

**ABRAHAM'S PORTRAIT IN THE HEBREW BIBLE, NEW TESTAMENT, AND THE
ISLAMIC SACRED TRADITIONS**

**(WTS-WR 301-0-2016SU1)
(2 credits)**

Summer Term, 2015-2016
Monday (6/20/'06) – Friday (6/24/'06)
9:00AM – 4:00PM

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COURSE INTRODUCTION:

The legacy of the biblical Abraham (and of Sarah) is foundational to three of the world's major religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Each of these so-called "Abrahamic religions" claims to hold the right understanding of Abraham, and there is little incentive in each religious tradition to inquire about the others' claims on Abraham. This course provides an overview of Abraham's reception in the Hebrew Bible, New Testament, and the Qur'an. Short excursions into later sources of Judaism and Islam will be made, but only to illustrate the rich texture of the biblical portrait. The purpose of this examination is two-fold:

On the one hand, we wish to underscore how the image/s of the biblical Abraham in each religious tradition is/are a product of changing religious, social, and political contexts that occurred initially in ancient Israel/Judah and then reemerged throughout Asia Minor and the Arabic Peninsula.

On the other hand, having gained this understanding, we will seek to identify ways in which the tradition/s of Abraham can serve as a bridge that brings Jews, Christians, and Muslims into a respectful dialogue and sustained collaboration to address societal and global challenges. To truly be "Abraham's sons and daughters" means having the capacity to demonstrate a sense of inter-religious and intra-faith unity.

Classes are based on lectures combined with structured reflection and discussion. Guest lecturers (a Rabbi and an Imam) may be invited to contribute a discussion.

COURSE PREREQUISITES AND REQUIREMENTS:

Prerequisites: **BI-101** (1st semester of OT) **and/or BI-172** (2nd semester of NT). The course should be of primary interest to students wishing to pursue ecumenical studies, religious studies (world religions), and those working in church/temple/mosque settings as well as in Think-Tanks, NGO's , etc. Students of other disciplines or interests may find this course offering beneficial.

Requirements: A fresh reading of Genesis 12-24 prior to starting the course. Classes include interactive discussions of required textbook readings and biblical text study. Students will therefore have on them an English Bible (RSV, NRSV, NIV) and be prepared to use it. Readings from the Qur'an will be provided. If you possess a copy of the Qur'an, bring it with you to class when we discuss Qur'anic texts. Attend regularly; missing more than 4 classes without permission will result in a reduction of your grade or a loss of credit.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

The course is assessed by a **research essay of 2,500 words** on a topic agreed upon with the professor. Research essay is 80% of your final grade. Class participation is awarded 20% toward your final mark. **Essays are to be emailed to professor directly on a date to be determined.**

- *Research essay:* professor will provide a list of topics for research at the beginning of the course; choose a topic from the list; explore it in greater depth, using additional bibliography, but do not exceed 2,500 words; a research essay must provide clear arguments (scriptural and scholarly) in support of your answer to the selected research question; refrain from citing long scriptural citations, unless necessary to demonstrate your point.

Office hours: by appointment (email to schedule: ocreanga@wesleyseminary.edu)

Course textbooks: Jon D. Levenson, *Inheriting Abraham: The Legacy of the Patriarch in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012); Norman Solomon, Richard Harries, and Tim Winter, eds., *Abraham's Children: Jews, Christians and Muslims in Conversation* (London: T&T Clark, 2006).