Christians, Muslims, Jews in the Medieval Period

Medieval Studies, Religious Studies, Jewish Studies, Orthodox Christian Studies
MVST: Theology, OCST: Hist/Social Studies

Class Location: Keating Hall, room 204 (8.30 am) & room 209 (11.30 am)
Class Time: Tuesday & Friday 8.30–9.45 am (RO1) and 11:30 am–12:45 pm (RO2)
Instructor: Dr. Dagmar A. Riedel
Office: Duane Hall, room 111
Office Hours: between classes on both days and by appointment
Email: driedel1@fordham.edu

1 – Description

According to Fordham University’s Course Bulletin 2019–2020 this Sacred Texts and Traditions course fulfills the requirement that “[a]ll sophomores and juniors take one core theology course numbered THEO 3000-3799, ... which introduces students to the historical-critical study of the scriptures or the classical texts of one or more religious traditions” (available at: https://bulletin.fordham.edu/undergraduate/theology/?_ga=2.89444316.678719636.1566752900-122011318.1565900267#contributiontothecoretext; accessed 26 August 2019).

For THEO 3332 the bulletin provides this summary: “This Sacred Texts and Traditions course explores theological writings from Christians, Muslims, and Jews in the Middle Ages. We will explore moments of both inter-religious conflict and peaceful coexistence, and we’ll interrogate what this complex, distant history can teach us about possibilities of mutual understanding among members of Christian, Islamic, and Jewish faiths today.” (available at: https://bulletin.fordham.edu/undergraduate/theology/?_ga=2.89444316.678719636.1566752900-122011318.1565900267#coursestext; accessed 26 August 2019).

Elaboration. The course will offer an introduction to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam during the era which in the western world is traditionally called the Middle Ages. It roughly comprises the millennium between late antiquity and early modernity. For this course, the era will be framed by the establishment of the Christian Visigothic Kingdom in Toledo (Spain) in the early sixth century CE and the Spanish colonization of the Americas in the sixteenth century. Its starting point is the observation that each of these three monotheistic religions emerged in a religiously and linguistically diverse environment in the Near East, so that its texts and traditions reflect the unavoidable engagement with other religions, even if these are not explicitly addressed. We will begin with a survey of the history of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam between the sixth and the sixteenth century to establish the necessary context for the primary sources. Geographically we will mostly focus on the Iberian Peninsula, since today in Europe and North America the historical reality of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities, living either under Christian or Muslim rule, continues to serve as the touchstone for both thriving interfaith communities and fanatic religious persecution. Among the primary sources will be excerpts from scripture and religious poetry; a range of secondary sources will facilitate the critical reflection on this complex history of religiously diverse societies in medieval Iberia.

2 – Learning Objectives

By the end of the term, students will have acquired

(a) a deep appreciation of the complexities of the shared history of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities between the sixth and the sixteenth centuries CE.
(b) an awareness that the co-existence of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities affected all areas of life so that a wide range of written sources and material evidence (e.g., architecture, artwork) document this shared history.
(c) an understanding of how the co-existence of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities impacted theological developments in each faith tradition, whether they were expressed as internal debates (“introspection”) or as disputes (“comparison”) with other faith traditions.
(d) a better informed perspective on how the shared history of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities is relevant to our contemporary perceptions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in public and private conversations on religiously motivated conflicts and violence, inside and outside North America.

Throughout the course, students will hone their critical skills in reading, analysis, and writing through the completion of course assignments and participation in class discussion.

3 – Requirements

FINAL GRADE
20% = attendance and class participation
20% = quizzes related to homework assignments
10% = short presentation in class
20% = 2 response papers (each between 600-800 words, double-spaced, any size 12 font); each counts 10%
10% = midterm exam
20% = final exam

GRADING SCALE (NB – this is a rough scale—instructor’s discretion may apply):
97-100pts = A+; 94-96pts = A; 90-93pts = A-; 87-89pts = B+; 84-86pts = B; 80-83pts = B-; 77-79pts = C+;
74-76pts = C; 70-73pts = C-; 60-69pts = D; below 59pts = F

ATTENDANCE
(a) As a course that meets twice per week, you may be excused for two absences in the semester. But any additional absence or regular tardiness may result in a reduction of your final grade. Please inform me IN ADVANCE if you believe that you will either be absent from or late for class for any reason. Any on-going issues that may make regular, timely attendance difficult should be discussed with me as soon as possible.
(b) Absences from announced quizzes or exams will be excused ONLY if I receive a note from the dean documenting extenuating circumstances. Religious holidays not on the Fordham calendar and University-sponsored events are excused. If you will be missing a class for these reasons, let me know; you will need to make up the work IN ADVANCE.
(c) If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to figure out what you have missed. Get the notes from a fellow student and catch up on the readings. Only THEN you may contact me if you have questions.

NO DIGITAL DEVICES IN CLASS
No electronic devices (phones, tablets, laptops, smart watches etc.) are allowed in class; they should be turned off and stored out of sight in your bag during class. Consequently, you must have in class either the printed books or print-outs of those readings, which I will upload to Blackboard or you yourself will download from Fordham Libraries.
**PARTICIPATION**
Attendance is indispensable but not sufficient to fulfill the active participation requirement. Do your assigned readings in advance, and “query” your texts so that you come to class with questions or thoughts, well prepared to discuss the material under review.

**BLACKBOARD AND EMAIL**
You are expected to check your blackboard and your email regularly; I will do the same. If you email me, I will respond within 24 hours on regular weekdays and within 48 hours on weekends and holidays. However, I will not respond to electronic grade inquiries.

**DEADLINES**
If you think that you may be unable to turn something in on time, please inquire about an extension IN ADVANCE. Extensions, however, will be an exception, only granted in very rare circumstances.

**THE UNIVERSITY’S POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**
Sanctions will be imposed on students who violate academic integrity. Please note that “[v]iolations of academic integrity include but are not limited to plagiarism, cheating on exams, false authorship, and destruction of library materials needed for a course.” (Fordham University, “Standards of Academic Integrity,” available at: https://www.fordham.edu/info/25380/undergraduate_academic_integrity_policy/6937/standards_of_academic_integrity; accessed 28 August 2019). Academic integrity applies to papers, quizzes and exams. For more information, please consult: Fordham University, Undergraduate Academic Integrity Policy, available at: https://www.fordham.edu/info/25380/undergraduate_academic_integrity_policy; accessed 28 August 2019).

**4 – Texts**
The required textbooks listed under (a), together with Teresa of Avila’s “Meditations” mentioned under (c), constitute the backbone of this course. Changes to other reading assignments are at the discretion of the instructor.

(a) Required textbooks which are available from the University’s bookstore as of 6 September 2019:

(b) Three textbooks, sections of which will be assigned, are digitally available from Fordham Libraries

• Nirenberg, David. *Neighboring Faiths: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism in the Middle Ages and Today*. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2014. **There is NO printed copy in Fordham Libraries.**

(c) **Books on reserve in Walsh Library:**
The above listed textbooks by Burrell, Goddard, and Miles are available on reserve. Fordham Libraries will buy copies of the assigned poetry books by Ibn al-ʿArabi and Judah ha-Levi, as well as of the textbook by Meddeb and Stora. Once these books have been entered into the collection, they too will be available on reserve. In addition, there will be a volume with works of Teresa of Avila (1515 –1582), which includes her “Meditations on the Song of Songs” (*Collected Works*, trans. Kavanaugh and Rodriguez, vol. 2, pp. 207-262 and 477-480; for the full bibliographical reference, see below s.v. 9 – scan will be uploaded to Blackboard); we will read her “Meditations” as a Christian example of religious literature from Iberia, together with the poems by Judah ha-Levi (b. before 1075; d. 1141) and Ibn al-ʿArabi (1165–1240).

The other books on reserve, a list of which follows at the very end of this syllabus, offer additional information; excerpts or sections from some of these may be assigned as readings.

(d) **Scripture:**
Sections from Tanakh, Bible, and Qur’an will be among the assigned readings. But you may already own copies of one or all of these. You may use different translations. Please remember that these works can be checked out from Fordham Libraries! There are also Open-Access versions on the Internet. If you want to purchase any of these, here are some widely used and easily available editions:


• *The Koran*. Translated by Nessim Joseph Dawood. 1t ed. London: Penguin, 1956. In print in several later editions, some of which include the Qur’an’s Arabic text.

(e) **Blackboard:**
Supplementary readings will be emailed or uploaded to Blackboard, once I have access to the system.

5 – **Expectations**

**WHAT I EXPECT OF YOU**
1/ Please be respectful of others; “do to others as you would have them do to you” (Luke 6:31).
2/ Put in your best effort on every assignment.
3/ Ask me questions if there are aspects of the readings or the course that you do not understand. You can ask questions during class, via email, after class, or during my office hours. If there is some aspect of the course you are uncomfortable with, come and talk to me. Do not remain silent.
4/ Do not feel constrained by the syllabus. If there is a term or concept you do not understand, or would like more background on a topic that I have not provided, or would like to explore a topic in more depth, do not hesitate to do a bit of research and exploration on your own. I can also give you some suggestions for good sources to read for further information, if you need recommendations.
WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT OF ME
1/ I will treat you with respect.
2/ I will switch up teaching methods throughout the semester to keep everyone engaged. I will lecture some on most days; however, I also like to encourage classroom discussions. If you do not like to speak in class, please see me for alternative venues.
3/ I will grade assignments promptly and offer you feedback on your work. I am happy to discuss grades with you, but only face-to-face.

6 – Additional Resources

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS
The University offers with its Writing Center (Rose Hill, Walsh Library, Reference Area, Room 121) a service which is free to all Fordham students in order to encourage and improve student writing of all levels and disciplines. For more information and resources, please see the Writing Center’s website: https://www.fordham.edu/info/20126/writing_center

MENTAL HEALTH
We all experience emotional distress and personal difficulties as a normal part of life. As your instructor, however, I am not qualified to serve as your counselor. The University provides free and confidential mental health services that are NOT connected to your academic record in any way through the Office for Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS). If you are experiencing mental health distress, I strongly encourage you to take advantage of the CPS services. For more information about CPS, please visit their website: www.fordham.edu/counseling. To make an appointment, please call 718-817-3725 (Rose Hill) or 212-636-6225 (Lincoln Center).

VETERAN SUPPORT
Fordham University participates in the VA’s Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership (VITAL) Initiative. If you are a military veteran and need support, I strongly encourage you to contact:

Yvette Branson, PhD
Coordinator of the VITAL Initiative
VA New York Harbor
Telefon: 646-772-6087
Email: Yvette.Branson@va.gov
Website: https://www.nyharbor.va.gov/services/vital.asp

7 – Legal Statements

CHOSEN NAME
As of the writing of this syllabus the University’s chosen-name policy is still in development, but should be in effect for Fall 2019 (Jordan Meltzer, “Schoolwide Chosen Name Policy Expected to Take Effect Next Semester,” Fordham Observer, 27 March 2019; https://fordhamobserver.com/39651/top-stories/schoolwide-chosen-name-policy-expected-to-take-effect-next-semester/). The new policy will be published on the University’s website Diversity at Fordham, available at: https://www.fordham.edu/info/25059/diversity_at_fordham

DISABILITY
Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, all students, with or without disabilities, are entitled to equal access to the programs and activities of
Fordham University. If you believe that you have a disabling condition that may interfere with your ability to participate in the activities, coursework, or assessment of the object of this course, you may be entitled to accommodations. For more information, please consult the website of the University’s Office of Disability Services: [https://www.fordham.edu/info/20174/disability_services](https://www.fordham.edu/info/20174/disability_services). To schedule an appointment for an intake meeting, please do not hesitate to call Disability Services at Rose Hill (O’Hare Hall, Lower Level, x0655) or at Lincoln Center (Room 207, x6282).

**MANDATORY REPORTING (CLERY ACT)**
Under the provisions of the Clery Act, faculty members are mandated reporters. This means that I am required to contact and provide information to Public Safety, or to the Dean of Students, or to the Title IX Coordinator if I learn that a student is a victim or survivor of certain crimes or has been sexually harassed, discriminated against, sexually assaulted, stalked, is exposed to domestic violence in an intimate partner relationship, or any other crime of a sexual nature or a violation of the University's sexual misconduct policy, including misconduct committed by a faculty member. Once reported, the University will promptly seek to properly support any student, and make efforts to stop the discrimination, prevent it from recurring, and remedy its effects. There are three offices on campus where you can obtain support while being guaranteed confidentiality: Psychological & Counseling Services, the Student Health Center, and Campus Ministries. For information about off-campus resources for support (including Safe Horizons and the Crime Victims Treatment Center), please consult the University’s Campus Assault and Relationship Education (CARE) website: [https://www.fordham.edu/info/23849/campus_assault_and_relationship_education](https://www.fordham.edu/info/23849/campus_assault_and_relationship_education)

I am also required to report other serious crimes covered by the Clery Act that occur within our University community, such as theft, hate crimes, assault, illegal weapons, etc.

### 8 – Schedule

I will stick to the syllabus as much as possible. However, the syllabus is only a loose version of what we want to accomplish this semester. Our discussions may, at times, lead us into uncharted territory, as may current events. Adjustments to calendar and reading assignments may be made at the instructor’s discretion. In other words, if necessary, this syllabus and its contents are subject to revision, and students are responsible for any changes or modifications distributed in class or posted on Blackboard.

**Introduction: Religion, Conflict, and the Middle Ages**

**Week 1**
- Aug. 30, 2019 = Middle Ages, western monotheistic religions, Iberia
  - *In class reading:* [OED Online](https://www.oed.com), s.v. “medieval” (updated, 3d ed., 2001). (emailed to students)
- Sept. 3, 2019 = Markers of Modernity: secular, tolerance, equality

**Week 2**
- Sept. 6, 2019 = Contested histories of relations between Judaism, Christianity and Islam
  - *Assigned readings:*
    - Goddard, *History of Christian-Muslim Relations*, 1–4
**Part 1: Scripture and History**

- Sept. 10, 2019 = the Ancient Near East as the context of Jewish and Christian Bible

  **Assigned main reading:**
  Scripture: Miles, *God*, 3–22 (“Foreword”) with 229–231 (notes)

**Week 3**

- Sept. 13, 2019 = Miles’s approaches of suspension of disbelief and theography

  **Assigned main reading:**
  Miles, *God*, 23–47 (“Adam and His Wife”) with 231–233 (notes)

- Sept. 17, 2019 = Judaism and Christianity in Antiquity and Late Antiquity

  **Assigned main reading:**
  Miles, *God*, 48–60 (“Adam’s Son and His Brother”) with 233 (notes)

  **Historical background readings:**
  Goddard, *Christian-Muslim Relations*, 5–18

**Week 4**

- Sept. 20, 2019 = Hispania: The Roman province in Iberia

  **Assigned main reading:**
  Miles, *God*, 61–80 (“Noah”) with 233 (notes)

- Sept. 24, 2019 = the Visigothic kingdom of Toledo and Isidore of Seville

  **Assigned main reading:**
  Miles, *God*, 81–98 (“Abraham and His Father”) with 233 (notes)

**Week 5**

- Sept. 27, 2019 = origins of Islam on the Arabian Peninsula and Muhammad

  **Assigned main reading:**
  Miles, *God*, 99–119 (“Abraham and His Sons”) with 233–234 (notes)

- Oct. 1, 2019 = the expansion of the Muslim community (Ar. *umma*)

  **Assigned main reading:**
  Miles, *God*, 120–144 (“Joseph”) with 234 (notes)

**Week 6**

- Oct. 4, 2019 = the Muslim conquest of Iberia

  **Assigned main reading:**
  Miles, *God*, 145–170 (“Moses”) with 234 (note)

- Oct. 8, 2019 = the Umayyads in Cordoba

  **Assigned main reading:**
  Miles, *God*, 171–195 (“Jesus and His Mother”) with 234–236 (notes)

**Week 7**

- Oct. 11, 2019 = the Taifa kingdoms

  **Assigned main readings:**
  Miles, *God*, 196–215 (“Afterword”)
  Judah ha-Levi, selected poems
Part 2: Scripture and Poetry

Week 8
- Oct. 18, 2019 = literary cultures of medieval Iberia: poetry and pious reading
  Assigned main readings:
  Judah ha-Levi, selected poems
  Oct. 22, 2019 = NO CLASS

Week 9
- Oct. 25, 2019 = NO CLASS
- Oct. 29, 2019 = religious poetry from Iberia 1 = Judah ha-Levi
  Response paper 1 on Miles is due in class
  Assigned main readings:
  Judah ha-Levi, selected poems
  Ibn al-ʿArabī, selected poems

Week 10
- Nov. 1, 2019 = religious poetry from Iberia 2: Ibn al-ʿArabī
  Assigned main reading:
  Ibn al-ʿArabī, selected poems
- Nov. 5, 2019 = religious poetry from Iberia 3: Teresa of Avila
  Assigned main reading:
  Teresa of Avila, “Meditations” [will be made available on BlackBoard]

Part 3: Scripture and Philosophy

Week 11
- Nov. 8, 2019 = Christian rulers in Iberia
  Assigned main readings:
  Burrell, *Knowing*, ix–x (“Preface”) and 1–4 (“Introduction”) with 114 (notes)
  Teresa of Avila, “Meditations”
- Nov. 12, 2019 = Jewish communities in Iberia
  Assigned main readings:
  Burrell, *Knowing*, 5–18 (“Picturing the Connection”) with 114–116(notes)
  Teresa of Avila, “Meditations”

Week 12
- Nov. 15, 2019 = North Africa and Iberia: Almoravids and Almohads
  Assigned main reading:
- Nov. 19, 2019 = the so-called “Reconquista”
  Response paper 2 on religious poetry is due in class
  Assigned main reading:
**Week 13**
- Nov. 22, 2019 = class will be taught in Special Collections (Walsh Library, 4th floor)

Assigned main reading:
- Nov. 26, 2019 = the Nasrids

Assigned main reading:

**Week 14**
*Nov. 29, 2019 = NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Recess*
- Dec. 3, 2019 = Islamic philosophy and Latin Qur’an translations

Assigned main reading:

**Week 15**
- Dec. 6, 2019 = Wrap up and preparation of final exam

Assigned main reading:
Dec. 10, 2019 = NO CLASS: Reading Day

**Week 16**
Dec. 13, 2019 = NO CLASS: Reading Day
*Dec. 17, 2019: FINAL EXAM*

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**9 – List of the Additional Books on Reserve in Walsh Library**


