
Culture in the Lands of the Bible

Annotation

The course The introductory survey comprises geographical location of the ancient cultures of the Middle East, languages, scripts, cult, or types of sacred literature. The highlighted issue is the phenomenon of strict monotheism as observed in the canonical texts of the Old Testament and the Quran. These will be seen in the stream of apocryphal and “heretical” substrate, particularly documented in the stories of essential Biblical figures as Abraham, Solomon, Joseph, John the Baptist, or Jesus Christ himself. Respective interpretations of these will show the appearance and main teachings of the three “heavenly religions” – Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. The seminar will combine visual presentations of the mentioned topics, interpretive reading of primary texts, and relation of secondary explanations presented in students’ papers.



Aim of the course

To provide informative introduction to the beliefs and practices of the Jews, the Christians, and the Muslims both in historical perspective and in their current shapes.

Literature

Reference

- ABDEL HALEEM, Muhammad. The Quran: a New Translation. Oxford: University Press, 2004.
- DAMMEN MCAULIFFE, Jane (ed.). Encyclopedia of the Quran. 6 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2001 – 2006.
- FINE, Steven, Art, History and the Historiography in Judaism in Roman Antiquity, Leiden: Brill, 2016.
- FRIEDMAN, David N. (ed.). Anchor Bible Dictionary. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
- HATTSTEIN, Markus – Delius Peter, Islam: Religion and Culture, Köln: Tandem, 2006.
- MAYEUR, Jean-Marie, Bischöfe, Mönche und Kaiser, Die Geschichte des Christentums, vol. 4, Freiburg: Herder, 2004.
- MITCHELL, Margaret M. The Cambridge History of Christianity, Cambridge: University Press, 2006.
- SANDERS, E. P. Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BC – 66 CE, Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016.
- VROOM, Hendrik M. – GORT, Jerald D. (ed.). Holy Scriptures in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Hermeneutics, values and society. Amsterdam – Atlanta: Rodopi, 1997.
- WAINES, David. An Introduction to Islam. Cambridge: University Press, 1995.

Online resources

- <https://www.biblegateway.com/>
- <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/>
- <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/>
- <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-tanakh-full-text>
- <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/>
- <https://quran.com/>
- <https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/encyclopaedia-of-islam-1/alpha/f>

Teaching methods

Lectures in form of visual presentations (ppt) supplemented by students' papers and presentations on chosen topics to illustrate the main themes of the course.

Syllabus

1. **The People:** Israel in the Desert, Synagogue, Christian Church, Umma muslima;
2. **The Holy Book:** Torah, Tanakh, New Testament, Qur'an;
3. **The Holy Place:** Desert Sanctuary, Temple of Jerusalem, Synagogue, Syriac churches, Mosque;
4. **The Rites:** Jewish, Christian, and Muslim feasts, ceremonies and daily prayers;
5. **The Creed:** Deuteronomy 5 (Hear o Israel, Decalogue) – The Christian Creed, Five Principles of Islam.

Course completion requirements

- Presentation of a chosen topic, active part in final review.