



Mountain Theological Seminary

Graduate Course Syllabus

Christian Theology and World Religions

CT696

Fall 2025
MTS
Arvada, CO 80004

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an overview of the major world religions as they relate to Christianity. Although many faiths will be studied, we will utilize Islam as a lens by which to focus on key issues entailed in the planet's competing worldviews. (3 credit hours)

COURSE RATIONALE

Our generation is marked by a curious blend of "seeking" and relativism. Never before has (absolute) truth been the target of such skepticism and doubt. Tolerance has been radically redefined by the "politically correct" to the point that spiritual conviction is misinterpreted as unsophisticated or even vengeful. The Scriptures have much to teach us as we navigate these sometimes treacherous waters. Further, even a cursory look at the various world religions easily explodes the shallow platitudes one hears in modern discourse about faith.

MTS MISSION

The mission of Mountain Theological Seminary is to equip followers of Jesus around the world to be spiritual leaders and servants in Christ's church by providing them with a transformative biblical distance education.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

As a result of this course, students should accomplish the following objectives:

1. Biblical thinking about worldviews. This includes the analytic ability to weigh truth claims, distinguish between genuine and false tolerance, and understand the tension between biblical faithfulness and worldly values, as illustrated by ancient Israel's struggle not to conform to the religious norms of the Ancient Near East. This fulfills Outcomes 1, 2, and 3 above.
2. Familiarity with the spectrum of world religions, with a view to appreciating what is distinctive, and thus being in a stronger position to win their adherents to Christ (1 Corinthians 9:19-23). This fulfills Outcomes 3 and 5 above.
3. Equipping believers for direct and respectful engagement with practitioners of other faiths (1 Peter 3:15-16). This fulfills Outcomes 3 and 5 above.

COURSE TEXTBOOKS

- Farhadian, C. (2015). *Introducing World Religions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker. 978-1540964915 and 1540964914.
- Jacoby, D. and Sarah, A (2009). *Jesus & Islam*. Spring, TX: Illumination Publishers. 978-0981737379
- Qureshi, N. *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus: A Devout Muslim Encounters Christianity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. 978-0310092643 and 0310092647.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS & SHORT READINGS

- *Answering Islam: The Crescent in Light of the Cross*, by Norman Geisler and Abdul Saleeb.
- *Allah: A Christian Response*, by Miroslav Volf. Academic, interesting, but not too heavy.
- *Islam*, by John Alden Williams, ed. Compact, not too long. Intended for the educated reader.
- *Paul Meets Muhammad*, by Michael Licona. Light, fun read.
- *Who Speaks for Islam? What A Billion Muslims Really Think*, by Esposito and Mogahed.
- *An Introduction to Islam for Jews*, by Reuven Firestone. You don't need to be Jewish to appreciate this one.
- *Infidel*, by Ayaan Hirsi Ali. Thought-provoking.
- *No God but One: Allah or Jesus?: A Former Muslim Investigates the Evidence for Islam and Christianity*, by Nabeel Qureshi (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016)
- *Answering Jihad: A Better Way Forward*, by Nabeel Qureshi (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016)
- *Into the Light*, by Steven Masood. Short. Faith-building story of a Pakistani whose quest for God led him to Christ.
- *Christ, Muhammad and I*, by Mohammed Al Ghazoli. Personal, eye-opening, often shocking.
- *Alone With a Jihadist: A Biblical Response to Holy War*, by Aaron D. Taylor. Great read for Americans who may be prejudiced re: Israel/Palestine. We will be listening to a podcast by the author, even if you don't select his book.
- *Son of Hamas*, by Mosab Hassan Yousef. Another personal story, easy to read.
- *The Koran*, Penguin version, tr. N. J. Dawood. You will need to read a minimum of two hours in your version of the Qur'an. Penguin is fine, but feel free to choose your own version. For the top 4 English versions (respected by scholars – you could almost call them "authorized"). The latest (and best?) version I have read is the new Oxford edition.
- *The Hadith of Bukhari*. You will need to read two hours in your version of the Hadith. Note: It is fine to read any version of the Hadith you like. You may choose to read the Hadith of Islam as an alternative to Bukhari.
- *The Analects of Confucius*. Short, pithy.
- *Sayings of the Buddha*. Select any edition if you like.
- *The Bhagavad Gita*. The most beloved of the Hindu scriptures.
- *An Intelligent Person's Guide to Judaism*, by Shmuley Boteach. Boteach is a popular and colorful writer.
- *An Introduction to Hinduism*, by Gavin D. Flood.
- *Sacred Texts of the World* (36 lectures, in The Great Courses), by Grant Hardy. Excellent follow-up to our course.

- *Great Minds of the Eastern Intellectual Tradition* (36 lectures, in The Great Courses), by Grant Hardy. Excellent follow-up to previous entry. That is, listen to Sacred Texts first, then Great Minds.
- *Beginnings of Judaism* (24 lectures, in The Great Courses), by Isaiah M. Gafni. Another interesting offering from The Teaching Company.

For writing papers students are to use *Turabian* style and format: The following link is available for reference: http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments for CT 696 include textbook reading, several additional readings (7-10), book reports (3), podcasts (10-12), quizzes (3), interactive posts (7), a scriptural project, time with a religious leader in another faith tradition, and an evangelistic study. Here follow, in descending order of total point value, the broad types of assignments. For the estimated time commitments of each assignment, refer to the following section.

- Final exam (50 points).
- Online posts/discussion forums (35 points).
- Three quizzes (30 points), on Farhadian's *Introducing World Religions*.
- Two short book reports (20 points).
- Meeting with imam, guru, priest, or rabbi etc. (25 points).
- Evangelistic study project (20 points).
- Scriptural project (20 points).
- Reading (included in the above; assessed by means of quizzes, online forums, and other means).

NOTE: Students are responsible to read the endnotes in the assigned books, as some of them contain valuable information.

ASSIGNMENTS WITH ESTIMATED TIMES FOR COMPLETION

CT 696 contains 7 modules. Complete details may be found in each module online. Some small changes will be made after this original syllabus is posted. If you notice any inconsistencies, please notify your professor and the change(s) will be made. Thank you.

MODULE 1 – THE WOLF – 20:30 (time) – 10 (points)

Sun 24 August – Sat 6 September

Introductory Zoom session [1:00] [5]

Half of book by Qureshi. [7:30]

Listen to & post on "The Wolf Will Lie Down with the Lamb" and take part in the Forum [3:00] [5]

Sun 7 – Sat 13 September



Chapter 1 of Farhadian. [3:00]
Listen to Islam talks A and B. [1:30]
Readings from the Qur'an. [2:00]
Various talks and articles on world religions. [2:30]
Arrange: meet with imam, rabbi, guru, priest / attend mosque, synagogue, temple, shrine before end of Module 5

MODULE 2 – THE JIHADI – 20:00 – 10

Sun 14 – Sat 20 September

Listen to & post on Taylor, “Interview with a Jihadist” [3:00]
Finish Qureshi and submit book report [9:00] **[10]**

Sun 21 – Sat 27 September

Read chapters 2-3 of Farhadian [6:00]
Quiz on Farhadian chapters 2-3 [2:00]

MODULE 3 – IDOLS OF CANAAN – 18:00 – 35

Sun 28 September – Sat 4 October

Read about half of *Jesus & Islam* [6:00]
Readings from Hadith of Bukhari [2:00]

Sun 5 – Sat 11 October

Listen to Hadith talk 1, talk 2, and talk 3. Read the notes, too. [2:30]
Post on Hadith and take part in the Forum. [2:00] **[5]**
Second Zoom session [1:30] **[10]**
Clashing Worldviews (Scriptural study project) [4:00] **[20]**

MODULE 4 – AL-QUR’AN – 19:30 – 25

Sun 12– Sat 18 October

Watch debate on Violence, the Bible & the Qur’an [2:00]
Post on debate & participate in Forum [2:30] **[5]**
Read chapters 4-6 of Farhadian [6:00]

Sun 19 – Sat 25 October

Finish reading *Jesus & Islam* and submit book report [7:30] **[10]**
Quiz on Farhadian chapters 4-6 [1:30] **[10]**

MODULE 5 – UP-CLOSE & PERSONAL – 17:00 – 40

Sun 26 October – Sat 1 November

Read chapters 7-8 of Farhadian [5:00]

Meet with imam / guru / priest / rabbi... or tour mosque / temple / synagogue [3:30]

Sun 2 November – Sat 8 November

Post: Learning from books vs. learning from a religious leader + participate in Forum [3:00] **[30]**

Quiz on Farhadian chapters 7-8 [1:30] **[10]**

Messianic Judaism classes [4:00]

MODULE 6 – GOING EAST–AND WEST — 28:00 – 5

Sun 9 – Sat 15 November

Spend time in the Eastern scriptures and share what you learned in Forum [4:00] **[5]**

Read chapters 9-10 of Farhadian. [5:00]

Listen to the lesson on Mormonism, following the accompanying notes. [1:00]

Listen to the lesson on the Jehovah’s Witnesses, following the accompanying notes. [1:00]

Sun 16 – Sat 22 November

Pre-recorded CLASSES with Douglas Jacoby [10:00]

(Zoroastrianism, Revolutionary Judaism, Postmodernism, Christian Reflections, and more)

Begin reviewing for the Final Exam [6:00]

BREAK: Sun 23 – Sat 6 December

MODULE 7 – DEFENDING THE FAITH – 13:00 – 75

Sun 7 – 13 December

Various New Age-related talks etc: Reincarnation, The Secret, Avatar, A New Earth [article], The Life of Pi. Be sure to read any/all notes – and take your own notes. [4:00]

Post on New Age Movement and take part in the Forum [3:00] **[5]**

Evangelistic project [4:00] **[20]**

Final Exam [2:00] **[50]**

Course feedback

Total hours = 135:00

USDE REQUIREMENTS

The United States Department of Education (USDE) requires a minimum of 135 hours of work for *any* 3-hour course, regardless of how long the course lasts. It does not have to be the *same work* as a traditional 15-week course, but it must be the *same amount* of work. To meet this USDE requirement, *all MTS instructors must list in their syllabi the amount of time that each assignment should take. The total hours for all work in a 3-semester-hour class must equal at least 135 hours, including any in-class time.* Use the following formula for reading and writing workloads: an average adult student takes 1 hour to read and absorb 20 pages of graduate-level text and 1.5 hours to research and write and rewrite 1 page of graduate-level text. Our reading and writing guidelines require about 1,000 pages of reading per course and up to 50 pages of writing per course (including any online

posts). Using the formula above, for example, reading 1,000 pages should take about 50 hours and writing 50 pages should take about 75 hours.

Use the following formula for determining total student work hours:

of hours in class (including online, in person, and video) + (X pages /20) hours of reading + (Y pages of writing and research x 1.5) hours of writing >= 135 hours. Note that the total number of hours in a course may be more than 135, but it cannot be less. In short:

- 1 hour in the classroom = 1 hour of course work
- 20 pages of reading = 1 hour of course work
- 1 page (300 words) of research and writing = 1.5 hours of course work
- 1 hour of field research = 1 hour of course work
- 1 page of online posting (200+ words) = 1 hour of course work.

COURSE EXAMS/QUIZZES

- Final exam (50 points). Multiple choice and true/false questions.
- Three quizzes (30 points), on Farhadian's *Introducing World Religions*.

COURSE GRADING

Below is the MTS grading scale for this class. Note: CT696 has a total of 200 possible points—thus an A is 188-200 points, a B- is 1660-164 points, etc.

A	Excellent	94–100%	4.00
A-		90–93	3.67
B+		87–89	3.33
B	Good	83–86	3.00
B-		80–82	2.67
C+		77–79	2.33
C	Average	73–76	2.00
C-		70–72	1.67
D+		67–69	1.33
D	Passing	63–66	1.00
D-		60–62	0.67
F*	Failing	0–59	0.00

POLICIES

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to attend every class session. For online classes (in real time) video cameras must be turned on throughout the duration of the session.

In the event that a student misses one class session, he/she must work with the instructor to determine what is needed to make up what was missed. If the student does not make up the work in a satisfactory manner, the student's final grade will be lowered one letter grade at the end of the course. If the student misses two class sessions, the student's final grade will be lowered one letter grade provided that he/she makes up work for both class sessions. If that make up work is not completed, then the final grade will be lowered by two letter grades. If the student misses three class sessions, he/she will be given an F for his/her final grade and not be allowed to finish the course.

At times students have legitimate extenuating circumstances for their absences from class. If this occurs and the student is doing well in class up to that point, the student can contact the professor of the class and the Dean of the appropriate MTS School and ask for a 30-day extension beyond the end of class to complete the work in the class. This request however must be made at least 2 weeks before the final class session. If a 30-day extension is approved beyond the end of class and the student fails to finish all the requirements of the class by the end of those 30 days, the student will be assigned an F for his/her final grade for that class. Appeals can be made to the appropriate MTS Dean.

LATE WORK POLICY

All work is due when listed in the course syllabus, unless otherwise stipulated by the instructor. Grading of any late work on any assignment during the semester will be done at the discretion of the Instructor. (Note that instructors are not under obligation to accept any assignment that is late but may do so and grade it if they wish according to their discretion). No work may be accepted later than one week after the course concludes, since *final grades for all classes are due two weeks after the last class session*. The only exception to this policy is for students who request and are granted an official course extension as noted in the above paragraph. All such extensions are granted only for extreme circumstances (extended illness, death in family, etc.), and the extension may not exceed 30 days from the last day of class. As every assignment has a due date, points will be lost in proportion to the lateness of any submission.

Only the appropriate MTS Dean may grant such requests, which must be made in writing at least 2 weeks before the last class session. Otherwise, the grade earned at the end of the class is the one granted.

ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL DISCIPLESHIP INTEGRITY POLICY

It is the policy of MTS that its students and faculty exhibit a high standard of honesty and integrity and a commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Students are expected to be committed to a living standard depicted in the Bible both academically and relationally both inside and outside of school. Incidents of lack of integrity, including such things as plagiarism, cheating, treating others with lack of respect will be taken seriously and offenders held accountable up to and including probation, suspension and/or

removal from their academic program and MTS. All infractions should be reported to the appropriate Dean of MTS.

INSTRUCTOR/STUDENT COVENANT

As instructor of this course, I covenant with each student that I will model Christ-like behavior, value and respect each student as a fellow disciple/learner, be prepared for each class session, make appropriate assignments, grade all assignments fairly, return all graded assignments promptly, and be available for consultation outside of class. In return, I expect each student to model Christ-like behavior, value and respect fellow students and me as the instructor, be prepared for each class session, and complete assignments in ways that demonstrate integrity.

ONLINE ETIQUETTE

Most of the online or hybrid courses in the graduate programs require students to interact with each other and with the instructor on a regular basis (per syllabus instructions). Most of that interaction is done through online comments posted on Canvas. Due to the constraints and unique nature of online communication, students should be aware of the tone or insinuations of any comments they post. Comments can often be misinterpreted when non-verbal cues such as facial expression and voice intonation are not present. Excessive punctuation, such as repeated exclamation points, could be construed as overly emotional or angry. Students need to consider how remarks might be interpreted by someone who does not know them personally and can only take their words at face value. Students should compose their comments per instructions under the syllabus assignments, paying careful attention to proper grammar and spelling.

LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES

While MTS does not have an official library onsite, there are many theological libraries which are available in the area for students to use with permission. These include:

The Denver Seminary Library
6399 South Santa Fe Drive
Littleton, Colorado 80120

Colorado Christian University
8787 W. Alameda Ave.
Lakewood, CO 80226

Iliff School of Theology
2323 E. Iliff Ave.
Denver, CO 80021



There are also several State University libraries in the area which can be visited for research including the University of Colorado in Boulder, Regis University, University of Colorado in Colorado Springs, Colorado College in Colorado Springs, Naropa University in Boulder. The best search engine for biblical article research is EBSCO ATLA Religion with Serials data base which can be found at all of the above libraries.

Please also visit any theological or university library in your area to see if they have access to ATLAS Religion data base. In Colorado, you may also check with local libraries for the availability of EBSCO *Academic Search Premier* data base. It searches many well respected academic religious journals also. MTS students can also access *Academic Search Premier* through our MTS website at www.mtsem.org.