direct quotations, ideas, or data, are taken from another source without acknowledgement, c) the whole work is copied from another source [especially a web based source], or d) significant portions of one's own previous work used in another course. See "Plagiarism" at <https://www.hartfordinternational.edu/student-affairs/academics/academic-policies> .

AI tools for learning: Artificial Intelligence programs, including Chatbots, are here to stay. If used properly, then can help you become a better writer and learner. AI programs can assist in your writing and clarity. Please know that HIU has a plagiarism and AI detector program within Canvas. So, all of your submitted material will be examined by this software. If you use some form of AI program in your submitted work, you must:

1. Indicate that you have used this as a source,
2. Proofread and check the AI generated material. You are solely responsible for its content. (AI software can generate fake sources, as well as provide incorrect information.)
3. I reserve the right to ask for a oral exam along with submitted written material to assist you in learning and retaining content.

Wikipedia and other non-documented websites: Please do not cite *Wikipedia* or other non-documented websites. While these sites might direct one to documented sources (in the **Bibliography**) their authorship is unknown and cannot be considered authoritative as academic sources. Students will be marked down for referencing these public sites if they are used as primary sources.

Extensions: Extensions for papers will be given for illnesses or family emergencies only in consultation with the instructor.

Late Assignments/Papers: As per the Student Handbook, late assignments or papers will be marked down 1/3 of a grade for every two days.

Grading: The following evaluation process will be utilized as a guideline: (based on a 4-point system)

- A (4-3.8 / 100-96) Demonstrates excellent mastery of the subject matter, a superior ability to articulate this, and provides helpful connections to daily life or contemporary issues. Exceeds expectations of the course.
- A- (3.7-3.5 / 95-90) Demonstrates mastery of the subject matter, ability to articulate this well, and makes connections to daily life or contemporary issues. Exceeds expectations of the course.
- B+ (3.4-3.1 / 89-86) Demonstrates a very good understanding of the subject matter, able to articulate lessons learned in the assignment well. Meets expectations of the course.
- B (3.0-2.8 / 85-83) Demonstrates an understanding of the subject matter and the ability to articulate lessons learned. Meets expectations of the course.

- B- (2.7-2.4 / 82-80) Demonstrates an understanding of the material at hand, has some difficulty articulating this, and basic connection of the material to daily life or contemporary issues/life. Meets basic expectations for the course.
- C+ (2.3-2.1 / 79-77) Demonstrates a basic comprehension of the subject matter, weak articulation and connections. Does not meet expectations for the course.
- C (2.0-1.8 / 76-73) Demonstrates a minimal comprehension of the subject matter and has difficulty making connections. Does not meet expectations of the course.
- F (1.7-0.0 / 72 >) Unable to meet the basic requirements of the course.

Students in the **Doctor of Ministry** degree program are graded as follows:

High Pass(95-100), Pass (83-94), Low Pass(70-82), and Fail (below 70).

Inclusive Language: HIU is committed to a policy of inclusion in its academic life and mission. All members of the community are expected to communicate in language that reflects the equality of genders, openness to diverse cultural and theological perspectives, and sensitivity to one another's images of God. If you insist to use a particular gender in reference to God, please consult with the instructor.

Accommodations: The Americans with Disabilities Act ensures equal access to qualified individuals and prevents discrimination on the basis of a documented disability. It is HIU's policy to provide reasonable accommodations. Students who wish to receive accommodations must contact the Student Services Coordinator. Students are eligible for support services when they are enrolled in courses *and* they have requested and been cleared to receive for the course. All students seeking accommodation must fill out the [Request for Accessibility Accommodations](#) form.

Student Handbook: For all other questions you might have regarding policies or procedures, please see HIU [Academic Policies webpage](#), or the [Student Handbook](#).