

# Introduction to World Religions

## Midterm Exam

### Part I: Multiple Choice (15x1=15 points)

Mark the box with the most appropriate answer. Questions are based on the material from the course web pages that were covered in class.

### Part II: Key Terms & Definitions (10x1=10 points)

Match terms in one column with the appropriate definitions in a second column. The terms and their definitions are drawn from the “Key Terms” sections at the end of each chapter of the course textbook.

### Part III: Identify and State the Significance (5x5=25 points)

Identify and state the significance of 5 of the following 7 topics. Responses should be a full paragraph (approximately five sentences).

1. Sunni, Shi’a and Sufi • 2. The Synoptic Gospels • 3. The Seven Sacraments
4. The Branches of Judaism • 5. The Pilgrimage to Mecca
6. The “Documentary Hypothesis” of the Torah
7. The “Phenomenological” Approach to the Study of Religion

### Part IV: Essay Questions on Judaism, Christianity and Islam (2x25=50 points)

Write essay-style responses to 2 of the following 3 questions.

#### 1. Judaism

“What need have I of all your sacrifices?” says the Lord. “I am sated with burnt offerings of rams, And suet of fatlings, And blood of bulls; And I have no delight in lambs and he-goats. That you come to appear before Me — Who asked that of you? Trample My courts no more; Bringing oblations is futile, Incense is offensive to Me. (Isaiah 1:11-13)

How did Isaiah’s rejection of temple sacrifices lead to a new understanding of sin and the means by which it could be cleansed? How did this pave the way for the transition from the Temple-centered Judaism of Isaiah’s time to the “Rabbinic” Judaism of the past two thousand years? How has this influenced Jewish perspectives on their covenant with God and their anticipation of the messiah?

#### 2. Christianity

<sup>28</sup> For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. <sup>29</sup> Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, <sup>30</sup> since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. <sup>31</sup> Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law. (Romans 3:28-31)

Explain Paul’s understanding of the relationship between “faith” and “works”. What role did the concepts of “faith” and “works” play in the later conflict between Martin Luther and the Medieval Catholic Church? In light of these different perspectives on the relationship between faith and works, do you think that the Christian path to salvation requires faith, works, or a combination of the two?

#### 3. Islam

The Prophet Muhammad is said to have distinguished between two types of jihad. Of these, he said, the Greater Jihad is the struggle against one’s lower self. It is the internal fight between wrong and right, error and truth, selfishness and selflessness, hardness of heart and all-embracing love. This inner struggle to maintain peaceful equilibrium is then reflected in outer attempts to keep society in a state of harmonious order, as the earthly manifestation of Divine Justice. The Lesser Jihad is an external effort to protect the Way of God against the forces of evil. This jihad is the safeguarding of one’s life, faith, livelihood, honor, and the integrity of the Muslim community. The Prophet Muhammad reportedly said that “the preferred jihad is a truth spoken in the presence of a tyrant.” (*Living Religions*, 423-4)

How is the Greater Jihad related to the Five Pillars of Islam? Does the Lesser Jihad condone the actions of Islamic terrorists, such as the killing of unarmed civilians and the willful destruction of property? Justify your answer in terms of Islamic doctrine and the precedent established by Muhammad himself.