

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

Mondays 6:00-8:00pm, spring 2021

Synchronous Zoom Sessions

Hartford Seminary
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Join us for guided tour of the historical development of the Hebrew, Christian, and Islamic scriptures. Evaluating and comparing the concepts of Scripture and Revelation will lead us through the texts, and how they came to be considered “revelation” and “canon.” We’ll also explore how these scriptures depict some of the most important shared characters, such as Abraham, Job, Mary, and Jesus, to name a few, as well as the seminal theological issues that arise from their specific roles in the Scriptures.

Course Objectives: Students will

1. Explore of how the concept of Scripture is utilized for members of the three Abrahamic Traditions;
2. Analyze shared 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 Program Outcomes:

Master of Arts in Religious Studies:

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.

Islamic Chaplaincy Program:

2. Develop an appreciation of living in a pluralistic world and dialogical skills needed to work in multi-faith and diverse settings.

Doctor of Ministry:

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.

Teaching and Learning Strategies:

This course is conceived as a “flipped class.” Material, activities, and presentations will be provided by the instructor prior to each class session on the course canvas site. Students will attend a synchronous class session and be expected to engage in discussions on that material based on the prompts for the week. The first half of the course will focus on the concepts of Scriptural texts, their role and purpose, and their historical development as “canon.” An essay exam will conclude this section. For the remainder of the course, students will be expected to research and develop presentations centered on biblical/qur’anic characters.

A final exam will follow the “flipped classroom” model and engage in a de-construction of a novel on a Muslim interpretation of “Good Friday.” Due to Ramadan, the class will be required to negotiate altered times of the class to accommodate *iftar* the final four weeks.

Required Reading (on Reserve):

A copy of the Scriptures: Jewish Publication Society’s *Tanakh*, the New Revised Standard Version of *The New Testament* (preferably the Oxford Annotated Study Bible), and an English interpretation of the Qur’an (preferably the *The Study Qur’an* by S.H. Nasr). If you read Arabic, please use the Arabic *mushaf*. Online versions are acceptable.

Hussein, Kamel M. *City of Wrong: A Friday in Jerusalem*. Trans. Kenneth Cragg. Oxford: OneWorld Publishing, 1994.

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

Mattson, Ingrid. *The story of the Qur'an: its history and place in Muslim life* 2nd ed. New York: Wiley-Blackwell Press, 2013.

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

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

Various articles and chapters as listed in the course outline below.

Hidayatullah, Aysha A. *Feminist Edges of the Qur'an*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

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

Assignment	Due Date(s)	Course objective(s) fulfilled by assignment	% of course grade
1. Weekly Class preparation (required reading) and contribution in discussions	Each weekly session	Course Objective #1 and #2	30%
1. DMin and PhD critical book review	Due 8 February, 8 pm	Course Objective #1	
3. “Take Home” Mid-Term Essay	Due 19 March, 8 pm	Course Objective #3	25%
4. Presentation on Biblical/Qur’anic character	Proposals for authors are due by 15 February; Outline due one week prior to presentation; presentation, TBD	Course Objective #3	25%
5. Final paper and discussion on <i>City of Wrong</i>	Final submission of paper is Mon., 3 May by 6 pm	Course Objective #1 and #3	20%

Course Assignments:

1. Read the assigned **required reading** and actively participate in class discussions (30%). The instructor will grade participation once midway through the course and then at the end.

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 the **week of 8 February by 8pm**.
3. "Take Home" **Mid-Term essay** (25% 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 Monday, 15 March. Students will have until **Friday, 19 March at 8 pm** to submit the essay. Students will be graded on demonstration of engagement with both the assigned reading and awareness of the concepts and terminology covered in the first weeks of class.

4. Presentation on Biblical/Qur'anic character and themes

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) a thorough analysis of the character and their role as presented in the scriptures (and extra-canonical material);
- c) provide religious and theological questions for discussion;
- d) provide a bibliography (credible articles, books and websites) for further reading.

In preparation for the presentation, in addition to primary and secondary sources, students should consult a tertiary source such as *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'an*, *Encyclopedia of Islam* (2nd or 3rd ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Qur'an*, *The Cambridge companion to the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament*, *The Cambridge companion to biblical interpretation*, etc.

Students should email their list of top three choices of characters in Kaltner by the end of class by **15 February at 8 pm**. Final assignments will be made the following week.

Students are required to send an outline and working bibliography to the instructor **one week prior to their presentation**, for review.

Final papers and presentations should be posted by **Sunday, 8 pm of the week of their presentation**. (25% of grade)

4. Students will read Kamel M. Hussein's *City of Wrong* and write a **1500-2000 word paper** discussing the following points:
- What is the purpose of Hussein's novel?
 - What character, if any, do you identify with in the book? Why?
 - What theological issues come into play between the Christian and Muslim perspectives of Good Friday?

The Final Examination will be a small and large group discussion on the book. Papers should be posted on the course site prior to the class **Monday, 3 May, by 6:00 pm**. (20% of the grade.)

Class Schedule:

January 25: What is Scripture?

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

February 1: *TaNaKh*, Oral and Written Torah

Required Reading: Wylen, 1- 43

February 8: The New Testament and the Christian Canon

Required Reading: Soulen, 1-28

February 15: *Qur'ān* and the *muṣḥaf*

Required Reading: Mattson, 1-75

DMin Critical Book Reviews to be posted on the Canvas site by 8 pm.

Students' should email their instructor their top three choices for presentation topics are due by 8 pm.

February 22: Classical interpreters: the Rabbis, Church Fathers, and 'ulama

Required Reading: Mattson, 178-219; Soulen 77-130; Wylen 97-157

March 1: Publishing and Translations of Scripture

Required Reading: Mattson 76-136; Soulen, 29-59

March 15: Contemporary interpreters: paying attention to race and ethnicity

Required Reading: Farid Esack, *Qur'an, Liberation & Pluralism: an Islamic perspective of interreligious solidarity against oppression* (Oxford: OneWorld, 2002), 1-81; Robert Allen Warrior, 'A Native American Perspective: Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians,' in *Voices From the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*. R. S. Sugirtharajah, 25th anniversary ed., Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Press, 2016), 235-41.

March 8: Contemporary interpreters: paying attention to gender

Required Reading: Melanie L. Harris, 'Womanist Interfaith Dialogue: Inter, Intra, and All the Spaces in Between,' In *Postcolonial Practice of Ministry: Leadership, Liturgy, and Interfaith Engagement*, Kwok, Pui-lan. Ed. (Lexington Books, 2016), 199-214; Aysha A. Hidayatullah, *Feminist Edges of the Qur'an*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 1-62

March 22: Mid-Term Essay

Students will have access to the Mid-Term Essay questions on the Canvas Site beginning Monday, 22 March and have until **Thursday, 25 March, at 8 pm** to submit the essay.

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

Week of March 29: No Class (Christian Holy Week, beginning of Passover)

April 5: Student Presentations on Biblical/Qur'anic characters and themes

April 12: Student Presentations

Given that Ramadan begins in mid-April, the students and instructor will negotiate altering times of the class to accommodate *iftar* during the final weeks of the class.

April 19: Student Presentations

April 26: Student Presentations

May 3: Final Exam: Discussion of *City of Wrong*

Papers are to be posted to the Canvas site prior to the class final class session. Graduating Students final research papers by **26 April**.

Be sure to bring or have access to a study Bible and 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/>.