

**RE-103 Religion and Culture**  
**Spring '08**  
**Dr. Zaas**

## **Syllabus**

### **Catalogue Description:**

An introductory study of the nature of religion, the interaction of religion and culture, and the function of religious belief in the life of the individual. Consideration will be given to such phenomena as myth and ritual, sacred time and space, mysticism, evil, conversion, and salvation. Readings will be drawn from classical and modern sources. (Fulfills humanities requirement.)

### **Instructor's Tweak:**

This semester this course will examine the lived experience of Christians, Moslems, and Jews against the backdrop of contemporary culture.

### **Course Requirements:**

This is a course in which a substantial part of the learning takes place in the classroom. I expect you to attend every class, prepared and prepared to speak up. I expect you to share your informed opinions with me and with your fellow students, and to let me know when you feel you are not receiving from the class what you should.

I strongly encourage:

- Good humor
- Self respect and the respect for others
- Tolerance for others' opinions --Coffee

I strongly discourage:

- Texting or other cellphone use during class

- Disruptive chat
- Late arrivals or early departures
- Food

### **Grade Requirements:**

--Analytical papers, 3 single-spaced pages, on five of the six assigned readings. All academic standards apply. Zero tolerance for any plagiarism. Assignment details under "Assignments."

- Midterm exam
- Final exam
- Participation, including attendance

Each of the five papers is worth 10% of your grade; the midterm is worth 15%, the final is worth 20%, participation 15%

### **Required texts:**

- Ignazio Silone, *Bread and Wine*
- Albert Camus, *The Plague*
- Art Spiegelmann, *Maus*
- Chaim Potok, *My Name is Asher Lev*
- Isak Dineson, *Babette's Feast*
- Yasmine Zahran, *A Beggar at Damascus Gate*

## Course Schedule

These readings and assignments are due on the date indicated:

January 23: About religion. About culture. About this course.

January 30: Read: Bread and Wine

Assignment: Define the first three terms in the catalogue course description (myth, ritual, sacred time and space)

February 6: Read: The Plague

Assignment: Define the last four terms in the catalogue course description

(mysticism, evil, conversion, and salvation)

February 13: Read: Babette's Feast

Define: Christianity

February 20: Film: Lilies of the Field

Christianity as lived experience

February 27: Midterm Exam, in class

March 5: Read: Maus

Define: Judaism

March 19: Read: My name is Asher Lev

Essay: What is the connection  
between religion and culture?

March 26: Film: Ararat

Religion and persecution

April 2: Read: A Beggar at Damascus Gate

Define: Islam

April 9: TBA

April 16: TBA

April 23: TBA