

Hartford International University for Religion and Peace



DI-636 Images of Jesus in Christian and Muslim Sacred Writings

Preliminary Syllabus

Synchronous Online

Thursdays 5:00 – 6:50 pm (Eastern)

Spring 2026

Instructor: Professor Lucinda Mosher, Th.D.

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Office Hours:

Professor Mosher's office is in Penney Farms, Florida. She may be "visited" there via Zoom or phone and is available at some point almost every day. Please use email or text-messaging to request a conversation. Typically, such requests are granted within 24 hours.

Course Description:

Employing the notion of "images" both literally and metaphorically, this synchronous online seminar considers—from Christian and Muslim perspectives—the birth, mission, death, and eschatological role of Jesus; the closely related matter of the life and status of Jesus's mother Mary; the role of Jesus and Mary in personal and communal piety; and other concerns commonly considered in the arena of "Jesus Studies". Methodologically, it draws upon the principles and

methods of interreligious studies, dialogue, close reading, and comparative theology in the critical investigation of canonical scriptures (the Bible and the Qur'ān) in conversation with other primary and secondary sources. Substantial reading and writing will be expected in preparation for weekly discussions via Zoom. Auditors are welcome.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students who participate fully will be able to:

1. Articulate the major themes, concerns, and methodologies commonly encountered in the arena of “Jesus Studies”.
2. Make respectful and accurate comparisons between Christian and Muslim perspectives on a number of “Jesus Studies” topics.
3. Identify and differentiate between textual sources for various Christian and Muslim “images” of Jesus.
4. Identify and employ analytical/critical methods for studying sacred writings and other texts.

With regard to *MAIRS Program Outcomes*, students who complete this course will be able to:

- Provide evidence of engagement in critical investigation of relations between people who orient around religion differently that has fostered deep understanding of a worldview different from their own.
- Express their ideas and perspectives clearly in oral and written communication.
- Conduct master’s-level research in the field of Interreligious Studies.

Deeper engagement of the material is expected of doctoral students.

Course format and structure:

As is the standard for a semester-long, three-credit course, DI-636 requires participation in a weekly two-hour Zoom meeting, complemented by a third hour of asynchronous online (or some other sort of experiential) learning each week. As an enrollee in this course, you are to be in a secure location that has adequate microphone, camera, and sound capabilities each Thursday at 5:00 PM (Eastern). You can expect to spend approximately six hours in preparation (through reading and writing) for each Zoom session. You will use Canvas to access the syllabus, reading materials, instructions, assignment descriptions and portals, grades, and discussions. The Canvas website provides the most accurate and up-to-date instructions for all aspects of the course. If you have difficulty accessing or navigating the site, call the Canvas Support Hotline: (877) 249-4494. If you have questions about course content, contact your professor.

Assessment:

Lecture-watching: Watching and commenting on prerecorded lectures. 15%.

Discussion Forum and short essays: Responses to prompts concluding each module and commenting as directed on classmates’ submissions. 40%

Zoom Participation: Attendance, contribution to oral discussion. 30%

Summary Essay: A major composition in proper academic form on some aspect of *images of Jesus—actual and virtual*. This essay should be an exercise in comparative theology,

demonstrating depth of understanding of both Christian and Muslim sacred texts and scholarly sources, and the range of points of view within each religion-community. In length, this essay should be 3500 – 6000 words; longer if a doctoral student. 15%

Reading Material

You will need a Bible and a Qur'an, preferably:

Nasr, et. al. *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*. New York; HarperCollins, 2015. ISBN 978-0-06-112586

Coogan, Michael, et al., editors. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible, New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha, Fourth Edition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. ISBN: 0195289609.

You can expect to read most of the following three books (and perhaps one other):

Khalidi, Tarif. *The Muslim Jesus: Sayings and Stories in Islamic Literature*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001. ISBN: 74011155

Khorchide, Mouhanad and Klaus von Stosch. *The Other Prophet: Jesus in the Qur'an*, tr. Simon Pare. London: Gingko, 2019. ISBN: 9781909942363.

Le Donne, Anthony. *Historical Jesus: What Can We Know and How Can We know It?* Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2011. ISBN: 97808028, 65267.

Portions of the following books may also be assigned:

Akyol, Mustafa. *The Islamic Jesus: How the King of the Jews Became a Prophet of the Muslims* New York: St Martin's Press, 2017. ISBN: 978-1-250-08869-7

Barker, Gregory, ed. *Jesus in the World's Faiths: Leading Thinkers from Five Religions Reflect on His Meaning*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2005. ISBN: 1570755736

Evans, Stephen C. *The Historical Christ and the Jesus of Faith: The Incarnational Narrative as History*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996

Gaventa, Beverly Roberts & Richard B. Hays, editors. *Seeking the Identity of Jesus: A Pilgrimage*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2008. ISBN: 0802824714.

George-Tvrtković, Rita. *Christians, Muslims, and Mary: A History*. Paulist Press, 2018. ISBN: 9780809153282

Lawson, Todd. *The Crucifixion and the Qur'an: A Study in the History of Muslim Thought*. Oxford: Oneworld, 2009. ISBN: 9781851686353

Leirvik, Oddbjørn. *Images of Jesus Christ in Islam*, 2nd Edition. New York: Continuum, 2010. ISBN: 1441181601

Saritoprak, Zeki. *Islam's Jesus*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2014. ISBN: 9780813049403.

Taylor, Joan E. *What Did Jesus Look Like?* T&T Clark, 2018.

Zahniser, A. H. Mathias. *The Mission & Death of Jesus in Islam and Christianity*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2008.

Various other items may be provided by the instructor via the course's Canvas website.

Not required, but highly recommended for students with little prior knowledge of Islam:

Hussain, Amir. *Oil and Water: Two Faiths: One God*. Kelowna, British Columbia: CopperHouse, 2006. ISBN: 1896836828.

Murata, Sachiko and William Chittick. *The Vision of Islam*. St Paul, Minnesota: Paragon House, 1998. ISBN: 1557785163.

Highly recommended for students with little prior knowledge of Christianity:

Hart, David Bentley. *The Story of Christianity: An Illustrated History of 2000 years of the Christian Faith*. London: Quercus, 2011. ISBN: 1623654165

McGrath, Alister. *Christianity: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2006. ISBN: 1405108997

Highly recommended for everyone:

John Renard, *Islam and Christianity: Theological Themes in Comparative Perspective* (University of California Press, 2011) ISBN 0520266781

Course Plan:

The course is delivered in twelve modules. Each contains items such as audio or AV files, reading assignments, and a discussion forum. The outline of module titles and themes will be provided in the final syllabus. Woven into that outline will be topics such as:

- “Jesus Studies” as an academic discipline: its themes, concerns, methods, practitioners
- The very notion of “images” of Jesus; Jesus’ appearance: what can we know?
- Portrayals, in Christian and Muslim sacred texts and traditions, of Jesus’ mother Mary, his birth, his childhood
- Portrayals of the adult Jesus in Christian and Muslim sacred texts and traditions
- Christian and Muslim perspectives on the conclusion of Jesus’ earthly life and his eschatological role
- Images of Jesus and Mary in personal and communal piety and asceticism
- Jesus and Mary as gulf/bridge between Christians and Muslims; from polemic to appreciative conversation

The details of each module are provided on the course’s Canvas website.

Canvas Concerns

The Canvas website is your primary roadmap for this course. If you have difficulty navigating or operating any aspect of the site, do take advantage of the “Help” button. The “live chat” feature works very well and you can expect prompt and clear responses to your questions. You may also phone the Canvas Support Hotline.

If you have questions about course content (or you tried Canvas Help but are still mystified), please do email or text-message your professor right away. If the situation is better addressed voice-to-voice, request a specific time for a phone or Zoom conversation. (Making an

appointment ensures that your professor is seated at her desk, ready to talk with you.)

If you fall behind, move on to the next module so that you can participate in written and oral conversations with your classmates; but, at the same time, check with your professor about strategies for catching up.

Your professor reserves the right to adjust the schedule, topics, and assignments in order to accommodate the needs and interests of the students enrolled in this course.