



האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים
THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM

בית הספר לתלמידים מחו"ל ע"ש רוטברג
Rothberg International School



Department of Summer Courses
and Special Programs

המחלקה לקורסי קיץ
ותוכניות מיוחדות

Religion in the Holy Land: Faith's Role in Peace and Conflict

Course Instructor: Ophir Yarden

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August 3-17, 2017

45 Academic Hours, 3 Academic Credits

*This course can be taken as a single course or as a component of the 9-credit program **Coexistence in the Middle East** (CME), which is comprised of the following three courses:*

- *Narratives and Realities: Inside the Israeli Palestinian Conflict*
- *Israel and the New Middle East: An Interactive View of the Post-Arab Spring*
- *Religion in the Holy Land: Faith's Role in Peace and Conflict*

Since these courses are designed to complement each other we strongly recommend participants to enroll in the three courses.

Course Description

Thought by some in the west to be a fading phase in human history, religion has proved to be a potent force in world conflict but also an inspiration for peace. With over half of humanity adhering to “Abrahamic Faiths,” the Middle East has been at the vortex of religion-related conflict for a millennia and still is in the 21st century. The continuing Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well as phenomena including ISIS, the Syrian civil war and mass refugees demonstrate the presence of religion in the realms of war and peace.

Based in Jerusalem, a city cherished – and disputed – by Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, this course analyzes the role of religion vis-a-vis peace and conflict. Through discussions with religious leaders and interfaith activists,

visits to holy sites, and the study of different interpretations and theological perspectives, participants will gain insight into the contradictory roles of religion as both an obstacle to peace and a resource for peacemaking.

Site Visits and Meetings

Through multiple field trips and encounters, this program offers the unique opportunity to gain first-hand access to key places and regional actors. Subject to the availability of guest speakers, participants will have the opportunity to meet with:

- Jewish, Muslim and Christian religious leaders
- Pilgrims and believers at holy sites
- Interfaith and NGO activists
- Academic and professional figures

Field trips and encounters will be finalized at a later date. As a reference only, participants may refer to the [tentative itinerary](#) for the Coexistence in the Middle East program. Please note that field trips in the itinerary are split among all [three CME Summer Courses](#).

List of Topics to be explored

The following list of topics might be updated due to the dynamic character of the Middle East and our intention to focus on the current issues in the region:

Unit 1: Religion as a Force for Peace or Conflict?

- A. Introduction to Judaism, Christianity and Islam
- B. The concept of peace in the three religions
- C. Religious peace in practice and context

Unit 2: Religious Aspects of the Israel-Palestine Conflict

- A. Introduction: Religion, history, culture and nationalism
- B. Religion as an exacerbating factor
- C. Conflict over holy sites: The Temple Mount and the Holy Land

Unit 3: Religion and Conflict as a Regional and Global Issue

- A. Religious Terrorism: ISIS, radical Islam, and islamophobia

- B. Challenges to multiculturalism: The wave of Syrian Refugees
- C. Religion in politics: The Syrian war - Shia and Sunni relations in the Middle East

Unit 4: Religious Peacebuilding

- A. Theory and case-studies
- B. Religious initiatives and conflict resolution
- C. Grassroots interfaith and peacebuilding projects

Grading & Course Requirements

Participants who do not require academic credits will be exempt from these requirements and will be able to obtain an active participation certificate.

- **25% Reading and class participation**
- **75% Term Paper.** The essay will not exceed 3000 words. Students will be encouraged to work in small teams and engage in field related work. Paper outlines will be presented in the last two weeks of classes. **Papers must be submitted no later than two week after the last class.**

It is mandatory for students to attend all classes, guest lectures, field trips, etc. Failure to attend classes will result in a student being denied the right to partake in the final assignment and receive a final grade in the course. Students who have a justified reason to miss class (illness, mourning, etc.) must communicate with their instructors and the Department of Summer Courses and Special Programs, and complete the material that they have missed. Students who have missed class due to illness must obtain a signed and stamped sick note from a treating physician and submit it to the Dept. of Summer Courses and Special Programs immediately following their return to class. Failure to do so will result in an unexcused absence. The Department reserves the right to refer the issue to an Academic Committee. In some cases, the Academic Committee may decide, in light of the requirements of the course, that it is not possible to make up the missing course work.

Earning Graduate Credits for this course

- Graduate students are expected to inform the Rothberg International School – rissummer@savion.huji.ac.il – of their interest in earning graduate credit for their summer course(s).
- Graduate students must complete a 15-page, double-spaced seminar paper with bibliography for the course in place of the course's standard final assessment (in most cases, an exam). The topic and bibliography for these papers must be chosen in conjunction and agreement with each course instructor.

Students must approach course instructors by the end of the first week of the course and arrange a time to meet and define their paper topic and bibliography.

- The seminar paper must make use of at least five scholarly sources (books or academic articles), in addition to internet resources.
- The graduate seminar papers must be submitted within 2 months following course completion in order for the graduate student to fulfill requirements for this course.

Preliminary Course Readings

Due to the dynamic character of the Middle East and the intention to focus on the current issues in the region the contents and readings might be updated.

Unit 1: Religion as a Force for Peace or Conflict?

- Abu-Nimer, Mohammed, The Miracles of Transformation through Interfaith Dialogue: Are you a Believer?, Smoch, David, R., ed., *Interfaith Dialogue and Peacebuilding*, USIP, Washington, 2002, 15-32
- Gopin, Marc, “Between Religion And Conflict Resolution: Mapping A New Field Of Study,” Chap. 2 in *Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World Religions, Violence, and Peacemaking*, OUP 2000, offprint
- Abu-Nimer, M., “Religion and Peacebuilding: Reflections on Current Challenges and Future Prospects,” *Journal of Inter-Religious Studies*, March, 2015 <http://irdialogue.org/2015/03/>
- Hayward, Susan, *Religion and Peacebuilding: Reflections on Current Challenges and Future Prospects*, USIP Special Report, 2012 <http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR313.pdf>
- Roth, Daniel, The Peacemaker in Jewish-Rabbinic and Arab-Islamic Traditions, *Journal of Religion, Conflict, and Peace*, (4:2, 2011) <http://www.religionconflictpeace.org/volume-4-issue-2-spring-2011/peacemaker-jewish-rabbinic-and-arab-islamic-traditions>
- Gordis, D., Safiq, M. and Thistlethwaite, S., “Acknowledge Responsibility for Conflict and Injustice and Seek Repentance and Forgiveness,” Thistlethwaite, Susan, ed., *Interfaith Just Peacemaking*, NY 2012 69-85
- Landau, Yehezkel, *Healing the Holy Land - Interreligious Peacebuilding in Israel/Palestine*, USIP, 2003 <http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/pwks51.pdf>
- Abu-Nimer, M., “Interfaith Dialogue and Peacebuilding in Israel and Palestine,” Chap. 3 in Abu-Nimer, M., Khory, A., and Welty, E., *Unity in Diversity: Interfaith Dialogue in the Middle East*, USIP, Washington 2007, 43-94
- Melchior, Michael, “Establishing a Religious Peace,” Kronish, Ron, ed., *Coexistence & Reconciliation in Israel: Voices for Interreligious Dialogue*, New York 2015, 117-128

Unit 2: Religious Aspects of the Israel-Palestine Conflict

- Yarden, Ophir, “Recent uses of Halakhic Discourse in Israel: Encouraging Racism and Violence,” in [Religious Stereotyping and Interreligious Relations](#) eds. Jesper Svartvik and Jakob Wirén, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- Rosen, Sharon, “Protecting Holy Sites,” Israel Hayom (video, 4 min.)
http://www.israelhayom.com/site/newsletter_article.php?id=13225

Unit 3: Religion and Conflict as a regional and global issue

- R. Scott Appleby, "Religious Violence: The Strong, the Weak, and the Pathological," Appleby, Little, and Omer eds., [The Oxford Handbook of Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding](#), (NY: Oxford) 2015.
- Rashied Omar, "Religious Violence and State Violence," Appleby, Little, and Omer eds., [The Oxford Handbook of Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding](#), (NY: Oxford) 2015.
- Sacks, Jonathan, [Not in God's Name: Confronting Religious Violence](#), (London: Hodder & Stoughton) 2015.
http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=rdr_ext_aut?encoding=UTF8&index=books&field-author=Jonathan%20Sacks
- Johan Galtung, “Cultural Violence” in *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 27, No. 3, (Aug. 1990), pp. 291-305.
- Marc Gopin. *Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World Religions, Violence, and Peacemaking, passim*
- Symposium: The Impact of Religion on Global Affairs, *SAIS Review* 18.2, Summer-Fall 1998

Unit 4: Religious Peacebuilding

- Rosen, David, “Working for Peace with Religious Establishments,” Kronish, Ron, ed., *Coexistence & Reconciliation* 245-253
- Brinn, Shlomo, “Teaching about the Other in Religious Zionist Education,” Kronish, Ron, ed., *Coexistence & Reconciliation* 236-242
- Salem, Omer, *The Missing Peace*, <https://youtu.be/5fbiEtBkKvY> (44 min.)
- Rosen, Sharon, “The Importance of Interfaith Cooperation for the Protection of Jerusalem’s Holy Sites,” Breger, Marshall, Reiter, Y. and Hammer, L., *Sacred Space in Israel and Palestine*, NY 2012, 251-283
- Reiter, Yitzhak, *Positive Role of Religious Leaders: Muslim Muftis on Peace with Israel*,
<http://www.crihl.org/content/positive-role-religious-leaders-muslim-muftis-peace-israel>
- Zelzberg, Ofer, *Involve Religious Leaders in the Diplomatic Process*,
<http://www.crihl.org/content/involve-religious-leaders-diplomatic-process>
- Ron Kronish, Interreligious Dialogue in the Service of Peace, [CrossCurrents, Volume 58, Issue 2, pages 224–246, Summer 2008](#)

