



KIIS Israel-Egypt, Summer 2018

HIST 490 Topics: History, Religion and Politics of Jerusalem and Cairo

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Syllabus subject to change

Required Texts:

- * *Readings in Judaism, Islam and Christianity in the historical and political context of Jerusalem and Cairo.* (A collection of articles and documents tailored for this course. 235 pages)
- * Frederick Mathewson Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*
- * Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*
- * *The Bible* (the New American Standard version is preferred, but any modern translation is OK)

I. Course Description:

An introduction to the teachings and practice of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity in historical and contemporary political context. Basic doctrine and ritual will be covered for each of these three religions. Special attention will be given to the historical development of religious traditions that are still alive today in the places that we will visit. The rich remains of religious architecture and art will be studied, from the Western Wall, to the Church of Holy Sepulcher, to Al-Azhar Mosque. Additionally, students will be exposed to the diversity of cultural and religious expressions in Jerusalem and Cairo, from a Shabbat service, to a Coptic mass, to a Sufi dikhr. Local experts in both locations will provide additional insights.

II. Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

1. To learn about the religions of Judaism, Islam and Christianity in their historic and political context, including, the basic contours of history (the "religious memory" of each religion).
2. To gain a basic knowledge of the formative texts: The Torah, The Bible, and the Qur'an.
3. To gain an understanding of how these religions have been and continue to be expressed in art, craft, architecture, rituals, and politics.
4. To better understand contemporary Jerusalem and Cairo, particularly how completing visions (informed by religious views) seek to address fundamental questions about human nature, the role of the State, the status of women and other human experiences.

5. To be able to articulate the foundational issues in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, and critically consider the claims (religious and otherwise) of the various parties to the Conflict.

6. To gain cross-cultural competences, to reflect on how one best engages with a host culture, to think critically about cross-cultural connections, and to develop tolerance of values across cultures.

III. Course Components:

Readings:

You will be assigned readings in books listed above. You will also be asked to read portions of primary sources (i.e. the Qur'an). These may seem strange or difficult to understand and might require special patience. Do not try to speed-read these primary sources. Reading quizzes will cover whatever is due on the given day. While traveling, you will be reading articles from your *Readings* binder; these will inform your experience, and you will be asked to discuss them in your journals.

Reflection Journals:

An essential part of your learning experience is your own reflection. While small- and full-group discussions will be useful ways for you to reflect, an important venue will be your Reflection Journal. Often during this course, you will be prompted to reflect on a certain experience, thus providing you the opportunity for *sustained* reflection. At the end of the course, you will be asked to write an *elaborate and thorough* essay (of at least 1200 words), providing a *synthesis* of things you have learned during the course as a whole.

Experiential and interactive learning:

Often during this course you will be asked to experience something specific. For example, you will be instructed how to politely and unobtrusively visit a local mosque at prayer time. In addition to learning proper etiquette, you will be given guidelines for how to make the most of participant observation. At other times, you will be asked to have some short conversations with a few locals concerning a certain subject that will give you new insights into local culture. You may be asked to attend religious or cultural events (concert, dance show, etc.) and reflect on them.

Research Project and Oral Presentation:

Approximately four weeks prior to departure, you will be assigned a religious and/or historical site that we will be visiting during the study-tour. You will do research into the origin, history, and significance of the site and prepare a 7-minute oral presentation. You should use at least two scholarly sources. Notes for your presentation should be made on 5x7" index cards. You should print out a bibliography of the sources you used for your research. Examples of sites that will be assigned are: The Mosque of Ibn Tulun in Cairo, St. James Armenian Orthodox Cathedral in Jerusalem, and The Ben Ezra Synagogue in Cairo. When we visit "your" site on the study-tour, you will present to the rest of the group. You will turn in your index cards and your bibliography.

Examination:

There will be a comprehensive examination at the end of the study-tour. It will consist of multiple choice, matching, and essay questions.

Language:

This is not a language class. But in order to better engage with your host cultures, you will be asked to learn a few basic phrases in Hebrew and Arabic. You will be learning a few words per day. Each word you learn will help to improve your interaction with your host culture. You will be quizzed on the phrases or words for the day.

Lectures, briefings, tours, and discussions:

Much of this course depends on successful appropriation of information given during the study-tour. Sometimes this will be a briefing with a Muslim scholar or spokesperson; sometimes this will be with an academic tour-guide. All of this information will be represented on your final examination.

VI. Policies

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Students are expected to attend every class and to participate in out-of-class activities as directed by the instructor. KISS requires that any unexcused absence result in grade reduction, and multiple unexcused absences may result in expulsion from the program.

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY: Cheating, plagiarism (submitting another person's material as one's own), or doing work for another person which will receive academic credit are all impermissible. This includes the use of unauthorized books, notebooks, or other sources in order to secure or give help during an examination, the unauthorized copying of examinations, assignments, reports, term papers, or the presentation of unacknowledged material as if it were the student's own work. Disciplinary action may be taken beyond the academic discipline administered by the faculty member who teaches the course in which the cheating took place.

Student Conduct Policy: All students must adhere this programs behavioral guidelines and also Western Kentucky University's code of conduct as stipulated in the Student Handbook. Please check the following link:

http://www.wku.edu/handbook/2009/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=51:code-ofstudent-conduct&catid=35:student-code&Itemid=54

V. Grading:

Quizzes	10%
Reflection Journal	40%
Research and Presentation	10%
Final Exam	30%
Participation	10%
Total	100%