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MW 705 Judaism and Islam: Religious Studies for Christian Mission I

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JUDAISM AND ISLAM: RELIGIOUS STUDIES FOR CHRISTIAN MISSION I

MW 705 Fall, 1999 (3 hrs.). A. H. Mathias Zahniser, instructor. Office (MC313) Hours: T & R 1500 - 1645. Please make appointments with Ms Dawn Tippey MC303, 858-2259. My phones: 858-2218 and 858-4434 (home). Email: mathias_zahniser@asburyseminary.edu; dawn_tippey@asburyseminary.edu.

I. DESCRIPTION, OBJECTIVES AND METHOD

- A. **Catalogue Description:** An introduction to the nature and function of religion in human culture with special reference to the Judaic and Islamic traditions. Special attention is given to the relevance of the cross-cultural study of religion to Christian mission among people influenced by the three great Abrahamic traditions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. A field trip is required.
- B. **Method:** In MW 705, religious traditions are explored historically, that is, as they occur over time, phenomenologically, that is, on their own terms and through their own forms, theologically, that is, in relation to the claims of Christian faith and revelation, and elenctically, that is, with a view toward providing opportunities for the Spirit to convince people influenced by these faith traditions of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8).
- C. **Course Goals.** The goals of the course are organized around **three primary areas of inquiry, learning and expression:** (1) religious studies; (2) the Jewish and Islamic religious traditions; and (3) an elenctic approach to evangelization.
1. **The Cross-Cultural Study of Religion**
 - 1.1 Students will know of some of the basic terms, techniques, and methods employed in the cross-cultural study of religious traditions.
 - 1.2 Students will develop their ability to listen to others, read and/or observe what they produce with unprejudiced attention and genuine respect, regardless of their worldviews and resultant commitments.
 - 1.3 Students will accept the ideal of *epoché* (*methodological* suspension of the subjectivity of the interpreter in order to minimize the distortion of the essence of the religious expression being observed) as a working principle of inter-cultural understanding and communication.
 2. **The Jewish and Islamic Religious Traditions**
 - 2.1 Students will know the minimal indispensable terminology and facts associated with these religious traditions.
 - 2.2 Students will understand the distinctive features of the Abrahamic tradition (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) over against other religious traditions.
 - 2.3 Students will understand salient features of the worldview and ethos of Judaism and Islam as exemplified in selected phenomena basic to their identity, and in relation to sharing the gospel with people influenced by them.
 - 2.4 Students will become aware of the satisfaction people influenced by Judaism and Islam derive from their faith traditions.
 - 2.5 Students will become aware of the personal integration participants realize from the performance of ritual obligations.
 - 2.6 Students will grow in spontaneous interest in learning about Jewish and Islamic traditions,

institutions, places and people.

2.7 Students will grow in a sense of common humanity with persons influenced by the Jewish and Islamic traditions.

3. **An Elenctic Approach to Evangelization**

3.1 Students will know the indispensable terminology and facts associated with an elenctic approach to evangelization.

3.2 Students will become aware of the possibilities associated with openness to the creative Spirit of God for cross-cultural communication.

3.3 Students will sharpen their interest in enabling others to know God in Jesus Christ.

3.4 Students will accept the role of elenctic witness in personal and corporate Christian life.

4. **Theological Integration**

4.1 Students will enjoy discovering a growing congruence of inner commitment and outer behavior.

4.2 Students will increase in faith in the power of the Holy Spirit to effect change in persons in spite of apparently insurmountable barriers.

5. **Pedagogy and Pilgrimage**

5.1 Students will gain experience and develop skills in group and travel learning.

5.2 Students will gain experience and develop skills in planning and leading the study of four major issues for a small group.

5.3 Students will increase their appreciation for the value of a team approach and a learning community in Christian witness to persons influenced by major religious faiths such as Judaism and Islam.

II. REQUIREMENTS, EVALUATION, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

A. Common Readings: The following books have been selected to give a common foundation to our knowledge:

J. H. Bavinck. *An Introduction to the Science of Missions*. Trans. David H. Freeman. Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1960. Distributed by Baker Books, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Part two is required reading and is included in your readings packet.

John Corrigan, et al. *Jews, Christians, Muslims: A Comparative Introduction to Monotheistic Religions*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1998.

Suzanne Haneef. *What Everyone Should Know about Islam and Muslims*. Chicago: Kazi Publications, 1982. This whole book is to be read by all students.

Yehezkel Kaufmann. *The Religion of Israel: From its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*. Trans. and abridged by Moshe Greenberg. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960. The material to be read from Kaufmann has been included in the course packet.

John Sanders (ed.), Gabriel Fackre, and Ronald H. Nash. *What About Those Who Have Never Heard?: Three Views on the Destiny of the Unevangelized*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1995. This book is available at the bookstore. See below plans for December 7 and 9.

Harold W. Turner. *From Temple to Meeting House: The Phenomenology and Theology of Places of Worship. Religion and Society*, 16. The Hague, Paris, and New York: Mouton, 1979. Portions of this book are required reading; these portions are included in your course packet.

Herman Wouk. *This is My God: The Jewish Way of Life*. Revised Edition. New York: Little, Brown, and Co., 1997. This book is to be read in its entirety by all students.

A. H. Mathias Zahniser. "Close Encounter of the Vulnerable Kind: Christian Dialogue and Proclamation Among Muslims." *Asbury Theological Journal* 49/1 (Spring, 1994), 71-78. This article, distributed by the instructor, is required reading for all students. See below regarding final integrative essay.

B. Recommended Readings

Robert S. Ellwood and Barbara A. McGraw. *Many Peoples, Many Faiths: Women and Men in the World Religions*. Sixth Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1999. Chapters 1, 7, 8, 9 (on MW705 reserve shelf).

Arthur J. Magida. *How to Be a Perfect Stranger: A Guide to Etiquette in Other People's Religious Ceremonies*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1996, Chapters 8, 10, and 12 (on MW705 reserve shelf).

C. The following **instruments of learning, means of evaluation, and vehicles for ministry** are designed to provide expressions of spiritual formation, cognitive discovery, affective response, and community and individual contributions related to the goals of the course.

1. **Interaction papers** cover designated readings for a particular session or chapters in texts not dealt with in class. These papers are designed to give you a chance to react to class materials from the point of view of your background and ministry perspective. These papers comprise thirty-five percent of the grade for the class. They will be evaluated carefully using the criteria identified on page 21 of the Seminary's catalogue: A = exceptional work; B = good work; C = acceptable work; D = marginal work; and F = unacceptable or unfulfilled work. Except for the special case of the two due on November 30 at 9:00 a.m., interaction papers must be turned in before the end of class on the day they are due and cannot be made up if missed. The lowest grade will be dropped before the interaction paper grades are averaged.
2. **Final integrative essay**. This essay represents sixty-five per cent of the grade for the class. In response to the article by your instructor, "Close Encounters of the Vulnerable Kind," and to Sanders, et al., *What about those who have Never Heard?* You will write an integrative essay on the topic: Christian Witness to Jews or Muslims: A Personal View. Guidelines for this essay will be distributed. The essay may not exceed fifteen pages in length, assuming one inch margins, double spacing, and twelve point courier font, not including notes and bibliography. Courier font is not required. If you use a variable-spaced font such as Times, fifteen pages of Courier content will fit into twelve pages.
3. **The field trip to Toledo, Ohio** (October 8-10 or 15-17) is required. Since this trip involves a significant time commitment, you are given some compensating days off.
4. **Small group leadership**. You and one or two other of your 705 colleagues will provide lessons and leadership for a small group consisting of the members of your van for the field trip to Toledo. General guidelines for this responsibility occur in the schedule for the weeks of September 28 (ritual and worship space), October 26 (ethics and morality), December 1 (politics), and December 7 (the state of the unevangelized) below. The basic materials for these lessons will be found in the special readings for MW705. While this responsibility is not optional it will not figure in the evaluation for the course. It will, however, be helpful in doing well on the competency exam for this course in February of 2000.

III. SCHEDULE FOR THE TERM

The schedule includes the assigned readings for the days on which they will be discussed. Please have the readings read by the class period for which they are assigned. The focus in the class sessions will be upon the material presented in the assigned readings, occasionally supplemented by material presented

by the instructor. Assignments are made for the week beginning on the date indicated and all interaction papers should be turned in on the Tuesday of the week for which they are assigned. Interaction papers will usually be handed back on Thursday.

A. Introduction to the Course

September 7: **Introduction to the course and organization for Toledo '99**, with special attention to course methodology and requirements. Corrigan et al., "Preface," pp. ix-xvi. Chapter 1 in Ellwood and McGraw (recommended reading on reserve) is relevant to this first week of introduction. This reading may contribute to your preparation for the following competency exam questions:

Competency exam questions 7 and 10. See below.

B. Judaism and Islam: a quick preview.

September 14: **An introduction to Judaism. Reading:** Corrigan et al., Introduction to Part III and Chapter 7. An **interaction paper** must be completed for this reading. In class **video:** "Judaism: The Chosen People." Note: this reading is light and so are the readings on some other days, but look at the assignment for October 12.

September 21: **An introduction to Islam. Reading:** Corrigan et al., Chapter 9. In class **video:** "There is No God but God." No interaction paper due today, use the time preparing for next week's heavy assignment.

September 28: **Preparation for Toledo '99. Readings:** Corrigan et al., Chapters 10, 12, 16, and 18. On Thursday and Friday of this week, your 705 team will make a presentation to your van group on Jewish and Islamic worship space and practice. This will represent a preparation for the field trip. Your 605 students will have read Haneef, pages 42-46 and 131-135; and Wouk, Chapter 8: "The Prayers, the Synagogue, and the Worshippers," so they will have some background. A manual, *How to be a Perfect Stranger*, edited by Arthur Magida giving guidelines for visiting mosques, synagogues, and Eastern Orthodox churches will be placed on reserve for your use. The relevant chapters are 10 and 12, but chapter 8 on Greek Orthodoxy will relate to our Sunday Morning worship. The media center has an excellent film on the mosque, showing the positions and content of the prayers you will observe in Toledo ("Friday Prayers at the Mosque"). You will be given a handout indicating the structure and content of the field trip. Be sure to query your group in connection with introductions on Thursday about their own experience with Jewish and Muslim worship; some of them may have had more actual experience than your 705 team has had. Montesquieu (1689-1755) said, "What the master does is nothing; what the master causes to happen is everything." Please provide your instructor with a one-page summary of your plans. The following questions or problems related to your reading and the trip to Toledo itself could show up on the competency exam for this course:

Competency exam question 1: Identify and describe the Five Pillars of Islam, showing how they contribute to fulfilling the Islamic ideal of *tawhid*, especially as it relates to the maintenance of a sense of community among believers.

Competency exam question 2: Kendall Folkert has made the point that religious traditions exhibit a tension between religious identity and individual freedom. Show how this tension is related to what Folkert calls public and private religion. The Jewish religious tradition exemplifies public and private religion as well as this tension between identity and freedom. You should be able to describe Folkert's insight, interpret it, exemplify it from the Jewish religious tradition, and evaluate its significance for Christian mission.

C. The Jewish Religious Tradition.

October 5: **Ritual occasions of the rabbinical year. Readings:** Corrigan et al., review Chapter 10, noting especially pages 222-23. Wouk, Chapters 5-7 and 9-12. An **interaction paper** must be completed on any one of the chapters from Wouk. In-class reading of “The Conversion of the Jews,” by Philip Roth (From *Good-bye Columbus*). **No class on Friday.** The following competency exam questions are relevant to this week’s work:

Competency exam question 2.

Competency exam question 3: Be able to give a definition of a symbol to aid in understanding the significant role of symbols in religious traditions. Interpret the meaning of the definition you offer, show its value for understanding religious traditions, and show the usefulness of a study of symbols for successful Christian mission among people influenced by such religious traditions as Judaism and Islam. Exemplify your presentation from the religious calendars of Judaism and/or Islam.

October 8 (F) - 10 (Su) *******TOLEDO '99 ONE*******

October 12: **Torah, Tenakh and Talmud: the scripturalization of Judaism. Reading:** Corrigan et al., Chapters 1 and 3, paying special attention to the charts on pages 9, 14, 19, and 21. Wouk, Prologue through Chapter 4 and Chapters 13-17. An **interaction paper** must be completed for any one of the chapters read. In class clip from the **video:** “Judaism: The Chosen People.”” **No class on Friday.**

October 15 (F) - 17 (Su) *******TOLEDO '99 TWO*******

D. The Islamic Religious Tradition.

October 19: **Islamic beliefs and ritual activities. Reading:** Haneef, Sec. I. An **interaction paper** must be completed for pages 3-38 from Haneef. Hopefully the reading you did for September 28 is still available in memory. **Video** clips from “The Five Pillars of Islam” and “There is no God but God” on the Islamic Pilgrimage (Hajj). The following competency exam questions are relevant to this week’s work:

Competency exam question 1.

Competency exam question 3.

October 26: **Ethics and morality in Judaism and Islam. Reading:** Corrigan et al., Chapters 13 and 15; Haneef pages 63-128 and 142-184. On Tuesday and Thursday of this week, you will have your second session with your van group. **No class on Friday it is a Day of Prayer.** Your 705 team will lead the discussion on Jewish and Islamic ethics. Your students will have read the sections from Haneef and you may want to refer to passages in Ellwood and McGraw related to ethics, especially what they have to say about women in Judaism (291-96) and Islam (418-27). On Thursday collect the interaction papers from 605 students and divide them up among the members of your team. Evaluate the interaction papers using the same criteria Zahniser has used in evaluating your papers and hand them back on Friday. Keep a record of your evaluations. Please turn in to Zahniser a one-page summary of your plans. The following competency exam question is relevant to this week’s work:

Competency exam question 4: Ethics and law are closely related in Judaism and Islam. How is the relationship conceived in each tradition? What are the sources of the law in these two traditions and what sanctions are available to motivate believers to follow the guidelines of the law? Identify similarities and differences. How is law treated in Christianity? How would you answer a Jew or a Muslim who sees a connection between salvation by grace and the moral chaos of North Atlantic cultures? How is Islamic and Jewish law being adjusted in response to the importance of women in these traditions?

E. The Cross-cultural Study of Religion and Christian Witness to People Influenced by Judaism and Islam.

November 2: **The distinctive characteristic of Abrahamic religion. Reading:** Corrigan et al., Part II and Kaufmann pages 21-121. This week we examine an analysis that suggests the basic and distinctive feature of biblical monotheism. It helps us greatly with the elenctic question: What have you done with God? The following competency exam questions are relevant to this week's work. Chapters two and eleven of my book *Symbol and Ceremony: Making Disciples across Cultures. Innovations in Mission*, 6 (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1997) are also relevant to this topic.

Competency question 5: Compare and contrast the Christian and Islamic understanding of God. Zahniser makes the case in class for the significance of contrasting Christian and Islamic concepts of God for Christian witness to people influenced by Islam. Describe, interpret, and evaluate Zahniser's case, exemplifying your response from the Christian and Islamic religious traditions.

Competency question 6: Yehezkel Kaufmann has offered a significant contrast between Israelite religion—including Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (Abrahamic traditions)—and other (non-Abrahamic) religious traditions. Be able to describe this difference in basic idea or cosmology, compare and contrast Judaism, Islam, and Christianity on the topic of monotheism, and identify the significance of your discussion for Christian witness among people influenced by Judaism and Islam.

November 9: **Christian witness and major religious traditions: an elenctic approach. Reading:** Bavinck, Part Two. On these days we shall work on our understanding of Bavinck's *elenctic* approach to Christian witness among people of other religious traditions. You will receive a handout called "Between Proclamation and Dialog: An Elenctic Approach to Cross-cultural Witness."

Competency exam question 7. Describe the elenctic approach to mission as developed by J. H. Bavinck. Evaluate its compatibility with Harold Turner's understanding of religions as authentic attempts to relate to a transcendent reality (see November 16 below). Assess its strengths and weaknesses for contemporary Christian witness, especially for witness to people of serious commitment to non-Christian religious traditions such as Judaism and Islam. What elenctic question—based in a Christian doctrine of prevenient grace—did Zahniser add to Bavinck's approach? Use the religious traditions studied in MW705 to illustrate your points.

November 16: **The Phenomenological Method and the Christian Project. Reading:** Turner pages 346-366. Today and Thursday we study one of the best examples of Christian theological use of the phenomenological method. Do an **interaction paper** over the chapter by Turner. The book will be found on the reserve shelf for MW705 but the assigned pages show up in your packet. **There will be no class on November 19—compensation for Toledo '99 I and II.** The following competency exam question is relevant to this week's work:

Competency exam question 7. See immediately above.

November 22-26 *** Reading Week***

November 30: An **interaction paper due today at 9:00 a.m.** on any two of Corrigan et al.'s chapters on Christianity. **There will be no class on November 30—compensation for Toledo '99 I and II.**

December 1 & 2: **Religion and politics. Reading:** Corrigan et al., Part VII. For this session, I would like you to read the Christian as well as the Jewish and Islamic chapters. This will be your only reading for this week. You will meet with your van groups on these days and discuss the topic. Your 605 students will not have read much on this topic for Judaism, but Ellwood and McGraw deal with the political character of Islam in Chapter 9, especially pages 394-97, 402-08, and 412-18. You can give background from your comparative reading and present your fellow van riders a set of questions to grapple with. It should not be hard to put something together, given the reading material and the questions included by Corrigan et al. at the end of Part VII. On Thursday collect the interaction

papers from 605 students and divide them up among the members of your team. Evaluate the interaction papers using the same criteria that Zahniser has used in evaluating your papers and hand them back on Friday. Keep a record of your evaluations. The following competency exam question is relevant to this week's work. I am especially interested in the views of international students on this issue.

Competency exam question 8: Religious communities sometimes are persecuted by the state. How have Jews, Christians, and Muslims been persecuted? How does persecution of religious minorities—or majorities that are out of power—relate to political power, that is, to a Jewish, Christian, or Islamic state? Do you think the United States should grant non-Christian religions all the privileges Christianity enjoys, such as opening the House and Senate with prayer?

December 7 & 9: **Major religious traditions and the state of the “unevangelized”:** the representative approaches. **Reading:** John Sanders (ed.), Gabriel Fackre, and Ronald H. Nash, *What About Those Who Have Never Heard?* Again, meet with your van groups around the issues of your reading. Briefly summarize for your group the positions represented by Sanders, Fackre, and Nash. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of all three positions. Refrain from advocating any one position. Give everybody a chance to speak both positively and negatively about each position. This will be good background for you because you will be required to be able to write a competency exam essay on this subject, such as the following:

Competency exam question 9: Be able to describe, interpret, and evaluate at least three major approaches to understanding the condition and options for those whom John Sanders has called “the unevangelized.” Indicate where you stand on this issue and why.

December 10: **Review for the exam.** The following competency exam questions are relevant to this week's work:

Competency exam question 7. See above.

F. Final examination: to be taken by the student on his or her own time.

See the discussion of the final integrative essay earlier in the syllabus under II, C, 2. Make sure you know what this is all about. The essay is due in the office of the instructor by 1700 on December 17. The following competency exam questions are relevant to this week's work:

Competency exam question 9. See above.

Competency exam question 10: Be able to describe, interpret, and evaluate the approach to Christian witness among people influenced by Judaism and Islam Zahniser has described as “Close encounters of the vulnerable kind.”