

Jewish Christian Encounter (Comparative Religion)

HIS 111

American Jewish University Campus in Israel

Young Judaea Year Course

"Ten measures of beauty descended upon the world—nine were given to Jerusalem... There is no beauty like the beauty of Jerusalem!"

(Babylonian Talmud, Kidushin, 49:2)

Introduction

Jerusalem—also known as *Zion*, *al-Quds* and *Terra Sancta*—is one of the most complex and exciting places in the world. Conflicts over ownership, control and setting the political/religious agenda have plagued the city since ancient times; never more so since the three monotheistic faiths of Judaism, Christianity and Islam settled here.

This course will examine one aspect of Jerusalem, namely its religious history and significance. We will explore ideas and texts related to the monotheistic faiths and ask critical questions from theoretical and personal perspectives. We will meet some of the most interested (and interesting) residents of the city to hear first-hand their understanding of Jerusalem and her value to them as spiritual beings. Most importantly, we will go out into the streets, synagogues churches, mosques and graveyards of the city, in order to see first hand how religion has shaped and influenced Jerusalem and how she in turn has and continues to play vital role in the development of these three important paths to God and spirituality.

Whether you are a veteran visitor to Jerusalem, or here for the first time, this course will give you a fresh perspective on Jerusalem and introduce you to new ideas, people and places.

Course Requirements

1. Attendance (20%)

THE major factor in determining your grade in this course is attendance. Since the course meets only once a week and because each class deals with and travels to unique sites, it is imperative that you attend each and every session. There is no way to ‘make-up’ for a missed session and therefore, no matter what the reason, your grade will be deducted for a missed session, regardless of the reason for your absence*.

**Except for Serious illness. This must be documented by a physician, confirmed by Jerusalem Section staff and reviewed by the Director of Education.*

2. Readings Review (25%)

Each week you will be given reading assignments. Based on these, you will be asked to complete a series of review questions meant to focus your learning & understanding. Details of this assignment will be discussed in class. The due-dates for this assignment are listed below.

Course Text: *Jews, Christians and Muslims: A Comparative introduction to Monotheistic religions*. (1998, Corrigan, J, Denny, F.M., Eire, C.M.N. & Jaffee, M.S., EDS.) . Specific chapters are listed below.

3. Test (50%)

A final test will be given in order to assess your integration of material presented in the course and for you to express your response to what you have learned.

4. Participation (5%)

It is important to be an active participant in this experience; to share feelings and opinions, engage in discussion and ask questions.

Additional Student Responsibilities:

- Specific class dates will be provided by the Director of Education. It your responsibility to know when class takes place and if any changes are made to the schedule.
- Treat yourself, your classmates, instructor, guest speakers and holy sites with respect. You will be told before leaving Beit Ar-El if a religious site requires special clothing or behavior. You must always respect these requirements, even if you do not value or understand them.
- You are **NOT** permitted to use electronic devices in class (phones, music players, computers, etc.) *UNLESS* written permission is given for students with special learning needs. If you bring these devises with you on the bus, they must not appear when others are speaking or when visiting sites.
- You must arrive at every class on time and with appropriate materials—source book, notebook and pen. In addition, you must remember to bring your bus pass, food, water a hat and safe/comfortable clothing/shoes.
- You are permitted to smoke and eat **ONLY** outside holy sites and not in the presence of guest speakers. *If in doubt, ask!*
- If you experience difficulty in any aspect of the class, speakers or sites, it is your responsibility to discuss this with Dr. Rose. Time is offered for such discussions. If you feel unable to or uncomfortable with entering specific sites, you must speak with Dr. Rose before leaving Beit Ar-El
- Madrichim and occasionally a guard will accompany us on field visits. It is very important to know where they are at all times, listen carefully to their instructions and treat them with respect.
- You must be an active participant in ensuring your safety. This means staying with the group at all times; knowing how to get home (in case you need to travel on your own); and make certain that you are polite and respectful.
- Go into every new place, meeting and situation with an open attitude. You never need to agree with the ideas and beliefs presented, only listen and treat them with respect and interest.

Class Schedule:

- Each there will be a lecture on themes connected to Jerusalem's Monotheistic faiths. This will allow us to better understand the points of connection and difference that exist between Judaism, Christianity and Islam.
- Each week we will explore sites connected to either one of the Monotheistic faiths, or to

the idea of Jerusalem as a religious capitol.

The following is an overview of the weekly schedule. Please note that due to various circumstances (weather, security, etc.) changes may occur. ***It is important that you consult the Jerusalem Department schedule on a weekly basis for updates.***

I Overview

Class 1

Introduction: *Review the “How’s & Why’s” of the course*

Theme: *Jerusalem—an Introduction to the Holy City*

Sites: *Mount Scopus, Sheikh Jar’ach, Shimon Ha-Tzadik*

Film: *“A Secular Pilgrim in Jerusalem”*

Class 2

Theme: *Judaism*

Site: *The Israel Museum*

Lecture: *An overview of Jewish Beliefs*

Reading: *Part I: Scripture and Tradition (page 1)*

Class 3

Theme: *Christianity*

Site: *Ein Karem Churches*

Lecture: *An overview of Christian Beliefs*

Reading: *Part II: Monotheism (page 75)*

Class 4

Theme: *Islam*

Site: *Abu Gosh Mosque and community centre (possible Speaker on Islam)*

Lecture: *An overview of Muslim Beliefs*

Writing: *Prepare review questions from parts I&II*

II Conflict

Class 5

Theme: *Temple Mount: Mosque or Temple?*

Site: *Al Aqsa Mosque & 3rd Temple Institute*

Lecture: *Comparative Overview: Chosen-ness & non-believers*

Reading: *Part III: Authority (page 155)*

Class 6

Theme: *Hebron: A Model for a Future Jerusalem?*

Site: *Hebron*

Lecture: *Comparative Overview: Life after death, heaven & hell*

Reading: *Part IV: Worship and Ritual (page 213)*

Class 7

Theme: *Christian Conflict*

Sites: Christian Quarter Holy Sepulcher, attend Armenian Service
Lecture: *Comparative Overview: Life-cycle rituals*
Reading: *Part V: Ethics (page 277)*

Class 8

Theme: Jerusalem: Jewish Capitol or Capitol of the Jews?
Sites: Belzer Synagogue, IRAC, Ma'aglei Tzedek?
Lecture: *Comparative Overview: Sex & Gender*
Writing: *Prepare review questions from parts III-IV-V*

III Coexistence

Class 9

Theme: Beyond the Walls: the new city of Jerusalem in the late 19th century
Sites: German Colony; Yemin Moshe; Mamilla Cemetery; Ethiopian Church
Lecture: *Comparative Overview: Clergy & holy (wo)men*
Reading: *Part VI: Material Culture (page 341)*

Class 10

Theme: Sowing the Seeds of Peace
Sites: Magnificat (music centre), Yad B'yad School, Neve Shalom
Lecture: *Comparative Overview: Law, society & punishment*
Reading: *Part VII: Religion and the Political Order (page 419)*

Class 11

Theme: People and Peace
Site: Meet with Jewish/Arab Youth dialogue group
FINAL TEST

Bibliography

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- Goldscheider, Calvin, *Israel's Changing Society: Population, Ethnicity and Development* (Westview Press, 1997)
- Grossman, David, *Sleeping on a Wire* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1991)
- Hareven, Alouph, *Every Sixth Israeli* (Jerusalem: Van Leer, 1983)
- Isralowitz, Richard and others, eds. *Transitions: Russians, Ethiopians and Bedouins in Israel's Negev Desert* (Ashgate Publishing, 1999)
- Minns, Amina, *Citizens Apart* (London: IB Tauris & Co, 1991)
- Peled, Yoav, "Ethnic Democracy and the Legal Construction of Citizenship – Arab Citizens of the Jewish State," *American Political Science Review* 86(2), 1992: pp. 432-43
- Qashua, Sayed, *Dancing Arabs* (New York: Grove Press, 2004)
- Stendel, Ori, *The Arabs in Israel* (Sussex Academic, 1996)
- Stone, M. E., Ervine, R. and Stone N., eds. *The Armenians in Jerusalem and the Holy Land* (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters Publishing, 2002)