**Carleton University**

**The College of the Humanities**

**RELI 2710A (FALL 2022)**

**MACCABEES TO MOHAMMED**

Wed and Fri. 11:30-1pm (Tory 446)

**Professor:** Kimberly Stratton

**Email:** [kim.stratton@carleton.ca](mailto:kim.stratton@carleton.ca)

**Office Hours:** Wed 2-3pm **or** by appointment (please email me to set up a meeting either by phone or Zoom).

**Course Description: What will you learn?**

This course introduces students to the early literature and history of the three great Abrahamic traditions. In particular, the course will examine key aspects of the social, literary, cultural, and intellectual development of these three interrelated traditions from the Second Temple period (6th century BCE) to the Crusades (11th century CE). Fall term will concentrate on understanding the origins of Judaism and Christianity as distinct religious systems and identities within the context of political upheaval, imperialism, and cultural hybridity that characterized the Mediterranean region in antiquity. Winter term will trace the trajectory of Christianity from persecuted minority to official religion of the Roman empire. The emergence of rabbinic Judaism from the sectarianism that characterized Judean religion in the Second Temple period as well as the origins of early and classical Islam will also be examined, culminating in the cultural and religious conflicts of the early Middle Ages. Since these traditions are often described as “religions of the book,” we will proceed with a close reading of some primary texts, developing interpretive reading strategies along the way. Additionally, material evidence and extra-canonical documents will expand our understanding, complement, and sometimes critique the official narratives presented in the canonized scriptures. Students are required to engage the primary texts critically, to appreciate the diversity of opinions within and across traditions, and to situate them in the broad socio-historical context that shaped them.

**Learning Objectives: What will you be able to do after taking this course?**

Students who complete this course successfully will be able to:

* Carefully read and interpret ancient texts from a variety of genres, including prophecy, apocalypse, psalms, historiography, law, biography, and epistle, with attention to a texts’ wording, internal logic, and argument
* Describe how various historical, social, and political factors helped shape texts read in this course and contributed to the formulation of distinct “Jewish” and “Christian” identities, scriptures, practices, and theologies
* Identify quality peer-reviewed scholarship on primary source(s)
* Selectively apply information gleaned from peer-reviewed scholarship to analyze and interpret primary source(s)
* Formulate an original argument based on academic research, knowledge of the historical context, and ones own interpretation of primary source(s)
* Identify key ideas and passages in the assigned readings
* Identify key historical figures, events, and social factors that shaped the history and development of Judaism and Christianity
* Use contemporary media to demonstrate an understanding of key ideas covered in the course

**Hireable Skills developed in this course:**

* textual analysis
* research
* problem solving
* formulating an argument
* expository writing
* religious literacy
* time management

**Assignments: Fall Term** (50% of final mark for the course)

*Details and instructions for each assignment are posted on the course’s Brightspace page*

* Research Paper: 8-10pp: 20% (5% annotated bibliography; 15% final paper) **DUE: Nov. 4 and Dec. 9**

Options:

* Analyze the retelling of a biblical story in later Jewish or Christian literature
* Examine an aspect of material culture as evidence for “lived religion”
* Explore an extra-canonical document and what it reveals about the history of Judaism and/or Christianity
* Trace a figure from the bible into later Jewish and/or Christian writings (including rabbinic)
* Learning Checkups: 15%

(Weekly online quizzes to help you stay on top of the material covered in the readings and lectures)

* Creative Assignment/Take Home Exam: 15% **DUE: Dec. 22**

Part A) Each submission should include 8-10 items (posts, songs, pages of dialogue). Be as creative as you want but explain your choices and demonstrate knowledge of material covered in the course: you do not need to do additional research (shoot for 1-2 paragraphs per item or post). **NB:** **This assignment must cover material that is distinct from the Research Paper** (i.e., if you traced the story of David and Bathsheba, you cannot also create David’s TikTok account).

Options:

* Playlist project (propose songs for the course and explain their relevance. 1 song per lecture or topic)
* Create a Social Media account or blog for a character encountered in the course
* Write a Dialogue between two characters encountered in the course
* Other assignment ideas are welcome (please submit a request and proposal by the last class (Dec. 9)

Part B) Answer 1-2 synthetic questions that demonstrate an understanding of broad themes covered in the course.

**Evaluation Criteria:** (credit to Micheline White for the following explanatory table)

A+ Extraordinary work that greatly exceeds the requirements of a second-year paper. This grade is rarely awarded.

A Excellent work: very insightful analysis; clear and persuasive thesis that goes beyond the ideas presented in lecture; free of any typographical or grammatical errors;

A-/ B+ Very strong work: insightful and clear, but in need of a bit of clarification, revision, or proofreading.

B/B- Good work. Demonstrates a solid understanding of the text and lectures, but requires more significant revision, clarification, or proofreading

C+/C/C- Average to poor work. Lacks a clear or insightful thesis and requires extensive revision, clarification, or proofreading

D/F Unacceptable or non-existent work.

**How to Succeed in this course:**

* The lectures are your “textbook.” They provide the context for understanding the assigned primary texts and give you crucial historical information about early Judaism and Christianity
* Lecture content will be evaluated on the weekly Learning Checkups.
* If you miss class for any reason, please arrange to get notes from a classmate so you do not miss the material and do poorly on the quizzes and assignments.
* Keeping up with readings is a challenge: please try, at least, to skim each reading assignment *before* the lecture. This will ensure that you get the most out of class time and are able to read the material more effectively when you get a chance.
* Your knowledge of the reading content as well as its interpretation and relevance will be assessed on the weekly Learning Checkups, so it is imperative to keep up with the readings, at least cursorily.
* Dedicate approximately 3.5 hours/week to doing the assigned readings, reviewing notes, and taking the online Learning Checkup. You will need to set aside additional time to research and write the paper: 1-2 hours/week throughout the semester would set you up well to complete it without stress.
* Keep a calendar to organize your time: record assignment deadlines for all your classes and set up blocks of time to work on them in addition to weekly readings. Treat your study time as seriously as you treat a job or other commitment.
* Written assignments must follow the instructions posted on Brightspace. Please refer to the previous table for an explanation of expectations for each mark.
* Written assignments benefit greatly from being peer reviewed; please allow extra time to read and revise your written work (i.e., avoid writing them the night before).
* Check your Carleton email account often so you do not miss important communication about this or other courses.

**Required Texts:**

* Apuleius’ *Golden Ass.* Transl. P. G. Walsh. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press: 1999. ***(available for purchase at Octopus Books (in the Glebe), 116 Third Avenue, Ottawa, ON K1S 2K1 (613) 233-2589)***
* The *Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha* (purchased for Hums 1000)
* All other sources are available on the course’s Brightspace page

**Class Schedule: What are we doing this week?**

Week 1

**Sept. 7:** Intro to the course and Historical Overview

*Read*: Course Syllabus

**Sept 9:** After the Exile

*Read*:Book of Daniel (Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha)

Week 2

**Sept 14:** Alexander to Antiochus: Encountering Hellenism

*Read*:2 Maccabees (Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha)

**Sept 16:** The “Wicked Priest” and Sectarianism

*Read*:Dead Sea Scrolls: “Community Rule,” “War Scroll,” “Florilegium or Midrash on the Last Days,” and “Apocryphal Psalms III” (posted on Brightspace)

Week 3

**Sept 21:** A Cosmic Plan

*Read*: I Enoch, books I-II (1-71; link posted on Brightspace)

**Sept 23:** Assimilation and Resistance:Diaspora Judaism I

*Read*: *Joseph and Aseneth* (posted on Brightspace)

Week 4

**Sept 28:** Judea and Rome: “It’s complicated”

*Read*: Flavius Josephus, *Judean Antiquities*, Book 14 (link posted on Brightspace)

**Sept 30:** Integration and Conflict:Diaspora Judaism II

*Read*: Flavius Josephus, *Against Apion*, Book 2 (link posted on Brightspace)

Week 5

**Oct 5:** Magic, Fortuna, and Isis *soteira*

*Read*: Apuleius’s *Golden Ass* (Chs. 1-3 and 11; skim the rest – there’s lots of sex and comedy)

**Oct 7:** Paul, an apostle to the gentiles

*Read*: Epistles to the Galatians and 1 Corinthians (Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha)

Week 6

**Oct 12:** (Re)defining messianic theology

*Read*: Epistle to the Romans (Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha)

**Oct 14:** Roman Conquest

*Read*: FlaviusJosephus: Jewish War, Book 6 (link posted on Brightspace)

Week 7

**Oct 19:** Grief and Theodicy

*Read*: *4 Ezra* = 2 Esdras Chs. 3-14 (Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha)

**Oct 21:** Catch up on lectures

Week 8

**Oct: 24- 28:** Fall Break

Week 9

**Nov. 2:** Jesus the Messiah

*Read*: Gospel of Mark, Psalm 22 (Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha)

**and** *Gospel of Thomas* (link posted on Brightspace)

**Nov. 4:** Refining the Gospel

*Read*: Gospel of Matthew **or** Luke (choose 1) (Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha)

**Annotated Bibliography Due**

Week 10

**Nov. 9:** Dualism and Division

*Read:* Gospel of John (Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha)

**Nov. 11:** Triumph of the bloodied Lamb

*Read:*Revelation (Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha)

Week 11

**Nov. 16:** This is the Way

*Read*: Epistle of James (Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha)

**and** the *Didache* (link posted on Brightspace)

AND

Bar Kokhba’s Failed Liberation of Jerusalem

*read:* Bar Kokhba’s letters and cave documents; excerpts from Cassius Dio and Eusebius (links and excerpts posted on Brightspace)

**Nov. 18 (SBL):** Guest Lecture by Tim Pettipiece

*Read:*Gospel of Philip and the Apocryphon of John (links posted on Brightspace)

Week 12

**Nov 23: “**Christian” Origins

*Read:* Justin’s *Dialogue with Trypho* (Chapters 1-29; link posted on Brightspace)

**Nov 25: “***Christianos eimi*”

*Read:* Ignatius’s *Epistle to Magnesians* and *to the* *Trallians*, Pliny’s *Epistle to Trajan* (10.96-7) (links posted on Brightspace)

Week 13

**Nov. 30:** Sovereignty without a land

*Read:* Mishnah *Pirkei* *Avot* 1 and *Niddah* 1 (links posted on Brightspace)

**Dec. 2:** Exodus and Identity

*Read:* Excerpts from *Mekhilta de R. Ishmael* and Melito, *Peri Pascha* (links posted on Brightspace)

Week 14

**Dec. 7:** From Jerusalem to Rome

*Read*: Acts of the Apostles (Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha)

**Dec. 9:** Semester Review and Paper Editing Workshop

**Research Paper Due at the beginning of class 11:35am\***

**\*Extension granted until midnight for to those who participate in the editing workshop**

**Dec 22:** **Creative Assignment/Take Home Exam due 11:59pm**