

**The Fruits of Monotheism**  
**HILR; Fall 2018**  
**Course Description in the Catalog**

**376 The Fruits of Monotheism**

**Beardsley Ruml**

**Readings:** Readings will be posted on the course website.

The thesis of this study group in intellectual history is that the adoption of monotheism (replacing monolatry, the worship of one god while acknowledging others) by the Jews who returned from the Babylonian Exile (ca. 400s BCE) precipitated a crisis: if the only cosmic force is YHWH, the Jewish god, how can we explain evil? (See the Book of Job.) The solution of apocalypticism adopted by some Jews, which includes the belief in dual cosmic forces of good and evil, provided an entirely new understanding of the cosmos and

the human condition. Although Jewish apocalypticism was a sectarian minority movement, its views became the basis for most of what we call Western Civilization because they were held by John the Baptist, Jesus, and Paul. Join us to explore the origins of the second antagonistic cosmic force (Satan), a consequential afterlife (heaven and hell), and universal resurrection. Readings are from the Hebrew Bible, Apocrypha, New Testament, and Roman Catholic Catechism. Three hours of preparation weekly. Class size limited to 25.

**B Ruml** has led five study groups concerned with the Bible and its likely history.