

6. Course prerequisites: None

7. Student learning outcomes

Throughout the course, your readings and assignments will develop your ability to think critically and communicate clearly, so that you can understand and interpret complex texts, works of art, and sustained arguments, marshal evidence to support your ideas, and express yourself effectively. By the end of the course, you will also have acquired, expanded, or improved specific knowledge and skills, enabling you to demonstrate the ability:

- a. to identify beliefs, traditions, institutions, or practices of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam that shaped and were shaped by their interaction, and to describe how this process took place.
- b. to recognize key aspects of how these religious communities portrayed their rivals, and to discover the social, political, cultural, or intellectual origins and purposes of these portraits.
- c. to analyze critically polemical texts in which religious traditions, beliefs, and practices—and their adherents—are represented by members of rival communities.
- d. to compare the place of violence in each religious tradition, and to assess causes of conflict among these religious communities and the ways violence was controlled or unleashed.
- e. to describe how communities of believers gained cohesion, dealt with internal conflict, and defined their boundaries through interactions with followers of different religions.

8. Required texts and/or course materials

You are not required to purchase any texts for this course. On Canvas, I post a **textbook (typically 10 to 25 pages a week)**, as well as short recorded introductions and readings from primary sources (scriptures and/or medieval texts) and modern historians.

Besides my textbook, **some readings are required for everyone (typically 40 to 70 pages a week)**; others are resources for specific discussion forums—you'll have choices—or *The Middle Ages Today*.

****Some readings include offensive, derogatory, and obscene parodies of religious beliefs, believers, and revered figures (like Jesus and Muhammad); others may graphically describe brutal violence, including sexual violence. One cannot understand religious conflict, violence, prejudice, and persecution without addressing this history directly.****

9. Course requirements such as exams, assignments, and projected due dates, if any

a. Weekly Schedule: Each week's topic spans **ten days (Thursday morning to the Saturday night of the following week) (See Course Schedule and Assignments/Assessment)**

b. Readings: The weekly page, available by Thursday, has and introduces required readings.

c. Weekly Quizzes: Required quizzes (30 minutes, open book, normally 16 to 20 multiple choice questions) **open 7PM, Thursday, close 11PM, Tuesday**. Guidelines explain what's covered.

d. Weekly Discussion Forums: Choose two forum topics. Make one posting of at least two full paragraphs for each, following the guidelines and prompts, and based on the indicated course readings. I post topics by Thursday. **Forums open Sunday morning. Your first of two postings is due 11PM, Wednesday. Forums close 11PM, Saturday.**

In the last seven weeks of term, the weekly requirement changes to ONE posting of at least three paragraphs, due 11PM, Saturday. (*See Discussion Forum Guidelines*)

e. **“The Middle Ages Today”**: After an introductory assignment in Week 8, you will make two postings in the final six weeks of term to designated forums with a choice of topics. Each posting must be at least three paragraphs. This is separate from the weekly discussion forum assignment. For this, you will critically analyze modern examples of **1) *how sacred scriptures or the medieval past are made relevant to current relationships among the three faiths and their believers***; OR **2) *how modern and current concerns shape representations of medieval relationships among these religions and religious communities***.

10. Grading scale

The final grade is based on **1000 points**. This is how I assign letter grades:

A+	990+	B+	870-899	C+	770-799	D	650-699
A	930-989	B	830-869	C	730-769	F	<650
A-	900-929	B-	800-829	C-	700-729		

11. Grade categories and weights

- a. **Quizzes (240 points): 24% of final grade** (best 12 of 14 quizzes; 20 points each; best 4 get 50% extra weight, lowest 4 get 50% less weight)
- b. **Discussion Forums (600 points): 60% of final grade** (12 required weeks; 50 points each; 50% more weight to your best 3, 50% less weight to your lowest 3)
- c. **The Middle Ages Today (160 points): 16% of final grade** (2 postings, 50 points each; 20 additional points based on the best posting; 20 points for the introductory assignment in Week 8; 20 points based on the overall assignment)
- d. On top of those 1000 points (100%), everyone gets **up to 2% (20 points) added to your final grade** based on your strongest assignment category. This is on top of any earned extra credit.

12. Course schedule

There are **two schedules** to remember: the **semester-long schedule of topics and readings** (visible in Canvas under Modules) and the **ten-day “weekly” schedule of assignments from Thursday through the following Saturday** for each topic. The “Course Schedule” lists week-by-week topics and readings in more detail. Here is a short outline.

a. Weekly Schedule (*there will be minor modifications in the first week and final two weeks*)

-**Thursday**: The week’s page (with an introduction, readings, and forum topics) is available; the quiz opens at 7 PM

-**Sunday morning**: Discussion forums open

-**Tuesday (11 PM)**: The quiz closes

-**Wednesday (11 PM)**: Your first forum posting is due.

[-**Thursday**: The next weekly page becomes available and the next quiz opens]

-**Saturday (11 PM)**: The forums close.

b. Semester Schedule (weekly materials are available on the Thursday listed here)

8.22-25: Getting Started! First Week Attendance Assignments (**Practice Quiz + Personal Introduction due by 6 PM, Thursday, August 25**)

MODULE 1: BEGINNINGS: DUELING TEXTS

Week 1 (1.1): 8.25-9.3: Reading Genesis: Creation, Covenants, Conflicts

Week 2 (1.2): 9.1-10: A Chosen People, a Promised Land, and a Jealous God

Week 3 (1.3): 9.8-17: The Gospels and the Jews: Prophecy, the Temple, and the Passion of Jesus

Week 4 (1.4): 9.15-24: Early Christian Anti-Judaism and the Parting of the Ways

Week 5 (1.5): 9.22-10.1: Rabbinic Judaism: Responses to the Christian Challenge

Week 6 (1.6): 9.29-10.8: A Third Way: The Hebrew Bible and the Jews in the Qur'an

MODULE 2: RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES: REPRESENTATIONS, ENCOUNTERS, CONFLICTS

Week 7 (2.1): 10.6-15: First Encounters: Jesus and Christians in the Qur'an; Christian Views of Islam

Week 8 (2.2): 10.13-22: Religious Violence/Project Week (Getting started on "The Middle Ages Today")

Week 9 (2.3): 10.20-29: Christians and Muslims in the Time of the Crusades

Week 10 (2.4): 10.27-11.5: Crossing Boundaries: Travel Accounts

Week 11 (2.5): 11.3-12: Christian Missions in the Near East and Interfaith Debates

Week 12 (2.6): 11.10-19: The Blood Libel and Medieval Christian Anti-Judaism

Week 13 (2.7): 11.17-27: Christian Images of Jews in Medieval Europe: Visualizing the Passion of Jesus

Week 14 (2.8): 11.24-12.2: Minority Communities and Their Masters: Different Views

There is NO FINAL EXAM.

13. Course-specific grading policies (e.g., late work, extra credit, etc.), if any

Each week's quiz and forums are a small portion of your final grade. I give your high scores more weight, reduce the weight of lower scores, and drop the two lowest quizzes. Everyone gets up to 20 points (2%) added to your final grade based on your best assignment category.

With small-scale, weekly assignments, these adjustments will offset a few low scores or even missed assignments in a way that is consistent for everyone. The best response to a low score or missed assignment is to move forward and earn higher scores which get more weight.

Because of this, I do not reopen quizzes or forums after the deadlines. There are no exceptions, retakes, or makeups (unless these are mandated by specific USF policies).

There are modest extra credit opportunities (limited to 2%) in addition to the "up to 2%" that everyone receives. Penalty points are deducted for missing any required assignment. For one or two assignments, those are little more than a "heads up" that will be offset by the extra points and weighting of high grades. Missing multiple assignments, however, will have a serious impact on your grade, as it reasonably should, and it is, in fact, the most common cause of failure. (See "Assignments/Assessment")

17. Course-specific attendance and punctuality policies, if any

This course is conducted entirely online. It is "asynchronous", with no fixed "meeting" times.

You are, however, required to complete a "First Week Attendance" assignment (Practice Quiz + Personal Introduction) by 6 PM, Thursday, Aug. 25, or you will be dropped from the course.

18. Course-specific technology and media policies (e.g., recording class, expected email response time, etc.), if any

All course materials, including the textbook, assigned readings, assignments, images, recordings,, and videos which I provide are intended solely for your use within this course. They are protected by copyright and must not be circulated outside this course (*except, as specified under HB 233, within a formal complaint to the university or in relevant civil or criminal proceedings*).

Distributing these materials on the internet, posting them on social media, or contributing them to digital repositories is specifically prohibited by USF Regulation 3.027 (Academic Integrity of Students), 4.I.8, p. 7, and USF Policy 10.048 (Course Notes and Recordings), 2.C, p. 2.

Violations may be sanctioned.

19. [USF Core Syllabus Policy Statements](#)

The core policy statements listed on the linked website apply to all USF courses. This course is a USF course. Therefore, these policies apply to this course. That's an example of a syllogism.

I look forward to the course!