Religion in the Holy Land: Faith's Role in Peace and Conflict (48891)

Course Instructors: Dr. Mostafa Elostaż and Dr. Daniel Roth
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Summer Semester: August 1-14, 2019
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 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.

Course Instructors

Dr. Mostafa Elostaż is the head of the human rights and international law department at Al Quds Bard College. Professor Elostaż's work focuses on free speech, citizenship, and Islam and human rights. He is part of the Geneva Initiative and has been part of a Palestinian team working on
“dealing with the past.” Prof. Elostaz holds a juris doctor degree from the Ohio State University, and a master's in international studies, with focus on the Middle East, from the University of Washington.

Rabbi Dr. Daniel Roth is the director of the Pardes Center for Judaism and Conflict Resolution in Jerusalem. Roth teaches at Bar-Ilan University’s Conflict Resolution, Management and Negotiation Graduate Program, and at Tel Aviv University’s International Program in Conflict Resolution and Mediation. Roth is the founder of the Jewish Week of Constructive Conflict, the Israeli Week of Mediation and Dialogue, and a regular lecturer of MEJDI (multi-narrative) Tours and National Geographic. Roth was a senior research fellow at George Mason University’s Center for World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution. He holds a Ph.D. from Bar-Ilan University.

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: Introduction to Religion as a Force for Peace or Conflict?
   A. Introduction to Religion and Peacebuilding
   B. Introduction to Judaism, Christianity and Islam
   C. Understanding Conflicting Religious Narratives

Unit 2. Religious Models of Peace and Conflict Resolution in text, theory and practice
   A. Salam in Islam
   B. Shalom in Judaism
   C. Peace in Christianity

Unit 3: Religious Aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
   A. Judaism between Rabbinic Quietism and Zionist Nationalism
B. Islam and Palestinian Nationalism - a misconception?
C. Conflict over holy sites: The Temple Mount, Haram el Sharif and the Holy Land

Unit 4: Religion and Conflict as a Regional and Global Issue
A. Religious Terrorism: ISIS, radical Islam, and islamophobia
B. Religion in politics: The Syrian war - Shia and Sunni relations in the Middle East

Unit 5: Religious Peacebuilding Initiatives
A. The theory of Religious Peacebuilding and case-studies
B. Grassroots interfaith and religious 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. There will be two parts to the paper one relating to Judaism and the other to Islam. Each part should be between 1000 to 1,500 words. Paper outlines will be presented in the last two weeks of class. Papers must be submitted no later than two weeks 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: Introduction to Religion as a Force for Peace or Conflict?**


**Unit 2. Religious Models of Peace and Conflict Resolution in text, theory and practice**


**Unit 3: Religious Aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**


**Unit 4: Religion and Conflict as a Regional and Global Issue**


**Unit 5: Religious Peacebuilding Initiatives**