This course introduces students to the original meaning and significance of religious law and ethics within Judaism. Law is the single most important part of Jewish history and identity. At the same time, law is also the least understood part of Judaism and has often been the source of criticism and hatred. We shall therefore confront one of the most important parts of Jewish civilization and seek to understand it on its own terms. In demonstrating how law becomes a fundamental religious and ethical ideal, the course will focus on the biblical and Rabbinic periods but spans the entire history of Judaism. Consistent with the First Amendment, the approach taken is secular. There are no prerequisites: the course is open to all qualified students.

The course begins with ideas of law in ancient Babylon and then studies the ongoing history of those ideas. The biblical idea that a covenant binds Israel to God, along with its implications for human worth—including the view of woman as person—will be examined. Comparative cultural issues include the reinterpretations of covenant within Christianity and Islam. The course investigates the rabbinic concept of oral law, the use of law to maintain the civil and religious stability of the Jewish people, and the kabbalistic transformation of law. The course concludes with contemporary Jewish thinkers who return to the Bible while seeking to establish a modern system of universal ethics.

The premise of the course is the discipline of academic religious studies. The assumptions of the course are therefore academic and secular, as required by the First Amendment. All texts and all religious traditions will be examined analytically and critically. Students are expected to understand and master this approach, which includes questioning conventional cultural assumptions about the composition and authorship of the Bible. Willingness to ask such questions and openness to new ways of thinking are essential to success in the course.

Office Hours
All students are encouraged to visit the Instructor to discuss their progress in the course. *If students have a schedule conflict, they should not hesitate to approach the Instructor to schedule an appointment outside of regular office hours.*

Required Texts
(Each student must own a copy of these texts and bring the text to class.)


Course Reader, Shelf 13 (at Alpha Print, 1407 Fourth Street SE, Mpls; 379-8535)


Recommended

Grading
One short paper, about four pages  5 %
Mid-term exam (in class, distributed in advance) 25
Course essay 45
  ( 5 points for proposal and bibliography)
  (15 points for first draft)
  (25 points for revision with portfolio)
Final exam (take home essay) 25
TOTAL 100%

Bonus Points: 4% (complete any 9 homework writing assignments)

The short papers must be written according to proper form and must argue specific positions in a clear and effective way. The course reader contains suggestions on how to write essays, including guidelines on paragraph structure and recommendations for Style Manuals.

Students must prepare in advance a proposal for their final paper, have it prepared, then present their papers for peer review and commentary, and then submit a final portfolio consisting of the first draft, peer review, final revised version, and paragraph explaining the revisions.

Course Essay: Distinctions between 3xxx and 5xxx/6xxx:

Essay Length for 3xxx: about 8 to 10 pages
Essay Length for 5xxx (undergrad) about 12 to 15 pages
Essay Length for graduate 5xxx/6xxx about 15 to 20 pages

Page lengths above do not include title page or bibliography.

Writing and Revision Schedule
Proposal with bibliography Oct 4 (Friday)
First draft due: Oct 31 (Thursday)
Final revision portfolio due: Dec 3 (Tuesday)
**LE Writing Intensive Requirement**

Writing and the ability to construct a written argument, based upon close textual analysis, represents one of the primary goals of the course. The premise of the course, in that regard, is that writing represents a means of thought—of discovering what you think and of learning to think more clearly. It follows, further, that the best way to learn how to write is to learn the technique of revision and rewriting.

In that way, the method of the course will implement the content of the course, as students discover how ancient authors “wrote” new law and discovered new insights into ethics—by revising and rewriting the laws and the literary texts of their predecessors.

This course satisfies the LE Writing Intensive requirement. Undergraduate students are required to pass four Writing-Intensive (WI) courses. All WI courses assign formal writing and include instruction on the written aspect of those assignments. These formal assignments are in addition to any informal, exploratory writing or in-class exams assigned in the course, and will include at least one for which you will revise a draft after receiving comments from the instructor.

Writing represents a significant portion of the overall course grade, as required for all University of Minnesota WI courses. {http://undergrad.umn.edu/cwb/definition.html}. Accordingly:

1. *Writing will count for 33% of the overall course grade;*
2. *Students who do not perform well on writing assignments will be unable to pass the course.*

**ABA Upper Division Writing Requirement**

This course satisfies the Upper Division Writing Requirement, required for all LLM and JD students. Upper Division Writing courses assign the construction of well-written, well-organized, and original paper of at least 5000 words (excluding bibliography and table of contents) on a legal topic with appropriate citation to applicable authority. The process of writing this work is supervised by the instructor, and includes stages of drafting, review, and revision, including consultation between instructor and student concerning the topic and the student’s plan of research, and substantial discussion with the instructor concerning legal writing strategy and technique.

Writing and the ability to construct a written argument, based upon close textual analysis, represents one of the primary goals of the course. The premise of the course, in that regard, is that writing represents a means of thought—of discovering what you think and of learning to think more clearly. It follows, further, that the best way to learn how to write is to learn the technique of revision and rewriting. In that way, the method of the course will implement the content of the course, as students discover how ancient authors “wrote” new law and discovered new insights into ethics—by revising and rewriting the laws and the literary texts of their predecessors.

**Recommended Style Manual Specific to Biblical and Religious Studies**

*Student Supplement for the SBL Handbook of Style.* 2nd edition. A condensed and helpful guide containing some of the essentials of the *SBL Handbook of Style* written especially for students writing papers in Biblical Studies.

Student Learning Objectives

- **Have mastered a body of knowledge and a mode of inquiry**

Students will focus on mastery of the essential texts of ancient Near Eastern and Biblical law and ethics and learn to engage with the questions modern scholars in these areas ask of these texts.

*How will you assess the students’ learning related to this outcome? Give brief examples of how class work related to the outcome will be evaluated.*

This outcome will be assessed in the essays that students write in which they analyze specific ancient texts or specific modern discussions of them.

- **Understand diverse philosophies and cultures within and across societies**

*Please explain briefly how this outcome will be addressed in the course. Give brief examples of class work related to the outcome.*

Students will consider the ways in which law and ethics are culturally specific as well as ways in which they have shaped later (i.e., not necessarily Jewish) cultural conceptions of ethics.

*How will you assess the students' learning related to this outcome? Give brief examples of how class work related to the outcome will be evaluated.*

This outcome will be assessed in student writing and class discussion. In particular, the take-home essays on the midterm and final exam will ask students to engage with these problems.

- **Can communicate effectively**

*Please explain briefly how this outcome will be addressed in the course. Give brief examples of class work related to the outcome.*

Much of the student’s coursework will involve written analysis and argument. The goal is to learn to communicate effectively about material that is sometimes unfamiliar and difficult for a modern audience.

*How will you assess the students' learning related to this outcome? Give brief examples of how class work related to the outcome will be evaluated.*

Student writing will be carefully evaluated as part of the grading process, and feedback designed to improve future performance will be provided.

**Course Requirements**

Attendance at each class is required. Students should budget about 3 hours of reading and preparation outside of class for every hour in class.
Students are expected carefully to prepare the assigned reading before the class meets each session, so that they can understand the lectures and participate fully in class discussion.

There will be no makeups for missed quizzes or exams except in the case of a medical emergency that is documented in writing by a physician or campus Health Services. All deadlines must be observed. Similarly, all written work must be handed in on time except in the case of a documented medical emergency.

If you miss a class, please be sure to check with a fellow-student (and, ideally, two) in order to obtain the notes that you have missed, which are your responsibility. Please do not ask the instructor to supply notes.

Out of courtesy to your fellow students, please arrive on time and do not leave before the class is complete.

The assignment sheets in the course reader should be completed in writing, on separate sheets of paper, and answered in complete sentences. On occasion these will be collected.

Essay Submission Procedures
All essays (both the first draft and the final version) must be submitted in two ways:
- as hard copy, in class
- as an electronic file uploaded to Turn-it-In.com via the Moodle course site.

Turn-it-In.com provides protection to you, to your work, and the grades assigned to everyone in the class by confirming that the essay avoids overlap with any material on the web. To ensure academic integrity and minimize the risks associated with plagiarism, it provides instructors with “originality reports” for each essay. It also protects your papers from any subsequent unauthorized reuse by third parties.

Grading System

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92%</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>F</td>
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A = Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements
B = Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements
C = Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect
D = Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully course requirements
F = Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I (see also I)

https://onestop.umn.edu/academics/viewing-grades
Course Requirements

- Attendance is compulsory.
- Punctuality: students should arrive on time for every class and are expected to remain for the entire class. It is not acceptable to leave early except with specific prior notice for a valid academic or health reason.
- Make-ups for missed quizzes or exams are impossible except in the case of a medical emergency or participation in a special university-sponsored event. All such requests must be supported with written documentation.
- On-time submission of all work: all assignments (homework, essays, etc) must be submitted on time. Late submission of work will not be accepted, except in the case of a documented medical situation.
- Students must read and prepare the assignment prior to the class in which they are discussed.
- Students should budget about three hours of preparation time per hour of class time. Additional time, of course, is required to prepare for exams.
- Students are required to bring to class all texts, including the Bible and course packet, assigned for reading.

Incompletes
Incompletes will only be given only in exceptional cases where a student has completed almost the entire course with a passing grade and something unexpected happens (normally, a medical or family emergency) to prevent completion of the course. Please note that any such emergency must be documented in writing and that the incomplete must be agreed upon prior to the last week of classes, and requires an explicit contract for completion of the remaining work.

Special Needs
The University of Minnesota is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Resource Center is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical), please contact the DRC at 612-626-1333 to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.

If you are registered with the DRC and have a current letter requesting reasonable accommodations, please contact your instructor as early in the semester as possible to discuss how the accommodations will be applied in the course.

For more information, please see the Disability Resource Center website: https://diversity.umn.edu/disability/

Academic Honesty
Academic honesty and responsible, courteous conduct are required in this course. CLA provides clear guidelines on definitions and procedures, as they are to be followed in this course:

Scholastic dishonesty is any act that violates the rights of another student with respect to academic work or that involves misrepresentation of a student’s own work. Scholastic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) cheating on assignments or examinations, plagiarizing (misrepresenting as one’s own anything done by another), submitting the
same or substantially similar papers (or creative work) for more than one course without consent of all instructors concerned, depriving another of necessary course materials, and sabotaging another’s work.

http://advisingtools.class.umn.edu/cgep/studentconduct.html

- Please note that “intent” does not enter into the definition of scholastic dishonesty.
- The sanction for any violation in this course follows the guidelines of the University Senate: *Academic dishonesty in any portion of the academic work for a course shall be grounds for awarding a grade of F or N for the entire course.*
  
  http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/policies/grades&acadwork.html

- As required by CLA and the university, all violations shall be reported formally.
- Students cannot evade (intentionally or unintentionally) a grade sanction by withdrawing from a course before or after the misconduct charge is reported. This also applies to late withdrawals, including discretionary late cancellation (also known as the “one-time-only drop”).
- If you have any questions about documentation or citation, please consult with the instructor. For further valuable sources of information, please consult:
  - Office for Student Academic Integrity (FAQ)  
    http://www.osai.umn.edu/students.html
  - Plagiarism: Definitions, Diagnoses  
    http://cisw.cla.umn.edu/plagiarism/index.htm

**Collaboration on homework assignments and essay exams**

Students are very welcome to work with a “study buddy” to prepare homework or plan for essay exams. In such cases, all group work should be very specifically disclosed on each relevant assignment by all parties.

**Form of Citing the Bible**

Genesis 1 means Genesis, chapter 1. Genesis 1:4 means chapter 1, verse 4.

Genesis 1-3 means chapters 1-3.

Genesis 1:1-5:6 means from chapter 1, verse 1 through ch.5, v.6.

Genesis 1:1-5; 2:4-6 means chs. 1, vv. 1-5; and also ch. 2, vv. 4-6.

Genesis 1:1-2:4a means from chapter 1, verse 1, through chapter 2, first half (a) of verse 4.

**E-mail Forwarding**

The official course roster assumes the university e-mail address assigned automatically to each student. If students prefer to use a different address (such as a Hotmail, Yahoo, or Broadband account), they are free to do so. But in order to remain in touch, it is essential that they arrange to have university mail forwarded to whatever account they prefer (on campus or off). This is easy, free, and security is assured. Simply follow the steps below:

1. Go to [www.onestop.umn.edu](http://www.onestop.umn.edu).
2. Click on the *Students* button.
3. Under the heading *General services*, choose the *Change address* link.
4. An internet login screen will pop-up that people will need to sign into using their username and password. Personal information for the person will pop up.
5. Choose the *Telephone and E-mail* tab. Here, people may type in their preferred e-mail account and hit *Submit*.
Missed classes
Recall that attendance is compulsory. If illness forces you to miss a class, please do not contact the instructor to request class notes or other information. Instead, please, in advance introduce yourself to two different students, exchange phone numbers and emails, so that you have a way of getting notes. Ideally, get two complete sets of notes! If illness prevents you from turning in a homework assignment in on the date scheduled, you may turn it in a day or two late, if accompanied by a simple note from Boynton.

Inclusive Language
Both in the classroom and in the writing assignments for the class, students should strive to use gender inclusive language: to refer to all human beings, not “man” but “human beings.” In referring to original sources, however, where the language is gender specific, then the original form should be retained.

Student Writing Support
A valuable resource for all those who wish to improve their writing, both those who don’t yet have confidence in writing and for strong writers who wish to learn how to write still better:

- Center for Writing: 15 Nicholson Hall and satellite locations. (612.625.1893)
  - http://writing.umn.edu

  Main office (by appointment): Fall hours: MTWTH: 9 am–4:30 pm; F: 9 am–2:15 PM

- Satellite Locations (walk-in only):
  - Wilson Library Information Commons: M-TH, 2:30-5:30 PM
  - Frontier Hall room 109: M-W, 6:30-9:30 PM
  - Middlebrook Hall room 120: M-W, 6:30-9:30 PM

who require assistance with grammar or organization; they are recommended for strong writers who wish to learn how to write even more effectively. Please consult:

- CLA Student Writing Center, 227 Lind Hall, 207 Church St. SE
ESSAY GUIDELINES

Students will be asked to submit two short, very specific, papers for the class on topics that will be assigned. The intent is to make your paper a clear textual study (and not general discussion of some motif in the abstract). An essay must make an argument: it must define a clear problem and argue a position. Often a clear title will help focus the paper. The paper must conform to standard academic format and should include footnotes or endnotes and a bibliography as appropriate. For the clearest presentation of the proper format for footnotes and bibliography, see Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers* (5th ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), which is in the Library’s Reference Room. A valuable additional resource is Strunk and White’s *Elements of Style* (New York: Macmillan, 1982).

In order to receive a grade of “A”, a paper should:

1. Demonstrate a firm grasp of the assignment and the issues involved in it;
2. Cite specific examples or passages from the text;
3. Provide a mature intellectual analysis that makes use of the categories and concepts developed in the course;
4. Make a clear argument that displays a logical progression of ideas;
5. Be well organized, making use of an introduction, body, and conclusion;
6. Be correct in grammar and syntax;
7. Utilize proper referencing techniques by giving credit for any ideas that are not the author’s own, and using proper footnote and bibliography form (Turabian above);
8. Be self-contained.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO HELP YOU WITH THE COURSE

1. Coming prepared to every class and being sure to ask questions is the best way to do well in this class. Your questions will help yourself and your fellow students and they will be welcomed. The assumption is that the question presupposes your having done the reading.
2. The best strategy for doing well in exams is to turn the lecture outlines into your own multiple choice questions, complete with 5 alternative answers. You should ideally do this following every class, as a way of reviewing on a constant basis. You are welcome to show these to your instructors for their commentary.
3. Maintain 3” x 5” file cards for every significant name, date, term, god, or important idea so that that you become familiar with the new vocabulary that you will be acquiring.
CLASS ASSIGNMENTS
(Schedule subject to change as necessary)

Sept 3 General Introduction

I. REFLECTIONS ON HUMAN VALUE IN ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA

5 A. Cosmology as an Ethical Statement
   Reader 4-17: The Babylonian Creation Epic (Enuma Elish), with assignment

10 B. Law as an Ethical Statement
   Reader 19-39: Hammurabi’s Code

12 C. Synthesis and Discussion
   Reader 69-88: Speiser, “Early Law and Civilization,”
   Finkelstein, “Law in the Ancient Near East”
   (as excerpted from Schreiber, Jewish Law and Decision-Making)

II. THE CREATION OF THE PERSON IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

17 A. Creation as an Ethical Statement
   Reader, p 40: Assignment sheet for Psalms and Genesis
   (Psalms 104, 89, Genesis 1) (do entire assignment sheet, in sequence)

   Reader assignment, p 44
   Recommended: Living Tree, 25-48

24 Academic Integrity and the University
   Guest seminar, Center for Student Conduct and Academic Integrity

26 C. Law as a Statement of World View: The Person as a Moral Idea
   Reader, 89-100: Greenberg, “Some Postulates of Biblical Criminal Law”

Paper Assignment #1:
What is distinctive about the Israelite conception of the Person? How is it constructed through narrative and law? Use specific examples. What is the significance of talion? How does it differ in Mesopotamian and biblical law?
D. The Uniqueness of the Ten Commandments
Bible: Exodus 19-20, Deuteronomy 4-5
Reader, 101-124: Weinfeld, “The Decalogue: . . . in Israel’s Tradition”
Who speaks the Decalogue? Why is it ambiguous? Note that the “you” in the
Decalogue is grammatically singular (exactly like French tu or German Du). What is
the anomaly in this context? What do you think the rationale might be? How would
its use affect the addressees involved?

E. The Ethics of Ritual Law
Bible: Leviticus 11, Deuteronomy 14
Reader, 125-141: Milgrom, “Ethics and Ritual: the Biblical Dietary Laws”

F. Gender and Law: Changes in the Status of Woman from Chattel to Agent
Rape Law and Inner-Biblical Revisions
Exodus 22:15-19; Deuteronomy 21-25; Leviticus 18, 20
Reader, 143-150: Frymer-Kensky, “Law and Philosophy: Sex in the Bible”
additional reading to be assigned

G. Prophecy’s New Standard: Ethics
Amos (all), in Jewish Study Bible, together with the Introduction

H. Canonization: The Conflict between Textual Authority and Ethics
Bernard M. Levinson, “You Must Not Add Anything to What I Command
You’: Paradoxes of Canon and Authorship in Ancient Israel.”
1–51. (Reader 485-535)

III. ASPECTS OF HALAKHAH IN THE LIFE OF JUDAISM

A. Mitzvah and Halakhah in the Rabbinic Torah Myth
Living Tree, 133-44, 185-98, 213-27

B. Halakhic Reflection as Intellectual Inquiry
Reader, 176-192: Neusner, “Form and Meaning in Mishnah”
Mishnah Shabbat 1:1; 7:1-2

C. Halakhic Reflection as Exegesis
Living Tree, 145-60 (includes Mishnah Bava Kamma and Mekhilta)

ESSAY FIRST DRAFT DUE: Peer Review and writing workshop
Nov 5  C. Halakhic Reflection as Jurisprudence
Living Tree, 165-84, 198-204 (includes Talmud Bava Kamma)

7  D. The Self as Halakhic Structure in Medieval Jewish Mysticism
Reader, 193-220: Matt, “The Mystic and the Mitzvot”
Ginsburg, “The Sabbath in Kabbalah”

IV. JEWISH LAW AND COMPARATIVE RELIGION

12  A. Christianity: “The Law of the Spirit of Life” (Rom 8:2)
    Living Tree, 235-45
    Reader, 241-251: E. P. Sanders, “When is a Law a Law? The Case of Jesus
    and Paul.” Pages 139-58 in Firmage, Edwin B., Bernard G. Weiss, and John

14  B. Islamic Law as a Religious System
    Reader, 221-240: Weiss, “Covenant and Law in Islam”

19  A. Biblical Law and the American Founding
    Reading:
    Andrew C. Skinner, “The Influence of the Hebrew Bible upon the
    Founders of the American Republic,” in Sacred Text, Secular
    Times: The Hebrew Bible in the Modern World (ed. Leonard J.
    Greenspoon and Brian F. LeBeau; Studies in Jewish Civilization
    10; Omaha: Creighton University Press, 2000), 13-32 (Reader:
    435-447).

    Bernard M. Levinson. “The First Constitution: Rethinking the Origins of
    Rule of Law and Separation of Powers in Light of Deuteronomy.”

21  Library Research Seminar

26  Study Day: Work on Final Course Essay!
    No class: Prof. Levinson at Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature

28  Thanksgiving break (enjoy yourself!)

V. JEWISH LAW CONFRONTS MODERNITY

Dec 3  Essay Dossier Due:
first draft, peer review, revision, writing process paragraph
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td>TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM (Due Tuesday, Dec. 19, 5:00 pm)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


Frymer-Kensky, Tikva. *In the Wake of the Goddesses*.

-----.”The Family in the Hebrew Bible.” *The Family in Religious Traditions*.


Course Contract

This course, concerned with the values of the humanities and a liberal arts education, requires academic integrity. There is a zero tolerance for academic dishonesty. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the description above. It could also be said that scholastic dishonesty is any act that violates the rights of another student with respect to academic work or that involves misrepresentation of a student’s own work. Also included would be cheating on assignments or examinations, inventing or falsifying research or other findings with the intent to deceive, submitting the same or substantially similar papers (or creative work) for more than one course without consent of all instructors concerned, depriving another of necessary course materials, and sabotaging another’s work. [http://advisingtools.class.umn.edu/cgep/studentconduct.html]

The sanction for any violation in this course follows the guidelines of the University Senate: Scholastic dishonesty in any portion of the academic work for a course will be grounds for awarding a grade of F or N for the entire course, at the discretion of the instructor. [http://www.policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/GRADINGTRANSCRIPTS.html]

I hereby agree to abide by the Student Conduct Code and affirm my commitment to academic integrity as fundamental to my participation in this course and to my education at the University of Minnesota. I understand that, as required by University policy, any violation of the Student Conduct Code will be reported formally to the Office for Student Conduct and Academic Integrity. I further agree that, should I have any questions or confusions about what constitutes plagiarism or scholastic dishonesty, I will consult with the course instructor before submitting the coursework in question. I know that it is my responsibility to inform myself about appropriate methods of citation and that ignorance is no excuse. I will also comply with the requirements regarding “Disruptive Conduct” and “Disruptions Caused by Technology Use.”

By signing below, I also acknowledge that I have read and understood the course attendance policies as outlined in the course syllabus and recognize that attendance policy provisions will be enforced. I further acknowledge that I understand that the focus of this course, as well as the focus of all assigned coursework to be submitted, is on mastering the academic study of religion, and not on matters of personal faith.

Student Name (printed): _______________________________________________
Student Number:  _______________________________________________
Student Signature:   _______________________________________________
Date:    ________________________
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Student Signature: _______________________________________________
Date: ______________________