

# TH16108: The Religious Quest I: Christianity and Judaism in Conversation

Fall 2013



## Time and Location:

M-W-F 12pm-12:50pm  
Cushing 331

## Instructor:

Ms. Jillian (Stout) Maxey  
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<http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/cas/theology/graduate/currentgrads/doctoral-candidates/jsmaxey.html>

## Office Hours:

Wednesday 1-2, and by appointment

**Course Description:** This is the first semester of a year long course that introduces the

comparative study of Jewish and Christian theologies, ethics, and spiritualities. We will study the fundamental texts, key figures, and lived practices of each tradition. Special emphasis will be placed on the historical relationship between Christianity and Judaism, as well as the contemporary character of the conversation between the traditions.

The course is designed to put you, the student, into conversation with Christianity and Judaism, into conversation with your fellow students, and into conversation with your own beliefs, assumptions, and spiritual questions. We will be guided by a number of questions throughout the semester: What is religion, spirituality and faith? Why are they important in the contemporary world and how do they inform your own self-identity? What is the Jewish or Christian worldview; that is how do Jews and Christians view the world and the human condition and how do these beliefs shape practices, teachings, responses to social justice issues, political conversations and other important aspects of modern life?

You are encouraged not only to understand the two traditions as their believers do (whether or not you consider yourself to be one), but to bring them into conversation with your own context.

The classroom is a place for learning, conversation, challenge and community. In addition to lectures, we will spend a significant amount of time in discussion and small groups. There will be a group component and a class participation component to your grade, as well as written assignments and exams.

With the fall's themes (the global religious landscape, religious identity, biblical narratives, suffering, sin and redemption) as a foundation, the spring term will investigate how this all plays out in the world. Within the Jewish context we will look at the diversity of the community, worship and synagogue life, holidays and festivals, ethics, Jewish social service agencies, social and political activism, marriage, family life and education. Similarly, in the Christian context we will look at the diversity of the Christian community, worship and parish life, holidays and liturgical year, ethics, Christian social service agencies, social and political activism, marriage, family life and education.

This course is an exercise in interreligious learning and conversation. Students are encouraged to draw upon their own experiences and to suggest particular topics that interest them.

A Note on the Core: This course satisfies one semester of the two semester core requirement in Theology. Please note clearly that in order to complete this requirement students must take the second semester of THIS core sequence, Religious Quest II. One semester of two different theology sequences, e.g. Religious Quest I and Exploring Catholicism II, will NOT satisfy the theology core requirement (Academic Catalogue, p. 217). Students who are unclear as to this regulation should consult their instructor or the Theology Department.

### Texts (Required):

Various links to articles and websites are included on the syllabus

Various required readings are available online through QUEST or in the shared Google Drive folder for the course (Note: There will not be a Blackboard site for this course, instead you will be given access to folder through Google Drive. If you have questions about accessing or downloading files, please ask!)

Bible: Catholic Study Bible, The New Oxford Annotated Bible (or another Christian Bible)\*

Michael Goldberg, Jews and Christians: Getting Our Stories Straight, the Exodus and the Passion - Resurrection (1991, rpt 2001)

Irreconcilable Differences? A Learning Resource for Jews and Christians, ed. David F. Sandmel, Rosann M. Catalano, Christopher M. Leighton (2001)\*

Seeing Judaism Anew: Christianity's Sacred Obligation, ed. Mary C. Boys (2005)\*

Colin Greer, Religious Differences Between Artichokes (2013)

\*We will be using these second semester as well.

Attendance: Each student is expected to attend class regularly and punctually. Three unexcused absences are permitted. More than three absences and/or excessive tardiness will result in the lowering of a student's grade for every absence beyond those allotted. Excused absences require an email to the professor and are allowed for illness, athletic team travel, family emergencies and religious observances.

Grading:

A 100-94  
A- 93-90  
B+ 89-97  
B 86-84  
B- 83-80

C+ 79-77  
C 76-74  
C- 73-70  
D 69-60  
F 59-0

Class Participation (25%): synagogue visit write-up, church visit write-up, RQ lecture write-up, reading responses, prep and in class discussion

Personal Narrative Essay (25%)

Mid-Term exam (25%)

Final Group Presentation (10%)

Final Group Paper (15%)

Grading Guidelines:

The class participation grade is derived from three factors: 1) the degree to which a student has prepared for and remained active in class, and 2) contributed to group discussion, 3) attendance at site visits and required lectures. A student will receive an A for this grade if s/he contributes to small/large group discussion, asks questions in class, and is consistently prepared for the day's readings. A student will receive a low B or C for participation if the professor cannot identify ways in which the student contributed to the classroom discussion. Please do not sleep in class, use your phone, or use your laptop for non-class related activity. This doesn't go unnoticed, it is a distraction and it will negatively impact class participation grades. The professor can modify laptop practices and privileges if this guideline is not met.

The following is a description of the letter grading for written assignments:

- A range = *Superior, exceptional, outstanding*. The assignment demonstrates critical, informed, and creative theological inquiry that reflects superior understanding of essential

theological/historical concepts. This means that the students demonstrates depth of insight beyond what is normally expected. Carefully nuanced reasoning and writing, free from material, structural and grammatical errors are presupposed in this grade.

- B range= *Good*. The assignment demonstrates ready command of a full range of concepts and shows some critical, informed and creative inquiry that reflects above average understanding of essential theological/historical concepts. This means the student has produced an assignment that is free from material, structural, and grammatical errors.
- C range= *Acceptable*. The assignment demonstrates satisfactory ability to describe overall concepts. This means the student has completed the assignment in a manner involving no significant errors. Material may not be free from structural and grammatical errors. Nuances reasoning is demonstrated.
- D range= *Below average*. This assignment demonstrates reasoning that is neither carefully nuanced nor coherently presented; writing is insufficient in depth of insight and/or use of texts; presentation is not free from material error in structure, spelling and grammar. This means that the student failed to respond adequately to the assignment and its intentions.
- F range = *Unsatisfactory*. In one or more of the following ways the student: 1) failed to turn in the assignment; 2) did not respond to the assignment as given; 3) submitted work so thoroughly flawed as to indicate that the student did not make a serious effort.; 4) was involved in plagiarism or cheating

Extensions on assignments are rarely granted, but in instances where they are, requests must be made in advance of the due date in writing (via email) and a specific date for submission must be suggested and agreed upon by the professor. Late papers will be penalized a half letter grade per day.

Extra credit: Extra Credit may be earned and applied to the participation grade by attending lectures and events relevant to the course and submitting a 1 pg summary and reflection on the event. The professor will suggest various opportunities, but students are encouraged to seek out and suggest events as well.

Disabilities: Students with documented learning needs should approach the professor and provide official notification within the first two weeks of class. The Connors Family Learning Center offers special services to students with learning disabilities and tutoring and skills workshops to all Boston College Students. For information visit: <http://www.bc.edu/libraries/help/tutoring.html>

### Academic Integrity

Please take note of the university's Academic Integrity Policy in all your academic work. See: <http://www.bc.edu/publications/ucatalog/policy.shtml#integrity>. Plagiarism MUST be reported to your dean and you MAY fail the course.

*The syllabus may be modified throughout the semester.  
Please consult the most up-to-date version in the shared Google Drive folder for the course.*

## UNIT I: Rootedness: Personal and Communal Identities

### 1) Wed Sept 4: Introductions and Syllabus

### 2) Fri Sept 6 (Rosh Hoshanah): Religious landscape (BC, US, world):

ASSIGNMENT: explore <http://www.pewforum.org/> including the assigned sections below, come to class with a topic that interests you, something new that you learned and a question that arose (written, ready to submit)

Read:

Executive Summary of report on The Global Religious landscape:  
<http://www.pewforum.org/global-religious-landscape-exec.aspx>

“Christians” in The Global Religious Landscape

<http://www.pewforum.org/global-religious-landscape-christians.aspx>

“Jews” in The Global Religious Landscape

<http://www.pewforum.org/global-religious-landscape-jew.aspx>

And “Muslims” Muslims in the Global Religious Landscape

<http://www.pewforum.org/global-religious-landscape-muslim.aspx>

“The religiously unaffiliated” <http://www.pewforum.org/global-religious-landscape-unaffiliated.aspx>

Explore: The Harvard Pluralism Project’s “World Religions in Boston”  
<http://www.pluralism.org/wrgb>

Judaism: <http://www.pluralism.org/wrgb/traditions/judaism>

Christianity: <http://www.pluralism.org/wrgb/traditions/christianity>

Suggested reading from the Global religious landscape: <http://www.pewforum.org/global-religious-landscape.aspx>

Hindu  
Buddhist  
Folk Religionists  
Other religions

Other suggested reading: Religious Pluralism in America  
[http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/centers/boisi/pdf/bc\\_papers/BCP-Pluralism.pdf](http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/centers/boisi/pdf/bc_papers/BCP-Pluralism.pdf)

### **3) Mon Sept 9: Studying religion, theology and comparative theology; Interreligious Dialogue**

Read the BC mission statement: <http://www.bc.edu/offices/bylaws/mission.html>

Catherine Cornille, "Introduction" *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Interreligious Dialogue* (Google Drive)

Ninian Smart, "The Dimensions of Religion" (Google Drive)

Hill, Knitter and Madges, "Religion—Why Bother?" (Google Drive)

Written reflection: 1 page reaction to "Religion-Why Bother?"

### **4) Wed Sept 11: At a glance: Judaism and Christianity**

Read:

[http://www.pluralism.org/files/wrgb/judaism/OCG\\_Judaism\\_Introduction.pdf](http://www.pluralism.org/files/wrgb/judaism/OCG_Judaism_Introduction.pdf)

Assignment: (1 pg, written): What from this presentation of Judaism surprised you? What was one thing new that you learned? What is one question that you have after reading the article?

### **5) Fri Sept 13: At a glance: Judaism and Christianity**

Read:

[http://www.pluralism.org/files/wrgb/christianity/OCG\\_Christianity\\_Introduction.pdf](http://www.pluralism.org/files/wrgb/christianity/OCG_Christianity_Introduction.pdf)

Assignment: (1 pg, written): Assignment: (1 pg, written): What from this presentation of Christianity surprised you? What was one thing new that you learned? What is one question that you have after reading the article?

(Sept 14 is Yom Kippur)

## **UNIT II: Exploring the Jewish and Christian Master Stories**

### **6) Mon Sept 16: Introduction to Scripture, reading the bible**

Ch. 4 *Irreconcilable Differences?* "How Do Jews and Christians Read the Bible? Pp. 53-74

**7) Wed Sept 18: Genesis 1-11**

Read Genesis 1-3 in your bible

(September 19-25 is Sukkot)

**8) Fri Sept 20: Genesis 12-end of the book**

Read Genesis 4-end of the book in your bible

Prepare bulleted answers for class discussion:

*What have we learned about God so far?*

*What are the key events that have taken place?*

*Who are the key figures in the narrative?*

**9) Mon Sept 23: Exodus**

Read Exodus 1-2 in your bible

Goldberg, "Prologue" and Ch. 1-2

**10) Wed Sept 25: Exodus**

Read Exodus 3-4:17 in your bible

Read Goldberg, Ch 3

**11) Fri Sept 27 (Simkhat Torah)– Guest Lecturer**

**Video:** Passover: Traditions of Freedom BM 695 P3 P37 1994

Read Sonsino, "Pesah" pp. 103-110

**12) Mon Sept 30: Exodus**

Read Exodus 4:18-10:29 in your bible

Read Goldberg Ch 4-5

**13) Wed Oct 2: Exodus**

Read Exodus 11:1-12:42; 13:17-15:27

Read Ch. 6 in Goldberg

**14) Fri Oct 4: Passover**

Mishnah Pesachim Ch. 10. (more on next page)

**15) Mon Oct 7: Concluding Exodus**

Read Exodus 19:1-20:14; 24: 3-8 in your bible; and familiarize yourself with the characters and narrative of Joshua 1-5; II Samuel 6-7; II Chronicles 34-36.  
Read Ch. 7 in Goldberg

**16) Wed Oct 9: Matthew**

Read Matthew Ch 1 in your bible  
Goldberg, Ch. 8;  
Raymond E. Brown, An Introduction to the New Testament, Ch. 1, "The Nature and Origin of the New Testament," and Ch. 6 "Gospels in General; Synoptic Gospels in Particular" (Google Drive)

**17) Fri Oct 11: Matthew**

Read Matthew 2-4 in your bible  
Goldberg Ch 9-10

**\*\*Mon Oct 14 – Columbus Day, No Class**

**18) Wed Oct 16: Matthew**

The Sermon on the Mount: Read Matthew 5-7 in your bible  
Harrington commentary (Google Drive)

**19) Fri Oct 18: Matthew**

Read Matthew 8-13:1-53 in your bible  
Goldberg Ch 11  
Talbert Essay (Google Drive)

**20) Mon Oct 21 – CCJR: No class, work on your group projects**

**21) Wed Oct 23: Matthew: The Last Supper and Eucharist**

Recommended: Read Matthew 14-20

Required: Read Matthew 21-26:1-35

Required: Goldberg Ch 12

DUE: final project proposal; draft 1 (See assignment page on Google Drive)



**22) Fri Oct 25: Easter**

Read Matthew 26:35-28  
Goldberg Ch 13 and 14

Recommended: Joseph B. Tyson, "Jesus a Faithful Jew," and "The Death of Jesus" in *Seeing Judaism Anew*

**23) Mon Oct 28: The Book of Acts**

The Book of Acts (aka The Acts of the Apostles; after the Gospel according to John in your bible)  
read the whole thing, chapters 1-28  
Goldberg Epilogue

**24) Wed Oct 30: MID-TERM EXAM: PART I (objective)**

**25) Fri Nov 1 (All Saints' Day): MID-TERM EXAM: PART II (essay)**

(Nov 2 is All Soul's Day)

**26) Mon Nov 4: Discussion and Comparison**

In light of going back through the materials in preparation for the mid-term, bring to class  
(written to hand in): 3 points of convergence, 3 points of divergence, and 3 questions

**SYNAGOGUE VISIT WRITE UP DUE IN CLASS**

**UNIT III: Introduction to Christian-Jewish Relations**

**27) Wed Nov 6: Christian-Jewish Relations: Introduction and Historical Overview**

Assignment: 1 pg, double-spaced response to Ch.2 of IRD and Ariel's essay  
(What surprised you? What did you learn? What questions do you have?)

*Irreconcilable differences?* Ch 2

Yaakov Ariel, Jewish-Christian Dialogue in the Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue (edited by Catherine Cornille) (Google drive or BC lib)

**\*\*\*Thurs Nov 7 @ 7pm in the Yawkey Center; RQ Lecture with Paul Knitter\*\*\***

This is *mandatory*. Please speak to me ahead of time about any conflicts

Knitter, Preface to Without Buddha I Could not be Christian, pp. 2-17 (Google Drive, in the Studying Religion, etc folder) –Read in preparation for the Nov. 7 lecture; use in your 1 pg write ups about the lecture.

**28) Fri Nov 8: Jewish-Christian Relations: Twentieth-century turning points**

10 Points of Seelisberg:

[http://www.bc.edu/dam/files/research\\_sites/cjl/texts/cjrelations/resources/documents/international/Seelisberg.htm](http://www.bc.edu/dam/files/research_sites/cjl/texts/cjrelations/resources/documents/international/Seelisberg.htm)

The Shoah: Eva Fleischner, “The Shoah and Jewish-Christian Relations” in *Seeing Judaism Anew*, p. 3-16.

Vatican II and Nostra Aetate:

[http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decl\\_19651028\\_nostra-aetate\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html)

**Assignment: 1 pg, double spaced response to the readings. (What surprised you? What did you learn? What questions do you have?)**

PLEASE NOTE: Starting next MONDAY we will be reading and discussing the play *Religious Differences Between Artichokes*. The entire play is about 70 pages long, which you need to have read by Wednesday Nov. 13. Please plan accordingly so that you can fit the reading in alongside your other reading for this class and your other courses.

**29) Mon Nov 11 Play: Religious Differences Between Artichokes**

Intro to *Religious Differences Between Artichokes*; p. 13-19.

**Assignment:** Google Abraham Joshua Heschel and Augustin Cardinal Bea to get a sense of their biographies. Come to class prepared (written out) with their birth and death years, countries of origin, religious background, roles or positions within the Church and Jewish world, respectively and something you find interesting about them.

Read: "On Improving 'Catholic-Jewish Relations'" by Abraham Joshua Heschel  
<http://conciliaria.com/2012/05/on-improving-catholic-jewish-relations/>

**30) Wed Nov 13: Play: Religious Differences Between Artichokes**

Class discussion of the play

**31) Fri Nov 15 Play: Religious Differences Between Artichokes**

Class discussion of the play

**32) Mon Nov 18 Christian-Jewish Relations: Recent developments**

Readings TBA

DUE: Paul Knitter lecture write-up

DUE: Final Project Proposal, Draft 2

**UNIT IV: Beliefs and Practices in Conversation**

**33) Wed Nov 20: God**

*Irreconcilable Differences?* Ch 3

"God" in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (On Google Drive)

**Assignment:** 1 pg, double spaced response (What surprised you? What did you learn? What questions do you have?)

### 34) Fri Nov 22: Jesus Christ

Peter C. Phan, "Jesus as the Universal Savior in the Light of God's Eternal Covenant with the Jewish People: A Roman Catholic Perspective," in *Seeing Judaism Anew*

Dominus Iesus:

[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_20000806\\_dominus-iesus\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000806_dominus-iesus_en.html)

**Assignment:** Assignment: 1 pg, double spaced response (What surprised you? What did you learn? What questions do you have?)

**\*\*\*Mon Nov 25 – AAR : no class; work on your group projects\*\*\***

DUE: ROMAN CATHOLIC SITE VISIT WRITE UP VIA EMAIL BY 12:00pm

(Nov 28-Dec 5 is Hanukkah; Dec 1 is the first day of Advent)

**\*\*\*Wed Nov 27 and Fri Nov 29 – No Class: Thanksgiving Break\*\*\***

37) Mon Dec 2: Group Presentations (2)

38) Wed Dec 4 Group Presentations (2)

39) Fri Dec 6 Group Presentations (2)

(Dec 8 is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception (Roman Catholic))

40) Mon Dec 9 Presentations (2)

40) Wed Dec 11 Group Presentations (1); Course wrap-up

Your final group paper is due on at the scheduled time for the final exam for this course: Saturday, December 14<sup>th</sup> at 9am.

*Good luck on your exams. Have a wonderful break.  
See you in January.*