

STUDY GUIDE FOR ESSAY:

**“Is The God Of The Bible The Same Deity As The
‘Allah’ Of The Qur’an?”**

PHIL 200: “COMPARATIVE RELIGION”

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(from the syllabus)

Due Dates:

Section 23055 (2:00 pm Tues./Thur.): October 17, 2019

Section 23054 (6:00 pm Monday): October 21, 2019

Is the God of the Bible the same deity (divinity) as the “Allah” of the Qur’an?

Here are some possible ways of answering the question:

1. **Yes.** There is one “true” God, and that God is both revealed in the Bible and in the Qur’an.
 - a. You can try to prove this *philosophically*. There is only *one God*, and religions that claim to believe in one God must believe in the *same* God.
 - b. You can try to prove this *theologically*: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have the same view of “ultimate reality,” of understanding “how the world works,” of what “God is like.”
2. **Yes.** We cannot know if any god exists (*or*, there is no god), but the 3 religions have the same understanding of what their god is. (This is a variant of 1.b.; however, you will be questioning/doubting whether the god “really” exists.)
3. **No.** The God of the Bible is the true “one God,” and the “Allah” of the Qur’an is a parody or “counterfeit” god. You can try to prove the negative of 1.a or 1.b.
4. **No.** Only Jews have the true God; the god of the Christians and Muslims is a “fake” or “forgery”.
5. **No.** The divinities of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are imaginary beings anyway, and each religion “invents” a version of god that supports their understanding of reality and their authority over their believers.
6. **It is impossible to know.** The divinities of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are imaginary beings anyway, and it is impossible to know if one god is the same as another god.
7. Remember the question posed at the end of our discussion on the Signature Assignment:
How does one know that two spiritual beings are identical? How can one determine that God A is the same being as God B?
8. The essay should be **5-6 pages long**, ≈ 1750-2000 words.

There is a “LibGuide” with an extensive listing of library resources at:
<http://libguides.hacc.edu/LAN-PHIL200-Layman>

Qur'an/Koran: Reserves

Translations of the Qur'an (Koran)

There are several good translations listed on the LibGuide. The LibGuide (under "Additional Resources") recommends <http://www.sacred-texts.com/isl/index.htm>, I especially recommend a scholarly translation by E. H. Palmer at <http://www.sacred-texts.com/isl/sbe06/index.htm> (that is Part I; Part II is linked at the top of the page).

Another excellent online version can be found at <http://legacy.quran.com>. Type in the reference (e.g., 96:1-5, the first verses below) in the search bar at the top. One can select from six translations on the left hand side. For clarity's sake, *deselect* Arabic images.

Introductions and Reading Guides

1. *The Koran, a very short introduction*. Cook, Michael, 1940-. Chapters 1 & 2: (pp. 3-20).
2. *Common ground: Islam, Christianity, and religious pluralism*. Heck, Paul L. Ch. 1: "Does the Qur'an Belong in the Bible?"
3. *Opening the Qur'an: introducing Islam's holy book*. Wagner, Walter H., 1935-. Chapters 2 & 3, "Basic Narratives for Judaism and Christianity," and "Islam's Basic Narrative and Core Positions" give a detailed compare and contrast of the "narratives" (the basic "story-line") of the three religions.

Sources on the Internet

(These are also linked on the "Additional Resources" tab of the LibGuide:

<http://libguides.hacc.edu/c.php?g=242561&p=2978794>)

4. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regensburg_lecture. The wikipedia summary of an important speech by Pope Benedict XVI, contrasting Christianity and Islam. The important paragraphs are found at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regensburg_lecture#Key_paragraphs. The full text can be found here: http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg.html.
5. Muslim leaders responded with "A Common Word Between Us and You." You can read key ideas here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Common_Word_Between_Us_and_You#Main_quotations_from_the_Letter. The full text can be found at <http://www.acommonword.com/?lang=en&page=faq>.
6. A key argument between Muslims and Christian critics is whether Allah is a God of love. A good statement on this question (arguing the negative position), and the general question of whether the God of the Qur'an is the God of the Bible is <http://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2013/06/no-the-god-of-the-quran-is-not-the-god-of-the-bible>.
7. Here is one of the instructor's own writings comparing the role of Christ and the Qur'an: <http://www.firstthings.com/blogs/firstthoughts/2010/08/is-the-quran-analogous-to-christ>.

8. About five years ago, an instructor at a Christian college wore a “hijab” in “solidarity” with Muslims. This initiated an internet debate over whether the Christian god was the same god as Allah. This is a *philosophical* question: **is there only one “one-God”?** Put another way: can there be two different divinities, each claiming to *the* “one God”? Here are some important postings from that debate: (If you cannot click on the link, then copy the entire link and paste into the url box of your browser.)
- a. **Pro** (God *is* the same god as Allah):
 - <https://www.thecatholicthing.org/2015/12/17/do-muslims-and-christians-worship-the-same-god/>
 - <https://www.thecatholicthing.org/2016/01/07/why-muslims-and-christians-worship-the-same-god/>
 - b. **Con** (God is *not* the same god as Allah):
 - <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/leithart/2015/12/muslims-and-christians/?> ;
 - <http://thefederalist.com/2015/12/21/wheaton-is-right-the-christian-and-muslim-gods-are-different/>
 - <http://www.andrewwalker.com/2015/12/18/do-muslims-and-christians-worship-the-same-god-a-response-to-francis-beckwith/> ;
 - c. The basic theory that there is only one one-God is called “**classical theism**”. One contemporary defender of this theory is Edward Feser. Here he gives a “round-up” of different postings he has done on the issue:
 - <https://edwardfeser.blogspot.com/2012/07/classical-theism-roundup.html> .
 Here is the primary post on the issue:
 - <http://edwardfeser.blogspot.com/2010/09/classical-theism.html>.