

JDST 2850-001
Prof. Shaul Bar
Fall 2010

THE RELIGIONS OF ABRAHAM

This course surveys the development of the Religions of Abraham—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—beginning in the ancient Near Eastern setting of Babylonia and Egypt. It also examines Zoroastrianism and two Shinto creation myths for comparative purposes. There are two mid-term exams, a comprehensive final exam, and a short paper of 3-5 pages analyzing selected primary sources.

Students are expected to do all the assigned readings.
Students must complete all the assignments to receive credit.

BOOKS:

Required

J. O'Brien and W. Major, In the Beginning [Scholars Press]
M. Fishbane, Judaism [Harper & Row]
Lewis M. Hopfe, Religions of the World [Mac Millan Publishing Co.] – New York

Plus a packet of required readings available on reserve

Recommended

W. E. Paden, Religious Worlds [Beacon]
H. Frankfurt, ed. The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man [Chicago]

TOPICS AND READINGS

1. **Ancient Near East**, O'Brien, 9-32; 69-87; 125-143; Frankfurt 125-219
2. **Egypt**, Frankfurt, 31-122. Packet of readings.
3. **Kojiki**, Packet of readings
4. **Nihongi**, Packet of readings
5. **Ancient Israel**, O'Brien, 33-45; 89-106; 145-158; Fishbane, 11-30
Genesis 12; Exodus

6. **Rabbinic Judaism and subsequent developments**, Fishbane, 30-140
Packet of readings.

MID-TERM I

7. **Zoroastrianism**, Packet of readings
8. **Roman and Hellenistic Religions**, O'Brien, 159-172; 195-198
9. **Gnosticism and Mystery Religion**, Packet of readings
10. **Christian Origins**, Packet of readings, Synoptic Gospels
11. **Early Christianity, Gospels, Creeds, later developments**; Book of Acts

MID-TERM II

12. Islam, Hopfe, 387-426. Selections from Quran

FINAL AS PER TIME SCHEDULE