

## **July - September 2009 Online Courses**

## [Women in the Baha'i Faith](#)

Lead Faculty: Anne Perry

Faculty: Susan Maneck

**Duration of course: Three months (July. 15 - Oct. 15, 2009)**

This course opens with an examination of Baha'i sacred writings, scholarly texts, and texts by a number of Baha'i authors about women. We will then turn to a historical overview of women's services to the Baha'i Faith. In one unit we will discuss women in the Heroic Age of the Baha'i Faith, 1844–1921 (the female members of the Holy Family, Tahiri, and others). In other units we will consider women in the Baha'i Faith's Formative Age (1921– ), including nineteenth- and twentieth-century martyrs, Hands of the Cause of God, teachers, administrators, and servants of humanity. You will have the option of preparing a project on one Baha'i woman or on a group of Baha'i women.

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## [The Advent of Divine Justice](#)

Lead Faculty: Jane Faily

**Duration of course: Three months (Aug. 15 - Nov. 15, 2009)**

*The Advent of Divine Justice* is a letter Shoghi Effendi sent to the Baha'is in "the United States and Canada" on December 25, 1938, during the second year of the First Seven-Year Plan (1937–44). Written to encourage, motivate, and teach, Shoghi Effendi noted that the Plan (which would conclude at the end of the first century of the Baha'i era) "should be viewed as a mere beginning, as a trial of strength, a stepping-stone to a crusade of still greater magnitude, if the duties and responsibilities with which the Author ['Abdu'l-Baha] of the Divine Plan has invested them are to be honorably and entirely fulfilled." A careful study of *The Advent of Divine Justice* provides not just a look at history but a guide for the future, for Shoghi Effendi was also looking ahead, noting that a "still more superb mission" lay before the Baha'is when he urged them to "cultivate, patiently and prayerfully, those distinctive qualities and characteristics that are so indispensable to their effective participation in the great redemptive work of their Faith" and began to "lay special stress upon . . . the essential requirements for the success of the tasks" that lay ahead of them. Not unlike the challenging times facing the Baha'i community in 1938, the Universal House of Justice has recently called upon the Baha'is to be "[u]ndeflected by the turmoil and distractions of the world around you" and to "direct your energies to the task at hand with expanded vision and renewed consecration." Studying *The Advent of Divine Justice* offers the perfect opportunity to learn about and apply Shoghi Effendi's guidance to the current times. Readings will include *The Advent of Divine Justice* as well as commentaries and articles chosen to assist understanding of and to encourage dialogue about this major letter written by Shoghi Effendi.

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**The Wilmette Institute** was established in January 1995 by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States. The Institute offers quality online courses on the Bahá'í Faith, is committed to engaging a broad and diverse international community of learners in deep study of the Faith and to fostering love for study of the Faith.

All online courses include Web-based discussion boards for students and faculty, systematic study plans, and a wide variety of learning projects to help students apply their learning in their local communities.

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## Upcoming Courses

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**July 15, 2009 - October 15, 2009:**  
Women in the Baha'i Faith

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**August 15, 2009 - November 15, 2009:**  
The Advent of Divine Justice

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**September 1, 2009 - November 30, 2009:**  
Tablets of Baha'u'llah Revealed  
after the Kitab-i-Aqdas

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**September 15, 2009 - December 15, 2009:**  
Century of Light

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**October 1, 2009 - December 31, 2009:**  
Mining the Gems:

## Tablets of Baha'u'llah Revealed after the Kitab-i-Aqdas

Lead Faculty: Necati Alkan

Development of the Individual

**Duration of course: Three months (Sept. 1 - Nov. 30, 2009)**

After revealing the Kitab-i-Aqdas in 1873–74, Baha'u'llah penned a series of highly significant tablets enunciating "certain precepts and principles which lie at the very core of His faith." Many of the tablets complement provisions in the Kitab-i-Aqdas, Baha'u'llah's Book of Laws. Others explore further the nature of the mystical life, describe basic theological teachings, examine important philosophical issues, and expound on the principles necessary for transforming human society. The bulk of these weighty epistles were published in 1978 in *Tablets of Baha'u'llah Revealed after the Kitab-i-Aqdas*. About these tablets from the last two decades of Baha'u'llah's life, Shoghi Effendi has written that they "must rank among the choicest fruits which His mind has yielded, and mark the consummation of His forty-year-long ministry." Using background information gleaned from a variety of publications, we will read and study the tablets and discuss their relationship with other works by Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l-Baha. Our aim will be to find, as Abdu'l-Baha said about many of the Tablets, "a model of how to be and how to live" and to become a "center of attraction wherever people come together."

[MORE >](#)

## Century of Light

Lead Faculty: Farhad Rassekh

Faculty: Robert Sarracino

**Duration of course: Three months (Sept. 1 - Nov. 30, 2009)**

Abdu'l-Baha referred to the twentieth century as the "century of light" while also forecasting terrible trials for humanity and events of great consequence for humanity's future. In 2001 the Universal House of Justice released a historical study of the century, noting that between 1900 and 2000 "our world underwent changes," mostly little understood, "far more profound than any in its preceding history" and, at the same time, the Baha'i Faith emerged from obscurity, "demonstrating on a global scale the unifying power with which its Divine origin has endowed it." In this course we will review, in the context of the Baha'i teachings, "the two processes detailed in *The Century of Light* and will "examine the relationship between them. Our aim will be to tap into a perspective that is "spiritually enriching" and also "of practical help in sharing with others the challenging implications of the Revelation brought by Baha'u'llah."

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## Tuition

\$150 Individual  
\$300 Study Group (3–12 members)  
\$120 Senior (65+)  
\$120 Full-Time University Student  
\$120 International Pioneer

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**October 15, 2009 - January 15, 2010:**

Sustainable Development and the Prosperity of Humankind

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**November 1, 2009 - January 31, 2010:**

Chinese Religions for Deepening and Dialogue

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**December 15, 2009 - March 15, 2010:**

How to Study the Baha'i Writings

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**January 15, 2010 - April 15, 2010:**

The Tabernacle of Unity

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**February 1, 2010 - May 1, 2010:**

Buddhism for Deepening and Dialogue

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**February 15, 2010 - May 15, 2010:**

Charters of the Faith: The Tablet of Carmel, the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Baha, and the Tablets of the Divine Plan

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**March 15, 2010 - June 15, 2010:**

Building the Fortress: Marriage and Family Life

For more information, see  
<http://www.wilmetteinstitute.us.bahai.org/tuition.aspx>

## Student News

### **The Impact of the Wilmette Institute: A New Understanding of Theology**

*Virginia Breen of Little Rock, Arkansas, recounts what she learned in the course **Baha'i Theology: Concepts of God, Manifestation, Revelation, Creation, Humanity, Afterlife, and Covenant:***

I learned a tremendous amount about the individual and spiritual development. I came to realize the importance of the Manifestations of God to our spiritual development. The only way we can come to know God is through the Manifestations of God. . . .

I thoroughly enjoyed connecting to the course website every day of the course. I gained so much insight into the Baha'i Faith and felt a spiritual nourishment from the learning I accomplished.

I became more confirmed in my belief in Baha'u'llah. I gained appreciation for the educational programs that the National Baha'i Center is offering to us. I felt more connected to Baha'is outside of my local area. I learned from the views of other students in the course and was impressed by the level of scholarship demonstrated in the course.

I learned about the Baha'i research library online and how to access it. This has helped tremendously in my own research on Baha'i topics. I learned about more Baha'i writings than I had previously known about. I began to view Baha'i theology in a more comprehensive manner than I had prior to the course. I attribute this to the guidance and direction of the Wilmette Institute. I don't think I could have accomplished this on my own. I learned how wonderful it is to learn with other Baha'is from widely different backgrounds and other parts of the world.

I gave a presentation to two non-Baha'is upon completion of the course. I told them that I was writing a paper based on the course content and the presentation to them was based on the introduction to my paper. I didn't want to overwhelm them with too much material for one sitting. When I finished the presentation, one of the audience members asked if they might hear the remainder of my report when it was finished. The other audience member expressed interest as well. So we have agreed to meet again as they eagerly want to hear more. I handed out a questionnaire to the audience members at the end of the presentation in which I asked what they had learned. I received comments which

included, "To me this was a new perspective on religion." And, "It made me think more deeply about the interaction of mankind and religious experience."

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