

The Lamp

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[Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation: A Systematic Survey](#)

- Lead Faculty: Necati Alkan
- Faculty: Susan Maneck
- Faculty: Helen T. Wilson

Duration of course: Four months (June 1 - Sept. 30, 2008)

The course provides a brief but thorough and systematic introduction to a selection of Bahá'u'lláh's most important works. While Bahá'u'lláh revealed approximately 15,000 tablets (texts) over a forty-year period (1853–92), most are short, personal epistles. This course will explore twenty of Baha'u'llah's most important works, considering their themes, the topics that Bahá'u'lláh progressively revealed during His ministry, and related tablets. The course is designed for students wishing basic information on the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, new Bahá'ís wishing more context on Bahá'u'lláh's works, and veteran Bahá'ís seeking deeper understanding of the ocean of Bahá'u'lláh's revelation. The course does not ask students to read the works being studied in their entirety (the Wilmette Institute offers a number of in-depth courses on specific texts by Bahá'u'lláh). Rather, this course seeks to survey the most important works in Bahá'u'lláh's revelation.

To Register, click [here](#).

[Exploring the Tanakh/Christian Old Testament](#)

- Lead Faculty: Peter Terry
- Faculty: Hossein Achtchi
- Faculty: Ted Brownstein

Duration of course: Three months (June 15-Sept. 15, 2008)

The Tanakh (or, as Christians call it, the Old Testament) is a collection of writings sacred to Jews and Christians. It is composed of historical accounts, prophetic utterances, sacred stories, poetry, hymns, and a variety of other material. The books of the Tanakh were composed over a two thousand year period by innumerable authors and assembled into a single collection after the year 70 C.E. In the second century the emerging Christian community accepted the Tanakh as scripture. The course will study the Tanakh's major books in the light of progressive revelation and in the historical contexts that they depict.

The Tanakh has brought hope to billions and nurtured spiritual journeys for millennia. It provides remarkable comparisons to (and contrasts with) Bahá'í scripture and contains many passages the meanings of which have been unsealed by the Bahá'í revelation. Studied in the light of the Bahá'í writings, the Tanakh confirms one's faith and provides numerous opportunities for sharing the Bahá'í revelation with others.

To Register, [click here](#).

Question: Why is the Wilmette Institute calling the Christian Old Testament the Tanakh?

Answer: The course will refer to the work by both terms. For Jews, it is not the Old Testament; it is their Bible, their entire holy book, which they often called the Tanakh. The course will look at the work as scripture from the point of view of both Judaism and Christianity. All three faculty have studied biblical Hebrew.

[Arise for the Triumph of the Cause](#)

- Lead Faculty: Melanie Smith

Duration of course: Three months (July 15-Oct. 15, 2008),

The purpose of the course is to provide an overview of the Bahá'í Faith's systematic efforts to spread the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh around the world and to expand and consolidate its administrative structure based on an outline of goals and principles by `Abdu'l-Bahá, and a series of specific plans by Shoghi Effendi, and the Universal House of Justice. It will explore the unique features that plans will have through 2021 (a focus on core activities and developing the process leading to the rapid growth of the Bahá'í community). The course will cover the following topics:

- The Tablets of the Divine Plan and the history of plans through 1996
- The messages announcing the Four Year Plan (1996–2000)
- The messages launching the Twelve Month and Five Year Plans (2000–01, 2001–06)
- The messages initiating clusters and core activities and elaborating on the institute process (2002–04)
- The messages about the current Five Year Plan (2006–11)
- The new terms and concepts that the Universal House of Justice has been stressing since 1996

To Register, [click here](#).

[What Is Religion?](#)

- Lead Faculty: Robert Stockman
- Faculty: Zaid Lundberg

Duration of course: Three months (Aug. 15 - Nov. 15, 2008)

Central to the crises facing humanity today is the nature and purpose of religion, for religion has been both a fuel that has fanned the flames and a catalyst for healing differences. From Baha'u'llah's revelation to *One Common Faith* commissioned by the Universal House of Justice, the Baha'i Faith has had much to say about the nature, purpose, and history of religion. The course will examine salient aspects of religion (such as mystical experience, ritual, the nature of ultimate reality, revelation, and the promise

of a future savior), and contrast the Bahá'í perspective with those offered by the academic field of religious studies and by Christianity and Islam.

To Register, [click here](#).

**The Impact of the Wilmette Institute:
A Student Comments on “Bahá'u'lláh's Early Mystic Writings”**

Judy Hardacre an American pioneer in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, offered the following about Bahá'u'lláh's Early Mystic Writings:

“I must admit I have been totally daunted by the pounding (in my head) question: What have I learned? So much and so little. I didn't know where to begin, there have been so many flashes of understanding and insight, so many new ways to look at things, so many useful, and unexpectedly marvelous background readings. And, at the same time, I have learned so little. By my standards, learning is doing. The vast spiritual panorama projected to us by Four and Seven Valleys and the Hidden Words helps me to perceive what a little ant I am. . . .

“. . . I was most impressed by a new understanding of the Tablet of the Holy Mariner. I always loved to recite it for its musical quality, but had never tried to meditate on its recycling prophetic vision. Nor did I know so much about the image of holy maidens.

“I was initially flattened by the first tablet—Rashh-i-Amá—and I did a presentation on this poem at my study circle. The most amazing thing to me was to perceive how each word can have many meanings, all of which bring more meaning to the whole. Now I better understand why some Writings may be untranslatable.”

**The Impact of the Wilmette Institute:
How “Islam for Dialogue and Deepening” Changed a Student's Life**

Cheryl Crane of Petersfield, Manitoba, Canada, reflected on how Islam for Deepening and Dialogue has assisted her:

“Two things really interested me during this course. The first was current situations of women in Islam. I realized how much the tribal aspect influenced the treatment of women (i.e. among the Taliban) vs. what was really stated in the Qur'án. Since women are not allowed to interpret the Qur'án they are quite often at the mercy of the Imams and men in general.

“The second is the prophecies which are in the Qur'án about the Bahá'í Faith. I knew more about how the Bahá'í Faith addressed and fulfilled the Christian prophecies than I did about the Islamic prophecies. Very interesting how many of the indicators of the coming Day of Judgment for the Muslims are the same as those for the Christians.

“In my own personal development, I feel I now have a good base understanding of Islam which will allow me to be objective when I do future studying and reading about it. I now

also have a greater grasp of the continuity of religion as it flows from Islam into the Bahá'í Faith. These understandings will help me delve deeper into my understanding of spirituality, humanity's travels to deeper understanding and ultimate approach to God, and humankind's spiritual destiny.

“I feel more confident to teach the Cause in the Five Year Plan because I know more about Islam, the Bahá'í Faith, and my place in the Plan.”

06/01/08 – 09/30/08: **Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation: A Systematic Survey**
06/15/08 – 09/15/08: **Exploring The Tanakh/Christian Old Testament**
07/15/08 - 10/15/08: **Arise for the Triumph of the Cause: The New Five Year Plan**
08/15/08 - 11/15/08: **What Is Religion?**
09/05/08 – 12/05/08: **The Summons of the Lord of Hosts**
09/15/08 – 12/15/08: **Abdu'l-Bahá: His Life and Writings**
10/01/08 – 12/31/08: **Introduction to Archives for Bahá'í Archivists**
10/15/08 – 01/15/09: **Rediscovering the Dawnbreakers: Bahá'í History, 1844-53**
11/01/08 – 01/31/09: **Hinduism for Deepening and Dialogue**
11/15/08 – 02/15/09: **The Life of Bahá'u'lláh**
12/01/08 – 02/28/09: **The Ministry of Shoghi Effendi**
12/15/08 – 03/15/09: **Bahá'í Theology: Concepts of God, Revelation, Manifestation, Humanity, Creation, Afterlife, and Covenant**

All on-line courses include Web-based discussion boards for students and faculty, regular conference calls, systematic lesson plans, and a wide variety of learning projects to help students apply their learning in their local communities. All courses are available at the *introductory* level for those who do not want to take a university-level course, the *intermediate* (undergraduate) level for those wishing to go into more depth, and the *advanced* (graduate) level for those wishing to do extensive research or writing. For more information go to <http://www.wilmetteinstitute.us.bahai.org>.

THE WILMETTE INSTITUTE was established in January 1995 by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'is of the United States. The Institute offers quality on-line courses on the Bahá'í Faith. It is committed to engaging a broad and diverse community of learners in deep study of the Faith and to fostering love for study of the Faith.

For more information about the Bahá'í Faith, the Wilmette Institute, or its courses, contact:

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