

Major Themes of the Bible and the Qur'an – (SC-634)

Thursdays 4:00-6:45pm, Spring 2019

Hartford Seminary

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Through comparative evaluation of the concept of Scripture and revelation, and the reading of the Hebrew, Christian, and Islamic scriptures, students will acquire a vision of how the Abrahamic religions treat some of the most important characters in their scriptures and the seminal theological issues that arise from these narratives.

Course Objectives: Students will

1. Explore of how the concept of Scripture is utilized for members of the three Abrahamic Traditions;
2. Analyze common Biblical/Quranic characters, their distinctive roles in each of the Scriptures, and the particular theological or religious themes that result from these narratives;
3. Articulate one's own scriptural/theological position on Scripture and the role it plays in one's religious identity and belief.

These course objectives meet the following Core Program Outcomes:

Master of Arts in Religious Studies: Learning Outcomes

2. To demonstrate the knowledge and capacities needed to respectfully engage other religions
4. To demonstrate knowledge and skills for dialogical and [constructive] engagement with diversity.

Doctor of Ministry: Learning Outcomes

3. 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.

PhD: Learning Outcomes

1. Acquire a comprehensive knowledge in Islamic Studies, Christian-Muslim Relations, and Interreligious Engagement/Interfaith Dialogue

Teaching and Learning Strategies:

The first third of the course will focus on lectures by the instructor and experiential learning of scriptural texts that includes a field trip to view rare books. For the remainder of the course, students will be expected to read, reflect upon, and discuss written materials that have been composed by members of the three Abrahamic faiths. Each student will present one unit on a Biblical/Quranic character and guide the discussions.

Required Reading (on Reserve):

A copy of the Scriptures: Jewish Publication Society's *Tanakh*, the New Revised Standard Version of *The New Testament*, and an English interpretation of the Qur'an (M. Asad, Majid Fakhry, Yusuf `Ali, M. M. Pickthall, *inter alia*). Online versions are acceptable.

Carl Ernst, *How to Read the Qur'an: A New Guide, with Select Translations* (University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 2011).

John Kaltner, *The Bible and the Qur'an: Biblical Figures in the Islamic Tradition* (T&T Clark: New York, 2018).

Richard N. Soulen, *Sacred Scripture: A Short History of Interpretation* (Westminster/John Knox: Louisville, 2009).

Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *What is Scripture? A Comparative Approach* (Fortress: Minneapolis, 2005).

Stephen M. Wylen, *The Seventy Faces of Torah* (Paulist Press: New York, 2005).

Andrew Rippin, ed. *The Blackwell Companion to the Qur'an* (Blackwell Pub.: Malden, MA, 2006).

Recommended Reading:

Mahmoud Ayoub, *A Muslim View of Christianity* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2007).

Kenneth Cragg, *The Privilege of Man: a Theme in Judaism, Islam, and Christianity* (Bloomsburg: New York, 2016).

Ellen F. Davis and Richard Hays, eds. *The Art of Reading Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2003).

John Kaltner, *Ishmael Instructs Abraham* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999).

Winter, Tim, ed. *Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Assignment	Due Date(s)	Course objective(s) fulfilled by assignment	% of course grade
1. Weekly Class preparation (required reading) and contribution in discussions	Each Thursday Session	Course Objective #1 and #2	20%
2. DMin and PhD critical book review	Thursday, 14 February, 4 pm	Course Objective #1	
3. "Take Home" Mid-Term Essay	March 10-14	Course Objective #3	30%
4. Presentation on Biblical/Qur'anic character	Proposals for authors are due by Thursday, 14 February;	Course Objective #3	20%

	Presentations TBD		
5. Final research paper on assigned topic.	Proposals for papers are due by Thursday, 21 March, by 4 pm. Final submission of paper is Thursday, 9 May at 4 pm	Course Objective #1 and #3	30%

Course Assignments:

1. Read the assigned **required reading** and actively participate in class discussions (30%).

Active attendance in class is required. 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 250-750 word written assignment on the required reading for that session.

2. (DMin and PhD students only) **Critical Book Review** of a work on the topic of intertextuality. A list of potential books will be provided. The book review is to be posted on the course Canvas site on Thursday, 14 February by 4pm.

3. “Take Home” **Mid-Term essay** (30% of the grade)

Students will have a “Take Home” Mid-Term, in which they will have five days to submit their essay on one of three questions that will be posed by the instructor. The questions will be posted on Sunday, 14 March. Students will have till Thursday, 17 March at 7 pm to submit the essay. Students will be graded on demonstration with both the assigned reading, awareness of the concepts and terminology covered in the first five weeks of class. There is no word requirement for the essay.

4. Presentation on Biblical/Qur’anic Character

Students should select one of the characters outlined in Kaltner’s *The Bible and the Qur’an: Biblical Figures in the Islamic Tradition*.

The presentation should be 15-20 minutes in length (plus 15-20 minutes discussion) and cover:

- a) an overview of Kaltner’s material on the character;
- b) at least two other sources used in the research;
- c) Provide religious and theological questions for discussion;
- d) Provide a bibliography (credible articles, books and websites) for further reading and reflection.

The presentation, questions and bibliography should be posted to the CANVAS course site before the class. (20% of grade)

Students should email their list of top three choices of characters in Kaltner by the end of class on Thursday, February 21 at 4 pm. Final assignments will be made the following week.

Students not presenting are still responsible for reading the relevant scriptural texts that will be provided.

5. Final Research Paper (30% of the grade)

Students will write one **Final Research Paper (4000-5000 words for MARS, 5,000-6,000 for DMin, 6,000-8,000 for PhD)** on a topic covered in the class; either a personality covered during class (Ibrahim / Abraham; Moses / Musa; Job / Ayyub; Mary / Maryam; Jesus / 'Isa, etc.), or an important them in Qur'anic and Biblical interpretation.

Students should email the instructor with their intended topic by Thursday, 21 March.

(As per Seminary policy, all professor-student email communications for this class will be made by using official student Hartford Seminary email accounts. Enrollees should check their Seminary email account regularly.)

Class Schedule:

January 24: What is Scripture?, Questions of Intertextuality

Required Reading: Smith, 1-20, 45-91

January 31: *TaNaKh*, Oral and Written Torah

Required Reading: Wylen, 1- 43

February 7: The New Testament and Versions of the Christian Canon

Required Reading: Soulen, 1-59

February 14: *Qur'ān* and *muṣḥaf*

Required Reading: Ernst, 1-75

DMin and PhD Critical Book Reviews to be posted on the Canvas site by 4 pm.

February 21: No Class (Dr. Grafton at conference)

Students' top three choices for presentation topics are due by 4 pm. (Please email the instructor.)

February 28: Midrash and Talmud; *Ḥadīth*, *Tafsīr* and *Qiṣaṣ al-'Anbiyā'*; Commentary and Creeds

Required Reading: Wylen 97-170; Soulen 77-130; Rippen 321-349

March 7: Field Trip to view Scriptural Texts

March 14: Mid-Term Essay Due

Students will have access to the Mid-Term Essay questions on the Canvas Site beginning Sunday, 10 March and have until Thursday, 14 March, at 7 pm to submit the essay.

Three essay questions will be provided and students will pick one essay question from which to respond.

March 21: Student Presentations on Biblical/Qur'anic characters and themes

Selections from Kaltner...

March 28: Student Presentations on Biblical/Qur'anic characters and themes

April 4: Student Presentations on Biblical/Qur'anic characters and themes

April 11: Student Presentations on Biblical/Qur'anic characters and themes

April 18: No Class (Christian Holy Week, beginning of Passover)

April 25: Student Presentations on Biblical/Qur'anic characters and themes

Graduating Students final research papers by **26 April**.

**May 2: Student Presentations on Biblical/Qur'anic characters and themes
Final Wrap up Session**

May 9: Non-Graduating Student final papers due.

Be sure to bring or have access to a Bible and a Qur'an for each class.

For additional information on format, proper footnotes, acknowledgments, etc., students are directed to consult the Hartford Seminary General Guidelines for a Research Paper. These guidelines can be picked up in the student forms center or downloaded from our website at: <http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/student-writing-resources/>. Students may also consult Kate L. Turabian's, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations* (at least the 8th Ed., 2013). The Seminary research paper guide can be found at: <http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/student-writing-resources/>.

Seminary Grading Scale

A (95-100) 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- (90-94) 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+(87-89) Demonstrates a very good understanding of the subject matter, able to articulate lessons learned in the assignment well. Meets expectations of the course.

B (83-86) Demonstrates an understanding of the subject matter and the ability to articulate lessons learned. Meets expectations of the course.

B-(80-82) 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+(77-79) Demonstrates a basic comprehension of the subject matter, weak articulation and connections. Does not meet expectations for the course.

C (70-76) Demonstrates a minimal comprehension of the subject matter and has difficulty making connections. Does not meet expectations of the course.

F (below 70) Unable to meet the basic requirements of the course.

Any D.Min student will be graded on fail, low-pass, pass, high-pass. High Pass(95-100), Pass (83- 94), Low Pass(70-82), and Fail(below 70) D.Min Students are also expected to do additional work, see the course instructor.

Email Policy: The instructor will use the official Hartsem student email addresses for all communications. Please check your Hartsem 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 <http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/policies/>.

Inclusive Language: Hartford Seminary 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.

Extensions: Extensions for assignments will be given only in consultation with the instructor.

Official Handbooks: For all other questions you might have regarding policies or procedures, please check the student handbook <http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/student-handbook/> and seminary policies at Academic policies are listed at <http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/policies/>.