

ESOM WORLDVIEWS

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Why are worldviews important?

Without appreciating an unbeliever's worldview, it can be difficult to connect and convince him or her of the truth of the gospel.

A worldview is “a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true, or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic construction of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being. We should all think in terms of worldviews, that is, with a consciousness not only of our own way of thought but also that of other people, so that we can first understand and then genuinely communicate with others in our pluralistic society” (James W. Sire).

There are substantial gaps between theism and atheism, eastern religions and western religions, modernists and postmodernists, the older generation and the younger generation. Moreover, according to the Barna Group, one of the top reasons young people are rejecting the faith is the perceived exclusivism of Christianity. Generating conviction about narrow road, as well as how Christ both includes and excludes, is what this course is all about.

Course description:

Introduction to worldview apologetics. The most influential and historically significant philosophies and religions (e.g. Islam, 1.8 billion adherents; Hinduism, 1.3 billion; Buddhism, 550 million) will be dissected, with special emphasis on secular outlooks (atheism, agnosticism, postmodernism). A study of Israel and the pluralism of polytheistic Palestine will anchor the study in a scriptural context. Learn the importance of worldview apologetics in “pre-evangelism,” and begin to implement new strategies for connecting with outsiders.

Course objective:

Exposure to worldview apologetics and major worldviews, including the tenets and scriptures of the major religions, in order to strengthen faith and facilitate evangelism of the 70% of the world unfamiliar with the teachings of Christ.

Materials:

Students will read both *Jesus & Islam* and *Informed: Untangling Destructive Interpretations of Scripture*. In addition, several videos will be viewed, audio talks listened to, and articles studied.

Field trip:

Personal interaction with a leader in a major world religion *or* participation in one of their meetings.

Workload:

Approximately 35-40 hours. (Assumes reading speed of 20 pages per hour.) The major part of the course averages out to 2.5 hours per week, including the five live sessions.

Papers:

There are no papers for this course.

Live sessions:

Participation in all 5 sessions, with camera on, is required. With permission students can miss *one* session, though they will need to make up the work through an additional assignment. Missing more than one session will result in a failing grade. The link (the same for all 5 sessions) is

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89535221983?pwd=fOQVJUZXZRLWHaadQBF9b1E7TnaaDE.1>

Final exam:

The exam is cumulative, covering all parts of the course. Participation in the LIVE sessions and completion of the reading also count in the final grade.

RECOMMENDED BIBLIOGRAPHY (required reading in **bold**)

- Chatraw Joshua D., *Telling a Better Story: How to Talk About God in a Skeptical Age* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2020).
- Confucius. *The Analects of Confucius* (any version).
- Copan, Paul. *True for You but Not for Me: Deflating the Slogans that Leave Christians Speechless* (Bloomington, MN: Bethany House, 2009). Copan has written numerous apologetic works.
- Farhadian, Charles, *Introducing World Religions: A Christian Engagement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2015).
- Geisler, Norman and Abdul Saleeb, *Answering Islam* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993).
- *Hadith of Bukhari* (selections)
- **Jacoby, Douglas. *Jesus & Islam* (IPI, 2009)**
- **Jacoby, Douglas & Joseph Harris. *Informed: Untangling Destructive Interpretations of Scripture* (IPI, 2019)**
- Lion/Eerdmans' *Handbook to the World's Religions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982)
- McCallum, Dennis. *The Death of Truth: Responding to multiculturalism, the rejection of reason, and the new postmodern diversity* (Bloomington, MN: Bethany House, 1996).
- *The Qur'an* (selections). Suggested: Haleem, M. A. S. Abdel. *The Qur'an: A New Translation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. There are many versions of the Qur'an, digital and analog.
- Qureshi, Nabeel. *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus: A Devout Muslim Encounters Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016); *No God but One: Allah or Jesus?: A Former Muslim Investigates the Evidence for Islam and Christianity* (Zondervan, 2016); *Answering Jihad: A Better Way Forward* (Zondervan, 2016).
- Sire, James. *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997).
- Zacharias, Ravi. *Jesus Among Other Gods: The Absolute Claims of the Christian Message* (Nashville TN: Thomas Nelson, 2000); *The Lotus and the Cross: Jesus Talks with Buddha* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Press, 2001).
- Islam (further): Masood, Steven, *Into the Light*; Al Ghazoli, Mohammed, *Christ, Muhammad and I*; Taylor, Aaron D., *Alone With a Jihadist: A Biblical Response to Holy War*; Yousef, Mosan Hassan, *Son of Hamas*; Geisler, Norman and Abdul Saleeb, *Answering Islam: The Crescent in Light of the Cross*.

See also the [Excellent Reads document](#) — scroll down to the World Religions / Worldview section.

25 HELPFUL SCRIPTURES

Here are some handy passages in both testaments on the topic of human religions. While you don't need to memorize these passages for this course, I would encourage you to become familiar with them, as they may prove useful in your outreach, counseling, and exploration of the various religions in biblical times.

OT	2 Ki 9-10	Hab 1:11	Eph 2:8
Exod 20:4	2 Ki 17		1 Tim 2:4
Josh 24:14-15	2 Ki 23:10	NT	Heb 9:27
Judg 16:23-30	2 Chron 32:19	John 14:6	1 John 5:21
1 Sam 5:2-7	Ecc 3:11	John 18:38	Rev 7:9
1 Ki 11:1-8	Jer 2:28	Acts 4:12	
1 Ki 18:27	Lam 2:14	Acts 17	
2 Ki 5:18-19		Rom 2:12-16	

FIELD TRIP

1. Visit a Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, or Baha'i Temple / participate in a service.

Interview a religious leader, or share in a tour, class, or discussion directed by him / her.

OR

2. Visit a Mosque or Islamic Centre.

Interview an imam or Muslim teacher, or participate in a tour, class, or discussion led by him.

OVERVIEW OF COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Unit I: CLEAR THINKING: TOLERANCE & SENSITIVITY — 15 November - 6 December 2026

- Carefully read the syllabus and requirements.
- Order the required books, *Informed* and *Jesus & Islam*—available at IPI, Amazon, Apple, Android, Kindle
- Tolerance, Judging, & Exclusivism (audio talk)
- The Wolf Will Lie Down with the Lamb (speech by a former Muslim)

Unit II: MONOTHEISM — 7 December 2026 - 4 January 2027

- **LIVE SESSION (7 Dec):** Judaism: Radical Counter-Culture, Islam: Introduction, Christianity: Trinity
- Islam A: Basics and Islam B: Jihad (audio).
- Read *Jesus & Islam*: Introduction - chapter 3
- Qur'an (surahs 1, 4, 19, 112 + others of your choice, 60 minutes total)

Unit III: RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE — 25 January – 14 February 2027

- What Were the Crusades, and Why Does it Matter? (audio talk)
- Violence, The Bible & the Qur'an (debate—optional)
- Listen to Islam C, Islam D, Islam E
- Hadith (spend an hour in any translation of the *Hadith of Bukhari*)
- Interview with a Jihadist (podcast by Aaron Taylor)
- Finish reading *J&I*
- **LIVE SESSION (25 Jan):** The God of the Old Testament

Unit IV: EAST MEETS WEST — 15 - 28 February 2027

- **LIVE SESSION (15 Feb):** Hinduism, Buddhism, and other Eastern Religions
- Eastern Scriptures: spend at least 1 hour reading any parts you choose from
The Analects of Confucius *The Tao Te Ching of Lao Tse*
The Bhagavad Gita *The Sayings of the Buddha*
- New Age-related pieces: at least two of the following:
Reincarnation The Secret Avatar
The Life of Pi A New Earth [article]
- FIELD TRIP — reminder: complete by 11 Apr

Unit V: CHRISTIANITY DEFORMED — 1 March – 30 April

- *Informed* – the whole book
- Listen to one or more: Why I Am Not a Fundamentalist
Why I Am Not a Protestant
Why I Am Not an Evangelical (or am I?)
- Recommended: The Book of Mormon Who Are the Jehovah's Witnesses?
- **LIVE SESSION (15 MAR)** Various denominations Postmodernism
- FIELD TRIP — complete by 11 Apr
- **LIVE SESSION (12 APR):** Report back on field trip
Atheism, Agnosticism, Pre-evangelism, Tools, Q&A
- Examination: take by 30 Apr