The information presented here is as of 11/30/2012.

RELIGION (Div. II)

Chair, Professor DENISE K. BUELL

Professors: BUELL, DAWSON, DREYFUS*. Associate Professor: HAMMERSCHLAG, Assistant Professors: HIDALGO, JOSEPHSON, SHUCK.

Lecturer: GUTSCHOW***. Bolin Fellow: NINH.

MAJOR

The major in Religion is designed to perform two related functions: to expose the student to the methods and issues involved in the study of religion as a phenomenon of psychological, sociological, and cultural/historical dimensions; and to confront students with the beliefs, practices, and values of specific religions through a study of particular religious traditions. It is a program that affords each student an opportunity to fashion his/her own sequence of study within a prescribed basic pattern constructed to ensure both cohesiveness and variety. Beginning with the class of 2016, the major in Religion will consist of at least nine semester courses as follows:

Required sequence courses

Religion 200 Theories and Methods in the Study of Religion

One 300–level seminar or tutorial

Religion 401 Senior Seminar

Elective courses

Six electives at the 100, 200 or 300 level (with a maximum of one 100–level class to count towards major)

In addition, each major will select a specialization route in the major in conversation with and with the approval of the department. The specialization will consist of at least four courses. There are two ways to meet this requirement. A major could fulfill the requirement by concentration in one of the College’s co–ordinate programs or by designating four specific courses that can be supported by the resources of the Religion department faculty and the College. In other words, these four courses might be from among the six electives and one 300–level seminar or tutorial or might include additional coursework from other programs and departments (whether cross–listed or not).

The major will culminate in a year–long senior project. The first semester will remain a seminar (REL 401) on a topic in the study of religion set by the faculty member in consultation with incoming seniors. The spring semester will consist of participation in a research colloquium (not a course taken for credit). In this colloquium, each senior major will present their individual research projects, begun in the senior seminar, drawing on their specializations and advised by members of the faculty.

For the beyond the formally–listed courses into a more intensive study of a particular religious tradition, methodological trends, or religious phenomenon (e.g., ritual, symbol–formation, mysticism, theology, etc.), there is the opportunity to undertake independent study or, with the approval of the department, to pursue a thesis project.

The value of the major in Religion derives from its fostering of a critical appreciation of the complex role religion plays in every society, even those that consider themselves non–religious. The major makes one sensitive to the role religion plays in shaping the terms of cultural discourse, of social attitudes and behavior, and of moral reflection. But it also discloses the ways in which religion and its social effects represent the experience of individual persons and communities. In doing these things, the major further provides one with interdisciplinary analytical tools and cross–cultural experience and opens up new avenues for dealing with both the history of a society and culture and the relationships between different societies and cultures. What one learns as a Religion major is therefore remarkably applicable to a wide range of other fields of study or professions.

The department will work with students in the classes of 2014–2015 to adapt these new guidelines for the major. Beginning in spring 2012, students declaring Religion as a major will identify an area of specialization and link it to their senior seminar final paper and be expected to present it in a spring colloquium during their senior year.

Through the class of 2013, the requirements for the major in religion will continue to be:

Required sequence courses

Religion 101 Introduction to Religion

Two seminars, one that explores a central topic of contemporary critical inquiry in the study of religion (courses numbered 270–299) and one that explores a body of theory in the study of religion (courses numbered 300–310)

Religion 401 Issues in the Study of Religion

Elective courses

Five additional courses in Religion are to be selected in such a way that at least one course is taken in both the Western and non–Western traditions. Students will construct their sequence in consultation with departmental advisors and subject to their approval. In order to achieve a deep coverage of a particular religious tradition or set of related problems in the study of religion, students are urged to select three electives that together have some kind of coherence, be it cultural, historical, or topical. Related courses from other departments or programs may be included among the three courses, and the point of coherence can be the subject of research papers in the senior seminar.

Students are advised to elect additional courses in related fields (e.g., psychology, sociology, anthropology, art, history, philosophy) in order to gain a clearer understanding of the social and cultural contexts in which religions appear.

For those who wish to go beyond the formally–listed courses into a more intensive study of a particular religious tradition, methodological trend, or religious phenomenon (e.g., ritual, symbol–formation, mysticism, theology, etc.), there is the opportunity to undertake independent study or, with the approval of the department, to pursue a thesis project.

The value of the major in Religion derives from its fostering of a critical appreciation of the complex role religion plays in every society, even those that consider themselves non–religious. The major makes one sensitive to the role religion plays in shaping the terms of cultural discourse, of social attitudes and behavior, and of moral reflection. But it also discloses the ways in which religion and its social effects represent the experience of individual persons and communities. In doing these things, the major further provides one with interdisciplinary analytical tools and cross–cultural experience and opens up new avenues for dealing with both the history of a society and culture and the relationships between different societies and cultures. What one learns as a Religion major is therefore remarkably applicable to a wide range of other fields of study or professions.

THE DEGREE WITH HONORS IN RELIGION

The degree with honors in Religion requires the above–mentioned nine courses and the preparation of a thesis of 75+ pages with a grade of B+ or better. A thesis may combine revised work done in other courses with new material prepared while enrolled either in Religion 493–W31 or Religion W31–494. Up to two–thirds of the work in the thesis may be such revised work, but at least one–third must represent new work. The thesis must constitute a coherent whole either by its organizing theme or by a focus on a particular religious tradition. Candidates will also be expected to present the results of their thesis orally in a public presentation. Students who wish to be candidates for honors in Religion will submit proposals and at least one paper that may be included in the thesis to the department in the spring of their junior year. Students must normally have at least a 3.5 GPA in Religion to be considered for the honors program.

The chair will serve as advisor to non–majors.

STUDY ABROAD

The Williams College Religion Department encourages potential majors to study abroad in order to enhance their education and gain international perspectives on religious studies. There are many excellent study abroad opportunities offering students a variety of possible experiences: among them cultural immersion, field work, intensive language learning, independent study, participation in another educational system. Many of our majors study in the Williams College Oxford Program, but our majors also regularly pursue a semester or year–long study in other programs.

REL 101 Introduction to Religion (Not offered 2012–2013)

An examination of the structure and dynamics of certain aspects of religious thought, action, and sensibility—employing psychological, sociological, anthropological, and philosophical modes of inquiry—the course offers a general exposure to basic methodological issues in the study of religion, and includes consideration of several cross–cultural types of religious expression.

Format: lecture/discussion. Assessment will be based on brief essays, a more substantial midterm paper and final essay–based exercise.

Enrollment limit: 25 (expected: 15–25).
REL 102(F) Sin, Danger and Darkness: Conceptualizing Evil and Misfortune in the Abrahamic Traditions

How do religious traditions cope with the problem of evil when they conceptualize their God as beneficent, omniscient and omnipotent? This classic question haunts every monotheist. This course will focus on this problem in Judaism and Christianity, with some attention to Islam as well, and will also consider post-religious variations on the theme. We will consider both philosophical accounts beginning in the Hebrew Bible with Job and Ecclesiastes and move forward through rabbinic texts and Saint Augustine; taking stock of the mediavals in all three traditions; moving into early modernity with Leibniz and will treat as well modern transformations of this question in thinkers such as Kant, Hegel, Kafka, Blanchot and Susan Sontag. This course is a part of the 2012–13 Gaudino Initiative on Danger and will be co-taught by Ryan Coyne and Sarah Hammerschlag.

Format: lecture.
Requirements: several short response papers and a take-home exam.
No prerequisites.

Enrollment limit (expected: 40).
Preference given to first-year students.

Hour: 11:00–11:50 MWF

HAMMERSCHLAG & COYNE

REL 103(S) The Way of Power: A History of Occult Knowledge and Practices

Description: Since antiquity, certain individuals and groups have claimed privileged access to hidden sources of knowledge, which they maintained could only be revealed to the initiated or enlightened. What is more, it was also often asserted that this knowledge conveyed various powers—from summoning good and evil spirits, transforming base metals into gold, predicting the future, achieving bodily immortality, directly witnessing the face of God or even becoming a God. How does examining these claims alter our understanding of established religions? This course will trace the historical development of these practices and beliefs known to scholars as “esotericism”—from antiquity to the present. It will cover such topics as magic, alchemy, kabbalah, Gnosticism, hermeticism, Theosophy, tantrism, occultism, vodou, and spiritualism. Emphasizing close the reading of the primary sources, we will explore the boundaries between religion, magic and science. We will discuss esotericism as the site for the European appropriation of the “Orient,” the construction of discipline of religious studies, and even the origins of modern science.

Format: In-class/research.
Requirements: two short writing assignments, a midterm, and a final exam.
No prerequisites.

Enrollment limit (expected: 40).

May not be taken on a pass/fail basis.

Hour: 11:30–12:15 MWF

BUCELLI & JOSEPHSON

REL 200(S) Theories and Methods in the Study of Religion

As recently as the 1960s, the most influential theorists of modernity were predicting that religion would eventually vanish, while theologians lamented what they called the “Death of God.” But one has only to glance at today’s headlines to see that accounts of religion’s demise were premature. Indeed a basic knowledge of religion is indispensable to understanding the current global moment as well as a range of fields from political science to English literature and history. To explore the meaning of religion, this course will introduce the debates around which the discipline of religious studies has been constituted. It will familiarize students with the discipline’s most significant theorists (both foundational and contemporary) and trace their multidisciplinary—philosophical, sociological, anthropological, and psychological—modes of inquiry. At stake are questions such as: How does religion relate to anxiety? To politics? To science? To society? To secularism? To colonialism? To health? To politics? To violence? To sex? To freedom? Has religion changed fundamentally in modernity? And if so, what is its future?

Format: Seminar.
Requirements: class participation, short weekly writing assignments, a 5-page midterm paper, and a 10–15-page final paper.
No prerequisites, although a previous course on religion is recommended.

Enrollment limit: 15 (expected: 15).
Preference given to Religion majors.

May not be taken on a pass/fail basis.

Hour: 2:35–3:50 MR

JOSEPHSON

THE JEWISH TRADITION

REL 201 The Hebrew Bible (Same as COMP 201 and JWST 201) (Not offered 2012–2013)

The Hebrew Bible is perhaps the single most influential work in the history of Western philosophy, literature, and art. But the overwhelming presence of the text in nearly every aspect of modern culture often obscures the sheer brilliance of its narrative technique as well as the complex interplay between law, history, prophecy, and poetry. This course offers a comprehensive introduction to the Hebrew Bible with an eye towards developing a sophisticated understanding of the text in its ancient context. Through the close reading of substantial portions of the Hebrew Scripture in translation and the application of various modern critical approaches to culture and literature, students will explore fundamental questions about the social, ritual, and philosophical history of ancient Israel, as well as the fundamental power of story-telling that has resonated across two millennia.

Format: lecture/discussion.
Evaluation will be based on class participation, short writing assignments, and two to three longer papers.
No prerequisites.

Enrollment limit: 40 (expected: 40).
Preference given to Jewish Studies concentrators, Religion and Comparative Literature majors.

DEKEL

REL 202 Moses: Stranger in a Strange Land (Same as COMP 214 and JWST 202) (Not offered 2012–2013)

As chieftain, priest, prophet, and lawgiver all in one, Moses occupies the central place in the history of Israelite and Jewish leaders. However, he is a somewhat unlikely candidate for such an important role. He is God’s chosen leader among the enslaved Israelites, but he is raised as an Egyptian prince. He is a spokesman for his people, but he is slow of speech. He is the lawgiver and first judge of his nation, yet he is quick-tempered and impatient. The story of the most revered figure in the Jewish tradition, who nevertheless remains asks a considerable series of questions. What is the impact of the story of Moses on subsequent religious literature and culture? How does the story of Moses compare to other traditions, both ancient and modern? How do religious traditions cope with the problem of evil when they conceptualize their God as beneficent, omniscient and omnipotent? This classic question haunts every monotheist. This course will introduce the debates around which the discipline of religious studies has been constituted. It will familiarize students with the discipline’s most significant theorists (both foundational and contemporary) and trace their multidisciplinary—philosophical, sociological, anthropological, and psychological—modes of inquiry. At stake are questions such as: How does religion relate to anxiety? To politics? To science? To society? To secularism? To colonialism? To health? To politics? To violence? To sex? To freedom? Has religion changed fundamentally in modernity? And if so, what is its future?

Format: Seminar.
Requirements: class participation, short weekly writing assignments, a 5-page midterm paper, and a 10–15-page final paper.
No prerequisites, although a previous course on religion is recommended.

Enrollment limit: 15 (expected: 15).
Preference given to Religion majors.

May not be taken on a pass/fail basis.

Hour: 2:35–3:50 MR

JOSEPHSON

REL 203 Ancient Wisdom Literature (Same as CLAS 205, COMP 217 and JWST 205) (Not offered 2012–2013)

The Biblical books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job are often grouped together under the Hebrew category of hokhmah, "wisdom." Although these books are very different in content, they can all be interpreted as meditations on ethical and practical philosophy. In this way, they represent the Hebrew Bible’s canonical embrace of a widespread Near Eastern literary phenomenon. From the instructional literature of Egypt and Mesopotamia to Greek didactic poetry and fables, ancient Mediterranean cultures offer a wide range of texts that engage the issues of personal behavior, leadership, and justice. Starting with the central wisdom books of the Hebrew Bible and moving through relevant material from the Apocrypha, New Testament, and the Egyptian and Babylonian traditions, this course will examine the features of wisdom throughout the ancient world with an eye toward understanding its various cultural, political, and philosophical contexts. We will then consider the Greek wisdom tradition in such texts as Hesiod’s Works and Days, AESOP’s fables, and fragments from the pre-Socratic philosophers. Finally, we will explore the influence of these ancient sources on later expressions of wisdom in medieval European literature, as well as more recent examples such as Benjamin Franklin’s Poor Richard’s Almanack. All readings are in translation.

Format: lecture/discussion.
Requirements: evaluation will be based on class participation, short written assignments, and two longer papers.
No prerequisites.
Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 19).
Preference given to students who have already taken a course in biblical literature.

DEKEL

REL 204(V) Judaism: Innovation and Tradition (Same as JWST 101) (D)

What is the relationship between modern notions of Jewish identity, thought and practice and the Hebrew Bible? How does the modern Reformation movement link itself to the laws of the rabbinic sages? Are there consistent values and ideals that mark Jewish moral thought throughout its history? What elements of the Jewish tradition have enabled its elasticity and historic persistence? By providing an introduction to the traditions of Jewish thought and practice through the ages, this course will take up these questions. Though the course will primarily focus on the reception of the Bible and its implications for understanding the relationship between modern and ancient Jewish identity, we will additionally emphasize the strong ties between methods of Jewish thought and practice and the surrounding cultural environments in which they developed. We will approach the tradition not only with historical concerns, but with literary and philosophical aims as well. We will analyze the interpretive strategies, theological presuppositions, and political aims that accompany the tradition both in its continuities and its ruptures. Finally, we will consider the extent to which we can speak of Judaism under the category of modern thought as well as the other categories that have been proposed for Judaism, Jews and Jewishness, such as nation, people, race and ethnicity, and the motivations behind such designations. Texts will include the Hebrew Bible, Hosea (ed), Back to the Sources; Halbertal, People of the Book; Mendelsohn, Jerusalem; Hertzberg (ed), The Zionist Idea; Levi, Survival in Auschwitz as well as excerpts and articles available in a course packet.

Format: lecture/discussion.
Assignments will include participation in class discussion, three short papers (5–7 pages) and a take-home final exam.
No prerequisites.

Enrollment limit: 30 (expected: 15).
Preference given to Religion majors and Jewish Studies concentrators.

Hour: 2:35–3:50 MR

HAMMERSCHLAG
REL 206(S) The Book of Job and Johan Literature (Same as COMP 206 and JWST 206) (W)

The Book of Job has often been described as the most philosophical book of the Hebrew Bible. The story of one man’s struggle to understand the cause of his suffering and his relationship to God represents the finest flowering of the Near Eastern wisdom literature tradition. Through its exploration of fundamental issues concerning human suffering, fate and destiny, and the nature of philosophical self-examination, Job has served as a touchstone for the entire history of existential literature. At the same time, the sheer poetic force of the story has inspired some of the greatest artistic and literary meditations in the Western tradition. This course will engage in a close reading of the Book of Job in its full cultural, religious, and historical context with special attention to its intellectual, philosophical, and psychological dimensions. We will then proceed to investigate key modern works in several genres that involve Johan motifs, themes, and text both explicitly and implicitly. These texts will include Franz Kafka’s The Trial, Archibald MacLeish’s J.B., Robert Frost’s “A Unity of Faith,” Carl Jung’s, and William Blake’s Illustrations to the Book of Job. All readings are in translation. Format: discussion. Evaluation will be based on class participation, weeky short written assignments, and two longer papers.

No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 19).

Hour: 9:55–11:10 TR

REL 207 From Adam to Noah: Literary Imagination and the Primeval History inGenesis (Same as CLAS 207, COMP 250 and JWST 207) (Not offered 2012–2013) (W)

How long did Adam and Eve live in the Garden of Eden? What was the mark of Cain? Why did Enoch not die? Who was Noah’s wife? How did Giants survive the Flood? These are only a few of the fascinating questions that ancient readers and interpreters of the Book of Genesis asked and attempted to answer. The first ten chapters of Genesis present a tantalizingly brief narrative account of the earliest history of humankind. The text moves swiftly from the Creation to the Flood and its immediate aftermath, but this masterful economy still contains details unexplained. This course will explore the rich and varied literary traditions associated with the primeval history in the Genesis. Through a close reading of ancient non-canonical sources such as the Book of Enoch, Jubilees, and the Life of Adam and Eve, as well as Jewish traditions represented in Josephus, Philo, and Rabbinic literature and other canonical presented in early Christian and Gnostic texts, we will investigate the ways in which the elliptical style of Genesis generated a massive body of ancient folklore, creative exegesis, and explicit literary re-imagining of the early history of humankind. We will then turn to several continuations of these variants traditions in medieval and early modern literature, with particular attention to the extensive material on the figures of Cain and Noah. All readings are in translation. Format: discussion. Evaluation will be based on class participation and several writing assignments.

No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: 19 (expected:19). Preference will be given to students who have already taken a course in Biblical literature.

DEKEL

REL 208(S) Ancient Greek Religion (Same as CLAS 208)

(See under CLAS 208 for full description.)

THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION

REL 210(S) Reading Jesus, Writing Gospels: Christian Origins in Context (Same as CLAS 210 and COMP 213) (W)

What were the religious and cultural landscapes in which Christianity emerged? How did inhabitants of the ancient Mediterranean world speak about the concept and significance of religion? How have scholars of early Christianity answered these questions? What are the implications of their various readings of early Christian history? In the first half of this course we will address these questions by examining the formation of Christianity from its origins as a Jewish movement until its legalization, using a comparative socio-historical approach. In the second half of the course, we shall examine the earliest literature produced by the Jesus movement and consider it within a comprehensive framework developed in the first half of the course.

Format: lecture/discussions. Requirements: one class presentation; three 3-page papers, one 5– to 7-page paper, and a final paper (15 pages).

No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 10). Preference given to sophomores but is open to all classes.

Hour: 9:55–11:10 TR

REL 212 The Development of Christianity: 30–600 C.E. (Same as HIST 324) (Not offered 2012–2013) (W)

This class will introduce you to the history, writings, practices, and structures of early Christians between 30–600 CE. Who were “Christians” and how did they understand and define themselves in this time period? What historical and cultural factors influenced the ways in which Christians were perceived, could imagine themselves, and lived? While this class addresses the basic flow of events and major figures in early Christian history, it will also require you to develop a critical framework for the study of history in general. In addition, you will gain significant experience in the critical analysis of primary source materials. Special attention will be paid to the incredible diversity of early Christian thought and practice.

Format: lecture/discussion. Requirements: evaluation based on attendance, active participation in class, regular brief writing exercises; two textual analysis papers (3 pages each); one historical analysis paper (5 pages); essay-based take-home final exam.

No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 19). Preference given to sophomores considering a major in Religion or History, then senior and junior majors in these departments.

BUELL

REL 213 Divine Kingship in the Ancient Mediterranean (Same as ANTH 258, CLAS 258, and HIST 394) (Not offered 2012–2013) (W)

(See under CLAS 394 for full description.)

REL 214(S) History of Christian Thought: Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages (W)

This class will familiarize students with the history of Christian theology, its major trends, figures, and debates, roughly from the fifth century C.E. to the mid-thirteenth century C.E. We will focus on the transition from Roman antiquity to the medieval period, paying particular attention to the rise of scholasticism and monastic theology, the role of Biblical interpretation in theology, shifting notions of authority, and the institutional context of theology in the Roman Church. Course readings will focus on primary source materials. Authors include: Augustine, Porphyry-Dionysios, Boethius, Gregory the Great, John Scottus Eriugena, Anselm of Canterbury, Abelard, Hildegard of Bingen, Bernard of Clairvaux, the Victorines, and Bonaventure.

Format: lecture. Requirements: regular class attendance; participation; three short papers (5–7 pages) and a take-home examination (essay format).

No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 19). Preference given to majors and prospective majors in Religion, Philosophy, and/or History.

Hour: 1:10–2:25 TF

REL 215(S) History of Christian Thought: High Middle Ages and Early Modernity (W)

This class will familiarize students with major trends in Western European Christian thought during the late medieval and early modern periods, from the middle of the thirteenth century to the beginning of the sixteenth century. We will focus on: (1) trends in high scholasticism, including the impact of Greek philosophy on theological method; (2) the increasing diversity of theological expression in vernacular and in professional contexts; (3) shifting views on liturgy, human freedom, and divine power; (4) the meaning of history and tradition. Authors include: Albert the Great; Thomas Aquinas; Duns Scotus; Marguerite Foret; Hadewijch; Angela of Foligno; Meister Eckhart, William of Ockham, and Nicholas of Cusa.

Format: lecture. Requirements: regular class attendance and participation; three short papers (5–7 pages) and a take-home examination (essay format).

No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 19). Preference given to majors and prospective majors in Religion, Philosophy, and/or History.

Hour: 1:10–2:25 TF

COYNE

REL 216(S) Greek Art and the Gods (Same as CLAS 248 and ARTH 238) (W)

(See under ARTH 238 for full description.)

REL 218 Gnosticism (W)

What is gnosis and Gnosticism? Who were the Gnostics? Salvation by knowledge, arch-heresy, an eternal source of mystical insights and experiences, secret esoteric teachings available only to a few. All these and more have been claims made about gnosis, Gnostics, and Gnosticism. This course will introduce you to the key ancient texts and ideas associated with Gnostics as well as to the debates over and claims made about Gnosticism in modern times. We shall explore neoplatonic, Jewish, and Christian thought, as well as modern spiritualism and esotericism. We shall also ask about how ancient Gnostics relate to later religious groups such as the Knights Templar and modern Theosophists. Readings include: Nag Hammadi writings in English, Irenaeus, Against All Heresies; David Brakke, The Gnostics; Elaine Pagels, The Gnostic Gospels; Karen King, What is Gnosticism? and The Secret Revelation of John.

Format: lecture/discussion. Requirements: periodic reflection papers, 2 textual analysis papers, 2 historiographical analysis papers, and a final paper that entails a revision and expansion of an earlier paper.

No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 19). Preference given to students with prior coursework in biblical or other ancient literature or history.

BUELL

REL 220 The Reformations in Early Modern Europe (Same as HIST 330) (Not offered 2012–2013)

This course tracks the major developments in Christian thought from the Reformations to the nineteenth century. We will begin by examining the background to the Reformations across Europe and across denominations of Christianity, showing how the Reformations along with their precursors indirectly helped to usher in a world that placed greater emphasis on the value of selfhood and moral authority, encouraged the emergence of the Enlightened and scientific rationality, and helped to lead to the cultural and political re-alignment of nation–states. Format: lecture/discussion. Evaluation will consist of several short papers (1500 words), a final paper (3000–3500 words), and thoughtful interaction.

No prerequisites; open to all. Enrollment limit: 20 (expected: 20).

SHUCK
REL 221(S) Modern Christian Thought

Christianity in the Western world has undergone numerous challenges since the early eighteenth century. Many thinkers have turned inward, developing pietistic theologies compatible with the modern world, while others have searched for an adequate expression of Christianity after the “Death of God.” Another, remarkably resilient strand has actively turned outward, appropriating modern technologies, for example, while replicating scientific discoveries that undermine their belief. This course will examine these issues, along with a careful consideration of the way gender, identity, and community have come to play a powerful role in contemporary expressions of Christian belief.

Format: lecture/discussion. Evaluation will consist of several short response papers, thoughtful interaction, a midterm, and a 10-page final paper.

No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: 25 (expected: 15).

Hour: 2:35–3:50 MR

REL 222 Europe From Reformation to Revolution: 1500–1815 (Same as HIST 226) (Not offered 2012–2013)

(See under HIST 226 for full description.)

SHUCK

REL 223(S) Asian Americans – Religious Roots and Trajectories (Same as AMST 223)

The objective of this course is to broadly examine the meanings and significance of different forms of religious practices and beliefs among Asian Americans. It treats across many layers of diversity -- from religious traditions to ethnicity, place, and time -- and we will draw upon theoretically-based historical, anthropological and sociological perspectives to understand their complexities, convergences, and (dis)continuities. Thus, although the course is focused on the religious life of Asians in the U.S., it also grounds and connects to historical, religious, and cultural phenomena that stretch from the historical to the present, and to diaspora. Books will include: Tony Cames and Fenggang Yang, Asian American Religions; Michael Emerson and Christian Smith, Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America; Anne Fadiman, The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down; Kenneth J. Guest, God in Chinatown; Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, Becoming American? The Forging of Arab and Muslim Ethnicity in Pluralist America; Kiyah Y. Joshi, New Roots in America's Sacred Ground: Religion, Race, and Ethnicity in Indian America

Evaluation/Course assignments: 1 response paper, 1 current events paper, presentation of final essay proposal, and final essay.

Class format: lecture and discussion.

No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: 25 (expected: 15). Preference given to first- and second-year students, then to Religion and American Studies majors

Hour: 11:20–12:35 TR

REL 224 U.S. Latina/o Religions (Same as AMST 224 and LATS 224) (Not offered 2012–2013) (D)

(See under LATS 224 for full description.)

NINH

REL 225 Religions of North America (Same as AMST 225) (Not offered 2012–2013)

Scholars have written much about the history of religion in North America, but the effort has been fraught with many oversight. Recent scholarship has begun to take account of the fact that North America either did not emerge from European sources, or has existed long before the arrival of Europeans. Indeed, many religions have grown out of the American soil during the past several centuries—what would some would call the product of religious “cross-fertilization,” and what others would deem as religious and cultural thievery, i.e. colonialism. This course follows a modified historical trajectory, one that strives to allow the voices of forgotten “others” to speak, bringing questions of colonialism, identity, and the importance of religious community to the forefront.

Format: lecture/discussion. Evaluation will consist of several short response papers, thoughtful interaction, a midterm, and a 10-page final paper.

No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: 25 (expected: 15). Open to all.

REL 226 New Religions in North America (Same as AMST 226) (Not offered 2012–2013)

This course explores contemporary North America religions from a historical, sociological, and philosophical perspective. We will examine the historical and contemporary experiences of America's ever-expanding religious diversity, prominently featuring the voices of those traditionally excluded from older, Protestant-informed accounts of American religion. The focus of the course will be the exploration of the ever-expanding variety of new religions in North America, challenging students to engage the numerous cultural, philosophical, and methodological issues involved with the study of marginal religions. New religions often highlight cultural anxieties, e.g. loss of identity in contemporary secular societies, responses to new technologies, changing gender roles, globalization, etc. The study of new religions becomes, then, a closer, reflexive examination of contemporary society and its underlying tensions. For example, the Raclin Movement claims to have cloned the first human. Wiiça, on the other hand, offers critiques of environmental depredation and traditional gender roles. In sum, we will explore the historical roots of the current boom in new religions, detail contemporary issues, and outline the possible forms new and emerging religions may assume in the coming years. This course will also have a website dedicated to the exploration of new religions, providing links to interesting sites, basic resources, and student essays/projects.

Format: lecture/discussion. Students will be evaluated on the basis of their writing and presentation projects, three 5–to 7-page essays, along with their thoughtful discussion of the key issues raised in the course.

Open to all classes without prerequisite. Enrollment limit: 30 (expected: 15).

SHUCK

REL 227 Utopias and Americas (Same as AMST 227, ENV 227 and LATS 227) (Not offered 2012–2013)

Where does the term “new world” come from? What do we mean by “utopia,” “utopian,” and “utopianism”? What relationships exist between the people who imagine utopias and the lands they inhabit? How do the dynamics of utopia and utopianism impact different peoples as they have existed, participated in, been excluded from, and lived under the governments and cultures of the Western hemisphere and the United States of America in particular? This course considers the relationship between the utopian imaginations and the imaginations of the lands and peoples in the Western hemisphere. We will spend some time studying utopian theory, ancient proto-utopias, and utopias in Latin America, though our main focus will be particular examples of utopianism in the U.S.A. While the U.S.A is the main focus of the course, the staff are encouraged to pursue and bring to class utopian ideas from other parts of the Americas. Students are also strongly encouraged to take questions from class and engage utopian images not listed on this syllabus but pertinent to our classroom learning.

Format: seminar. Evaluation will be based on class participation, short weekly writing assignments, a 5-page midterm paper, and a 10- to 15-page final research paper examining an American utopia.

No prerequisites. Enrollments: 19 (expected: 12).

HIDALGO

REL 228T(F) North American Apocalyptic Thought (Same as AMST 228T) (W)

Apocalyptic thought pervades much of contemporary American culture, whether among Protestant evangelicals, new religions, novelists and filmmakers, or even scientists and environmentalists who warn of ecological catastrophe and the deadly consequences of nuclear proliferation. This course will introduce, using historical, sociological, and philosophical accounts, how North Americans have thought about and continue to think about questions of the End, both in a cultural and in a personal sense.

Format: tutorial. Evaluation will be based upon written work, critiques, and thoughtful participation. Requirements: each student will write and present orally, five 1,000-word essays every other week on the readings for the week and a final 2,000- to 2,500-word essay. Students not presenting will be expected to critique their colleague’s work.

No prerequisites; open to all. Enrollment limit: 10 (expected: 10).

Tutorial meetings to be arranged.

SHUCK

REL 229(F) Reel Jesus: Reading the Christian Bible and Film in the U.S.A. (Same as AMST 229) (W)

In this course we examine some of the myriad ways that Christian biblical narratives have appeared in certain movies. What are the overt and subtle ways that these films seek to interpret and employ biblical texts? Why do they draw upon the texts they do and read them as they read them? What can cinematic interpretations of biblical texts reveal to us about how these texts are used in broader U.S. culture? How does an awareness of this scriptural dimension in a work of “popular culture” affect our interpretation of both the film and the scriptural text’s meanings? How do varying interpretations of biblical texts help us to understand cinematic meaning? By assuming that we can read both biblical texts and cinematic representations as contradictory ways, this class can use film as the occasion for interpreting, analyzing, and debating the meanings, cultural functions, and affective responses generated by biblical narratives in film. Finally, this course asks us to analyze how movies may interpret certain biblical texts in order to crystallize and reflect certain political, economic, ethnic, racial, sexual, and social parameters of U.S. cultures. Attention to the biblical imagination of U.S. cinema and the cinematic imagination of biblical texts will necessitate interdisciplinary study of text and representation and a concern with the implications of ways in which we read texts and films. While this course will read selected biblical and non-canonical texts, including selections from canonical and noncanonical narratives such as Paul and the Book of Revelation, our focus will be on the way that movies (and the people who make them and watch them) seek to make meaning out of and with reference to these biblical texts.

Format: lecture/discussion. Evaluation will be based upon participation (including three 1-page film analyses and three 1-page text analyses), one 3-page analytical essay that will also be revised, a 6-page synthetic midterm essay, and a final 10-page research essay.

No prerequisites. Enrollments: 19 (expected: 12).

Hour: 1:10–2:25 MR
THE ISLAMIC TRADITION

REL 230(F) Reading Reading: An Introduction to the Qur’an and Islam (Same as COMP 260) (W)

One of the two most consequential texts in human history, the Qur’an is more conscious of itself as text and the work of interpretation that is part of the life of a text. Because it is God’s most important sign (and also because it is relatively short) millions have memorized it and the art of Qur’anic recitation is one of the supreme Islamic performing arts. Nevertheless, it is primarily as a text that the Qur’an exists in itself and in the minds of Muslims. The text of the Qur’an will thus be the focus of this course, reading it extensively, intensively and repeatedly throughout the semester. We will attend to the structure and variety of styles and topics in the text and to the Qur’an’s understanding of itself in relation to other forms of literary expression. We will place the form and content in the context of seven centuries c.e. Arab society and attend to the life of the Prophet (PBUH) that provides one crucial framework to the text. Through the lens of taṣfīr, Qur’anic commentary, we will also use the text to give an initial survey of some of the main theological, philosophical, mystical and legal developments in the Islamic tradition. Finally we will consider some of the aspects of the place of the text in the life of Muslims, including the development of calligraphy and recitation.

Format: lecture/discussion. Requirements: three essays (6–8 pages) based on class materials (at least one will have a revision process). Students able to read the Arabic text may substitute work in a collaborative reading group of the Qur’an in Arabic for one of the essays.

No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 10). Open to all.

Hour: 11:00–12:15 MWF

DARROW

REL 231 The Origins of Islam: God, Empire and Apocalypse (Same as ARAB 231 and HIST 209) (Not offered 2012–2013)

Both Muslim and non-Muslim historians usually see the rise of Islam in the seventh century C.E. as a total break with the past. This course will challenge that assumption by placing the rise of Islam in the context of the history of late antiquity (c. 250–700 C.E.). The first portion of the course will examine the impact of Judeo–Christian monotheism in the ancient world, the rise of confessional empires, articulation of new ideas about holiness and its relation to sexuality and the transformations undergone by Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism. We shall examine the conversation and the minds of Muslims. The text of the Qur’an will thus be the focus of this course, reading it extensively, intensively and repeatedly throughout the semester. We will attend to the structure and variety of styles and topics in the text and to the Qur’an’s understanding of itself in relation to other forms of literary expression. We will place the form and content in the context of seven centuries c.e. Arab society and attend to the life of the Prophet (PBUH) that provides one crucial framework to the text. Through the lens of taṣfīr, Qur’anic commentary, we will also use the text to give an initial survey of some of the main theological, philosophical, mystical and legal developments in the Islamic tradition. Finally we will consider some of the aspects of the place of the text in the life of Muslims, including the development of calligraphy and recitation.

Format: lecture/discussion. Requirements: three essays (6–8 pages) based on class materials (at least one will have a revision process). Students able to read the Arabic text may substitute work in a collaborative reading group of the Qur’an in Arabic for one of the essays.

No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 10). Open to all.

Hour: 11:00–12:15 MWF

DARROW

REL 232(S) The Texting of the Divine: Language and Imagination in Islamic Thought (Same as ARAB 232) (W)

This course will be an introduction to Islamic intellectual history with a focus on the themes of God’s speech, the relation of reason and revelation, and the vision of a good and just society. The course will begin with a survey of the legacy of Neoplatonic thought in the early Islamic period and the interreligious polemic of Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, philosophers and Muslims. Out of this arose two separated movements in Islam: theology (kalam) and philosophy. In the first portion of the course we will trace the rise of the Mu’tazila movement and their views on “divine speech” and the Asharite and Maturidi response. We will then turn to the key figures of the classical Islamic tradition, al–Farabi, Ibn Sina (Avicenna), Ibn Rushd (Averroes) and Ibn ‘Arabi. In the final portion we will examine the rise of mystical thought (Sufism) and the complicated interrelations of that rich movement with theology and philosophy in the figures of al–Ghazali, Suhrawardi, Ibn ’Arabi, Musharraf al–Daghestani and Muhammad Iqbal, “the father of Pakistan.”

Format: seminar. Requirements: three 6– to 8-page papers.

No prerequisites; open to all. Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 19).

Hour: 11:20–12:35 TR

DARROW

REL 233 Islamic Mysticism: The Sufis (Not offered 2012–2013) (W)

Studying Sufism, the mystical tradition of Islam, is an excellent introduction to the Muslim world. The Sufis represent a delightful and many–faceted spiritual tradition that both enriches and criticizes orthodox Islam. This course will explore the origins of Sufism in the ascetic and revolutionary piety of the early Islamic community; the systematization of the Sufi path to God; Sufi themes in art and poetry; the development of the Sufi orders and techniques of ecstasy, both at high and popular levels. We will read in the classics of Sufi poetry and thought, including Rumi, Attar, Suhrawardi, and Ghazali; we will also explore the Sufi theology of Ibn Arabi. We will conclude with an examination of contemporary Sufi life in Pakistan, Egypt and Turkey.

Format: lecture/discussion. Requirements: four 5– to 7-page papers based on the readings and revised in editing workshops.

No prerequisites; open to all. Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 19).

DARROW

REL 234 Shi’ism Ascendant? (Same as ARAB 234) (Not offered 2012–2013)

This course will be a survey of Islamic history from the Shi’ite perspective or better perspectives. The purpose is to provide a survey of issues in Islamic social and intellectual history from the Shi’ite margin. On that margin, Shi’ism has always been an alliance of the dispossessed and the intellectuals (assuming the latter are not among the former) and functioned in Islam to provide a vocabulary of revolution, a highly developed philosophy of religion, and a pietistic fervor in contrast to which Sunnism emerged. One consequence, important or not, of recent U.S. actions in the Middle East has been to inflame the Sunni/Shi’ite divides and raise fears of Shi’ite ascendency. But sectarian conflict is, in fact, the exception rather than the rule in Islamic history because Sunni and Shi’a have in many places been separated or lived relatively peacefully together where they intermixed. This is the fourth time in Islamic history when the specter of an ascendant Shi’ism has occupied the Muslim community. This course will compare the three earlier putative episodes of Shi’ite ascendency in the eighth (in Iraq), tenth (in Egypt) and sixteenth centuries C.E. (in Iran) and set these in conversation with contemporary developments. We will be guided by early Shi’ism’s view of the legitimacy of an alternative Islamic state, the ideas of the imamate and martyrdom, the emergence of Isma’il’I and Twelver versions of Shi’ism, the conversion of Safavid Iran to Shi’ism, ecumenical efforts in the mid twentieth century, the Iranian revolution of 1979 and after.


No prerequisites; open to all classes. Enrollment limit: 30 (expected: 15).

DARROW

REL 235 Muhammad and the Rise of Islam (ARAB 206 and HIST 206) (Not offered 2012–2013) (D)

(See under HIST 206 for full description.)

BERNHARDSSON

REL 236(F) The Greater Game? Central Asia and its Neighbors Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow (Same as ASST 236, HIST 216 and INST 101)

The collapse of the Soviet Union, the recognition of untapped mineral wealth, and Islamic resurgence have all led to an increased focus on Central Asia and its neighbors, Russia, China, the Middle East. This course will be an introduction to the Caucasus, the Central Asian Republics, Xinjiang and Mongolia and the interests of their neighbors, including now the United States in these areas. This will be a lecture course that will introduce the salient themes and issues that are necessary for understanding these areas. The course will inevitably be deeply comparative focusing on themes of “the clash of civilizations,” the construction of national identities, notions of ethnicity and the treatment of ethnic minorities, resurgent religious movements, and the relation of state and civil society. This course will also function as an introduction to doing social scientific research on these areas and special attention will be devoted to the preparation of a research paper.

Format: lecture/discussion. Requirements: weekly responses, three short essays (4–6 pages), and one research paper (12–15 pages).

No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: 30 (expected: 15). Preference given to first-year students and sophomores.

Hour: 9:55–11:10 TR

DARROW

REL 239(F) The Modern Middle East (Same as ARAB 207, HIST 207, INST 101 and JWST 217) (D)

(See under HIST 207 for full description.)

BERNHARDSSON

SOUTH ASIAN TRADITIONS

REL 244 Mind and Persons in Indian Thought (Same as ASST 244) (Not offered 2012–2013)

In this course, we will follow the conversation among Indian philosophers concerning the self and the nature of consciousness. We start with some of the Hindu views about the self and the mind and consider their ethical implications. We then consider a range of Buddhist critiques of these views, focusing more particularly on the Madhyamaka philosophy, which radicalizes the critique of the self into a global anti–realist and skeptical stance. We also examine the Yoga school, which offers a process view of reality focusing on the analysis of experience. We conclude by considering some of the later Hindu holistic views of the self as responses to the Buddhist critique. In this way we come to realize that far from being the irrational foil of “the West,” Indian tradition is a rich resource for thinking through some of the central ideas that have challenged philosophers in both traditions.

Format: lecture/discussion. Requirements: full attendance and participation, three short essays (6 pp.).

Prerequisite: prior exposure to Buddhism or philosophy, or permission of the instructor. Enrollment: 18 (selection on the basis of relevant background) (expected: 18).
REL 245 Tibetan Civilization (Same as ASST 247) (Not offered 2012–2013) (D)

Often depicted as Shangrila, a mythical and ideal country, Tibet has had the dubious privilege of being a focus of Western fantasies. One cannot but wonder about the motives and sources of this mythology. Although this course examines these representations, its main focus is an immersion in the cultural and historical aspects of Tibetan civilization, which give students the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the Tibetans through reading and discussing primary sources. The course examines the relationship between Buddhism and the Tibetan culture, paying particular attention to the development of Buddhism in Tibet and its influence on the Tibetan people, both in the pre-modern period and in more recent times, when the Tibetan people have faced the challenge of how to use their institutions and culture to resist oppression.

Format: lecture/discussion. Requirements: full attendance and participation, three 6-page essays.

REUFS

REL 246 India’s Identities: Religion, Caste, and Gender (Same as ANTH 246 and WGS 246) (Not offered 2012–2013) (D)

India is a country based on difference whose multiple and fragmented identities are often framed as unified oppositions: Hindu/Muslim, Rich/Poor, Secular/Religious, Male/Female. This course will deconstruct the media’s popular representations of these and other identities in order to complicate the notion of a diverse Indian nation. It will highlight the range of identities and social practices among India’s booming population that have produced critical axes of differentiation such as gender, ethnicity, and religious sect. It begins by considering how the colonial principle of “divide and rule” provides an object lesson in the ways that difference can be used to sustain both social hierarchy and political rule. It describes how this logic of difference created the tragedy of Partition and its legacy for the operation of gender and religion on the subcontinent. We critically examine the class and religious divisions that led to the birth of three nations—India, Pakistan, and subsequently Bangladesh—and the particular logic of communalism and religious violence in modern India. Throughout, the course attends to the subjective experience of being Hindu, Muslim, or Sikh, untouchable or upper caste, as well as male or female as a way of understanding the way that difference shapes individual agency and lives across India. It seeks to empathize or at least understand the perspective of both victims and perpetrators of communal and gendered forms of violence in India today. This course fulfills the Exploring Diversity Initiative by theorizing the ways in which difference has been used to effect profound social, historical, and individual changes in the Indian subcontinent.

Format: seminar. Requirements: participation in bi-weekly class blog, class discussion, oral presentation, final paper.

No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: 20 (expected: 20). Preference given to seniors, as well as majors in Religion, Anthropology, and Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies.

GUTSCHOW

REL 248(F) Body Politics, Gender and Religion in South Asia (Same as ANTH 248, ASST 248 and WGS 249) (D)

This course examines the relationship between body, gender, and religion or community in South Asia, using three countries—India, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh—and three major religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam—as its focus. It begins by unpacking the critical theories in which the human body serves as map for society and vice versa. It then examines the South Asian discourses linking body with nation, population, or purity. It explores a South Asian sociology of the body that occasions solidarity as well as social suffering, violence, and difference. The course looks at a diverse set of practices that constitute the body to produce social cohesion including yoga, sex selection, family planning, monasticism, and fundamentalism. The body emerges as a lens through which to view the production of a politics of identity as much as fragmentation or social hierarchy.

Format: seminar. Requirements: writing on class blog, final paper, participation in class discussion and presentations.


Hour: 11:20–12:35 TR

EAST ASIAN TRADITIONS

REL 250 Scholars, Saints and Immortals: The Religious Life in East Asia (Same as ASST 250) (Not offered 2012–2013) (D)

In East Asian cultures, as in the United States, popular conceptions of morality typically take their shape, not from explicit rules, but from moral paragons—stylized figures that are said to embody a distinctive cluster of virtues. For example, American Christians invoke not only Jesus, but also a pantheon of “saintly saints” as diverse as Martin Luther King Jr. and Mother Teresa. In China, the image of the bodhisattva—benevolent compassionate ones who, through meditation, will eventually achieve enlightenment and so benefit others—has served as the model and inspiration for the ideal Confucian moral exemplar. Most people know the legends of the bodhisattva Ksitigarbha who, by rescuing beings from hell, seeks to ensure the rebirth of all beings, and the one-time monk, now enlightened, Nichiren, who tames the tiger of attachment.

This course will explore the East Asian moral exemplars and the various ways in which they have shaped东亚 culture. We will examine the lives of a range of personal exemplars and of socially recognized moral paragons—philosophers, artists, samurai, and others—who have served as models for the pursuit of virtue. We will also examine the various moral exemplars that have come to serve as moral paradigms, and we will consider the range of practices that have been developed in order to emulate such moral exemplars. The course will examine the ways in which moral exemplars have shaped and been shaped by the social, cultural, and political contexts in which they lived. The course will also examine the ways in which moral exemplars have been used to shape the moral climate of the East Asian world, and the ways in which they have been used to shape the moral climate of the East Asian world. The course will also examine the ways in which moral exemplars have been used to shape the moral climate of the East Asian world.


JOSEPHSON

REL 251(F) Zen Buddhism: History and Historiography (Same as ASST 251)

Because mystifying references to Zen are strewn throughout American popular culture—from episodes of the Simpsons to names of perfumes and snack foods—most Americans have an image of Zen Buddhism that is disconnected from anything actually practiced in East Asia. This course offers a corrective to this image by familiarizing students with the history of Zen Buddhism and with Zen Buddhism in the Tibetan world, and the indispensable assessment of Western representations of Tibet becomes not just an exercise in self-reflection but also a gate to a better understanding of a remarkable but tragically threatened civilization. This course, which explores in depth the Tibetan cultural and the tragic cross-cultural misunderstanding that threatens its own identity, is part of the Exploring Diversity Initiative.

Format: lecture/discussion. Requirements: full attendance and participation, three 6-page essays.

DREYFUS

REL 252(S) The Path to Enlightenment: Zen and Zen Art In China and Japan (Same as ARTH 376 and ASST 376) (W)

(See under ARTH 376 for full description.)

JANG

REL 255 Buddhism in Society (Same as ASST 255) (Not offered 2012–2013)

This course introduces students to Buddhism by examining its ideas and practices as they have taken place in actual social contexts rather than as disembodied textual objects. After surveying the main ideas and narratives of the tradition, we turn our attention to Thailand where we examine how these ideas and narratives have shaped a whole range of practices, from meditation to ritual of exorcism involving magical and shamanistic elements. We also consider the complex relation that Buddhism has entertained with the political realm, focusing more particularly on the place of statecraft in the Buddhist ethical universe and the problematic place of violence therein. We then consider the transformation that Buddhism is undergoing in contemporary Thai society, examining the changing role of monks and laity, the complexities of gender dynamics, the emergence of the new order, the rise of Buddhist social activism and the development of new Buddhist social philosophies. We ask questions such as: How can Buddhism adapt to modernity? What are the transformations involved in this process? What is the role of Buddhism in the new consumerist culture, which is taking over East Asia? Should Buddhism traditions take advantage of the opportunities of this new culture or should they adopt a critical stance toward its values? And if so, how can it contribute to the transformative movements that are changing our world? We conclude by raising some of the same questions in the United States.

Format: lecture/discussion. Requirements: full attendance and active participation; three 6-page papers.


DREYFUS

REL 256 Engendering Buddhism: How Women and Men Shape and Are Shaped by Buddhism (Same as ANTH 256, ASST 256 and WGS 256) (Not offered 2012–2013) (D)

This course looks at how gender has shaped Buddhism as well as how Buddhism has shaped gender. Most generally, it considers the myriad ways that Buddhist soteriology and practice produce the very gender differences they purport to overcome. How have the Buddha and his far-flung disciples institutionalized gender differences in spite of their putative goal of transcending duality? We examine the varying experiences of women and men in Buddhist societies and literatures as a lens by which to analyze the pervasive operation of social and gender hierarchies. Last but not least, we discuss how well feminist and American revisions of Buddhism have transformed gender and other forms of difference. Analysis revolves around several interdependent themes: (1) How do female and male bodies become the subject of a specific set of Buddhist gazes? What does Buddhist discourse say about the possibility of gaining enlightenment in the female body? (2) How do gender divisions reflect deeper social divisions such as class and race in
Buddhist discourse? (3) How have feminist deconstructions of Buddhism transformed gender and social hierarchies in the contemporary world? This course fulfills the Exploring Diversity Initiative by seeking to theorize the ways that Buddhism has produced and reinscribed gender differences and social hierarchies.


ROBERTS

TRADITIONS OF AFRICA AND THE AFRICAN DIASPORA (See also courses listed REL 311–315)

REL 261 Rastafari: Dread, Politics, Agency (Same as AFR 302 and PSCI 372) (Not offered 2012–2013)

(See under AFR 302 for full description.)

REL 265 Sacred Cinema: Black Religion and the Movies (Same as AFR 316) (Not offered 2012–2013)

(See under AFR 316 for full description.)

ROBERTS

COMPARATIVE INQUIRY

REL 270T Father Abraham: The First Patriarch (Same as JWST 270) (Not offered 2012–2013) (W)

The figure of Abraham in the Hebrew scriptures is interesting for at least two reasons: he comes first and seems more universal rather than particular. He first received the covenant through the land of Israel, but before that final revelation on Mount Moriah. He fathers both the Jewish people and the Arab. And the significance of that wider identity was later captured both by Christianity in the work of Paul and in the Qur'an where Muhammad identified with Abraham as the prototypical and non-sectorarian monotheist prophet. This course will trace the figure of Abraham by a close and multidisciplinary reading of the Jewish, pagan, Christian and Muslim sources on Abraham. Our task is not to decide on the historicity of Abraham, but rather to explore the history of the figure and his continuing relevance for today in understanding Jewish/Christian/Muslim conflict and encounter. We will begin with an intensive reading of the Biblical narratives, the issues of idolatry and monothelitism, the covenant and circumcision, relations of the patriarch to his women and sons, and primal model of faith all are articulated. We will then turn to later Jewish developments in the figure of Abraham in mishra and apocalyptic. We will then explore the view of Abraham in the classical world, the uses made of Abraham by Christianity as it broke from an emerging Rabbinic Judaism and the development of Abraham’s specific connection with the view of the afterlife. We will then treat the figure of Abraham in the Qur'an and later Islamic traditions. We will conclude with an examination of the cult surrounding Abraham in the city of Hebron, a currently contested site on the West Bank where we will consider the current religious practice regarding Abraham by both Jews and Muslims. The purpose of this tutorial is to read closely a variety of primary religious texts and to explore the variety of tools available for the reading of these texts.

Format: tutorial. Requirements: each student in the tutorial will write and present orally live 5–7 page essays every other week on the readings for the week and a final 7–10 page essay. Students not presenting an essay will be responsible for offering an oral critique of the work of their colleague. Evaluation will be based on written work and critiques. No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: 10 (expected: 10). Open to all.

DARROW

REL 273 Charisma and Celebrity (Same as ANTH 222) (Not offered 2012–2013) (W)

(See under SOC 520 for full description.)

VALIANI

REL 274 Ritual, Power and Transgression (Same as ANTH 299) (Not offered 2012–2013) (W)

(See under SOC 520 for full description.)

D. EDWARDS

CONTEMPORARY CRITICAL INQUIRY

REL 284(S) What’s At Work? (W)

Curse for sin, opposite of fun, or curiously peripheral, as in the now conventional career advice, “Do what you love and the money will follow,” work has generally gotten short shrift, at least by the male authors with soft hands one usually reads in college. This course will examine shifting attitudes and approaches to human labor in the history of western thought. We will begin with a multifaceted consideration of why we work and the ways in which approaches to human labor intertwined with reflections on human inequality, especially slavery and its justification, and the identification between poverty and the resistance to hard work. With the abolition of slavery and consequent arrival of modernity, two trends are strikingly added to the traditional discourses on work: the workplace as the public site for the achievement of justice, e.g., a living wage, workplace safety and equality of opportunity; and the articulation of individual identity and worth in the context of work, e.g., notions of profession, career and status. The legacy of both those trends is still very much with us, but the twentieth century dislodged the focus on humans as laborers in favor of a view of them as consumers. That is in part a consequence of the continuing shift from a production to a service economy, but also is intimately connected with the fortunately incomplete licensing of desire and leisure that are becoming the hallmark of both our current consumer economy and workplace. These competing issues leave us with the central split in American society between the slightly larger portion of Americans who say they ‘get a sense of identity from their jobs’ and the remaining significant minority who describe their jobs as ‘just what they do for a living.’ This course will explore some of the reasons for this fundamental cleavage. In addition to readings in the classics of Western thought including the Bible, Hesiod, Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, Hobbes, Rousseau, Adam Smith, Kant, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud and Weber, we shall explore contemporary portrayals of work and workplace in literature and film and conclude with contemporary authors including Swendsen, Muihleback, Florida, Gini, Lindsay, Sennett.

Format: lecture/discussion. Requirements: essays (4–6 pages) in different genres: philosophical, ethnographic, ethical case study, personal reflection.

No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: 25 (expected: 15).

Hour: 1:10–2:25 MR

REL 285T Haunted: Ghosts in the Study of Religion (Not offered 2012–2013) (W)

Haunting offers a powerful way to speak about forces that affect us profoundly while remaining invisible or elusive. “What is it that holds sway over us like an unconditional prescription? The distance between us and that which commands our moves—or their opposite, our immobility—it is a distance that closes in on you at times, it especially slavery and its justification, and the identification between poverty and the resistance to hard work. With the abolition of slavery and consequent arrival of modernity, two trends are strikingly added to the traditional discourses on work: the workplace as the public site for the achievement of justice, e.g., a living wage, workplace safety and equality of opportunity; and the articulation of individual identity and worth in the context of work, e.g., notions of profession, career and status. The legacy of both those trends is still very much with us, but the twentieth century dislodged the focus on humans as laborers in favor of a view of them as consumers. That is in part a consequence of the continuing shift from a production to a service economy, but also is intimately connected with the fortunately incomplete licensing of desire and leisure that are becoming the hallmark of both our current consumer economy and workplace. These competing issues leave us with the central split in American society between the slightly larger portion of Americans who say they ‘get a sense of identity from their jobs’ and the remaining significant minority who describe their jobs as ‘just what they do for a living.’ This course will explore some of the reasons for this fundamental cleavage. In addition to readings in the classics of Western thought including the Bible, Hesiod, Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, Hobbes, Rousseau, Adam Smith, Kant, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud and Weber, we shall explore contemporary portrayals of work and workplace in literature and film and conclude with contemporary authors including Swendsen, Muihleback, Florida, Gini, Lindsay, Sennett.

Format: lecture/discussion. Requirements: essays (4–6 pages) in different genres: philosophical, ethnographic, ethical case study, personal reflection.


BUELL

REL 286 (formerly 308) Shopping: Desire, Compulsion and Consumption (Not offered 2012–2013)

If we view our material site of modernity as the shopping mall of the postmodernity; the place where consumption trumps production and, it has been argued, our only remaining public space. This course will focus on the experience of shopping, focusing on three themes. First we will explore the manufacturing of desire on which consumption must depend. We will critique the tired critiques of advertising and explore in more depth the neurotic and erotic dimensions of the creative of desire for objects. We will then turn to some comparative and historical analysis contrasting the experience of shopping in traditional bazaars and contemporary malls, as well as exploring the history from the eighteenth century through the current phenomena of globalization. Finally, we will explore the place of shopping in our collective imaginations, attending especially to the relation between the gendering of the shopping experience and expressions of contempt and outrage toward consumerism, with a special focus on the discourse on Christmas in American society.

Format: lecture/discussion. Requirements: three essays (4–6 pages) and one ethnographic account (4–6 pages).

No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: 40 (expected: 20). Open to all.

DARROW

REL 287 The Dynamics of Globalization: Society, Religion and the Environment (Same as ENVI 287) (Not offered 2012–2013) (D)

This course offers a theoretical reflection on the social, cultural and environmental dynamics of globalization and their consequences for the nature and place of religion. Rather than argue for or against globalization, we examine the nature of this new configuration and its relation to (post)modernity, asking questions such as: What are the cultural and social dynamics of modernity? What is the new spiritual site of modernity? What are the effects on the nature of religion and the political practices that take place in the global world? What are its environmental consequences? We then shift to examining the role of culture in general and religion in particular, arguing that its renewed relevance is a function of the socio-cultural transformations that globalization brings about, particularly the loss of community and the atomization of individuals in an ever more interconnected world. In this way, we come to understand some of the dominant features of the global age, the role of cultural differences and the growing concern for questions of meaning and personal identity. We conclude by examining the new cultural practices created by the new religious expressions that attempt to respond to this situation, from personal spiritual quests as manifested in interest in Buddhism, ecology or mountain climbing, to various forms of fundamentalism, such as Evangelicalism, the fastest growing religious movement in the Americas, and the most radical forms of Islamism. Reading list: Harvey, The Condition of Postmodernity; Castells, The Rise of the Network Society; Bauman, Globalization; Kivisto, Multiculturalism in a Global Society; Casanova, Public Religions in the Modern World; Orritt, Life and Death on Mt. Everest. Matthews, Global Culture/Individual Identity. Shuck, Mark of the
REL 288 The Embodied Mind: A Cross-Cultural Exploration (Same as PHIL 288) (Not offered 2012-2013)
This course examines some of the central questions raised by the study of the consciousness: the place of intentionalty, the role of emotions, the relation with the body, the nature of subjectivity, the scope of relexivity, the nature of perceptual presence, etc. In confronting these difficult questions, we do not proceed purely theoretically but consider the contributions of various observation-based traditions, from Buddhism psychology and meditative practices to phenomenology to neurosciences. We begin by examining some of the central concepts of Buddhism psychology, its treatment of the mind as a selfless stream of consciousness, its examination of the variety of mental factors and its accounts of the relation between cognition and affects. We also introduce the practice of meditation as a way to observe the mind and raise questions concerning the place of its study in the mind-sciences. We pursue this reflection by examining the views of James, Husserl, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, particularly as they conern the methods for the study of the mind and the relation between consciousness, relexivity and the body. In this way, we develop a rich array of analytical tools and observational practices to further our understanding of the mind. But we also question the value of these tools based on first person approaches by relating them to the third person studies of the mind. In this way, we come to appreciate the importance of considering the biology on which mental processes are based and the light that this approach throws on the nature of consciousness. We conclude by considering the relation between first and third person studies of the mind, focusing on the concept of the embodied mind as a fruitful bridge between these different traditions.

Format: seminar. Requirements: regular practice of meditation, a class presentation, a short essay (6p) and a long final research paper (15 p.).
Prerequisites: some background in either psychology, cognitive sciences, philosophy or permission of the instructor. Enrollment limit: 18 (expected: 12). Selection on the basis of relevant background.
DREYFUS and CRUZ.

REL 289T(S) (formerly 390) Exile, Homecoming and the Promised Land (Same as COMP 309T and JWST 491T(W) (D)
In terms of its metaphor, the Jewish experience of exile pervades modern, western discourse on the experience of being alienated, severed, and separated from one's national and natural homelands. In this course we will take the Jewish experience of exile (galut) as our point of departure for a broader discussion of these themes as they relate to other diasporic communities. As a consequence of increased mobility, political instabilities, economic insecurity and the proliferation of means of communication, the state of Diaspora increasingly characterizes populations across the globe, from Africa, Asia, South America, and Europe. While we will not focus specifically on these communities, one of our tasks will be to discover how the Jewish experience shapes the discourse on exile and Diaspora that pervades modern discussions of displacement and emigration.
We must further consider what is at stake politically and philosophically in privileging the Jewish experience, especially given the post-1948 community of Palestinian refugees. To illuminate this discussion we will draw on the literature of the Jewish tradition from the Hebrew Bible and rabbis to Twentieth Century accounts and reflections of Franz Kafka, Walter Benjamin and Emmanuel Levinas, as well as materials that reflect the voices of other refugee communities. We will then move to examine the relationship of the notion of the Homeland to that of the promised land. We will consider that ambivalence in the nineteenth and twentieth century concerning discourse of blood and soil, and the consequent possibility that exile and rootlessness could signal positively.
Format: tutorial. Requirements: meeting in pairs, each student will either write and present a paper or respond to their partner’s paper. Each student will write and present a 5-page paper in the remaining weeks. On the weeks in which the students are presenting, she will be expected to write a 1- to 2-page critique/response to her classmate’s paper. The final assignment will be an 8- to 10-page paper that expands on an issue or question raised in class.
No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: 10 (expected: 10). Preference given to Religion majors. This course will also serve as the capstone course for senior Jewish Studies Concentrators.
Tutorial meetings to be arranged.
HAMMERSCHLAG.

REL 290T Explorations of the Afterlife (Not offered 2012-2013) (W)
From Heaven to Hell, Valhalla to Hades, the Fields of Aaru to the Land of Yellow Springs, all cultures have generated images of other worlds that lie beyond death. By considering examples from a range of different cultures, this course will guide students on an exploration of the topographies of these shadow-lands. In an effort to map the continuities and discontinuities between these visions of the hereafter, we will consider them as reflections of existing social hierarchies, examining their underlying assumptions about punishment, family, and ethics. Along the way, we will discuss culturally specific notions of death and mourning, attitudes towards the bodies of the dead, and controversies about the nature of the soul. Texts will include selections from primary works in translation, such as Virgil's Aeneid, Dante's Inferno, and The Tibetan Book of the Dead, as well as selections from secondary literature, including Teiser's The Scripture on the Ten Kings, Gauchet's The Disenchantment of the World, and Bremmer's The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife.
JOSEPHSON.

REL 291(S) Religion and the American Environmental Imagination (Same as ENVI 291 and SOC 291) (W)
(See under ENVI 291 for full description.)
HOWE.

REL 292F Sirens in the Synagogue: Real and Imaginary Encounters in Jewish Narratives from Antiquity to the Present (Same as COMP 291 and JWST 294)
(See under JWST 291 for full description.)
GARBARINI.

REL 296 The History of the Holocaust (Same as HIST 338 and JWST 338) (Not offered 2012-2013)
(See under HIST 338 for full description.)
HASAN–ROKEM.

REL 300 Dialectics and the Archaeology of Knowledge (Not offered 2012-2013)
How might one perform a philosophical study of history? How do ideas (including philosophic, artistic and religious movements) advance over time? What makes something “thinkable” today but inconceivable in another era? What contemporary intellectual foundations rest on false universals? This course will address these questions and provide students with methods for exploring the historical dimension of religion. It will focus on two approaches to the philosophy of history inspired by Kant. One school (Hegel, Marx) has focused on tracing dialectical formations as the background against which all history unfolds. Another school (Foucault, Agamben) performs “philosophical archaeology,” which Foucault described as “the history of that which renders necessary a certain form of thought.” This course will introduce students to these intertwined bodies of theory, which promise to do nothing less than expose bare the fundamental concepts of knowledge and transform the study of history from the stringing together of events into a philosophical enterprise. Thinkers to be considered may include: Kant, Hegel, Marx, Engels, Nietzsche, Foucault, Agamben, and Jameson.
Format: seminar. Requirements: regular participation and attendance, short writing assignments, class presentations, 10– 15-page final paper.
JOSEPHSON.

REL 302T Philosophy of Religion (Same as PHIL 281) (Not offered 2012-2013) (W)
(See under PHIL 281 for full description.)
BARRY.

REL 303 (formerly 280) The Turn to Religion in Post-Modern Thought (Same as JWST 280 and PHIL 282) (Not offered 2012-2013) (W)
As thinkers of the 20th century came to question the Enlightenment ideal of human self-sovereignty, both for its intellectual and political consequences, many turned back to religious imagery and concepts in pursuit of alternate modes of conceptualizing the human being. This course will examine some such endeavors in the fields of philosophy, psychoanalysis and literature. While none of the texts we examine will be explicitly theological, all will, in some form or another, make use of theological notions such as revelation, redemption, or sacrifice. In dissecting these texts we will be asking some fundamental questions: What meaning do religious concepts have when emptied of dogmatic content? How effective are these concepts when employed in the service of cultural critique? How might such efforts reflect back on the theorizing and practice of religions in contemporaneous culture? We will, furthermore, analyze the very category of the post-modern by considering its relationship to the Enlightenment, debating whether this relationship is one of continuity, rupture or both, and dissecting the critique that post-modern philosophy’s concern for religion is a sign of its nostalgic or reactionary nature. Readings will include Immanuel Kant’s Religion within the Limits of Reason alone, Friedrich Nietzsche’s Twilight of the Idols, Jacques Lacan’s Feminine Sexuality, as well as essays by Luce Irigaray, Georges Bataille, Emmanuel Levinas, Jean-François Lyotard and Jacques Derrida.
Format: discussion. Requirements will include regular participation and four writing assignments: three shorter papers of 3–5 pages on a question assigned by the instructor and a longer essay of 12–15 pages on an approved topic of the student’s choice.
HAMMERSCHLAG.

REL 304 From Hermeneutics to Post-Coloniality and Beyond (Same as COMP 344 and ENGL 386) (Not offered 2012-2013) (D)
This course explores and critiques some of the resources offered by “Theory” for making sense of our contemporary situation, focusing on the nature of interpretation and its role in the construction of the self in a global world. We start with Gadamer’s hermeneutics, which offers a classical formulation of the philosophy of liberal arts education, stressing the importance of questioning one’s prejudices. Although this approach offers important resources for understanding ourselves in a world of cultural differences, it also has
limitations, which we explore through the works of Derrida, Foucault and Said. In this way, we question some of the notions central to understanding ourselves such as identity and difference, suggesting some of the difficulties in the ever more pertinent problem of knowing oneself. We also suggest that representation is not innocent but always implicated in the world of power and its complexities, particularly within the colonial and postcolonial contexts explored by Said. We conclude with a critique of the construction of this course done from the point of view of cognitive sciences and suggest that the future of “Theory” may well be in a dialogue with the emerging mind sciences. This course, which theorizes the possibilities of cross-cultural understanding, is part of the Exploring Diversity Initiative.


Agamben, Homo Sacer.

Format: seminar. Requirements: full attendance and participation, three essays (6 pages).

Prerequisite: some familiarity with philosophy and/or theory is recommended. Enrollment limit: 18 (expected: 18). Selection based on the basis of relevant background.

DREYFUS

REL 305(S) (formerly 284) Foucault (W)

Michel Foucault was first and foremost a scholar of power. His ironic “genealogies” of how the Enlightenment promised freedom but instead delivered intricate and perilous technologies of control have inspired philosophers, intellectual historians, and even novelists. Yet for all of this Foucault is often thought of as having posited a helpless subject trapped in an inescapable web. Worse, scholars such as Rosie Braidotti have seen this subject as a uniquely masculine manpower—ignoring women’s struggles. This course will consider Foucault and his own “mentors,” Heidegger, Nietzsche, and Kant, among others, as well as exploring such central questions as Foucault’s views on gender and sexual identity. We will also examine whether Foucault was able—as he intended—to move beyond “resistance” in his later writings and help post-Enlightenment individuals engender a more empowered sense of subjectivity.

Format: seminar. Evaluation will be based upon: active classroom engagement (students are expected to take a major role in class discussions as this is a seminar course), two response papers of 1500 words, a take-home midterm exam, and a final, 15–page (~3,750 word) paper.

No prerequisites, although some work in Continental Philosophy will be helpful. Enrollment limit: 19 (expected: 10). Preference given to Religion majors.

Hour: 2:35–3:50 TF

SHUCK

REL 306 Feminist Approaches to Religion (Same as WGS 307) (Not offered 2012–2013) (W) (D)

What does feminist theory have to offer the study of religion? How have participants in various religious traditions helped to produce and enact feminisms? Feminisms and religion(s) have a long enough troubled history of interconnection. In this course, we shall explore a range of feminist and queer theoretical analyses that have either emerged out of particular religious contexts or have been applied to the study of religious traditions and practices. We shall consider how conflicts within feminism—especially those pertaining to issues of sexuality, gender, race, class, nationality, ethnicity, and religious affiliation—make a difference for the ways that religion is interpreted and practiced.

Format: seminar. Requirements: evaluation based on attendance, active participation in class, 3-page “position” paper for seminar discussion; 5–7 page analytical essay; peer-review of analytical essay; draft presentation of final paper in–progress; 15 page final research paper or equivalent project.

Prerequisite: either WGST 101 or REL 101, or permission of instructor. Enrollment limit: 15 (expected: 10). Preference given to majors and prospective majors in Religion and Women’s Gender and Sexuality Studies.

BUELL


Although it is still in its infancy, the so-called “cognitive turn” has already become one of the most exciting contemporary developments in the study of religion. During the past two decades, scholars influenced by cognitive science have begun to formulate new models and challenge old assumptions about human religiosity and its relationship to the mind. In so doing, they have articulated theories about the evolutionary origins of religious concepts, reassessed the role of memory and of counterintuitive explanations in the perpetuation of religious ideas, and developed new concepts such as “theological incorrectness” and “systematic anthropomorphism.” By examining the cutting-edge work produced by this movement on both sides of the Atlantic we will trace the historical roots of the cognitive turn and introduce some of its most important recent products. Authors to be considered include Sigmund Freud, Ludwig Feuerbach, Jean–Pierre Dupuy, D. Jason Slone, Pascal Boyer, Veikko Anttonen, Scott Atran, Richard Dawkins, Dan Sperber, and Iikka Pyysäinen.

Format: seminar. Requirements: active participation, class presentations, short writing assignments, and a take–home final exam.


JOSEPHSON

REL 308(F) Nietzsche and Religion

Few thinkers have been as controversial or as outspoken about religion as the nineteenth century German theorist/philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. His work was not understood during his lifetime, or so he thought, and there are definitely controversies surrounding the way the writings of Nietzsche ought to be applied in the early twenty-first century. We will see Nietzsche as a lonely curmudgeon who hated his rigid, Lutheran upbringing, as well as his sister, Elisabeth Förster–Nietzsche. But we will also see the many fruitful dialogues created by his fractured personality and idiosyncratic writings which, perhaps despite his intentions, speak to religion in both a destructive and constructive way, as well as to later thinkers.

Format: seminar. Evaluation will consist of two 5– to 6-page response papers, a midterm exam, and a 10– to 15-page final paper, and thoughtful participation.


Hour: 2:35–3:50 TF

SHUCK

REL 309 (formerly 273) Scriptures and Race (Same as AFR 309 and LATS 309) (Not offered 2012–2013)

What are “scriptures,” and what is “race”? How and why did these two terms come to have any relationship to each other? How and why do peoples engage “scriptures”? In what ways do peoples’ “scriptures” inform how peoples imagine themselves and others? How did “scriptures” and “race” inform each other in modern colonialisms and imperialisms? In this course, we will examine the ways that “scriptures” have been employed in order to understand and develop notions of “race,” and we will examine how ideas about “race” have informed the concept of “scriptures” as well as practices of scriptural interpretation. While this course will focus on the relationships between constructions of “race” in the post–1942 American world and “Christian scriptures,” we will also consider a few other historical moments and places where “race” is engaged, as well as other texts and practices identified with “scriptures.”


No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: 20 (expected: 15)

HIDALGO

REL 310 Womanist/Black Feminist Thought (Same as AFR 310, AMST 309 and WGS 310) (Not offered 2012–2013) (D)

(See under AFR 310 for full description.)

This course will fulfill the body of theory seminar requirement for Religion majors.

R. MANIGAULT–BRYANT

REL 311 Black Ministerial Imaginations: Griots, Athletes, and Maestros (Same as AFR 311) (Not offered 2012–2013)

(See under AFR 311 for full description.)

This course DOES NOT fulfill the body of theory seminar requirement for Religion majors; this course will count as an elective towards the major in Religion.

J. MANIGAULT–BRYANT

REL 315 The Sociology of Black Religious Experience (Same as AFR 305, AMST 304 and SOC 305) (Not offered 2012–2013)

(See under AFR 305 for full description.)

This course DOES NOT fulfill the body of theory seminar requirement for Religion majors; this course will count as an elective towards the major in Religion.

J. MANIGAULT–BRYANT

REL 318(S) California: Myths, Peoples, Places (Same as AMST 318, COMP 328, ENVI 318 and LATS 318) (W)

(See under LATS 318 for full description.)

HIDALGO

REL 324(TS) Religion, Identity, and Place (Same as SOC 304T) (W)

(See under SOC 304T for full description.)

MANGLOS

REL 325(S) Memory, Repetition, Forgetting (W)

Plato famously argues that all learning is recollection; during the period of Roman antiquity, a robust training in memory practices was an essential aspect of formal education. This course will examine ancient, medieval, and modern discourses on memory, forgetting, and repetition. Starting with Greek sources we will consider the philosophical relevance of memory and forgetting. We will then consider the role of memory and forgetting in medieval Christian sources, examining the place of memory in the search for God and the role of memory and repetition in religious practice. We will then ask the following questions: how do modern accounts of memory and forgetting differ from ancient and medieval accounts? And how do we construe memory and forgetting differently today, when so much information is archived or at least potentially archivable, and when the availability/selection of information is such a charged political topic? Authors include: Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Augustine, Peter Damian, Hugh of St. Victor, Pascal, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Freud and Derrida.


Hour: 7:00–9:40 p.m.

COYNE
REL 326T(S) Queer Temporalities (Same as COMP 326T, LATS 426T, and WGSS 326T) (W)

How do we experience and represent time, and what factors might account for both our experiences and our representations? What are some of the ways that people experience and ritually mark the passing of time? What are some of the different ways that people have made sense of time and themselves in time? Especially for individuals and peoples who have been denied certain self-representation and narratives of place, how do competing notions of time, history, space, and location get negotiated? In this course, drawing from within the broad corpus of queer theory (including theorists such as Gloria Anzaldúa, Elizabeth Freeman, J. Halberstam, and José Esteban Muñoz) we will examine some non-linear, non-normative, and interruptive approaches to making sense of time, space-time, and self within time. On the one hand, we will consider theorists who specifically question and challenge what José Esteban Muñoz dubs the “linearity of straight time,” and we will turn to a set of issues with regard to family and sexuality, especially critiques of normative lifecycle events and rituals that have reconfigured experiences and representations of time and place. On the other hand, we will also work with queer theory as it explores alternatives to normative conceptualizations of time and place that have already existed in the past. Hence we will look not only to queer theory as it reads more contemporary negotiations of sexuality, identity, time, and space-time; we will also consider how some contemporary theorists have read previous historical examples. Students will meet with the instructor in pairs for one hour each week. Almost every week, one student from the pair will write a 5-page analysis of the week’s reading. The other student will respond orally with a 2-page response to their partner’s paper. Pairs will also prepare a midterm synthesis, and students will revise two of their 5-page analytical papers: one from the first half of the semester, and one from the second half due at the end of the semester.

Format: tutorial. Requirements: evaluation will be based on class attendance, analytical essays, responses, and revised essays. No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: 10 (expected: 10). Preference given to majors and concentrators in Religion, Latina/o Studies, Comparative Literature, and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies or students who have previous coursework in these programs. May not be taken on a pass/fail basis.

REL 385(S) Ethics after the Shoah (Same as JWST 385) (W)

The Destruction of European Jewry during World War II has had an enduring impact on philosophical and literary work in Europe and elsewhere. Can any meaning be gleaned from it? How can it be represented? In so far as it changed our conception of what it is to be human, does it also change how we participate in the humanities? In this class we will consider these questions, by focusing on the surge of ethical inquiry that followed from the disaster. We will treat post-World War II works by authors who consider the impact of the Shoah on notions of the other, election, representation, forgiveness, and universalism, with particular attention given to the French context. Emmanuel Levinas will be a central figure along with Primo Levi, Emil Fackenheim, Hannah Arendt, Georgio Agamben, Maurice Blanchot and Jacques Derrida.


REL 397(F), 398(S) Independent Study

REL 401(F) Issues in the Study of Religion

To be conducted as a working seminar or colloquium. Major issues in the study of religious thought and behavior will be taken up in a cross-cultural context enabling the student to consolidate and expand perspectives gained in the course of the major sequence. Topics will vary from year to year. In keeping with the seminar framework, opportunity will be afforded the student to pursue independent reading and research.

Requirements: class reports, papers, and substantial research projects. Topic for 2012–13L Genealogies of Religion. Prerequisites: senior Religion major status or permission of instructor. Enrollment limit: 15 (expected: 15).

Hour: 1:10–3:50 W

JOSEPHSON

REL 405 Kings, Heroes, Gods, and Monsters: Historical Texts and Modern Identities in the Middle East (Same as ARAB 410, HIST 410 and JWST 410) (Not offered 2012–2013) (D) (W)

(See under HIST 410 for full description.) This course will fulfill an elective towards the major in Religion.

REL 493(F)–W31; W31–494(S) Senior Thesis

REL 497(F), 498(S) Independent Study