

## RELIGION (Div II)

Chair: Professor Jeffrey Israel

- Zaid Adhami, Assistant Professor of Religion and Faculty Affiliate in Anthropology & Sociology; affiliated with: Anthropology and Sociology
- Efrain Agosto, Croghan Bicentennial Professor in Biblical and Early Christian Studies; affiliated with: Latina/o Studies Program
- Magnús T. Bernhardtsson, Brown Professor of History and Faculty Affiliate in Arabic Studies, Leadership Studies and Religion; affiliated with: Religion Department, Leadership Studies Program; on leave Fall 2021
- Casey D. Bohlen, Visiting Assistant Professor of History; affiliated with: Religion Department
- Denise K. Buell, Cluett Professor of Religion
- Edan Dekel, Chair and Professor of Classics, Chair of Jewish Studies Program; affiliated with: Religion Department
- Georges B. Dreyfus, Jackson Professor of Religion
- Kim Gutschow, Lecturer in Religion and Anthropology/Sociology; affiliated with: Anthropology and Sociology
- Jacqueline Hidalgo, Associate Dean for Institutional Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Chair and Professor of Latina/o Studies and Professor of Religion; affiliated with: Latina/o Studies Program, Religion Department
- Jeffrey I. Israel, Chair and Associate Professor of Religion
- James A. Manigault-Bryant, Chair and Professor of Africana Studies and Faculty Affiliate in Anthropology and Sociology and Religion; affiliated with: Religion Department, Anthropology and Sociology; on leave Spring 2022
- Neil Roberts, Professor of Africana Studies and Faculty Affiliate in Political Science and Religion; affiliated with: Religion Department, Political Science Department; on leave Fall 2021
- Jason Josephson Storm, Professor of Religion, Chair of Science & Technology Studies; affiliated with: Science & Technology Studies
- Saadia Yacoob, Assistant Professor of Religion

### 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 their own sequence of study within a prescribed basic pattern constructed to ensure both coherence 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

REL 200 Theories and Methods in the Study of Religion

One 300-level seminar or tutorial

REL 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 coordinate programs or by designating four specialization 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 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.

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.

### **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.

### **FAQ**

Students **MUST** contact departments/programs **BEFORE** assuming study away credit will be granted toward the major or concentration.

#### **Can your department or program typically pre-approve courses for major/concentration credit?**

Yes, in many cases, though students should be sure to contact the department.

#### **What criteria will typically be used/required to determine whether a student may receive major/concentration credit for a course taken while on study away?**

Course title and description. Sometimes a course title is sufficient, but for many courses we also need to see a description of some sort because the title is unclear.

#### **Does your department/program place restrictions on the number of major/concentration credits that a student might earn through study away?**

No.

#### **Does your department/program place restrictions on the types of courses that can be awarded credit towards your major?**

No.

#### **Are there specific major requirements that cannot be fulfilled while on study away?**

Yes. 3 courses: Religion 200, one 300-level Religion seminar or tutorial, and Religion 401 Senior Seminar.

#### **Are there specific major requirements in your department/program that students should be particularly aware of when weighing study away options? (Some examples might include a required course that is always taught in one semester, laboratory requirements.)**

Yes. Make sure that they have or will be able to take REL 200, because it is offered only once a year.

#### **Give examples in which students thought or assumed that courses taken away would count toward the major or concentration and then learned they wouldn't:**

None to date.

## **REL 104 (S) Religious Conflict and Cooperation**

Violent conflicts throughout the world are animated by religious rhetoric, driven by religious actors, and sanctioned by religious authorities. At the same time, religious and "interfaith" organizations are often prominent participants in peace advocacy and conflict resolution. What are the varieties of religious involvement in war and peace? What can we learn about "religion" from the conflicts and cooperative initiatives that are labeled "religious"? Does the modern nation-state increase the likelihood of religious conflict? Will 21st century globalization support more or less conflict and/or cooperation? We will investigate these and other questions through contemporary case studies. In some cases we will focus on conflicts over territory: the Temple Mount/Noble Sanctuary in Jerusalem, the Babri Mosque/Birthplace of Rama in Ayodhya, India, the Black Hills in South Dakota. But we will also study the rhetoric of Usama Bin Laden and the role of spirit possession in the formation of the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda. Finally, we will consider efforts to end such conflicts peacefully and delegitimize militant groups. In each case, we will see how competition for control over what counts as "Judaism," "Hinduism," "religion," "religious," and so forth is central to these conflicts and to the goals of those who seek to resolve them. Along with primary and secondary sources related to each case study, we will also read theoretical works by authors that may include Mark Juergensmeyer, Samuel Huntington, Scott Appleby, Bruce Lincoln, Saba Mahmood, Olivier Roy, Ananda Abeysekara, Talal Asad, Tomoko Masuzawa, Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, and others.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** two short papers, an in-class mid-term exam, and a final paper or project

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** none

**Enrollment Preferences:** first-year students and potential Religion majors

**Expected Class Size:** 30

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

Not offered current academic year

## **REL 105 (F) Introduction to European Art Before 1700**

**Cross-listings:** ARTH 101 REL 105

Secondary Cross-listing

A team-taught introduction to the art and architecture of Europe from the ancient Mediterranean to Baroque Italy. This course celebrates the glory of works of art as physical objects, to be viewed and contemplated, to be sure, but also often to be worshiped, worn, touched (even licked), held, exhibited, bought and sold, passed through or around, and lived in. To help students begin to appreciate how these works of art might have been understood by those who originally made and used them, the course sets its objects of study within a number of revealing historical contexts, from the social and the political to the philosophical and the art historical. To give students time with original works of art, our discussion-centered conferences use the wealth of art resources in Williamstown: the Clark Art Institute, the buildings and sculpture of the Williams College Campus, and the Williams College Museum of Art.

**Class Format:** This course has 2 components: lectures and conferences. The lectures will be twice or three times weekly, the conferences once per week. Both lectures and conferences will be held in person.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Three shorter essays (one of which may be in the form of a take-home final exam), several quizzes, and engaged participation in conference sections

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 60

**Enrollment Preferences:** Preference will be based on a short questionnaire, which students will be asked to complete if the course is over-enrolled.

**Expected Class Size:** 60

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

ARTH 101 (D1) REL 105 (D2)

LEC Section: 01 MWF 12:00 pm - 12:50 pm Peter D. Low, Stefanie Solum

CON Section: 02 T 9:55 am - 11:10 am

CON Section: 03 T 11:20 am - 12:35 pm

CON Section: 04 T 1:10 pm - 2:25 pm

CON Section: 05 R 9:55 am - 11:10 am

CON Section: 06 R 11:20 am - 12:35 pm

CON Section: 07 R 1:10 pm - 2:25 pm

### **REL 108 (F) Technologies of Religious Experience**

In 1962, ten Harvard Divinity School students received a capsule of white powder before Good Friday services. The powder was psilocybin, a psychedelic. One of them soon ran out of chapel to announce that the Messiah had arrived. Seven others reported profound mystical experiences, which they reported even years later as exerting continued influence on their life and work. Is psilocybin a technology for producing religious experience? Should religions find and employ technologies that engender religious feeling? Are such experiences any less true or authentic than ones that aren't technologically mediated? More humbly, how is a religious service experienced differently when it's viewed online or through a TV? How can an amulet, icon, or statue be used as a technology of religion? Drawing from a broad range of sources, this course will introduce students to the critical study of religion through its consideration of religious experience as both central to religious life and as (almost always) technologically mediated. The course thus aims to expose students to a wide variety of religions and technologies of religion, while simultaneously offering them a chance to explore Technology Studies as one critical lens for studying religion and religious experience.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** short response papers, one longer non-research paper

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** none

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion majors

**Expected Class Size:** 25

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 109 Apocalypse (WS)**

An end of days. A utopia to come. A great cosmic reversal of fortune. A revelation of truth that leads to radical transformation. Each of these themes and many more fall under the genre of imagination that we associate with the apocalypse. In order to understand the persistence and prevalence of apocalyptic imaginations, we will move back and forth through time. On the one hand, we will read the Book of Revelation in relationship to a selection of ancient Zoroastrian, Jewish, Greek, Christian, and Muslim texts identified with apocalyptic traditions. On the other hand, we will read these texts in relationship to and alongside select literature and movements of apocalypse in the U.S.A. We will pay particular attention to how apocalyptic imaginations reflect upon and interact with social structures of class, colonization, ethnicity, gender, race, and sexuality.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** grading will be based on participation, short P/F papers, a graded 3-page essay that will be revised, a 5-page second essay, and a final 7- to 10-page paper

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Enrollment Preferences:** first-years and sophomores preferred or Religion majors

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:**

**Distributions:** (D2) (WS)

**Writing Skills Notes:** As a WS course, grading will be based on short, weekly P/F papers, a graded 3-page essay that will be revised for credit, a 5-page second essay, and a final 7- to 10-page paper for which a draft will be peer reviewed. Students will receive from the instructor timely comments on their writing skills, with suggestions for improvement.

Not offered current academic year

**REL 110 (S) Religion in Everyday Life (WS)**

When studying religions, people generally turn to studying scriptures, the life and teachings of the religion's founder, and the fundamental doctrines of the religion. What this approach does not allow us to understand, however, is the way that such religious traditions actually manifest themselves in the world. This course introduces students to an alternative approach to studying religion, by exploring the way these religions are lived and experienced by individuals and communities in a variety of contexts. We will see how religion intersects with people's lived experiences of gender, race, class, sexuality, and broader socio-cultural and political contexts. We will explore this approach to religion through an engagement with ethnography (the qualitative research method in the social-sciences generally described as "participant-observation"). Students will not only learn about the theory and practice of this methodology, but will also conduct their own ethnographic research project over the course of the semester. This will involve: designing a feasible project and research question, selecting local research sites and subjects, taking field-notes and conducting interviews, and finally analyzing data and writing an ethnographic essay.

**Class Format:** Semester-long community-based field research. Regular in-class peer-review exercises.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** regular reading responses, semester-long research project with frequent small assignments building up to the final product (class presentation and approximately 10-page paper)

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** first-year students and sophomores; students interested in Religious Studies

**Expected Class Size:** 10-12

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2) (WS)

**Writing Skills Notes:** Students will learn a specific mode of qualitative/ethnographic writing through a semester-long field-based project. This involves many scaffolded assignments of field-based research and writing, for which they receive very regular feedback from the instructor, as well as extensive peer-review exercises. There will be a number of readings on writing style and technique, as well as class discussion and workshoping activities. The final essay will itself be developed in multiple steps.

**Attributes:** EXPE Experiential Education Courses

Spring 2022

SEM Section: 01 TR 11:20 am - 12:35 pm Zaid Adhami

**REL 126 (S) Religion, Politics, and Society: A Global Perspective (DPE)**

**Cross-listings:** REL 126 GBST 101 PSCI 126

**Secondary Cross-listing**

In spite of predictions that religion would wither away with in the face of modernization, even casual observation indicates that it remains a powerful force in contemporary political life. Our goal is to obtain an enhanced understanding and appreciation of the salience of religion in public life. The course will be divided into three parts. The first part focuses on different theoretical approaches to make sense of the relation between religion, politics, and society, discussing especially the concept of the 'secular.' The second part discusses religion in the US society. Here, we will discuss if the American society can be called secular, the role of religion in American political culture, the relation of religion to the state, the relevance of religious interests and their mobilization, religious minorities in the United States and many other aspects of religion in the US society. The third part will take a global perspective on the relation between religion and politics. We will discuss cases of Buddhism, Christianity (Catholicism and Protestantism), Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam (Sunni and Shi'a) and Judaism. Although the study of religion and politics raises a host of deep philosophical questions, the principal aim of the course is to understand how religion affects politics (and vice versa), rather than to explore the moral questions raised by the interaction of these two forces.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Class participation and three papers, in these proportions: 20% participation; 25% first paper (7 pages); 30% second paper (8-10 pages); and 25% third paper (7 pages). No final exam.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 35

**Enrollment Preferences:** Global Studies concentrators and intended concentrators; Religion majors and intended majors

**Expected Class Size:** 25

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Unit Notes:** Core course for GBST

**Distributions:** (D2) (DPE)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 126 (D2) GBST 101 (D2) PSCI 126 (D2)

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** An engagement with religious difference in the world, with a spotlight on how religion and politics--that is, power--interact globally and in the USA.

Spring 2022

LEC Section: 01 TR 8:30 am - 9:45 am Farid Hafez

### **REL 133 (S) Buddhist Literature**

**Cross-listings:** ENGL 147 ASIA 133 REL 133 ASST 133

#### **Primary Cross-listing**

This course introduces students to the diverse literary culture of Buddhist Asia. Through close readings of particular influential Buddhist texts, we will analyze not only what the texts say and mean, but also learn about the "social life" of these texts--i.e., what is the socio-historical context of these texts, who are the intended audience, what is the relationship of these texts with their particular communities, how do these communities engage with their texts, including how texts have been translated, taught, worshipped and ritualized. We will also explore the materiality of these texts, which is as diverse as the languages in which these texts are written. Alongside an exploration of materiality requires that we reflect on what counts as "text". Moreover, by sampling different genres of Buddhist texts (e.g., philosophical, historical, narrative, grammatical, cosmological, astrological, magical), we will discuss what makes them Buddhist and what makes them literary. The Lotus Sutra, the Heart Sutra, the *Dhammapada*, and Vessantara Jataka are just some of the texts we will study in this course. No prior knowledge about Buddhism is required.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Attendance and active participation 20%; Short writing assignments 25% (i.e., a one-page, single-space, critical response based on the class reading x 5 total); Mid-term exam (in-class: identification terms and short essay) 25%; Final project and presentation 30% (the final grade includes initial consultation with the instructor regarding topic selection, annotated bibliography, project outline, final presentation, and final written report).

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 12

**Enrollment Preferences:** REL, ASST, and ENG majors

**Expected Class Size:** 12

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

ENGL 147 (D2) ASIA 133 (D2) REL 133 (D2) ASST 133 (D2)

**Not offered current academic year**

### **REL 134 (S) Leaving the World Behind: The Literature of Reclusion (DPE) (WS)**

**Cross-listings:** ANTH 134 CHIN 134 COMP 134 REL 134

#### **Secondary Cross-listing**

Living in a time of political and social turmoil, Confucius told his followers: "When the realm has the Way, show yourself; when it lacks the way, hide." Reclusion here is a moral choice, justified by the ethical decline of the state. But it could also be a mortal necessity in a period in which government service was a distinctly hazardous pursuit. In other contexts becoming a hermit could instead be figured as aesthetic stance meant to preserve one's artistic integrity against the dominant claims of society. This course looks at the literature of reclusion--living a life of seclusion from society--in a range of different cultures and periods, from ancient China to contemporary America. With sources that include poems, essays, novels, and films, we will investigate a set of issues surrounding radical seclusion. What different forms does reclusion take? Can one be a hermit without being completely separated from society? What is the relationship between hermits and the state--to what extent does one depend on the other? What are the philosophical and moral implications of eremitism? Is separating oneself from human society an inherently immoral act? What is the relationship between reclusion and technology in the contemporary world? What is the nature of solitude and can it be experienced in a group (for example, in

contemporary "intentional communities")? While most of our work will focus on textual analysis, there will be an experiential component to the course as well. Each student will design and implement their own experiment in (short-term) eremitism.

**Class Format:** experiential component

**Requirements/Evaluation:** tutorial papers, responses, and an individual project

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** first-year students, Chinese majors, Religion majors, Anthropology majors

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D1) (DPE) (WS)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

ANTH 134 (D1) CHIN 134 (D1) COMP 134 (D1) REL 134 (D2)

**Writing Skills Notes:** Students will write a 5- to 7-page paper every other week for a total of five papers. On weeks in which they are not writing, they will critique their partner's paper. Papers will receive substantial writing-based feedback from both the instructor and partner.

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** This course provides students with the opportunity to analyze the shaping of social differences and dynamics of unequal power. Acts of reclusion are often ways that individuals can challenge the dominance of the state and other structures of authority indirectly. Modes of reclusion can differ substantially depending on the social standing of the recluse. These are issues that we will examine in the course.

Not offered current academic year

## **REL 149 (F)(S) The Sacred in South Asia**

**Cross-listings:** ANTH 249 ASIA 242 REL 149

Secondary Cross-listing

Is religious identity necessarily singular and unambiguous? The jinn - Islamic spirits born of fire - are sought out for their healing and other powers not only by Muslims in India, but by Hindus, Christians and Sikhs, as well. In parts of Bengal statues of the Hindu goddess Durga are traditionally sculpted by Muslim artisans. Buddhist pilgrimage sites in Sri Lanka contain tombs of Muslim Sufi saints and shrines of Hindu deities. South Asia - where a fifth of humanity lives - provides some of the most striking examples of pluralism and religiously composite culture in our contemporary world. Yet at the same time, strident religious majoritarianism has been a defining feature of the politics of India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka for decades, and haunts Nepal and Bangladesh as well. Are these two modes of religious being - pluralistic and composite on the one hand, singular and majoritarian on the other - reflective of two different conceptions of selfhood? What if we turn from questions of community and identity to questions of unseen power and the sacred? This course is an exploration of lived religion in South Asia. It is simultaneously a study of popular Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam and an introduction to the anthropology of religion. Centered on in-depth studies of popular sites of 'syncretic' ritual practice (shared across religious difference) as well as studies of mass mobilizations that seek to align the religious community with the nation, we approach from multiple angles what the sacred might mean in modernity.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** weekly (1 page) posts on readings, two short (5 page) papers, and one (12-14 page) final research paper.

**Prerequisites:** Interest in the topic!

**Enrollment Limit:** 20

**Enrollment Preferences:** Students in all fields of study are most welcome; if overenrolled, priority will be given to majors in Anthropology, Sociology, Religion and Asian Studies.

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

ANTH 249 (D2) ASIA 242 (D2) REL 149 (D2)

Fall 2021

LEC Section: 01 MWF 8:30 am - 9:45 am Joel Lee

Spring 2022

LEC Section: 01 MWF 8:30 am - 9:45 am Joel Lee

**REL 166 (F) Being Muslim, Being American: American Muslim Literature in the 21st century (DPE)**

**Cross-listings:** REL 166 AMST 166 COMP 166 ENGL 268

**Primary Cross-listing**

Islam and Muslims in the United States are the subject of extensive public scrutiny and media coverage in broader public discourses. It is less common, however, to hear Muslims' own voices speak about their lives, experiences, beliefs, and commitments. This course will take a literary approach to exploring American Muslims' own narratives about themselves, which will serve as an introduction to religion in contemporary U.S. culture. We will address questions such as: How do American Muslims attempt to fashion their identity in the wake of 9/11? What are the pressures and demands of American national belonging and cultural citizenship that Muslims must navigate? How are race, gender, ethnic heritage, and immigration definitive of Muslim experiences and self-understandings? How are Muslims approaching the tensions between communal belonging and individuality? What are the competing claims and contestations about authentic expressions of Islam? We will be engaging such themes through an analysis of popular memoirs, autobiographies, novels, short stories, poetry, films, and comedy.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** regular reading responses, short midterm essays, and final paper

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 20

**Enrollment Preferences:** First-year students and sophomores

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2) (DPE)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 166 (D2) AMST 166 (D2) COMP 166 (D1) ENGL 268 (D1)

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** This course will explore the intersections of power in American Muslim life, such as: Muslims as a religious minority in the context of the War on Terror; racial and ethnic differences in Muslim communities; immigration and national belonging; competing claims to religious authenticity and authority; and conflicting gendered norms. Students will learn to identify these multiple layers and configurations in the texts, and how to analyze their workings in nuanced multidimensional ways.

Fall 2021

SEM Section: 01 TR 9:55 am - 11:10 am Zaid Adhami

**REL 168 (F) Making God Real**

Is God real? Are Spirits? Divine messengers? What would it mean to say "yes" to any of these questions if we don't "believe" in supernatural beings at all? This course will explore how God(s), spirits, ancestors, and other super-human beings have been seen, heard, and felt by humans. Instead of rehearsing now tired debates between believers and skeptics, this class will combine cognitive sciences approaches to the study of religion with new perspectives on the nature of ontology--the nature of being--to examine how God and other super-human beings exist in and through their effects upon humans. From this perspective, we'll see how, even if God(s) and other supernatural beings don't exist in the heavens, they nevertheless act in this world through they ways that humans experience them. The puzzle for us will be, how do God(s), spirits, and/or divine messengers act? How do we feel, see, or hear beings that might not be there? What kind of reality do God(s) and spirits have in such scenarios? What is the nature of their being?

**Class Format:** Remote; synchronous learning

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Students will be required to take notes on course readings, write weekly or biweekly response papers, and submit a final essay at the end of the course.

**Prerequisites:** No prerequisites

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion Majors, Seniors

**Expected Class Size:** 15



**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 171 (S) Music and Spirituality: Cross-Cultural Perspectives**

**Cross-listings:** REL 171 MUS 171

**Secondary Cross-listing**

How does the sacred sound? Across cultures and across millennia, music has served to enable, inspire, and express the spiritual life experiences of communities and individuals. Why is this so? In what contexts and through what means can making and hearing music reflect and produce spiritual experience? This team-taught course will take a comparative approach to exploring music's spiritual power, considering such areas as the function of music in ritual practices from various cultures and times, the use of music to tell sacred stories, music and dance in spiritual practice, and the role of music created in the face of death and its aftermath. Working from both musicological and ethnomusicological perspectives, we will explore the possibilities of sensory ethnography for better understanding the role of perception and the body in spiritual experiences with music. Our comparisons will draw from Western and world Christian traditions from medieval to modern times, and on conversations with musicians immersed in the music of other faith traditions (including Jewish, Hindu, and Muslim). We will explore connections between music and spirituality through a wide variety of repertoires, including plainchant and Renaissance sacred choral music; the music and dance of traditional West African religions like vodun and orisa; music from the Western classical tradition by such composers as Bach, Beethoven, and Messiaen; American hymnody and spirituals; gospel music in the U.S. and Africa; and selected artists from the world of jazz and popular music, such as John Coltrane and Leonard Cohen.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class participation; class journal; presentation with annotated bibliography; ethnographic field study; final project with presentation

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Enrollment Preferences:** students with a demonstrated interest in music, religion, and/or anthropology/sociology

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D1)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 171 (D1) MUS 171 (D1)

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 200 (S) What is Religion? Theories and Methods in the Study of Religion**

To explore the meaning of religion, this course will introduce the debates around which the discipline of religious studies has been constituted. At stake are questions such as: How does one go about studying religion? Is "religion" a cultural universal? What is religion's relationship to the "European Enlightenment"? to race? to science? to society? to secularism? to colonialism? to ethics? to politics? to violence? to sex? to freedom? Has religion changed fundamentally in modernity? And if so, what is its future?

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class participation, weekly short (max 2 page) writing assignments, a 5-page midterm paper, and a 10-page final paper

**Prerequisites:** none, although a previous course on religion is recommended

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion majors and prospective majors

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

Spring 2022

SEM Section: 01 TR 11:30 am - 12:45 pm Denise K. Buell

## REL 201 (F) The Hebrew Bible

**Cross-listings:** JWST 201 COMP 201 REL 201

### Primary Cross-listing

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 literary, historical, and theological aspects of 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 storytelling that has resonated across two millennia.

**Class Format:** discussion

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class participation, short written assignments, and two to three longer papers

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 40

**Enrollment Preferences:** Jewish Studies concentrators, Religion and Comparative Literature majors

**Expected Class Size:** 40

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

JWST 201 (D2) COMP 201 (D2) REL 201 (D2)

**Attributes:** JWST Gateway Courses

Not offered current academic year

## REL 202 (S) Moses: Stranger in a Strange Land

**Cross-listings:** COMP 214 REL 202 JWST 202

### Primary Cross-listing

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 an outsider to the very end, has fascinated commentators and inspired countless artistic and literary interpretations. This course will engage in a close study of the figure of Moses by examining the biblical narrative of his life and career from Exodus through Deuteronomy with an eye towards understanding the complex and often contradictory portrait of this self-described "stranger in a strange land." We will also examine some of the ancient legendary and folkloric accounts about Moses, as well as philosophical and allegorical treatments in Hellenistic Jewish, early Christian, and Muslim biographies. We will then proceed to investigate key modern reconfigurations and critiques of Moses in several genres, which may include renaissance visual depictions, literary works by Sigmund Freud, George Eliot, Thomas Mann, and Zora Neale Hurston, and even musical and cinematic renditions. *All readings are in translation.*

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class participation, short written assignments, and two or three longer papers

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Enrollment Preferences:** students who have already taken a course in biblical literature

**Expected Class Size:** 19

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

COMP 214 (D2) REL 202 (D2) JWST 202 (D2)

**Attributes:** JWST Core Electives

Not offered current academic year

## REL 203 (F) Judaism: Before The Law

**Cross-listings:** REL 203 JWST 101

### Primary Cross-listing

This course introduces the academic study of Judaism through a humanistic exploration of "the Law" as a concept in Jewish thought and practice. Coverage will include the Law of Moses in the Hebrew Bible, the rabbinic distinction between "Oral Law" and "Written Law," medieval philosophical justifications for the Law, modern interpretations of the Law as Moral Law, Hasidic challenges to the centrality of the Law, and twentieth-century Jewish fiction that is haunted by a felt absence of the Law. Topics may also include the nature of rabbinic authority, methods of Jewish legal interpretation and innovation, and Jewish law as it pertains specifically to women, gentiles, idolaters, food consumption, and the Land of Israel. Course materials will include classical sources such as the Talmud and Midrash, modern philosophical texts by Franz Rosenzweig, Leo Strauss and Joseph Soloveitchik, Kafka's *The Trial* with his parable "Before The Law," Woody Allen's film *Crimes and Misdemeanors*, and ethnographic accounts of contemporary Jewish observance. *All readings will be in translation.*

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class participation, three short papers, and a final longer paper

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 30

**Enrollment Preferences:** Jewish Studies concentrators, Religion majors and students who are considering these options

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 203 (D2) JWST 101 (D2)

**Attributes:** JLST Interdepartmental Electives JWST Gateway Courses

Fall 2021

SEM Section: 01 MR 1:10 pm - 2:25 pm Jeffrey I. Israel

## REL 204 (F) Jesus and Judaism

**Cross-listings:** JWST 204 REL 204

### Primary Cross-listing

Was Jesus a Christian? Was he Jewish? And if Christianity's ostensible founder was Jewish, what does that mean for his Christianness? This course will explore Christian, Jewish, and secular depictions of Jesus' Jewishness to see what they reveal about the nature and history of the relationship between Christianity and Judaism. Broad in its historical scope, the course will include examinations of ancient Jewish messianic expectations, New Testament depictions of Jesus' Jewishness, covert references to Jesus in the Talmud, medieval debates between Jews and Christians, and modern scholarly "quests" for the historical Jesus. Was Jesus Jewish? How so and for whom?

**Requirements/Evaluation:** active preparation and participation, papers

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 21

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion Majors and Jewish Studies concentrators get preference

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

JWST 204 (D2) REL 204 (D2)

Not offered current academic year

## REL 205 (S) Ancient Wisdom Literature

**Cross-listings:** JWST 205 REL 205 COMP 217 CLAS 205

**Primary Cross-listing**

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 literature of wisdom throughout the ancient world with an eye toward understanding its various social, 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.*

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class participation, short written assignments, and two longer papers

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Expected Class Size:** 19

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

JWST 205 (D2) REL 205 (D2) COMP 217 (D1) CLAS 205 (D1)

**Attributes:** JWST Core Electives

Spring 2022

SEM Section: 01 TR 9:55 am - 11:10 am Edan Dekel

**REL 206 (S) The Book of Job and Joban Literature**

**Cross-listings:** REL 206 JWST 206 COMP 206

**Primary Cross-listing**

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 divinity, 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 literary, philosophical, and psychological dimensions. We will then proceed to investigate key modern works in several genres that involve Joban 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 "Masque of Reason," Carl Jung's *Answer to Job*, and William Blake's *Illustrations to the Book of Job*. *All readings are in translation.*

**Class Format:** For the spring of 2021, this course will be taught online. The seminar will meet at the regularly scheduled time twice a week.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Evaluation will be based on class participation, weekly short written assignments, and two longer papers.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 12

**Enrollment Preferences:** If the course is overenrolled, preference will be given to students who have already taken a course in biblical literature.

**Expected Class Size:** 12

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 206 (D2) JWST 206 (D2) COMP 206 (D2)

**Attributes:** JWST Core Electives

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 207 (F) From Adam to Noah: Literary Imagination and the Primeval History in Genesis**

**Cross-listings:** COMP 250 REL 207 JWST 207 CLAS 207

#### **Primary Cross-listing**

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 of style leaves many 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 noncanonical 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 accounts 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 some continuations of these variant traditions in medieval literature, with particular attention to the material on the figures of Cain and Noah. *All readings are in translation.*

**Class Format:** For the fall of 2020, this course will be taught online. The seminar will meet at the regularly scheduled time twice a week.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Class participation and several writing assignments.

**Prerequisites:** None.

**Enrollment Limit:** 12

**Enrollment Preferences:** If the class is overenrolled, preference will be given to students who have already taken a course in Biblical literature.

**Expected Class Size:** 12

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

COMP 250 (D1) REL 207 (D2) JWST 207 (D2) CLAS 207 (D1)

**Attributes:** JWST Core Electives

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 208 (S) Genesis: The Family Saga**

**Cross-listings:** COMP 207 REL 208 JWST 208

#### **Primary Cross-listing**

The Book of Genesis has rightly been described as the masterpiece of Hebrew biblical narrative. In particular, the continuous tale that begins with Abraham and Sarah and extends four generations to the children of Jacob, Leah, and Rachel is one of the most extraordinary examples of literary artistry in any time or tradition. As one family wrestles with the promise of becoming a chosen people, the narrative explores themes of marriage, parenthood, sibling rivalry, land, violence, wandering, and, above all, the complex relationship between humanity and God. This course will examine those themes through a close reading of Genesis in translation, from Abraham and Sarah's first appearance on the scene to the death of Jacob. We will consider the text from multiple perspectives with an eye toward understanding the literary, philosophical, and psychological dimensions that continue to amaze and perplex readers to this day.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class participation, a series of short writing assignments, and two longer papers

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Enrollment Preferences:** students who have already taken a course in Biblical literature

**Expected Class Size:** 19

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

COMP 207 (D2) REL 208 (D2) JWST 208 (D2)

**Attributes:** JWST Core Electives

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 209 (S) Jewish America**

**Cross-listings:** REL 209 JWST 209

#### **Primary Cross-listing**

Who and what counts as "Jewish" in America? Does stand-up comedy have a distinctly Jewish pedigree? What about neoconservatism? How is it possible to answer such questions without falling into what David Hollinger has called the "booster-bigot trap"? How is it possible, that is, to avoid answers that uncritically celebrate "Jewish contributions" or perniciously suggest "Jewish influence"? This course will explore the various meanings of Jewishness in American culture as expressed by artists, rabbis, activists, intellectuals, boosters, bigots and others. We will seek to avoid the booster-bigot trap by focusing vigilantly on what is at stake wherever Jewishness is invoked, defined or ascribed. We will draw methodological support from scholars like Hollinger, Jonathan Freedman, Laura Levitt, Yuri Slezkine, Shaul Magid, Andrea Most and others. Particular attention will be given to the appearance of Jewish themes and involvement in popular culture and political action, as well as to Jewish American communal institutions, the everyday lives of Jewish Americans, and Jewish variations on American religion. Coursework will involve some historical, sociological and ethnographic readings, but will focus primarily on close analysis of films, literary fiction, stand-up comedy, political magazines, theological texts, and television shows. We may, for instance, watch films like *The Jazz Singer* (1927 and 1980), *Exodus* and *Annie Hall*; read John Updike's *Bech: A Book*, Philip Roth's *Operation Shylock* or Cynthia Ozick's *The Puttermesser Papers*; listen to the comedy of Mort Sahl, Lenny Bruce and Sarah Silverman; read from Henry Ford's *Dearborn Independent*, the *Menorah Journal* or *Commentary*; study works by Rabbis Stephen Wise, Abraham Joshua Heschel and Meir Kahane; and watch episodes of *Bridget Loves Bernie*, *Northern Exposure* and *Curb Your Enthusiasm*. We will also study arguments about the role and meaning of Jewishness in American secularization, "therapeutic culture," the civil rights movement, the sexual revolution, and feminism.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class participation, two short papers, a midterm take-home exam, and a final paper interpreting an example of Jewishness in America chosen by the student

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 30

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion majors, Jewish Studies concentrators, and students who are interested in either of these options

**Expected Class Size:** 25

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 209 (D2) JWST 209 (D2)

**Attributes:** JWST Core Electives

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 210 (S) Distant Encounters: East Meets West in the Art of the European Middle Ages (WS)**

**Cross-listings:** ARTH 212 REL 210 ARAB 212

#### **Secondary Cross-listing**

In this tutorial, students will investigate the rich artistic consequences -- in architecture, manuscript illumination, mosaic, sculpture, panel painting, fresco, metalwork, and other minor arts -- of European contact with the Eastern Mediterranean between approximately 300 and 1450 CE. From the beginnings of Christianity, pilgrims from Europe made the long journey to sacred sites in the Holy Land (extending across parts of present-day Egypt, Israel, Syria, and Turkey). When these sites became less accessible with the spread of Islam in the seventh century, Europeans sought to recreate the sites at home. Later, from 1095 onward, Christian Europeans attempted to reclaim and hold the Holy Land from non-Christians by force, through an ill-fated series of five major and several lesser "crusades." Over the centuries, before, during, and after the Crusades, exposure to the peoples, ideas, and cultures of the Eastern Mediterranean also came through trade and through the travel and settlement of non-Europeans in Europe itself, particularly in Spain, Sicily, and Venice. Together, through open discussion, we will explore artistic production within each of these different cross-cultural contexts of East-West encounter. In the process, we will reflect on how art could function as a conduit for the exchange of ideas in the

Middle Ages, and how it could be used both to negotiate and to intensify cultural difference.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** participation in discussion; five 5-7-page tutorial papers (one of which will be revised as a final writing assignment); five 1-2-page response papers

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** First- and second-year students, but open to all

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D1) (WS)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

ARTH 212 (D1) REL 210 (D2) ARAB 212 (D1)

**Writing Skills Notes:** In this tutorial, students will develop skills of critical reading and focus on how to craft clear and persuasive arguments of their own. To help them achieve these goals, they will receive timely comments on their written work, especially the five 5-7-page papers they will submit, with suggestions for improvement.

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 211 Christians versus Pagans: Ancient Egypt**

This course explores the religious terrain of ancient Egypt in the Greek and Roman periods. Focused mostly on the rise of Christianity, this course asks big questions about what changes and what stays the same when major religious movements emerge in a place. What parts of Christianity were new to Egypt and were premised upon a rejection and displacement of Egyptian religious practices and beliefs? What parts of Egyptian religious life, rather than being replaced or transformed by Christianity, were adopted into Christianity? And what parts of Egyptian religious practice resisted Christianity? And how and where did it resist?

**Requirements/Evaluation:** 1-2 page weekly papers, final paper, participation

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 18

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion Majors

**Expected Class Size:** 12

**Grading:**

**Distributions:** (D2)

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 213 (F) Patrons, Rituals, and Living Images in Japanese Buddhism**

**Cross-listings:** ASIA 205 REL 213 ARTH 205

Secondary Cross-listing

This course introduces students to Buddhist art and architecture in Japan from its introduction in the sixth century through the present. We focus on the ways different communities--the imperial court, immigrant artists, monks, women, and commoners--employed and venerated Buddhist images for political legitimacy, personal salvation, and worldly benefit. This course also examines how Japanese Buddhist imagery became aestheticized in the early twentieth century and appropriated later in modern and contemporary visual cultures. Some of the topics to be discussed include the reception of continental styles of Buddhist sculpture, the relationship between mandalas and rituals, the role of women in developing Buddhist embroideries, and the Western reappraisal of Zen arts. Students will develop familiarity with the concepts and ideas underlying the production of Buddhist images and will gain foundational skills in analyzing the visual, material, and iconographic qualities of Japanese Buddhist art. For the final project, students will design a digital exhibition focused around one of the topics of the course.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** attendance, class participation, 4 reading and object response papers (2-3 pages), midterm, non-cumulative final exam, and digital exhibition project with an 8-10 minute presentation

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 25

**Enrollment Preferences:** First and second-year students, but open to all

**Expected Class Size:** 20

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

ASIA 205 (D1) REL 213 (D2) ARTH 205 (D1)

Fall 2021

LEC Section: 01 TF 1:10 pm - 2:25 pm Carolyn J. Wargula

### **REL 214 (F) Religion and the State**

**Cross-listings:** REL 214 PSCI 271

#### **Primary Cross-listing**

The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution begins: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." What does "religion" mean in this formulation? Should "religion" be singled-out for exclusion from government? Are "religious" reasons ever legitimate reasons for laws, policies or popular political action? Should "religious" organizations be exempt from otherwise generally applicable laws? Is "religion" good or necessary for democratic societies? In this course we will respond to these and related questions through an investigation of "religion" as a concept in political theory. Particular attention will be given to the modern liberal tradition and its critics. Coverage will range from modern classics to innovative contemporary arguments. Classics may include John Locke's *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, selections from Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *The Social Contract*, James Madison's *Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments*, Immanuel Kant's *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, John Stewart Mill's *Three Essays On Religion*, and John Dewey's *A Common Faith*. More recent arguments may come from John Rawls, Alasdair MacIntyre, Nicholas Wolterstorff, Martha Nussbaum, Jeffrey Stout, Winnifred Sullivan, Brian Leiter and Andrew Koppelman.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class participation, two short papers, a midterm take-home exam, and a final take-home exam

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 30

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion majors, those interested in being Religion majors, and Political Science majors concentrating on Political Theory

**Expected Class Size:** 25

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 214 (D2) PSCI 271 (D2)

**Attributes:** JLST Interdepartmental Electives

**Not offered current academic year**

### **REL 215 (S) The New Testament: From Word to Book**

**Cross-listings:** CLAS 215 REL 215

#### **Primary Cross-listing**

In this course, students will be introduced to the New Testament through an exploration of how the New Testament became a book and continues to be produced as a book. We will start by examining the letters of Paul--its earliest texts--in terms of the habits and traditions of ancient letter-writing. We will similarly place the other texts of the New Testament in the context of Greek, Roman, and Jewish literary traditions and conventions. As the semester moves forward, we will examine how the New Testament itself became a material object--a book--and how its changing material status shaped its meaning and functioning. We will see the New Testament transform from a library of separate scrolls and/or codices (a library which was occasionally bound together into a single codex), to a luxury object in the Middle Ages, to a cheap printed object in the wake of the printing revolution of the 19th century, to its modern life as both a highly marketed object and a searchable digital thing in online spaces and mobile apps.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** active participation and preparation, papers

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** none



**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion Majors, Then Classics Majors

**Expected Class Size:** 25

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

CLAS 215 (D2) REL 215 (D2)

Not offered current academic year

### REL 216 (S) Greek Art and the Gods

**Cross-listings:** ARTH 238 REL 216 CLAS 248

#### Secondary Cross-listing

In the *Iliad*, when the god Apollo is visualized, it is as a man, angry in his heart, coming down from the peaks of Olympos, bow and quiver on his shoulders, the arrows clanging as the god moves, "like the coming of night," to bring dogs, horses, and men to their deaths. By the end of the Classical period, one statue of the archer god depicted him as a boy teasing a lizard. In this course, we will examine the development of the images of the Greek gods and goddesses, from their superhuman engagement in the heroic world of epic, to their sometimes sublime artistic presence, complex religious function, and transformation into metaphors in aesthetic and philosophical thought. The course will cover the basic stylistic, iconographical, narrative, and ritual aspects of the gods and goddesses in ancient Greek culture. The course will address in detail influential artistic monuments, literary forms, and social phenomena, including the sculptures of Olympia and the Parthenon; divine corporeality in poetry; the theology of mortal-immortal relations; the cultural functions of visual representations of gods, and the continued interest in the gods long after the end of antiquity. Readings assignments will include selections from Homer, Hesiod, Sappho, Aeschylus, Euripides, Plato, Walter Burkert, Jean-Pierre Vernant, Nikolaus Himmelmann, Erika Simon, and Friedrich Nietzsche.

**Class Format:** discussion

**Requirements/Evaluation:** short writing assignments, midterm exam, final exam, final paper

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 40

**Enrollment Preferences:** preference will be given to pre-registered Art-History majors needing to fulfill the pre-1800 requirement; otherwise, the course is open to any interested student

**Expected Class Size:** 30

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D1)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

ARTH 238 (D1) REL 216 (D1) CLAS 248 (D1)

Not offered current academic year

### REL 217 (F) Religion and American Politics

**Cross-listings:** REL 217 HIST 257

#### Primary Cross-listing

In this course, students will explore the history of religion and American politics, from the colonial era to the present. In the process, they will tackle such questions as: Were Anglo-American colonies 'cities on a hill' or bastions of intolerance? Was the First Amendment designed to protect the state from religion, or religion from the state? Has American religion primarily served to justify the *status quo* or inspire revolutionary change? How have religious ethics shaped responses to racial, gender, and class inequality? How has religious conflict impacted civic unity and political polarization? What role *should* religion play in American political life? The course will cover such topics as: Anglo-colonial treatment of heretics and blasphemers; the meaning of the First Amendment; religious conflict over slavery; state regulation of sexuality and polygamy; state treatment of religious minorities; the Scopes Trial and scientific modernity; Christian responses to industrial capitalism; theologies of civil disobedience and nonviolence; and 20th-century religious battles over school prayer, civil rights, the military draft, abortion, and democracy itself.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Class participation; five informal response papers (350-450 words); two unit papers (4-6 pages); final paper (8-10 pages).

**Prerequisites:** None; open to all students.

**Enrollment Limit:** 20

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion and History majors, in order of descending seniority.

**Expected Class Size:** 20

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 217 (D2) HIST 257 (D2)

**Attributes:** HIST Group F Electives - U.S. + Canada

Fall 2021

SEM Section: 01 MR 2:35 pm - 3:50 pm Casey D. Bohlen

### **REL 218 (F) Foundations of China**

**Cross-listings:** GBST 212 ANTH 212 REL 218 HIST 214 ASIA 211 CHIN 214

#### **Secondary Cross-listing**

This course examines the foundational period of Chinese civilization, from the earliest evidence of human activity in the geographical region we now call China, through the end of the Han dynasty in the early third-century CE. This is the period that saw the creation and spread of the Chinese script (a writing system that would be the dominant one in East Asia for thousands of years), the teachings of Confucius (whose ideas continue to play a role in the lives of billions of people today), the construction of the Great Wall (which is not, as it turns out, visible from space), and the creation of the imperial bureaucratic system (that was, in essence, the progenitor of the modern bureaucratic state). We will proceed chronologically but focus on a set of thematic topics, including language and writing, religion and philosophy, art and architecture, politics and economics, and science and technology. While this course is entitled "Foundations of China," we will take a critical perspective on narratives, both Chinese and Western, that see Chinese history as an unbroken history of a single "civilization."

**Requirements/Evaluation:** short writing assignments (approximately 750-1000 words each), quizzes, a mid-term, and a final exam

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 40

**Enrollment Preferences:** Chinese majors, History majors, Religion majors, and Anthropology majors

**Expected Class Size:** 25

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

GBST 212 (D2) ANTH 212 (D2) REL 218 (D2) HIST 214 (D2) ASIA 211 (D1) CHIN 214 (D1)

**Attributes:** HIST Group B Electives - Asia

Fall 2021

LEC Section: 01 MWF 12:00 pm - 12:50 pm Christopher M. B. Nugent

### **REL 219 (S) Judaism Under Ancient Greek and Roman Imperialisms**

**Cross-listings:** CLAS 219 REL 219 JWST 219

#### **Primary Cross-listing**

How did ancient Greek and Roman empires shape the beginnings of Judaism? In this course, we will examine how Greek and Roman imperial systems of identity, ethnicity, law, religion, and knowledge affected Judaism as a religious and cultural system. We will pay particular attention to the ways that Jews/Judaeans responded to these imperial pressures, especially as those responses articulated "hybrid" versions of Judaism that were informed both by resistance to imperial centers as well as the sheer hegemony of those cultural systems. The course thus uses (and introduces students to) postcolonial theory to study the history of Judaism under Greek and Roman empires. Readings for this course will include a wide array of ancient Jewish works, such as the books of Maccabees, Flavius Josephus, Philo of Alexandria, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Mishnah. The course

will also include select readings from early Christian texts and postcolonial theory.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** active participation and preparation, papers

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 21

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion majors, Jewish Studies concentrators, Classics majors

**Expected Class Size:** 14

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

CLAS 219 (D2) REL 219 (D2) JWST 219 (D2)

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 220 (F) History of Islam and the Middle East since 1453**

**Cross-listings:** HIST 206 REL 220 ARAB 206

Secondary Cross-listing

This course offers an introduction to the major political and societal institutions that evolved under the aegis of what we might call "Islamic civilization" since the Ottoman conquest of Byzantine Constantinople in 1453. The principal geographic areas covered are the Middle East, North Africa, and to some extent the Balkans. Major topics include the rise of the Ottoman sultanate and their consolidation of rule, the Persian Safavid Empire, the rise of Western intervention and colonialism, nationalism, and state formation, and the challenges of and responses to modernization.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** attendance, participation, map exercise, 2 papers, midterm and take-home final

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 30

**Enrollment Preferences:** History and Arabic Studies majors, seniors

**Expected Class Size:** 30

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

HIST 206 (D2) REL 220 (D2) ARAB 206 (D2)

**Attributes:** HIST Group E Electives - Middle East

Fall 2021

LEC Section: 01 TR 9:55 am - 11:10 am Febe Armanios

### **REL 221 (F) Technologies of Religion in the Early Christian World**

**Cross-listings:** CLAS 221 REL 221

Primary Cross-listing

What is the relationship between religion and technology? How do various technologies affect the production and distribution of religious knowledge? Facilitate communication and interaction with the divine? Transform the religious self? In this course, we will look specifically at the uses and effects of technology on religion in the early Christian world. While focused most directly on the influence of technology on the development of early Christianity, the course will also explore the place of technology in coterminous movements: in "pagan" sacrifice, Neoplatonic divination, and Stoic practices of the self. By examining technologies of text production, sacrifice, memory, and the self, the course will shed light on early Christianity and its competing religious and philosophical movements, as well as on the nature of technology's relationship to religion.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** active preparation and participation, short reading response papers (1 page), and a final exam

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** none

**Enrollment Preferences:** none

**Expected Class Size:** 10-12

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

CLAS 221 (D1) REL 221 (D2)

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 222 (F) The Jewish Art of Interpretation**

**Cross-listings:** JWST 222 REL 222 COMP 211

Primary Cross-listing

*Turn it and turn it, for everything is in it.* This famous rabbinic dictum offers an enigmatic yet comprehensive account of the principles that have defined the Jewish practice of interpretation for over two millennia. The imperative to keep a text, word, image, or concept in constant motion, in order to generate as many meanings and cross-meanings as possible, challenges us to transform the act of interpretation itself into a virtuosic craft or art that can engage the human imagination as diversely and powerfully as the creation of the works being interpreted. At the same time, emphasis on the dynamism between text and interpreter should dispel the notion that only expansive works have expansive meanings. If interpretation itself is an art, then even the shortest text can contain "everything" within it when it participates in that art. This course will engage students in a radical experiment in the art of interpretation. Through a deep encounter with a selection of miniature texts, ranging from ancient rabbinic proverbs and medieval fables to the modern parables and fragments of Franz Kafka, as well as folklore and jokelore from every period in Jewish history up to the present, we will develop an interpretive practice that combines analytic, critical, and creative principles in both written and oral contexts. The goal throughout is to explore interactively how the making of meaning is an integral part of the human experience.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class participation, regular short written and oral assignments, and a final project

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 18

**Expected Class Size:** 18

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

JWST 222 (D2) REL 222 (D2) COMP 211 (D2)

**Attributes:** JWST Core Electives

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 223 (F) Revolt and Revelation in 20th-Century Americas**

**Cross-listings:** AFR 228 AMST 228 REL 223 LATS 228

Secondary Cross-listing

Writing in 1971, Dominican priest and Peruvian theologian Gustavo Gutierrez asked "Is the Church fulfilling a purely religious role when by its silence or friendly relationships it lends legitimacy to dictatorial and oppressive government?" Such a question encapsulates the sometimes agonistic and other times deeply intertwined relationships between religious institutions, religious thought, and movements for political transformation in the 20th century Americas. This course examines those forms of "God-talk" broadly termed "liberation theologies" that responded to and challenged social relationships of class, colonization, race, culture, gender, sexuality, (dis)ability, and ecology. These theologies were borne out of and in turn deeply shaped struggles against oppressive regimes and structures in the Americas, and as such we will focus on some specific theological writings--such as those of Gutierrez--and their relationship to distinct social movements and struggles over land, economy, and political power, especially in Brazil, El Salvador, Perú, and the United States of America between 1960-2000.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** participation, short writing exercises, a 5- to 6-page take-home midterm essay, and an 8- to 12-page final review essay

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 25

**Enrollment Preferences:** majors and concentrators

**Expected Class Size:** 12

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

AFR 228 (D2) AMST 228 (D2) REL 223 (D2) LATS 228 (D2)

**Attributes:** LATS Core Electives

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 224 (F) U.S. Latinx Religions**

**Cross-listings:** AMST 224 REL 224 LATS 224

#### **Secondary Cross-listing**

In this course, we will engage aspects of Latinx religious experiences, practices, and expressions in the United States of America. Given the plurality of Latinx communities and religious lives in the U.S.A., we can only consider select contexts that help us understand the challenges of studying and defining the "religious" and "hybridity" in Latinx contexts. We will survey certain selected religious traditions and practices --such as popular Catholic devotions to Guadalupe, crypto-Judaism, curanderismo, Latinx Muslims, and Santería--by focusing on particular moments of religious expression as elucidated in specific historiographies, ethnographies, art, literature, and film.

**Class Format:** discussion

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class participation, short writing exercises, a 3-page essay, a 5-page essay, and an 8-12-page final review essay/project

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 20

**Enrollment Preferences:** LATS concentrators and AMST and REL majors

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

AMST 224 (D2) REL 224 (D2) LATS 224 (D2)

**Attributes:** AMST Comp Studies in Race, Ethnicity, Diaspora LATS Core Electives

Fall 2021

SEM Section: 01 TR 2:35 pm - 3:50 pm Efrain Agosto

### **REL 226 (F) Spiritual But Not Religious**

**Cross-listings:** REL 226 ANTH 226

#### **Primary Cross-listing**

Today, more than one in five people in the United States identify as "none" when asked about their religious affiliation. Yet that does not mean that religious sentiment or spirituality is on the decline. On the contrary, talk of "spirituality" is more pervasive than ever in popular discourse. Increasingly Americans claim that they are "spiritual but not religious" or that they prefer "individual religion" over "organized religion." This course seeks to understand and investigate this phenomenon. What is the lived experience of being "spiritual but not religious"? What counts as spirituality? Is there a meaningful distinction between spirituality and religion? What does this distinction assume about the nature of organized religion? What is the history that led us to this ideology of individualized spirituality? And what are the social and political implications of this trend? We will explore these questions and study this phenomenon through an engagement with ethnography (the qualitative research method generally described as "participant-observation"). Over the course of the semester, students will be expected to conduct an ethnographic research project within local communities in Williams College and Williamstown. Alongside our central readings on spirituality, we will also be studying some background in the theory and practice of this methodology. Throughout the semester, students will work together on developing the practical skills necessary to conduct an ethnographic project, and will be gradually executing their own individual projects. This will include: designing a feasible project and research question, selecting research sites and interlocutors, taking field-notes and conducting interviews, and finally analyzing data and writing an ethnographic essay.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** regular reading responses; semester-long research project with frequent small assignments building up to the final product (15- to 20-page paper)

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Expected Class Size:** 10-15

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 226 (D2) ANTH 226 (D2)

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 228 (F) Zen and the Art of American Literature**

**Cross-listings:** REL 228 ENGL 239 AMST 238

#### **Secondary Cross-listing**

Just one hundred years ago, few Americans knew the first thing about Buddhism. But in 2021, who hasn't heard of (or even tried) mindfulness or meditation? Buddhist ideas and practices now seem ubiquitous, available even in the form of smartphone apps like Headspace and Ten Percent Happier. In this class, we'll explore how Buddhism came to be the profoundly important cultural force in American life that it is today. We'll read some Buddhist American literary texts, like Ruth Ozeki's wondrous novel, *A Tale for the Time Being*. And we'll range far beyond the world of literature into other cultural domains in which Buddhism has had a deep impact, like environmentalism, psychotherapy, and Western attitudes towards death and dying. We'll also give special attention to the role that Buddhism is playing in the struggle for racial justice (from bell hooks to Black Lives Matter). And we'll engage in an experiential investigation of the benefits of incorporating contemplative practices like meditation into the classroom: students in the course will learn a variety of meditation techniques, and we'll spend some time each class practicing and reflecting upon those practices. Students will be expected to meditate outside of class as well (2-3 times per week) and keep a meditation journal. No prior experience with meditation is necessary. Just an open mind.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Since this is an experiential course, presence is essential and will be strictly required (so after two allowed absences, each subsequent absence will lower a student's final course grade by 1/3 of a letter grade: A- to B+, for example). Other requirements: a weekly meditation journal, various informal in-class and take-home writing assignments, and a final 8- to 10-page essay.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 50

**Enrollment Preferences:** Students who preregister should fill out an expression of interest form at [www.tinyurl.com/Engl239Fall2021](http://www.tinyurl.com/Engl239Fall2021) by May 20 (day after pre-reg closes). Preference will go to juniors and seniors, with a few seats saved for sophomores (10 max); no first years.

**Expected Class Size:** 50

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 228 (D2) ENGL 239 (D1) AMST 238 (D2)

**Attributes:** ENGL Literary Histories C EXPE Experiential Education Courses

Fall 2021

LEC Section: 01 MW 7:00 pm - 8:15 pm Bernard J. Rhie

### **REL 232 (S) Buddhist Economics**

**Cross-listings:** REL 232 ASIA 232 ASST 232

#### **Primary Cross-listing**

Or, "From 'Shark Tank' to 'Monk Cave': Business and Socially Engaged Buddhism". Television shows like Shark Tank, featuring a panel of potential investors who consider propositions from aspiring entrepreneurs, evinces that popular culture values only the making of profit. In such a capitalistic

world, who are the "winners" and "losers"? What impact does a business/product have beyond its intended consumer benefits? What is the Buddhist response to business and commerce and its overall effects on individuals, society, and ecology? This course will challenge students to research, analyze, and devise resolutions for real world issues, by having students employ Buddhist solutions informed by concepts such as compassion, interconnectedness, and Socially Engaged Buddhism. Students will scrutinize the related concept of "structural violence". We will look at examples from Bhutan's "Gross Domestic Happiness", Thailand's "Sufficiency Economy", China's state-led religious charities under the name of "Humanistic Buddhism", as well as the ordination of trees. This course hopes to prepare students to be critical, rather than merely passive, world citizens, especially in the realm of business, and to be more conscious and aware of their everyday life choices and its impact on every aspect of society.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** attendance and active participation 20%; experiential exercises 25% (i.e., critical reflection that incorporates class readings with personal experience of the various experiential exercises conducted throughout the term: mainly, a 30-day social-media cleanse, and meditation sessions); Mid-term exam (in-class: identification terms and short essay) 25%; Final project and presentation 30% (the final grade includes initial consultation with the instructor regarding topic selection, annotated bibliography, project outline, final presentation, and final written report)

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 8

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religious Studies majors and Asian Studies majors

**Expected Class Size:** 8

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 232 (D2) ASIA 232 (D2) ASST 232 (D2)

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 233 (S) Islam and the West: A Clash of Civilizations?**

"This idea that all religions share the same values is bulls\*\*t and we need to call it bulls\*\*t," the popular political commentator and critic Bill Maher has said on multiple occasions. "If you are in this religion [Islam], you probably do have values that are at odds [with American values]. This is what liberals don't want to recognize." Maher has acquired a reputation for making strong statements like this about the need for Americans (and liberals in particular) to stand up for their secular liberal values, which are in conflict with and superior to the values of Islam. Maher's comments are only one recent manifestation of a long line of pundits making such claims. This is best exemplified by Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" thesis, which famously predicted that there would inevitably be a violent clash between the Islamic and Western Civilizations. This course investigates such ideas about the inherent conflict between Islam and the West. How should we understand the nature of Islamic and Western civilizations and the relation between them? What is the history of this relationship? What has given rise to these standard representations of Islam and Muslims? What are the political stakes and consequences of these representations? How should we understand the phenomenon of "Islamophobia"? We will explore these questions through an in-depth and critical investigation into the history of Euro-American nationalism and colonialism, the concepts of "civilizations" and "religions", the history of modern Islam, and the nature of Orientalism and secularism.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** regular reading responses, 5- to 6-page midterm essay, group social-media project (research-based, creating a video essay), final 7- to 8-page essay

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 25

**Expected Class Size:** 20

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 234 (F) What is Islam? (DPE)**

**Cross-listings:** ARAB 234 REL 234 GBST 234 HIST 208

Primary Cross-listing

This course introduces students to Islam as a varied and contested historical tradition. The course will trace the historical development of Islam, focusing on religious and intellectual thought, political developments, and the practices and lived lives of Muslims. We will begin with situating the rise of Islam within the context of late antiquity, followed by an examination of the life of Muhammad, and the rise of Muslim empires. These developments

will form the framework through which we investigate the theological, philosophical, legal, mystical, and literary writings of Muslims from the classical to the early modern periods of Islamic history. The main aim of the course is to develop a framework for understanding the historical developments through which Muslims have constructed ideas about normativity, authority, and orthodoxy in debates around Islam. Sources will include pre-modern historical and religious texts (in translation).

**Requirements/Evaluation:** reading responses, two essays, final exam

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 20

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion majors (or those considering Religion as a major), then Arabic Studies and History majors

**Expected Class Size:** 20

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2) (DPE)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

ARAB 234 (D2) REL 234 (D2) GBST 234 (D2) HIST 208 (D2)

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** This course looks role of power, in particular imperial and colonial power in the construction of religion. To that end, the course will explore how the rise of Muslim empires shaped the construction of pre-modern Islam and subsequently the role of European colonialism in shaping the emergence of modern Islam. This course will teach students critical tools in postcolonial theory about the relationship between power and the production of knowledge and the agency of the colonized.

**Attributes:** HIST Group E Electives - Middle East

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 235 (S) The Garden in the Ancient World**

**Cross-listings:** COMP 235 REL 235 CLAS 235 ENVI 232

Secondary Cross-listing

Drawing on the literature, art, and archaeology of ancient gardens and on real gardens of the present day, this course examines the very nature and experience of the garden and the act of gardening. Using a multi-disciplinary approach, we will explore the garden as a paradise; as a locus for philosophical discussion and religious encounter; as a site of labor, conquest, and resistance; and as a place for solace, inspiration, and desire. This course will be grounded in crucial readings from antiquity, such as the Hebrew Bible, Homer, Sappho, Cicero, Lucretius, Vergil, Horace, Columella, and Augustine, and in the perspectives of more modern writers, from Jane Austen and Tom Stoppard to contemporary cultural historian George McKay. Ultimately, our goal is to analyze conceptions and expressions of beauty, power, and love-in the garden. All readings are in translation.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class participation, short written assignments, and a final project

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 20

**Enrollment Preferences:** Classics majors

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

COMP 235 (D1) REL 235 (D2) CLAS 235 (D1) ENVI 232 (D1)

**Attributes:** ENVI Humanities, Arts + Social Science Electives

Spring 2022

SEM Section: 01 TF 2:35 pm - 3:50 pm Nicole G. Brown

### **REL 236 (S) Reading the Qur'an**

**Cross-listings:** ARAB 236 REL 236 COMP 213 GBST 236

Primary Cross-listing



In the nearly 1500 years of Islamic history, the Qur'an has been a central source of spiritual insight, ethical and legal guidance, sacred stories, and theological principles. Considered the divine word of God, the Qur'an is central to devotional life. This course will explore the Qur'an as a text that is always in a state of production. We will focus significantly on close readings of the text of the Qur'an, in addition to pre-modern and modern Qur'anic exegesis. The course will begin with a historical account of the revelation and collection of the Qur'an, placing the form and content of the text in the context of 7th century Arab society and the life of the Prophet. We will then study Qur'anic commentaries to discuss how Muslims have drawn theological, legal, philosophical, and mystical meaning from the Qur'an. We will pose some of the following questions: What do the different exegetical methods tell us about the intertextual nature of the Qur'an? How have these shifting notions affected the meaning made from Qur'anic verses and passages? What role do interpretive communities play in determining what the Qur'an says? Lastly, through an exploration of the art of Qur'an recitation, calligraphy, and Qur'an manuscripts, we will explore the ways in which the Qur'an is also an object of devotion in Muslim life.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class participation, weekly reading responses, 3- to 4-page midterm paper, and a final project with a media component and a 4- to 6-page analytical essay

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion and Arabic Studies majors

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

ARAB 236 (D2) REL 236 (D2) COMP 213 (D1) GBST 236 (D2)

Spring 2022

SEM Section: 01 MW 8:30 am - 9:45 am Saadia Yacoob

**REL 237 (S) Islam in the United States: Race, Religion, Politics (DPE)**

**Cross-listings:** REL 237 AFR 237 AMST 237

**Primary Cross-listing**

Malcolm X is one of the most iconic yet controversial figures in the black freedom struggle in the United States. He is also arguably the most prominent and influential Muslim in the history of the United States. His story and legacy powerfully illustrate the complex intersections of Muslim identity, political resistance, and national belonging. From the early period of "Black Muslim" movements represented by Malcolm X, to the current "War on Terror" era, American Muslims have faced a complex intersection of exclusions and marginalization, in relation to national belonging, race, and religion. Taking Malcolm X as our point of departure, this course examines how American Muslims have navigated these multiple layers of marginalization. We will therefore consider how the broader socio-political contexts that Muslims are a part of shape their visions of Islam, and how they contest these competing visions among themselves. In so doing, we will examine the complex relation between religion, race, and politics in the United States. Throughout the course, we will be engaging with historical and anthropological material, autobiographies, comics, documentaries, films, historical primary-source documents, and social media materials. The course fosters critical thinking about diversity by challenging assumptions of who Muslims are, what being American means, and what Islam is. It also focuses on the complex interaction of different dimensions of diversity, from religion to ideology, race, nationality, ethnicity, culture, gender, and language.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** regular reading responses, midterm essay, final exam/essay

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 20

**Enrollment Preferences:** Majors and concentrators in REL, AFR, and AMST

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2) (DPE)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 237 (D2) AFR 237 (D2) AMST 237 (D2)

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** The course fosters critical thinking about diversity by challenging assumptions of who Muslims are, what being

American means, and what Islam is. It also focuses on the complex interaction of different dimensions of diversity, from religion to ideology, race, nationality, ethnicity, culture, gender, and language.

**Attributes:** AMST Comp Studies in Race, Ethnicity, Diaspora

Spring 2022

SEM Section: 01 MR 2:35 pm - 3:50 pm Zaid Adhami

**REL 238 (F) Islam and Reason (DPE)**

In an essay on the "reality of Islam," the popular New Atheist writer, Sam Harris, concludes: "All civilized nations must unite in condemnation of a theology that now threatens to destabilize much of the Earth... It is time we realized that the endgame for civilization is not political correctness. It is not respect for the abject religious certainties of the mob. It is reason." These words forcefully express the common sentiment that the fanatical blind faith demanded by "mainstream Islam" poses a major threat to the so-called civilized world. Islam is thus seen as exemplifying the irrational dogmatism of religion par excellence. This course will critically examine such assumptions, by exploring how Muslim philosophers and theologians throughout the history of Islam have addressed a variety of questions, such as: Is faith compatible with reason and rationality? What is the relation between reason and scripture? What modes of perception, reasoning, and knowledge are involved in religious belief? What room is there for doubt, skepticism, and critique in Islam? We will explore these questions through an array of primary and secondary readings in Islamic theology, philosophy, mysticism, and ethics, as well as anthropological engagements with lived Islam. Through these explorations, we will also critically reflect on our own cultural assumptions about religious belief, the nature of reason and knowledge, and the politics and power-dynamics of reason and rationality.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Regular discussion posts; Midterm essay; Final essay

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion majors

**Expected Class Size:** 5-10

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2) (DPE)

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** This course requires students to engage deeply with a very different philosophical universe than that of the modern West. This is also meant to prompt a critical engagement with our own cultural and philosophical assumptions about reason, knowledge, and religious belief. Finally, we will also reflect on the politics and power-dynamics of reason and rationality, considering how dominant modes of thinking are designated as "reason" and others are relegated to being objects of critique.

**Attributes:** PHIL Related Courses

Fall 2021

SEM Section: 01 MW 11:00 am - 12:15 pm Zaid Adhami

**REL 239 (F) The Modern Middle East (DPE)**

**Cross-listings:** HIST 207 JWST 217 REL 239 ARAB 207 GBST 101 LEAD 207

**Secondary Cross-listing**

This survey course addresses the main economic, religious, political and cultural trends in the modern Middle East. Topics to be covered include the cultural diversity of the Middle East, relations with Great Powers, the impact of imperialism, the challenge of modernity, the creation of nation states and nationalist ideologies, the discovery of oil, radical religious groups, and war and peace. Throughout the course these significant changes will be evaluated in light of their impact on the lives of a variety of individuals in the region and especially how they have grappled differently with increasing Western political and economic domination.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** participation, two short papers, quizzes, midterm, and final exam

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 40

**Enrollment Preferences:** History & Arabic majors, and Jewish studies concentrators; completion of course admission survey if overenrolled

**Expected Class Size:** 30-40

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2) (DPE)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

HIST 207 (D2) JWST 217 (D2) REL 239 (D2) ARAB 207 (D2) GBST 101 (D2) LEAD 207 (D2)

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** This course introduces students to the incredible diversity of the Middle East. It will explore how people of different backgrounds and in different situations have responded in diverse ways to the problems of the day. Students will acquire the critical tools to assess a number of interpretations of the past and how to understand and appreciate the many narratives in the Middle East today that have profound political and cultural implications.

**Attributes:** HIST Group E Electives - Middle East JWST Elective Courses LEAD Facets or Domains of Leadership

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 241 (F) History of Sexuality**

**Cross-listings:** REL 241 HIST 292 GBST 241 WGSS 239

#### **Primary Cross-listing**

Is sexuality an immutable aspect of who we are or is it socially constructed? How have people understood sex and sexuality throughout history? Why does religion have any say in the sexual lives of individuals and society? What are sexual transgressions and why are they punished? Is sex a commodity that can be exchanged for money? Is sex political? This course will explore these questions through a historical approach, focusing in particular on the shifting understanding of sex and sexuality across historical time and different geographical regions. In investigating the category of sexuality, this course will push us to consider three key questions: 1) Is sexuality a useful category for historical analysis, 2) how have our assumptions regarding sexuality and sexual ethics taken shape and changed over time and 3) how do social, cultural, political, and economic conditions affect changing meanings of sexuality. Historical studies will be read in conjunction with different theoretical frameworks about sexuality. Reading historical accounts of sexuality alongside theoretical pieces will allow us to consider how historians construct an argument and the influence of theoretical frameworks in shaping scholarship. Some of the theorists we will read in the course include: Michel Foucault, David Halperin, Afsaneh Najmabadi, Valerie Traub, and Carla Freccero.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** reading responses, two essays, and final research paper

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion, History, and Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies majors

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 241 (D2) HIST 292 (D2) GBST 241 (D2) WGSS 239 (D2)

**Attributes:** HIST Group G Electives - Premodern

Fall 2021

SEM Section: 01 TR 8:30 am - 9:45 am Saadia Yacoob

### **REL 242 (S) Women, Gender, and Sexuality in Islam (DPE)**

**Cross-listings:** REL 242 WGSS 242 ARAB 242

#### **Primary Cross-listing**

The figure of the Muslim woman is an object of intense scrutiny in Western society. Claims that Muslim women are oppressed and the incompatibility of Islam and feminism abound. This course will consider women and gender roles in the Islamic tradition and how Muslim women have interpreted and negotiated these discourses. We will explore questions of masculinity, femininity, and sexuality across various historical periods as well as through contemporary Muslim feminist scholarship and literature (including film and novels). We will begin with insights into the politics of representing Muslim women, exploring how Muslim women are depicted in popular culture and media and ask the crucial question: do Muslim women need saving? We will then explore: how Muslim women have claimed religious authority through scriptural interpretation; how they have negotiated their position in Islamic

law both historically and in contemporary Muslim societies; and the lives of pious women in Sufism--the mystical tradition of Islam. We will conclude with Muslim feminist scholarship and recent works on Islamic masculinities. Throughout the course, emphasis will be placed on the diversity of interpretations in Islam around women, gender, and sexuality and on Muslim women's own articulations about their religious identity and experiences. Some of the topics covered in this course include: marriage and divorce, slavery, modesty and veiling, and homosexuality.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** weekly discussion post, midterm essay, and final paper (6-8 pages)

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion, Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies and Arabic majors

**Expected Class Size:** 14

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2) (DPE)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 242 (D2) WGSS 242 (D2) ARAB 242 (D2)

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** This course explores the relationship between gender, authority, and civilizational discourse. To that end, the course will explore: 1) how assumptions about gender shaped the legal and Quranic exegetical tradition and Muslim feminist critiques. 2) The construction of the oppressed Muslim woman in justifying military invasion and nationalistic rhetoric. This course will introduce students to critical tools in decolonial feminism and the relationship between gender and power.

Spring 2022

SEM Section: 01 TR 8:30 am - 9:45 am Saadia Yacoob

### **REL 243 (F) Islamic Law: Past and Present**

**Cross-listings:** WGSS 243 ARAB 243 REL 243 HIST 302

#### **Primary Cross-listing**

From fear of the Shari'a to its implementation in so called "Islamic countries," Islamic law is perhaps best associated with draconian punishments and the oppression of women. Islamic law is ever present in our public discourse today and yet little is known about it. This course is designed to give students a foundation in the substantive teachings of Islamic law. Islamic law stretches back over 1400 years and is grounded in the Quran, the life example of the Prophet Muhammad, and juridical discourse. Teetering between legal and ethical discourse, the Shari'a moves between what we normally consider law as well as ethics and etiquette. The course will explore four key aspects of the law: its historical development, its ethical and legal content, the law in practice, and the transformation of Islamic law through colonialism and into the contemporary. Specific areas we will cover include: ritual piety, family and personal status law, criminal law, and dietary rules.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** weekly responses, four 2- to 3-page essays

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Enrollment Preferences:** majors

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

WGSS 243 (D2) ARAB 243 (D2) REL 243 (D2) HIST 302 (D2)

**Attributes:** HIST Group B Electives - Asia HIST Group E Electives - Middle East JLST Interdepartmental Electives

Fall 2021

SEM Section: 01 MW 11:00 am - 12:15 pm Saadia Yacoob

### **REL 244 (F) Mind and Persons in Indian Thought**

**Cross-listings:** ASIA 244 PHIL 245 REL 244

**Primary Cross-listing**

In this course, we follow the Indian philosophical conversation concerning the self and the nature of consciousness, particularly as they are found in its various Yogic traditions. 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, which radicalizes the critique of the self into a global anti-realist and skeptical stance. We also examine the Yogacara 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 questions that have challenged philosophers in both traditions.

**Class Format:** discussion

**Requirements/Evaluation:** full attendance and participation, three short essays (6 pages each)

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 18

**Enrollment Preferences:** selection based on the basis of relevant background

**Expected Class Size:** 18

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

ASIA 244 (D2) PHIL 245 (D2) REL 244 (D2)

Fall 2021

LEC Section: 01 M 7:00 pm - 9:40 pm Georges B. Dreyfus

**REL 246 (S) India's Identities: Nation, Community, & Individual (DPE) (WS)**

**Cross-listings:** ASST 246 ASIA 246 REL 246 ANTH 246 WGSS 246

**Primary Cross-listing**

This tutorial considers India's multiple and intersecting identities, in relation to climate emergencies, resource scarcities, and ongoing struggles for power and status across very different parts of India. We examine the intersectional identities that produce solidarity and opposition within landscapes always already structured by power and inequity. How do communal and individual identities such as gender, class, caste, sexuality or religion shape social conflict and ongoing struggles for power in India today? We examine key moments in Indian history that that continue to produce social conflict and fluidity such as Partition, the riots in Gujarat, Hyderabad, and Delhi that have shaped the modern landscape of communal identity, as well as the contested border such as Ladakh as well as Jammu & Kashmir. Our readings will include ethnographic, sociological, historical fiction, and oral history. Students choose their own topics to delve into for final weeks of the semester.

**Class Format:** Meeting weekly in pairs with tutorial partner to discuss texts and student essays.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** weekly writing assignments and tutorial attendance every week

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** Majors in Anthropology, Sociology, Religion, Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies, concentrators in Asian Studies, STS

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2) (DPE) (WS)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

ASST 246 (D2) ASIA 246 (D2) REL 246 (D2) ANTH 246 (D2) WGSS 246 (D2)

**Writing Skills Notes:** This tutorial involves weekly essays of 1500 words or oral responses, intensive feedback on writing, and individual writing chats with instruction in the middle of the semester.

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** This course fulfills the Difference, Power, and Equity by theorizing the ways that social power and equity are

sources of struggle and division within Indian society. It analyzes the intersectional identities of class, caste, gender, and religion in shaping differential access to power and equity within India today.

**Attributes:** PHLH Bioethics + Interpretations of Health WGSS Racial Sexual + Cultural Diversity Courses

Not offered current academic year

**REL 247 (F) Anti-Muslim Racism: A Global Perspective (DPE)**

**Cross-listings:** PSCI 244 GBST 243 REL 247

**Secondary Cross-listing**

The racialization of Islam and Muslims has been constitutive to how they have been imagined in Europe and elsewhere. This course looks at how difference works and has worked, how identities and power relationships have been grounded in lived experience, and how one might both critically and productively approach questions of difference, power, and equity. It goes back to the founding moments of an imagined white (at the beginning Christian) Europe and how the racialization of Muslim and Jewish bodies was central to this project, and how anti-Muslim racism continues to be relevant in our world today. The course will not only show how Muslims were constructed as subjects in history, politics and society from the very beginning of the making of Europe and the Americas to the end of the Cold War to the post-9/11 era. Rather, it also looks at how Muslims live through Islamophobia. It looks at processes of racialization of Muslims within the Muslim community and between Muslim communities, while also considering which agencies Muslims take to determine their own future. The course draws from anthropology, gender studies, history, political science, religious studies, postcolonial studies, decolonial studies, and sociology.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Active class participation, two response papers, and a comprehensive, open-book and open-note final exam.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 25

**Enrollment Preferences:** Global Studies concentrators and Religion majors

**Expected Class Size:** 20

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Unit Notes:** Also qualifies for the GBST Urbanizing World track

**Distributions:** (D2) (DPE)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

PSCI 244 (D2) GBST 243 (D2) REL 247 (D2)

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** The course critically examines difference, power, and equity. Thematically, it looks at the racialization of Islam and the intersection of race, religion, class and gender in the construction of the 'Muslim problem' from a historical as well as a global contemporary perspective. It aims to promote a self-conscious and critical engagement with the practice and experience of difference, especially as it relates to the dynamics of power in structuring that experience.

Fall 2021

SEM Section: 01 TR 8:30 am - 9:45 am Farid Hafez

**REL 249 (S) Anti-Semitism (DPE)**

**Cross-listings:** JWST 249 REL 249

**Primary Cross-listing**

This course will investigate intellectual traditions, political movements, and cultural objects that portray Jews, Jewishness, or Judaism as essentially pernicious. We will analyze materials from a variety of times and places, including the ancient world, the medieval period, and the present day. We will assess the impact of anti-Semitism on the lives of Jews and non-Jews. But we will also read theoretical approaches to the study of anti-Semitism that raise key questions for our investigation. Where does the term "anti-Semitism" come from and how exactly should it be defined? Is anti-Semitism a continuous phenomenon that connects every claim of Jewish perniciousness, wherever it is alleged, for over two thousand years of human history? Or should every context be treated as fundamentally distinct, so that the claim of Jewish perniciousness is presumed to have a distinct meaning, origin, and purpose in each case? What motivates charges of Jewish perniciousness? What are the particular threats typically alleged to be posed by Jews, Jewishness, and Judaism? How do constructions of Jewish perniciousness fit with constructions of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, class, sexuality, and nationality in different times and places?

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Three 5-7 page papers, class participation

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** Jewish Studies concentrators, Religion majors, and students who have taken JWST 203

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2) (DPE)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

JWST 249 (D2) REL 249 (D2)

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** This course will introduce students to discursive, institutional, and social structures that have organized the stigmatization, domination, and persecution of Jews in various geographic locations for over two thousand years. An understanding of these structures is crucial to understanding contemporary dynamics of difference and power. Students will also learn how anti-Semitism intersects with constructions of race, gender, class, religion, ethnicity, and nation.

**Attributes:** JWST Core Electives

Spring 2022

SEM Section: 01 TF 1:00 pm - 2:25 pm Jeffrey I. Israel

### **REL 250 (F) Scholars, Saints and Immortals: Virtue Ethics in East Asia**

**Cross-listings:** ASIA 250 REL 250

#### **Primary Cross-listing**

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 "secular saints" as diverse as Martin Luther King Jr. and General Patton, George Washington and Cesar Chavez. This course will explore the cultural functions of moral paragons and philosophies of virtue in East Asia by introducing students to examples from Chinese and Japanese history, ranging from Confucian articulations of the ideal scholar-bureaucrat to Buddhist conceptions of the Bodhisattva to Taoist immortals. It will also address the history of ethical thought in East Asia, focusing particular attention on conceptions of "Virtue Ethics." This approach has come to be seen by some contemporary analytic philosophers as a way out of the impasse produced by ethical relativism and the loss of theological rationales for moral action. Readings will include Euro-American philosophers such as Nietzsche and MacIntyre as well as primary texts in translation by Chuang-tzu, Confucius, Shantideva and others. The fall 2021 iteration of the course will have a special focus with a few additional readings on idealized communities and political "utopias."

**Class Format:** discussion

**Requirements/Evaluation:** active participation, short writing assignments, midterm, and a self-scheduled final exam

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 30

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion and Asian Studies majors

**Expected Class Size:** 20

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

ASIA 250 (D2) REL 250 (D2)

**Attributes:** PHIL Related Courses

Fall 2021

LEC Section: 01 MR 1:10 pm - 2:25 pm Jason Josephson Storm

## REL 253 (S) Spiritual Crossroads: Religious Life in Southeast Asia

**Cross-listings:** ANTH 233 ASST 233 REL 253 ASIA 233

### Secondary Cross-listing

No region of the world presents a richer tapestry of religious beliefs, practices, and institutions than Southeast Asia. Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam are all to be found and all of them interpenetrate and contend with each other and with a deep undergirding of animism, shamanism, and mystical folk belief systems. This course will survey these religious traditions through time and space, looking in particular at the growing tension between religion and the state as fundamentalism and religious militancy have spread into the region in recent times. All of Southeast Asia will be covered, but particular attention will be devoted to Indonesia, where religious blending and the growth of new fundamentalism are both especially marked.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** midterm, short essays, term paper

**Prerequisites:** none; open to non-majors

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

ANTH 233 (D2) ASST 233 (D2) REL 253 (D2) ASIA 233 (D2)

Not offered current academic year

## REL 254 (S) The Theory and Practice of Meditation in the Modern World

This course invites students to examine theoretically and experientially meditation. Throughout the course, we examine meditations belonging to various Buddhist traditions through our own practice. We study some of the manuals where these meditations are taught and connect these practices to some of the more important ideas of the tradition. In studying and practicing meditation, we follow a gradual approach, starting from the most basic practices to more advanced ones. We also connect the practices and ideas we consider with modern scientific approaches, examining practices such as mindfulness therapy and the practice of positive emotions from a psychological perspective. In the process, we re-contextualize Buddhist ideas by connecting them with modern approaches, particularly those inspired by biology, psychology and ecology. Throughout the course, students will keep a daily practice of meditation and record their experiences in a journal so as to be able to come to an informed understanding combining a theoretical grasp of the issues raised by meditation and their own personal appreciation.

**Class Format:** mixture of lecture, discussion, and practice of meditation

**Requirements/Evaluation:** full attendance and participation, regular practice of meditation, two middle-length essays, and a meditation journal

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 25

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion majors, students who have taken REL 288

**Expected Class Size:** 18

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

Spring 2022

LEC Section: 01 MWF 8:30 am - 9:45 am Georges B. Dreyfus

## REL 255 (F) Buddhism: Ideas and Practices

**Cross-listings:** ANTH 255 REL 255 ASIA 255

### Primary Cross-listing

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 examining 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 shamanistic rituals. We then consider the transformations that Buddhism is undergoing in contemporary society, examining the rise of meditation movement, the changing role of monks and laity, the resurgence of



the nun 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 a modern global consumerist society? What are the transformations involved in this process and the role that Buddhism can play in such a global society? Should Buddhists take advantage of the opportunities of this new global culture or should they adopt a critical stance toward its consumerist values?

**Class Format:** discussion

**Requirements/Evaluation:** full attendance and active participation; two essays

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 25

**Expected Class Size:** 25

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

ANTH 255 (D2) REL 255 (D2) ASIA 255 (D2)

**Attributes:** PHIL Related Courses

Fall 2021

LEC Section: 01 MWF 8:30 am - 9:45 am Georges B. Dreyfus

**REL 256 (F) Buddhism, Sex, & Gender: #MeToo Then and Now (DPE)**

**Cross-listings:** ANTH 256 WGSS 256 REL 256 ASST 256 ASIA 256

**Primary Cross-listing**

This course considers the feminist voices that have been part and parcel of Buddhist practices, texts, and institutions for most of its 2500-year history. We will conduct a historical genealogy of Buddhist voices that illustrate the fluid and disruptive role of sex, gender, caste, and class in relation to individual behavior and social relations. How did the Buddha's inner revolution produce a set of practices that both reject and reinforce existing binaries and social hierarchies of sex and gender, and with what effects? We will trace a feminist voice that decries harassment, assault, and systemic sexism within Buddhist communities from the first female disciples (Theri) of the Buddha to the current #MeToo era of embattled toxic masculinity. Along the way, we explore a literary canon that contains misogyny and 'she devils' alongside a rich tapestry of female divinities, transgender fluidity, and female liberation. We pursue an intersectional analysis of Buddhist traditions and texts by considering the multiple forms of social hierarchy--gender, sexuality, race, and class--that Buddhism has attempted to transcend. We begin by considering three women in the Buddha's life--his mother (Maya), his stepmother/aunt (Gotami), and his wife (Yashodhara)--as well as the tales of the first enlightened Buddhist women whose topics include prostitution, patriarchy, sexism, and pathetic husbands, as well as their own decaying bodies and beauty. Our next theme is the myriad ways that gender is both produced and deconstructed in Buddhist discourses on enlightenment and the human body. Our final theme considers a range of monastic memoirs, including a Buddhist black nun who left Harvard to take ordination in Thailand, and a Dutchman who studied Zen in Japan. We close by examining the current debates in the U.S. and Asia that seek to combat systemic racism, sexism, and casteism in Buddhist traditions.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class discussion, reading responses (3-4 pages), writing chat, final research paper (12 pages)

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Enrollment Preferences:** Anthropology, Religion, Asian Studies, Women's, Gender and Sexuality majors

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2) (DPE)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

ANTH 256 (D2) WGSS 256 (D2) REL 256 (D2) ASST 256 (D2) ASIA 256 (D2)

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** The course fulfills DPE because it seeks to theorize the role of difference (gender, sex, class, and race) and intersectionality within Buddhist texts, practices, and institutions. It considers how Buddhist practices and institutions both deconstruct and reproduce social inequality.

**Attributes:** WGSS Racial Sexual + Cultural Diversity Courses

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 257 (S) Tibetan Buddhism: Embodying Wisdom and Compassion**

We begin by considering the basic ideas and practices of Tibetan Buddhist traditions and the ways in which the ideals of wisdom and compassion have shaped Tibetan culture. We then proceed to examine particular aspects of the tradition such as the role of the teacher or lama and their various manifestations, from the exotic figure of the tantric guru to that of the Dalai Lama, a charismatic world teacher engaged in both religious and political affairs. We also examine a wide range of lay and monastic practices, from the life of large monasteries and their unique culture to the practices of nuns and lay people. Throughout this course, we consider not just the variety of exoteric practice forms but also the esoteric tantric tradition that pervades Tibetan life. We examine the various meditative practices that revolve around this profound and often misunderstood tradition. In doing so, we do not consider tantra as just a set of strange practices sometimes revolving around sex and violence. Rather we examine how it manifests a philosophy of embodiment that has profound implications for thinking about who we are as human beings.

**Class Format:** discussion

**Requirements/Evaluation:** full attendance and participation, two essays

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 25

**Expected Class Size:** 25

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**Attributes:** PHIL Related Courses

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 258 (F) American Conservatism**

**Cross-listings:** HIST 378 REL 258

**Secondary Cross-listing**

This course traces the history of modern conservatism in the United States, from the early 20th century to the present. Students will examine the key ideas, leaders, and social movements that fueled and defined the rise of the modern right, broadly construed. In the process, they will go beyond electoral politics, exploring the relationship between conservatism and American life more broadly - especially in the realms of race relations, gender and sexuality, religion, and capitalism. Students will be asked to think historically, considering how the right rose from obscurity to political ascendance over the course of the 20th century. And they will be asked to engage theoretically, considering what (if anything) has defined conservatism in principle and in practice. In the process, they will examine such topics as Christian fundamentalism; anti-New Deal organizing; Cold War nationalism; the GOP's 'Southern Strategy;' law and order politics; anti-feminism and the culture wars; neoliberal economics; and neoconservative foreign policy.

**Class Format:** This course will be hybrid -- accessible to both on-campus and fully remote students. It is designed as a seminar, in which course meetings will revolve around synchronous discussion. Remote learners will be expected to digitally attend and participate in those meetings through Zoom (or a similar program).

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Participation in group discussion; five response papers (300-400 words); two essays (4-6 pp); final research paper (8-10 pp).

**Prerequisites:** None, open to all students.

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** History and Religion majors.

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

HIST 378 (D2) REL 258 (D2)

**Attributes:** HIST Group F Electives - U.S. + Canada

Not offered current academic year

**REL 259 (S) Ethics of Jewish American Fiction****Cross-listings:** ENGL 259 JWST 259 REL 259**Primary Cross-listing**

After the Second World War, Jewish American writers who wrote about Jewish characters and Jewish themes were increasingly celebrated as central figures in American fiction. Isaac Bashevis Singer, Bernard Malamud, Saul Bellow, Cynthia Ozick and Philip Roth are among those who gained prominence in this period. These writers were literary innovators and often addressed broad humanistic themes. But they also struggled with profound questions that arose in the postwar period about Jewishness, the legacy of the Holocaust, and what it means to be an American. In this course we will read the above authors and others. We will focus, in particular, on the distinctive ethical and political ideas, emotions, and aspirations that animate their work. The course will begin with a study of theoretical approaches that will provide the basis for our ethical criticism: we will read, for instance, Lionel Trilling, Wayne Booth, Martha Nussbaum, and Noël Carroll. Then we will delve into the fiction, following a trail that begins in the postwar period and continues in fictions by Erica Jong, Rebecca Goldstein, Michael Chabon, Gary Shteyngart, and others. Can we find a distinctive Jewish American ethics in Jewish American fiction?

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class participation, one take-home exam on theoretical approaches to ethical criticism; four short essays**Prerequisites:** none**Enrollment Limit:** 19**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion majors, Jewish Studies concentrators, and English majors**Expected Class Size:** 18**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, no fifth course option**Distributions:** (D2)**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

ENGL 259 (D1) JWST 259 (D2) REL 259 (D2)

**Attributes:** JWST Core Electives**Not offered current academic year****REL 261 (F) Rastafari: Dread, Politics, Agency****Cross-listings:** REL 261 AFR 299 PSCI 233**Secondary Cross-listing**

The emergence of Rastafari in the twentieth century marked a distinct phase in the theory and practice of political agency. From its heretical roots in Jamaica, Garveyism, Ethiopianism, and Pan-Africanism, Rastafari has evolved from a Caribbean theological movement to an international political actor. This course investigates the political theory of Rastafari in order to develop intellectual resources for theorizing the concept of agency in contemporary Africana thought and political theory. We will analyze texts and audio-visual works on the political economy of late colonial Jamaica, core Rastafari thinking, political theology, the role of reggae music, the notion of agency, and the influence of Rastafari on global politics.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** attendance and participation, weekly reading e-response papers, two short essays, and a 12- to 15- page final paper**Prerequisites:** none; open to all**Enrollment Limit:** 15**Enrollment Preferences:** Africana Studies concentrators and majors in Political Science and Religion**Expected Class Size:** 12**Grading:** no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option**Distributions:** (D2)**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 261 (D2) AFR 299 (D2) PSCI 233 (D2)

**Attributes:** AFR Core Electives AMST Arts in Context Electives AMST Comp Studies in Race, Ethnicity, Diaspora AMST Critical and Cultural Theory Electives**Not offered current academic year**

## REL 262 (F) Time and Blackness

**Cross-listings:** AFR 208 AMST 208 REL 262

### Secondary Cross-listing

The concept of time has been one of the most examined, yet least explicitly theorized, concepts in Africana Studies. While the field is saturated with historical studies and literary analyses that take up issues of cultural memory--which involves thinking about time--time itself has rarely been the subject of sustained inquiry. This may be due to its abstractness as an idea, and the level of analysis its conceptualization demands, or because time in the Black experience cannot be understood outside of the meaning of race, which itself is not completely tangible. In this tutorial, "Time and Blackness," we will explore how Black writers across a number of genres--spiritual autobiography, fiction, memoir, literary criticism, and cultural theory--understand time, and create paradigms of time to organize their work. The following questions will structure our investigation: What are the constituent elements of time in Black writings? How does race shape the ways Black writers conceive the experience of time? And, finally, to what can we attribute the recent surge in explicit, theoretical examinations of "time and blackness"?

**Requirements/Evaluation:** assignments will include six 2-page response papers; two 5-page writing assignments; and a final, 10-page review essay on how time is understood in a genre of writing

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** concentrators in Africana Studies, majors in Religious Studies, and majors in American Studies

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

AFR 208 (D2) AMST 208 (D2) REL 262 (D2)

**Attributes:** AFR Core Electives AMST Arts in Context Electives AMST Comp Studies in Race, Ethnicity, Diaspora

Fall 2021

TUT Section: T1 Cancelled

## REL 263 (S) Giving God a Backbeat: Rap Music, Religion & Spirituality

**Cross-listings:** AFR 221 REL 263

### Secondary Cross-listing

On the surface, religion and rap music may seem as if they have little in common. Yet, like other Black musical traditions such as spirituals and the blues, rap is rooted in African American religious traditions. In this course, we will explore the ways in which rap music intersects with the sacred and secular worlds. Through an examination of Black religious traditions, lyrics, music videos, and digital media, we will unearth what Anthony Pinn calls the "spiritual and religious sensibilities" of rap music. Grounded in culture-centered criticism, we will investigate the rhetoric of rap and religion through the theoretical ideas of Black Liberation Theology and hip-hop feminism.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** students will be evaluated on their class participation, Twitter threads, response papers, quizzes, and a final class group project

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 18

**Enrollment Preferences:** First year, sophomore, and juniors

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

AFR 221 (D2) REL 263 (D2)

**Attributes:** AFR Core Electives AMST Arts in Context Electives

Spring 2022

SEM Section: 01 TR 9:55 am - 11:10 am VaNatta S. Ford

**REL 264 (F) Bodies, Genders, and Sexualities in the Early Christian World (DPE)**

**Cross-listings:** REL 264 WGSS 264

**Primary Cross-listing**

What does it mean to be a woman or a man? To have body? A gender? A sexuality? In this course we will explore the ways in which bodies, genders, and sexualities were experienced and described in Mediterranean antiquity. Ancient experiences of and ideas about bodies, genders, and sexualities were often very different than those of the contemporary world. Nevertheless, because Greek and Roman antiquity and Christian beginnings often function as the imagined origins of "Western" (or European and American) "civilization," these ancient ideas about bodies, genders, and sexuality maintain an out-sized presence in current debates about the "normal" body, gender practices, and the contour of sexuality. With a focus on early Christianity, the course seeks, on the one hand, to introduce students to the early history of Christianity through an inspection of its pluriform discourses on the meaning and regulation of bodies, genders, and sexuality, even as it keeps an eye toward the modern legacy of these ideas. On the other hand, the course gives students the opportunity to be introduced to key questions and theories in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies through the study of early Christianity and its environs

**Requirements/Evaluation:** weekly response papers, 5- to 6-page paper, 8- to 10-page paper

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Enrollment Preferences:** majors, student seniority by class

**Expected Class Size:** 19

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2) (DPE)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 264 (D2) WGSS 264 (D2)

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** The course's focus on the production and use of difference in terms of bodies, genders, and sexualities, and how those putative differences were used to authorize the social distribution of power, qualify this course as meeting the DPE distribution requirement.

**Not offered current academic year**

**REL 268 (F) Where are all the Jews? (DPE) (WS)**

**Cross-listings:** REL 268 ARAB 363 COMP 363 JWST 268

**Secondary Cross-listing**

Until four decades ago, many Maghrebi and Middle Eastern cities and villages teemed with Jewish populations. However, the creation of the Alliance Israelite Universelle's schools (1830s), the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the decolonization process in the Maghreb and the Middle East, and the Arab defeat in the Six-Day War accelerated the departure of Arab and Berber Jews from their homelands to other destinations, including France, Israel, Canada, the United States, and different Latin American countries. Arab and Berber Jews' departure from their ancestral lands left a socioeconomic and cultural void that Maghrebi and Middle Eastern cultural production has finally started to address, albeit shyly. The course will help students understand the depth of Jewish life in the Maghreb and the Middle East, and interrogate the local and global factors that led to their disappearance from both social and cultural memories for a long time. Reading fiction, autobiographies, ethnographies, historiographical works, and anthropological texts alongside documentaries films, the students will understand how literature and film have become a locus in which amnesia about Arab/Berber Jews is actively contested by recreating a bygone world. Resisting both conflict and nostalgia as the primary determinants of Jewish-Muslim relations, the course will help students think about multiple ways in which Jews and Muslims formed communities of citizens despite their differences and disagreements.

**Class Format:** The course will be offered both in-person and remotely. Students enrolled remotely are required to watch the recorded videos of the in-person sessions in order to stay abreast of the discussions that take place in the classroom and enrich their engagement with the materials assigned in the course.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** 400-word weekly, focused responses on Glow; a book review (600 words); two five-page papers as mid-terms; one ten-page final paper; one presentation.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Enrollment Preferences:** students interested in critical and comparative literary, religious or historical studies.

**Expected Class Size:** 19

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D1) (DPE) (WS)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 268 (D2) ARAB 363 (D1) COMP 363 (D1) JWST 268 (D2)

**Writing Skills Notes:** Students are required to present an outline of their papers before submitting a draft paper. The professor will give feedback on each written work to improve students' writing skills. Students are required to incorporate the feedback to improve their drafts before they become final. Students will receive detailed and consistent feedback about their writing in Arabic language. Students will receive from the instructor timely comments on their writing skills, with suggestions for improvement.

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** Students in this course will understand the historical process that lead to the disappearance of Arab/Berber Jews. Students also will work out alternative ways to grasp Jewish-Muslim relations beyond nostalgia and conflict. Finally, students enrolled in the course will grapple with and try to disentangle the complexity of Jewish-Muslim citizenship in both pre-colonial and postcolonial contexts.

**Attributes:** JWST Core Electives

Not offered current academic year

**REL 269 (F) Mindfulness Examined: Meditation, Emotion, and Affective Neuroscience** (DPE) (WS)

**Cross-listings:** REL 269 STS 269 ASIA 269 ANTH 269

Primary Cross-listing

This course provides a social analysis of and practical engagement with mindfulness in the US today. It considers the modern applications of Buddhist meditation as a tool to improve awareness of the related processes of mind, behavior, and emotions within landscapes structured by racism, sexism, and other systemic inequalities. We consider how mindfulness relates to Buddhist discourses as well as the rapid rise of fields like contemplative neuroscience, affective neuroscience, and integrative neurobiology. How can mindfulness help people communicate more effectively--be they doctors or patients, teachers or students? How has the exploding research on mindfulness and meditation since 2000 help us understand the intersection of human emotions, behaviors, and relationships? We train in a variety of Buddhist meditation practices through the semester including forest bathing, mindfulness, compassion meditation, while unpacking the subjective experience of our minds and emotions first-hand. Students will be asked to train in mindfulness practices the entire semester while studying models of the mind developed by research in clinical and evolutionary psychology, affective neuroscience, and interpersonal neuroscience.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** weekly tutorial papers and discussion

**Prerequisites:** A prior class or some experience with meditation is recommended

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** ANTH, SOC, REL, ASST majors; PHLH, STS concentrators; seniors and juniors

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2) (DPE) (WS)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 269 (D2) STS 269 (D2) ASIA 269 (D2) ANTH 269 (D2)

**Writing Skills Notes:** This class will involve weekly tutorial essays or oral responses, intensive written feedback on every essay, and a mid-semester 'writing chat' with the instructor.

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** This class fulfills the Difference, Power, and Equity requirement because it will explore the ways that mindfulness can address the growing epidemic of anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues we find in the US today. We study mindfulness from an intersectional perspective and relate its benefits to intersecting inequities and intergenerational trauma in the US today.

Fall 2021

TUT Section: T1 TBA Kim Gutschow

## REL 270 (F) Reading Jesus, Writing Gospels: Christian Origins in Context (WS)

**Cross-listings:** REL 270 CLAS 270 COMP 263

### Primary Cross-listing

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 reconstructions of early Christian history? The course is divided into four parts. The first part establishes the interpretive approach of the course. The second part of this course addresses these questions by examining the formation of Christianity from its origins as a Jewish movement until its legalization, using a comparative socio-historical approach. The third part of the course focuses on the earliest literature produced by the Jesus movement and consider it within a comparative framework developed in the first half of the course. The final part of the course emphasizes modern interpretations of Jesus and the Jesus movement; here we shall be examining how scholars make use of ancient materials to frame their arguments.

**Class Format:** lecture/discussion

**Requirements/Evaluation:** three 3-page papers (with revisions), one 5- to 7-page paper (that builds on one of the earlier 3 page papers), and a final paper (7-10 pages, that draws on some of the earlier writing in addition to new writing)

**Prerequisites:** none; open to all

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Enrollment Preferences:** sophomores, especially potential majors in Religion, Classics, and Comparative Literature

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2) (WS)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 270 (D2) CLAS 270 (D1) COMP 263 (D1)

**Writing Skills Notes:** Students will write a series of short essays, with required revisions, to develop their skills in close reading of ancient texts and interpretive analysis of modern scholarship about Christian origins. In each successive section of the course, writing from the prior unit will inform the subsequent papers.

Fall 2021

SEM Section: 01 MR 1:10 pm - 2:25 pm Denise K. Buell

## REL 272 (F) Art of the Noble Path: Buddhist Material Culture Across Asia

**Cross-listings:** REL 272 ARTH 272 ASIA 272 ASST 272

### Secondary Cross-listing

Buddhism has spread throughout Asia and beyond since its emergence in India in the 5th century BCE, providing a shared philosophical and cosmological framework for diverse cultures. Artistic expression, regional politics and cultural landscapes have been shaped by its remarkable influence. With patrons ranging from powerful monarchs and monks to merchants and tradespeople, Buddhist art has historically reflected the religion's social inclusivity. This course will survey the architecture, painting and material culture of Buddhism in Asia, tracing its influence in diverse media, from rock-cut architecture to Zen painting. A close reading of primary texts, such as architectural inscriptions in India, manuscripts from Tibet, and travelogues of Chinese pilgrims, will provide greater context for the artworks.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** 3 ten-minute quizzes, weekly Glow responses, a midterm, and a final exam

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** Art History majors, Asian Studies majors, Religious Studies majors, Art Studio majors

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D1)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 272 (D2) ARTH 272 (D1) ASIA 272 (D1) ASST 272 (D1)

Not offered current academic year

### REL 273 (F) Heroes, Saints and Celebrity

**Cross-listings:** REL 273 ANTH 222

#### Secondary Cross-listing

This course examines the ways in which cultures select, ritually celebrate, institutionally harness, and ultimately devour people designated as 'extraordinary'. We will begin by considering cultural archetypes and theories of the hero and how heroism has been understood in different eras and cultural contexts. Using Weber's theory of charisma as a foundation, we will look at a number of specific case studies to evaluate the relationship between individual creativity and action and the demands of social conformity and control. Finally, we will examine how charisma is commoditized in the form of the celebrity in contemporary American culture.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class participation, two short response papers, research paper, final exam

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Enrollment Preferences:** Anthropology and Sociology majors

**Expected Class Size:** 19

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 273 (D2) ANTH 222 (D2)

Not offered current academic year

### REL 274 (F) Ritual, Power and Transgression

**Cross-listings:** REL 274 ANTH 299

#### Secondary Cross-listing

The focus of this course is on the role of ritual in harnessing political power. In the first part of the semester, we examine some of the ways in which different cultures manufacture social order and political power through categories of inclusion and exclusion, clean and dirty, proper and improper, and licit and illicit. We will be particularly attuned to the ways in which these categories are performed through and maintained by rituals and how bodies are deployed in ritual spaces as instruments of persuasion and control. We will also look in depth at a variety of ritual forms, including scapegoating and sacrifice, and how they serve as engines of political control and protest, and we will examine the uses of dead bodies and memorials as vehicles for gaining and maintaining political power and the destruction and desecration of bodies and memorials as a form of political protest and dissent. Throughout the semester, we will be relating theoretical texts and historical cases to current political struggles in this country and abroad.

**Class Format:** The class will be taught remotely.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class participation, biweekly responses to instructor prompts, three short (500 words) response papers, and one 10- to 12-page (2000-2400 words) research paper

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 12

**Enrollment Preferences:** ANSO and REL majors, open to first-years

**Expected Class Size:** 12

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 274 (D2) ANTH 299 (D2)

Not offered current academic year

### REL 275 (S) Paul the Apostle: Then and Now

The Apostle Paul is the most important thinker in the history of Christianity. He wrote much of the New Testament and was one of the first to formulate



and articulate the basic message of Christianity. In this course, we'll start by exploring Paul's writings in their original context, probing what his message would have meant for the inhabitants of the Roman Empire. Special attention will be paid to Paul's contribution to ancient debates about Judaism, conversion, and ethnic difference. In addition to examining the first contexts and meanings of his writings, we'll be especially interested in the legacy of Paul's writings on modern political thought in Europe and America in the 20th and 21st centuries. In this portion of the course, we'll see how Paul's influence has shaped current theories of citizenship, with or without the knowledge or consent of modern thinkers and societies. The course thus explores the original significance of Paul's thought as well as its hidden influence upon the political structures of secular modernity.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** four five-page papers, final paper, participation

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion Majors

**Expected Class Size:** 14

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 276 (S) Gnosis, Gnostics, Gnosticism (DPE)**

**Cross-listings:** REL 276 COMP 258

Primary Cross-listing

Reality is not what it seems. 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 in modern forms of esotericism and spiritualities. We shall explore how claims about gnosis offer modes of critiquing and seeking to transform unjust social and political systems.

**Class Format:** lecture/discussion

**Requirements/Evaluation:** weekly GLOW posts, 1 textual analysis paper, 1 historiographical analysis paper, and a final paper that entails a revision and expansion of earlier writing for the course.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** students with prior coursework in biblical or other ancient literature or history

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2) (DPE)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 276 (D2) COMP 258 (D1)

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** This course situates "gnosis" as a practical epistemological orientation used both to disrupt and challenge power arrangements deemed unjust and to empower those who are marginalized within dominant power structures. At the same time, the course interrogates "gnostic" epistemological claims as capable of being used to reinstall hierarchical power structures. Attention to power and equity and how difference is produced is at the center of the course.

Spring 2022

LEC Section: 01 MR 1:10 pm - 2:25 pm Denise K. Buell

### **REL 277 (F) Meditation and Modern American Life**

**Cross-listings:** REL 277 ENGL 277

Secondary Cross-listing

The first English translation of a Buddhist text was published in the United States in 1844. At the time, few Americans knew the first thing about what Buddhism was, but now, a little over a century and a half later, Buddhist ideas and practices (meditation, in particular) can be found everywhere. In this

class, we'll explore how Buddhism came to be the profoundly important cultural force in American life that it is today, looking particularly at the increasingly mainstream role of meditation in modern American life. We'll study how traditional Buddhist meditation practices were transmitted to the West, and then track the way those practices changed over time, as they were adapted to the radically new context of American culture. And we'll study the way meditation is impacting a wide array of cultural domains, including: literature, psychology, education, environmentalism, Western attitudes towards death and dying, and the fight against racism. A key part of the course will be an introduction to the theory and practice of meditation: we'll learn a variety of meditation techniques, and we'll spend a significant amount of time each class practicing and reflecting upon those practices. This course is a part of a joint program between Williams' Center for Learning in Action and the Berkshire County Jail, in Pittsfield, MA. The class will be composed equally of nine Williams students and nine inmates. An important goal of the course is to encourage students from different backgrounds to think together about issues of common human concern. Classes will be held at the jail, with transportation provided by the college. \*Please note the atypical class hours, Thursdays, 4:45-8:30 pm.\*

**Requirements/Evaluation:** full attendance and participation; meditation 2-3 times a week outside of class; a meditation journal; and a final 10-page essay

**Enrollment Limit:** 18

**Enrollment Preferences:** final selection will be made on the basis of (a) statements of interest sent via email to brhie@williams.edu by June 26 and (b) brief interviews with the instructor.

**Expected Class Size:** 18

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D1)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 277 (D1) ENGL 277 (D1)

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 278 (F) Buddhist Material Culture: Objects of Practice and Merit**

**Cross-listings:** REL 278 ASIA 278 ASST 278

Primary Cross-listing

You've heard of the "material girl" (or boy), but what about the material Buddhist? This course encourages students to look beyond modernist ideals of Buddhism as a rational tradition of monks, monasteries and manuscripts, merely advocating mindfulness. In this course, we take Buddhist "stuff" (material culture) seriously. We explore what exactly is material culture, and what makes it Buddhist? If Buddhism is supposed to be a tradition that encourages non-attachment, then what is meant by "Buddhist material culture"? Shouldn't Buddhists be free of material things? Or, rather, who says they have to be? This course offers: (1) an introduction to the core concepts of Buddhism; (2) a brief overview of Material Religion, or the "material turn" in the study of religion; and (3) a preliminary exploration into the vast material- and spiritual worlds of Buddhist Asia, particularly China, Japan, Myanmar, Tibet, and Thailand. We begin by decolonializing Buddhism (think *mandala*, not only meditation; or ghosts and spirits, not just *sutra*). Next, we trace religious studies trends that privilege material investigations that acknowledge the agency of not only humans but also the agency of objects/things/stuff, and that emphasizes the dynamics among people, things, and spirits. We learn about these dynamics by looking closely at Buddhist stuff. Things act upon us, and we (re)act upon them. They shape identity, create meaning, and maintain relationships. We will learn that things are never just things. They help us better understand what people do in Buddhism, not just what people believe. This course includes brief experiential components on Buddhist meditation and ritual. No prior experience in meditation or Buddhism is required. This course does not assume any previous background in Buddhism, Religion, Asian Studies, or Art History.

**Class Format:** This class is remote with a mix of synchronous and asynchronous requirements. Synchronous meetings are limited to once a week for roughly one hour (between 60-75 minutes). Many of our synchronous requirements will feature breakout sessions into small groups for intimate, peer exchanges, followed by discussions with the entire class. A few asynchronous sessions will require community-building with your peers through some form of work exchange or reflection related to the weekly topic.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Attendance and active participation 25%; Short writing assignments 25% (one-page, single-space, critical response based on class reading x 4 total); Mid-term exam 25% (identification terms, short essay); Final project and presentation 25% (initial consultation with the instructor regarding topic selection, annotated bibliography and project outline, formal written report (4-5 single-space pages), presentation, and final reflection)

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 16

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion and Asian Studies majors

**Expected Class Size:** 12

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 278 (D2) ASIA 278 (D2) ASST 278 (D2)

Not offered current academic year

**REL 279 (S) What is the Shari'a? Law, Power, and Ethics in Islam (DPE)**

Discussions of the Shari'a or Islamic law in American public discourse conjure images of veiled women, girls barred from attending school, and public spectacles of flogging and stoning to death. Such a caricature of Islamic law as a medieval but draconian penal code elicits public fear and state suspicion. In the West, legislative measures are taken to curb the Shari'a's perceived threat to security, democracy, and human rights. On the other hand, Islamists seek to harness the Shari'a as an instrument of political legitimacy and authoritarian rule. Both instances reify the Shari'a in ways that erode its regional diversity, intellectual versatility, and socially embedded practices and modes of interpretation. This course offers an in-depth introduction to the Shari'a through an examination of major themes in its substantive content and historical evolution. While students will gain an integrated view of the Shari'a from its origins in 7th century Arabia to the modern era, our primary emphasis will be on the Shari'a's tumultuous relationship with liberal democracy and the secular nation-state. Students will probe the history of the Shari'a's present by pursuing a genealogical inquiry in two parts: (a) precolonial, and (b) postcolonial. Module (a) comprises Islamic legal theory, its scriptural sources, and the formation of schools of jurisprudence; Shari'a governance in the imperial age; and the institution of slavery. Module (b) covers colonial transformations and reforms; state-sponsored projects of restoration and codification; blasphemy and religious minorities; and gender and sexuality. Apart from learning substantive content through the course of our genealogical inquiry, students will also develop a theoretical foundation in anthropological approaches to the study of Islam as law (discursive tradition, symbolism, custom), power (sovereignty, discipline, biopolitics), and as ethics (subjectivity, self-cultivation, ordinary ethics).

**Class Format:** students will submit weekly responses to the readings; for each session two students will be assigned as leaders of the discussion who will be assisted by the instructor

**Requirements/Evaluation:** weekly reading responses (300 words): 20%; class participation: 15%; leading class discussion: 15%; 2 short essays (750 words each): 20%; research paper (3000 words): 30%

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Expected Class Size:** 19

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2) (DPE)

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** This course exposes students to the diversity of Islamic legal interpretations on questions of gender, sexuality, and religious freedom across a variety of regions and cultures. Students gain a critical appreciation of how present-day authoritative readings of Islamic law, its punitive practices and legalized forms of gender discrimination are sanctioned by patriarchal norms, the colonial construction of Islam as a scriptural religion, and regulatory powers of the modern state.

Not offered current academic year

**REL 280 (S) The Seeds of Divinity: Exploring Precolumbian Art & Civilization in a Museum Exhibit**

**Cross-listings:** ARTH 281 ANTH 281 REL 280

Secondary Cross-listing

For all ancient civilizations, the gods were a powerful force, affecting all aspects of human lives and dominating ancient art. This course will explore concepts of divinity in five civilizations in Precolumbian Central America: Aztec, Maya, Zapotec, Teotihuacan, and Nayarit. The course examines how the broad concept of divinity is materialized in everyday life. We will query how the human body is used as the prism through which concepts about humanity, the human soul and the supernatural are perceived and depicted in the art of these civilizations. This is a project based course, and each student will study one or more art objects from these five civilizations, and consider how these objects could be presented in a museum exhibit.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** active class participation; three short papers; 15-page research paper and presentation

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 20

**Enrollment Preferences:** ANTH, SOC and ARTH majors

**Expected Class Size:** 12

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

ARTH 281 (D2) ANTH 281 (D2) REL 280 (D2)

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 281 (S) Religion and Science**

**Cross-listings:** REL 281 STS 281

#### **Primary Cross-listing**

In the last few years the deniers of religion such as Dennett and Dawkins have forcefully argued that recent scientific developments show the degree to which religion is irrelevant to a modern understanding of what it means to be human. Atran and Boyer have made a similar case, arguing that recent progresses in our understanding of human cognition demonstrate that religion is a purely natural phenomenon that has little if any value for human development. Theologians such as Haught and Polkinghorne have rejected these views, arguing that a proper understanding of scientific developments such as evolution and quantum mechanics suggests religiously relevant views of the universe and our place therein. This course considers these competing perspectives while offering critical reflections on the views and categories involved in these controversies. We also examine the works of reflective naturalists such as Bellah and Herrstein, who argue that far from showing the irrelevance of religious ideas and practices, the new mind and life sciences suggest a much more nuanced view according to which religion is both grounded in the natural world and central to the development of human culture. Hence, it cannot be easily discounted as irrelevant to a scientifically informed understanding of what it means to be human.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** tutorial format. one paper every two weeks

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** preference for religion majors or future religion majors

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 281 (D2) STS 281 (D2)

Spring 2022

TUT Section: T1 TBA Georges B. Dreyfus

### **REL 283 (F) Religion and American Capitalism**

**Cross-listings:** REL 283 HIST 383

#### **Primary Cross-listing**

Was Jesus a revolutionary socialist or a savvy salesman? Does capitalism bring prosperity to the virtuous or breed selfishness and sin? Shall the meek inherit the earth or should the hand of the diligent rule? Is it holier to renounce worldly wealth or crusade against poverty? These questions have long preoccupied religious believers, and their changing answers have transformed the history of American capitalism. This course invites students to study that history, from the early 19th century to the present. It will cover such topics as: utopian communes; the political economy of slavery; working-class religion and labor organizing; Christian and Jewish socialism; big business and the Prosperity Gospel; 'New Age' spirituality and the counterculture; and conservative Christianity in the age of Wal-Mart and Chick-Fil-A.

**Class Format:** This course will be hybrid -- accessible to both on-campus and fully remote students. It is designed as a seminar, in which course meetings will revolve around synchronous discussion. Remote learners will be expected to digitally attend and participate in those meetings through Zoom (or a similar program).

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Participation in group discussion; five response papers (300-400 words); two essays (4-6 pp); final research paper (8-10

pp).

**Prerequisites:** None; open to all students.

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion and History majors.

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 283 (D2) HIST 383 (D2)

**Attributes:** HIST Group F Electives - U.S. + Canada

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 284 (S) From the Battlefield to the Hermit's Cell: Art and Experience in Norman Europe (WS)**

**Cross-listings:** REL 284 WGSS 284 ARTH 218

#### **Secondary Cross-listing**

This tutorial provides students with the chance to investigate in-depth three of the most astonishing works of art created during the entire Middle Ages: the Bayeux Tapestry (c.1077-1082), the Cappella Palatina (c.1130s-1166), and the Psalter of Christina of Markyate (1120s-1160s). Created within a hundred years of each other all within territories controlled by the Normans--a warrior dynasty that settled in northern France in the 10th century and then expanded north into England and south into Italy in the 11th and 12th centuries--each of these works is unprecedentedly ambitious in scale, dazzling in its material properties, and survives in its original wholeness, a rarity in the medieval world. Despite these similarities, however, each work is very different from the other two and so sheds light on very different aspects of Norman experience, across Europe. The Bayeux Tapestry, likely made by female embroiderers for a baronial hall, is a giant textile (over 70 meters long) that in gruesome and fascinating detail tells the story of the Norman invasion of England by William the Conqueror in 1066. The Cappella Palatina in Palermo, in turn, commissioned by King Roger II, is a royal chapel covered in sumptuous mosaics that reveals through its decoration and ritual the dynamic interaction of Islamic, Byzantine, and Latin Christian traditions in the multicultural Norman kingdom of Sicily in the 12th century. And the Psalter of Christina of Markyate, a large prayerbook made for the use of a female recluse in southern England, contains 40 full-page paintings and 215 decorated initials, a vast and inventive program of imagery that through its creative profundity helped reshape private devotional art and culture for centuries to come. Through their variety, then, these three objects--an embroidery, a building, and a book--give students insight into the rich array of concerns and aspirations, from the political to the spiritual and from the public to the private, that gave substance and meaning to 11th- and 12th-century European life, for women as well as men. What is more, these three remarkable works of art have been the focus of much interesting scholarship in recent years, so an exploration of some of that literature provides a compelling introduction to the discipline of art history itself, past and present.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Participation in discussion; five 5-7-page tutorial papers; five 1-2-page response papers.

**Prerequisites:** None

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** First years and sophomores, but open to all.

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2) (WS)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 284 (D2) WGSS 284 (D2) ARTH 218 (D1)

**Writing Skills Notes:** In this tutorial, students will develop skills of critical reading and focus on how to craft clear and persuasive arguments of their own. To help them achieve these goals, they will receive timely comments on their written work, especially the five 5-7-page papers they will submit, with suggestions for improvement.

Spring 2022

TUT Section: T1 TBA Peter D. Low

**REL 285 (S) Haunted: Ghosts in the Study of Religion**

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-approaches us: it is a distance that closes in on you at times, it announces a proximity closer than any intimacy or familiarity you have ever known" (Avital Ronell, Dictations: On Haunted Writing [1986] xvi-xvii). The figure of the ghost has been developed by those seeking to grapple with the ongoing effects of modern slavery, colonialism, state-sponsored terrorism, the holocaust, and personal trauma and loss. Building upon the insights about memory, history, and identity that haunting has been used to address, this course will challenge you to explore the study of religion by way of its "seething absences." We shall ask how the study of religion has endeavored to address loss, trauma, and its persistent effects, what "holds sway" over various approaches to the study of religion, as well as how "religion" constitutes its own ghostly presence, haunting other domains.

**Class Format:** tutorial; meeting in pairs, each student will either write and present a paper or respond to their partner's paper

**Requirements/Evaluation:** two 1-page papers (written and presented), five 5-page papers, and five oral critiques (based on written notes) of their partner's paper; students will revise two papers

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion majors

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

Not offered current academic year

**REL 286 (F) The Bible and Migration: Latinx Perspectives**

**Cross-listings:** REL 286 LATS 285

Primary Cross-listing

This course seeks to understand migration in the current historical moment, around the globe but especially on the US border. The lenses through which we will explore migration include Religion, with special focus on the Christian Bible. We will explore instances of and reflections on migration in the Bible, as well as various interpretations of the Bible emerging today in debates over migration. The course will approach US migration from the perspective of Latinx communities in the US - historically, culturally, politically, and religiously. Readings will include: The Bible, monographs and essays on the Bible and Migration, especially from the perspectives of Latinx authors and thinkers.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Participation in class discussions; two to three short essays (3-5 pages each) analyzing selected readings; a longer final research paper (7-10 pages) on an aspect of Bible and Migration of interest to the student defined in consultation with the professor.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 25

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion majors and Latinx Studies concentrators, and those interested in these areas of study

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 286 (D2) LATS 285 (D2)

**Attributes:** LATS Core Electives

Fall 2021

SEM Section: 01 TR 11:20 am - 12:35 pm Efrain Agosto

**REL 288 (F) Embodiment and Consciousness: A Cross-Cultural Exploration**

**Cross-listings:** REL 288 PHIL 288

Primary Cross-listing

This course examines some of the central questions raised by the study of the consciousness: the place of intentionality, the role of emotions, the relation with the body, the nature of subjectivity, the scope of reflexivity, 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 Buddhist psychology and meditative practices to phenomenology to neurosciences. We begin by examining some of the central concepts of Buddhist 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 concern the methods for the study of the mind and the relation between consciousness, reflexivity 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.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** regular practice of meditation, a class presentation, a short essay (6-pages); a long final research paper (15 pages)

**Prerequisites:** any introduction to philosophy and at least two upper level courses in PHIL, at least one of which meets the Contemporary Metaphysics or Epistemology distribution requirement for the major, no exceptions;

**Enrollment Limit:** 18

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion and Philosophy majors

**Expected Class Size:** 18

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Unit Notes:** there is no need to email the professor in advance to indicate interest in the course

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 288 (D2) PHIL 288 (D2)

**Attributes:** COGS Interdepartmental Electives PHIL Contemp Metaphysics + Epistemology Courses

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 289 (S) The Talmud on What it Means to be Human**

**Cross-listings:** REL 289 JWST 289

#### **Primary Cross-listing**

The Talmud, a central text in Judaism, is one of the richest and most sophisticated works of literature and thought ever produced. In this course, students will be introduced to the challenges and thrills of reading the Talmud as they consider how the Talmud asks and answers the question of what it means to be human. We will be particularly interested in exploring how the Talmud theorizes and prescribes a certain type of bodily self in its rereading of the Biblical laws of purity and impurity. In addition to learning how to read the Talmud, therefore, students will also be introduced to burgeoning interdisciplinary questions regarding the self and its making.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** 1-2 page weekly papers, final essay, participation

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 16

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion majors, Jewish Studies students

**Expected Class Size:** 8

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 289 (D2) JWST 289 (D2)

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 291 (S) Religion and the American Environmental Imagination**

**Cross-listings:** SOC 291 ENVI 291 REL 291



### Secondary Cross-listing

This course examines the relationship between religious and environmental thought in modern America. Exploring a broad range of practices and beliefs, we will examine the religious (and anti-religious) roots of contemporary environmental discourse. Rather than survey the environmental teachings of organized religious groups, our focus throughout will be on ambiguous, eclectic, and fascinating traditions of "eco-spirituality" and popular "nature religion." Where do these traditions come from? What is their relationship to science, to secularism, to politics, and to the search for environmental justice? Starting with the Transcendentalist movement of the 19th century, we will trace a roughly chronological line to the present, taking long detours into several modern religious trends and movements, including the revitalization and contestation of Native American religions, Wicca and neo-pagan ecofeminism, and evangelical Creation Care. Focusing on the writings of activists and radicals from a variety of religious backgrounds, our overarching question throughout the semester is one of the most critical we face in modern environmental thought: what is the relationship between spirituality and the just, sustainable society?

**Requirements/Evaluation:** a 15- to 18-page research paper and several shorter writing assignments

**Prerequisites:** ENVI 101 or permission of instructor

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Enrollment Preferences:** Environmental Studies majors and concentrators

**Expected Class Size:** 12

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

SOC 291 (D2) ENVI 291 (D2) REL 291 (D2)

**Attributes:** AMST Space and Place Electives ENVI Humanities, Arts + Social Science Electives

Not offered current academic year

### REL 292 (S) Religion and Politics in the Caribbean and the Diaspora: Puerto Rico and Cuba

**Cross-listings:** LATS 253 REL 292

### Secondary Cross-listing

This course explores the role of religion in Caribbean history and politics, with a focus on Puerto Rico and Cuba. These Caribbean islands have lived out contested colonized histories and experiences, as well as diasporic realities on the US mainland. The US government and military have played a significant role in both since the turn of the last century, forcibly shaping their economies and politics. Religion, particularly the Protestant missionary enterprise since the US invasions in 1898, has also shaped histories and politics on the islands and throughout their diasporas. We will explore the role and impact of Protestant religion in these historically indigenous, African descendent, and Roman Catholic religious spaces, as well as how these religious engagements and theologies impacted migration and the creation of diasporic communities in the US. We will analyze the role of religion in imperialist endeavors, as well as in solidarity movements. Puerto Rican and Cuban historical luminaries, such as Pedro Albizu Campos and Jose Marti, who struggled against Spanish colonialism in Puerto Rico and Cuba respectively, had not only political but religious visions for better prospects for their homelands. By understanding the intertwining of religion and politics in Puerto Rico, Cuba and their diasporic communities, we will have the tools to consider the implications for other Caribbean nations, such as the Dominican Republic, as well as other Latin American countries that have experienced US interventions and the creation of diasporic communities.

**Class Format:** This course will follow a discussion format, in which students are expected to come to class prepared to address the assigned readings, to have completed short assignments in preparation for discussions, to make presentations to the class, and/or to lead discussions.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Evaluation in this course will be based on class participation, short 1 to 2-page writing assignments every other week based on readings and assigned videos/films; a five-page midterm essay on an aspect of Puerto Rican or Cuban political/religious reality discussed in class, and final 7-page research essay on a theme in the course agreed upon by student and professor.

**Prerequisites:** None

**Enrollment Limit:** 25

**Enrollment Preferences:** LATS concentrators and Religion majors, and those with expressed interest in these fields

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)



**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

LATS 253 (D2) REL 292 (D2)

**Attributes:** LATS Core Electives

Spring 2022

LEC Section: 01 TR 11:20 am - 12:35 pm Efrain Agosto

**REL 293 (S) Religion, Play, and Fantasy**

Religion is sometimes described as separate from everyday life, a source of transcendence, offering practices that allow you to lose yourself and be absorbed into another level of consciousness, or a realm of supernatural forces. These could also be descriptions of "play." In this course we will explore the play element in culture and how it relates to what we usually describe as "religious." We will investigate video games, fantasy novels and films, Live Action Role-Playing, war reenactment, pop culture fandom, BDSM, festivals like Mardi Gras, and places that are "set apart" for play like Las Vegas. How do the ways that we play involve religious ideas like sin, redemption, supernatural forces of good and evil, canonization, countercultural community, tradition, submission, and purgation? Is play at the core of what we usually deem religious? What, for instance, is the play element in ritual, myth, and the devotional interpretation of texts? How important is play? Should we accept the conventional assumption that religion is more important than play? Is playing, perhaps, what we most want to do? Is playing what we would do if all of our practical needs were already met and we didn't have to do anything at all? In addition to exploring particular kinds of play, we will read theorists of play from a variety of disciplines, including: Johan Huizinga, Roger Caillois, Brian Sutton-Smith, Victor Turner, Donald Winnicott, Bernard Suits, Sam Gill, Robert Bellah, and Wendy Doniger. In a final paper, each student will have an opportunity to investigate in depth and interpret a particular form or instance of play that they choose.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** three short papers (3-5pages) and one final research paper or project

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 30

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion majors

**Expected Class Size:** 30

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

Not offered current academic year

**REL 294 (S) Paul and Early Christianity: Race, Empire, and the New Testament**

In the Christian New Testament, 13 letters are attributed to "Paul" (out of a total of 27 documents that comprise the New Testament). These letters have been a rich source for a host of political and theological debates over the last two millennia, but in this course, we will examine them as expressions of earliest Christianity's encounter with race, ethnicity, gender, and the ethics of a new religious movement, established in the midst of the oppressive Roman imperial order. Seven of these letters were almost certainly written by someone known to us as Paul of Tarsus. How Paul, a devout Jew, addressed controversial issues in his newfound communities, often in equally controversial ways, will guide our discussions of the role of religion and politics in his world as well as our own. Reading the letters of Paul and related documents in the New Testament, and interpretations of Paul over the centuries, including in modern scholarship, especially by African American, Asian American, and Latinx biblical scholars, theologians, artists, and thinkers will focus our study of religion and politics, ancient and modern.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Students will prepare written and oral summaries of the letters (at least one per student) from their own perspectives in conversation with scholarly interpretation, as well as write short papers (two for the semester, 3-4 pages each) on relevant themes for today inherent in these ancient documents. There will also be a final, research paper (8-10 pages) examining race, ethnicity, gender, and/or politics -- then and now -- using several of the letters as sources for the written exploration.

**Prerequisites:** None

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** juniors and seniors, either Religion majors, concentrators, or at least one course in Religion

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Materials/Lab Fee:** None

**Distributions:** (D2)

Spring 2022

SEM Section: 01 W 7:00 pm - 9:40 pm Efrain Agosto

**REL 296 (F) The History of the Holocaust**

**Cross-listings:** HIST 338 JWST 338 REL 296

**Secondary Cross-listing**

In twenty-first century United States, the murder of approximately six million European Jews by Nazi Germany remains a central event in our political, moral, and cultural universe. Nevertheless, the Holocaust still confounds historians' efforts to understand both the motivations of the perpetrators and the suffering of the victims. In this course, we will study the origins and unfolding of Nazi Germany's genocidal policies, taking into consideration the perspectives of those who carried out mass murder as well as the experiences and responses of Jews and other victim groups to persecution. We will also examine the Holocaust within the larger context of the history of World War II in Europe and historians' debates about Germany's exterminatory war aims. Course materials will include diaries, speeches, bureaucratic documents, memoirs, films, and historical scholarship.

**Class Format:** mostly discussion

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class participation, weekly reading responses, a map quiz, two papers (5-7 pages) on class readings, a final research paper (10-12 pages)

**Prerequisites:** none; open to first-year students with instructors permission

**Enrollment Limit:** 25

**Enrollment Preferences:** History majors and Jewish Studies concentrators

**Expected Class Size:** 20-25

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

HIST 338 (D2) JWST 338 (D2) REL 296 (D2)

**Attributes:** HIST Group C Electives - Europe and Russia JWST Core Electives

**Not offered current academic year**

**REL 297 (F) Theorizing Magic**

**Cross-listings:** REL 297 COMP 289 ANTH 297

**Primary Cross-listing**

This is a course about magic. It is not about stage magic, sleight of hand, or the art of pulling rabbits out of hats. You will learn no card tricks. But instead we will learn about those people who believed in the reality of certain powers; from the ability to summon good or evil spirits, transform base metals into gold, predict the future, or manipulate matter by thought alone. The problem of how to theorize magic has long been a cause of concern for the natural and social sciences. Many a sociologist and anthropologist has imagined that belief in magic should have vanished with modernity (despite much evidence to the contrary). Meanwhile, philosophers of science have been long fascinated with the demarcation problem—figuring out grounds by which to distinguish legitimate sciences (like astronomy) from their magical or pseudoscientific cousins (like astrology). We will trace these discussions and problematize them by looking at the beliefs of self-defined witches and magicians. This should put us in a position to interrogate the construction of concepts of magic, science, and religion and show how the boundaries between these categories emerged historically. Topics to be discussed will include: the rationality of magic, the fine lines separating magic, science and religion, the persecution of witches, and the role notions of magic and superstition played in European modernization and colonization projects. The tutorial sessions will be customized to student interests, but texts will likely include selections from primary works in translation, such as Cornelius Agrippa's *Occult Philosophy*, Giordano Bruno's *On Magic*, Aleister Crowley's *Magick Liber Aba*, as well as selections from secondary literature, perhaps including Marcel Mauss, *A General Theory of Magic*, Max Weber, "Science as Vocation," Tanya Luhmann, *Persuasions of the Witches' Craft*, Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Larry Laudan, "The Demise of the Demarcation Problem," E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft and Oracles*, and *Magic among the Azande*, and/or Kelly Hayes, *Holy Harlots: Femininity, Sexuality and Black Magic in Brazil*.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** weekly writing assignments and tutorial attendance every week

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** potential Religion or Comparative Literature majors

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 297 (D2) COMP 289 (D1) ANTH 297 (D2)

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 301 (F) Social Construction (DPE)**

**Cross-listings:** COMP 315 WGSS 302 REL 301 SOC 301 SCST 301 STS 301

#### **Primary Cross-listing**

"Social construction" can often seem like the great collegial insight. By now, you've all heard that categories such as race, gender, and sexuality are in some sense not part of nature, but instead are created and maintained socially or culturally. The idea of social construction has been vital to critical race theory and queer theory, and, in this course, we will push ourselves into philosophy of science to see whether or not these same insights apply to everything. If we know that "Whiteness," "heterosexuality," and "masculinity," for instance, are all socially constructed, we will ask if the same is true of "electrons," "money," "the solar system," and "climate change." Can it be that all of our reality is socially constructed? Or does social construction have limits? If so, what are they? We will also ask more fundamental questions, such as: What does it mean to say something is socially constructed? How does social construction relate to claims that an aspect of the world is "real" or "not real?" Is social construction a theory about language, power, culture, societies, human perceptions, or the limits of science? What kind of political, ethical, ontological, or epistemological work do theories of social construction do? We will begin with different accounts of the social construction of race, gender, and sexuality. In the second part of the course, we will dig deeper into philosophical debates about social construction as such. Then we will explore constructionism about natural science. In the last part of the course, we will change gears and explore look at cutting-edge work in the theory of social science aimed at explaining the construction and ontology of social worlds. The class will culminate in a project in which students will put their social construction theories into practice.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** regular attendance and participation, short weekly reflection papers, a 10-page research paper, and final project

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion majors, then majors from cross-listed departments

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2) (DPE)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

COMP 315 (D2) WGSS 302 (D2) REL 301 (D2) SOC 301 (D2) SCST 301 (D2) STS 301 (D2)

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** Central to REL 301 will be an analysis of the social construction of race, gender, and sexuality. It will show how power and difference are tied up in their construction and maintenance of these categories. Students will be taught how to critically analyze race, gender, and sexuality as well as social construction as such. Students will also learn sophisticated tools for studying systems of social power and difference.

**Attributes:** PHIL Related Courses

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 302 (S) Philosophy of Religion (WS)**

**Cross-listings:** PHIL 281 REL 302

#### **Secondary Cross-listing**

Our goal will be to determine how far reason can justify belief in God. We will examine well-known philosophical arguments for and against the existence of God (including the ontological argument, the cosmological argument, the teleological argument, the argument from religious experience, and the argument from evil). For each argument, we will first look at historically important formulations and then turn to contemporary reformulations.

Our aim will be to identify and evaluate the strongest version of each argument. After working through these arguments, we will reflect more generally on the proper roles of reason and faith in justifying religious belief. Near the end of the semester, we'll also examine some evolutionary explanations of religious belief. Our tools in this course will be logic and reason, even when we are trying to determine what the limits of reason might be. Authors will include Plato, Anselm, Aquinas, Pascal, Paley, Hume, Kant, Kierkegaard, and several contemporary philosophers.

**Class Format:** students meet with instructor in pairs for an hour each week; emphasis will be placed on developing skills in reading, interpretation and oral argument as well as critical reasoning and writing

**Requirements/Evaluation:** five 5-page papers and five 2-page papers

**Prerequisites:** one PHIL course

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** current and prospective Philosophy majors

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2) (WS)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

PHIL 281 (D2) REL 302 (D2)

**Writing Skills Notes:** Five 5-page papers and five 2-page papers, evenly spaced throughout the semester. Students will receive from the instructor timely comments on their writing skills, with suggestions for improvement.

**Attributes:** PHIL History Courses

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 303 (F) Augustine's Confessions**

**Cross-listings:** CLAS 307 PHIL 307 REL 303

Secondary Cross-listing

No thinker has done more to shape the Western intellectual tradition than Augustine (354-430 CE), and no book displays Augustine's dynamic vision of reality more compellingly than the *Confessions*. Its probing and intimate reflections on the meaning of human life, the nature of God and mind, time and eternity, will and world, good and evil, love and sexuality have challenged every generation since Augustine's own. The seminar will be structured around a close, critically engaged reading of the *Confessions* (in English translation) and will give attention to its historical context and significance as well as to its philosophical and theological ideas. (There will be optional, supplementary opportunity to engage with the Latin text for interested students with some facility with Latin.)

**Class Format:** The course will be taught in a hybrid (partly in-person, partly remote) or wholly remote format--a final decision about format will be made in early September, prior to the first class. Class meetings (in whatever format) will consist primarily in student presentations and open, directed discussion of assigned readings.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Regular reading assignments from the *Confessions* and related secondary literature. Weekly participation in online discussion on Glow (15% of final grade); 3 class presentations (of various lengths and kinds) (20%); a short paper (maximum 1500 words) due around the middle of the semester (20%); a term paper in two drafts (maximum 3000 words) due near and the end of the semester (40%); preparation for and participation in class that shows thoughtful engagement with the assigned readings (5%).

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** Advanced students in Philosophy, Religion and/or Classics

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

CLAS 307 (D1) PHIL 307 (D2) REL 303 (D2)

**Attributes:** PHIL History Courses

Not offered current academic year

## REL 306 (F) Feminist Approaches to Religion (WS)

**Cross-listings:** WGSS 307 REL 306

### Primary Cross-listing

What does feminist theory have to offer the study and practice of religion? How have participants in various religious traditions helped to produce and enact different kinds of feminist approaches to critique and transform religions? Feminisms and religions have a long though often troubled history of interconnection. In this course, we shall explore a range of feminist analyses that have either emerged out of particular religious contexts or have been applied to the study of religious traditions and practices. The course prioritizes attention to the intersections and interactions of gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and nationality (among other factors) with religion.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** weekly GLOW posts before class, one "position paper" for class discussion (3 pages), a research question with rationale for interest and potential action plan (1 page), exploratory research statement (2 pages), essay on interpretive approach to research project (3 pages), participation in writing workshop on 7-page early drafts of final papers, one 15-page final paper.

**Prerequisites:** none; open to all

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion and Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies majors have priority, and then students who have taken either REL 200 or WGSS 101.

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2) (WS)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

WGSS 307 (D2) REL 306 (D2)

**Writing Skills Notes:** This course features a series of scaffolded writings assignments that will culminate in a final research project.

**Attributes:** WGSS Feminist Theory Courses

Fall 2021

SEM Section: 01 TF 1:10 pm - 2:25 pm Denise K. Buell

## REL 308 (S) What is Power?

**Cross-listings:** REL 308 STS 308 SOC 308 PSCI 306

### Primary Cross-listing

*What is power?* Despite the importance of notions of power across the social sciences, there is a broad lack of consensus. Is power essentially domination or resistance? Is it freedom, empowerment, privilege, or oppression? Are there forms of unequal social power which are morally neutral or even good? Is power the kind of thing held by individuals, races, genders, classes, discourses, causal mechanisms, institutions, or social structures? What is the connection between social and physical power? Does power obey laws? How does power relate to technology? Or knowledge? Or agency? Or ideology? This course begins with the observation that power is often described as a causal relation--an individual's power is supposed to equal their capacity to produce a change in someone else's behavior. This suggests that the better we can understand the nature of cause and effect, the better we can understand power. Fortunately, in recent decades philosophers have made significant progress in theorizing causation. Hence, this seminar will put two very different bodies of theory in conversation: **critical theory about power** and **philosophy of science about cause and effect**. We will trace classic philosophical accounts of power and causation (in European and Chinese philosophy), as well as more recent developments in philosophy of science, political theory, and other fields. The insights we gain in this course from analyzing the nature of power should empower us to more effectively transform society. It will help students in the social sciences to understand the nature of causation in the social world, and it will help students interested in political action to better understand the nature of power. Thinkers to be considered may include: Aristotle, Amy Allen, Hannah Arendt, Bourdieu, Judith Butler, Nancy Cartwright, Foucault, Gramsci, Byung-Chul Han, Han Feizi, Giddens, Hobbes, Hume, Locke, Steven Lukes, Machiavelli, J.L. Mackie, Marx, Nietzsche, Sunzi, and Max Weber.

**Class Format:** Remote

**Requirements/Evaluation:** critical annotations for every class, midterm review essay (4-6 pages), final essay (10-12 pages)

**Prerequisites:** None.

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion majors, STS concentrators,

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 308 (D2) STS 308 (D2) SOC 308 (D2) PSCI 306 (D2)

**Attributes:** PHIL Related Courses

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 309 (S) Scriptures and Race**

**Cross-listings:** REL 309 AFR 309 LATS 309

Primary Cross-listing

This course focuses on the relationships between constructions of race in the post-1492 American world and "Christian scriptures." The big questions of the course examine the ways that contestations of power are intertwined with the making of, interpretation, and transformation of sacred texts. Both scriptures and race are conceptual constellations of human social imagination, and yet their conceptualization has often been embroiled in the hopes and traumas of everyday life in the Americas. 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 have "scriptures" informed how people imagine themselves, their communities, and their relationship to religious and racial "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 and lived experiences of race have informed the concept of scriptures as well as practices of scriptural interpretation.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** participation, short writing exercises, a 5- to 8-page take-home midterm essay, and a 10- to 15-page final essay

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 309 (D2) AFR 309 (D2) LATS 309 (D2)

**Attributes:** LATS Core Electives

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 310 (F) Womanist/Black Feminist Thought**

**Cross-listings:** WGSS 310 AFR 310 AMST 309 REL 310

Secondary Cross-listing

This course explores the genealogy and development of black feminist and womanist thought. We will investigate the expansion of womanist thought from a theologically dominated discourse to a broader category of critical reflection associated more commonly with black feminism, analyze the relationship between womanism and black feminism, and review the historical interventions of black feminism. As critical reflections upon western norms of patriarchy, heterosexism, and racism, womanism and black feminism begin with the assumption that the experiences of women of color--particularly black women--are significant standpoints in modern western society. Through the examination of interdisciplinary and methodological diversity within these fields, students will be introduced to key figures including Alice Walker, Zora Neale Hurston, and Katie Cannon, and will engage materials that draw from multiple fields, including, but not limited to, literature, history, anthropology, and religious studies.

**Class Format:** discussion

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class participation, three short response papers, and the completion of an original research paper or project

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 25

**Enrollment Preferences:** Africana Studies concentrators, Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies majors, Religion majors

**Expected Class Size:** 20

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

WGSS 310 (D2) AFR 310 (D2) AMST 309 (D2) REL 310 (D2)

**Attributes:** AFR Core Electives AMST Comp Studies in Race, Ethnicity, Diaspora AMST Critical and Cultural Theory Electives WGSS Racial Sexual + Cultural Diversity Courses WGSS Feminist Theory Courses

Not offered current academic year

**REL 311 (S) Islam and the Critical Study of Secularism (DPE)**

**Cross-listings:** ANTH 311 REL 311

Primary Cross-listing

Since the Iranian Revolution of 1979, successive Islamist movements have sought to transform Muslim states along religious lines. In Euro-American discourses on political Islam, such blatant disregard for the separation of religion and state is often seen as a tragic failure of secularization. Islam, in other words, is understood as a religion out of place in the modern world. While the global resurgence of religion in the face of much scientific and material progress has tempered scholarly enthusiasm for the secularization thesis, contemporary Islamic religiosity is increasingly viewed as an aberration from the regular course of history. Moreover, as scholars rewrite the script of secularization by unearthing modern secularism's European-Christian heritage, they unwittingly bolster a narrative of civilizational difference between Islam and the secular West. Our understanding of Islam is thus inextricably tied to its oppositional framing as the other of secularism. In this course, we will critically assess Euro-centric representations of Islam as created through canonical and critical discourses on secularism. Rather than assuming a natural opposition between Islam and secularism, we will examine the various modalities of power, institutional formations, habits of thinking, normative presuppositions, and cultural and visceral sensibilities that configure their agonistic relationship. This examination amounts to deconstructing the very category of the secular in its cognitive and sensory dimensions. To accomplish this task, we will rely on the work of Talal Asad and his interlocutors in Religious Studies, Anthropology, Continental Philosophy, Postcolonial Studies, and Comparative Literature. The course content is divided into 2 modules. Module A: "Theorizations" will examine Euro-centric theories of secularism and problematize their portrayals of Islam as an intrinsically asecural religion. In Module B: "Secularism Beyond Europe," we will read postcolonial critiques of secularization and examine its alternative trajectories in non-European contexts. Crucially, we will shift from a conventional emphasis on the state by comparing Islamic and secular disciplines of subject formation. By the end of the course, students will be able to appreciate how secular legal, political, and cultural institutions have re-defined religion in the modern world. Further, they will be able to discern the ways in which contemporary Islamic movements are both responses to and manifestations of a global secular condition.

**Class Format:** This course will be conducted online in its entirety and will rely on a combination of synchronous and asynchronous modes of learning. The synchronous component will consist of weekly class meetings via Zoom. A discussion leader will be assigned once a week to present on the week's readings and lead class discussion. The asynchronous component will consist of weekly reading responses (500 words each), 2 essays (1,000 words each), and a final paper (2,500 words)

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Weekly Reading Responses (500 words each): 30%; 2 Essays (1,000 words each): 20%; Attendance and Class Participation: 10%; Term Paper (10 double-spaced pages/2,500 words): 40%. Note: Out of the 13 weekly reading responses, you can choose to skip a maximum of 3

**Prerequisites:** None.

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Enrollment Preferences:** Juniors and seniors.

**Expected Class Size:** 19

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2) (DPE)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

ANTH 311 (D2) REL 311 (D2)

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** This course will sensitize students to the intractable difficulties of securing religious freedom, diversity, and tolerance under secular law. Students will gain a nuanced historical understanding of the role of Islam as a political force in postcolonial Muslim societies and its implications for religious minorities. Notably, they will understand how religiously motivated forms of violence and oppression are often deeply imbricated with secular power and institutions.



Not offered current academic year

### **REL 312 (F) The Mughal Empire: Power, Art, and Religion in India**

**Cross-listings:** GBST 312 REL 312 ASIA 312 ASST 312 HIST 312

#### **Secondary Cross-listing**

Established in the early 1500s, the Mughal Empire was one of the grandest and the longest to rule the Indian subcontinent for over three hundred years. Commanding unprecedented resources and administering a population of 100 to 150 million at its zenith--much larger than any European empire in the early modern world--the Mughals established a centralized administration, with a vast complex of personnel, money, and information networks. Mughal emperors were also political and cultural innovators of global repute. Moreover, while the Mughal dynasty was brought to an end with British colonial rule over India in 1857, the Mughal administrative structures and cultural influences continued to have a lasting impact on the British and later Indian states that followed. Centered around the intersection of the themes of power, patronage of art and architecture and religion, this course will ask: What factors contributed to the durability of the Mughal Empire for three centuries? How did global trade and innovations in taxation contribute to its wealth and stability? How did this dynasty of Muslim monarchs rule over diverse, and largely non-Muslim populations? How did they combine Persian cultural elements with regional ones to establish an empire that was truly Indian in nature? How were the Mughals viewed in their contemporary world of gunpowder empires like the Safavids of Persia and the Ottomans of Turkey? Readings will include the best of the recent scholarship on this vastly influential empire and a rich collection of primary sources, including emperor's memoirs, accounts of European travelers, and racy biographies, which will allow students make their own analysis. They will also have the opportunity to interpret paintings (some of which are held in the WCMA collections) and architecture. They will also discuss how the Mughals are remembered in South Asian film and music.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** participation, response papers/short essays, one final paper

**Prerequisites:** none, open to first-year students with instructor permission

**Enrollment Limit:** 25

**Enrollment Preferences:** History majors and potential History majors

**Expected Class Size:** 20

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

GBST 312 (D2) REL 312 (D2) ASIA 312 (D2) ASST 312 (D2) HIST 312 (D2)

**Attributes:** HIST Group B Electives - Asia HIST Group G Electives - Premodern

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 313 (F) Humans and Bodies: Theories of Embodiment**

**Cross-listings:** WGSS 303 REL 313

#### **Primary Cross-listing**

What is the body? Does the body precede culture, or is the body a product of society? How does the self relate to the body? How are sexual, racial, and gendered identities formed in and through the body? And how does the self sense its "own" body, or how does the body sense and make the self? In this course, we'll query and theorize embodiment through examining classical approaches (e.g., Freud, Lacan, Merleau-Ponty) as well as more recent queer (e.g., Butler), trans (e.g., Salamon), and posthuman (Haraway) theories of embodiment.

**Class Format:** Remote synchronous learning

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Students will be required to take notes on course readings, write 1-2 page weekly response papers, and submit a final paper at the end of the course.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 12

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion Majors, WGSS Majors

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**



WGSS 303 (D2) REL 313 (D2)

Not offered current academic year

### REL 314 (S) Racial and Religious Mixture (DPE)

**Cross-listings:** REL 314 LATS 327 AFR 357 AMST 327

#### Secondary Cross-listing

The very term "mixture" implies that two or more distinct substances have been brought together. Distinctions of race and religion are social fictions; yet, the lived ramifications of these social fictions involve tense struggles over the boundaries of racial and religious communities. These boundaries are not just ideas but also practices. In the history of the Americas, mixed racial and religious identities and experiences have more often been the result of violent clashes than romantic encounters. Still, the romanticization of the New World as a geography that makes such mixtures possible reaches back to the earliest days of Spanish conquest in the Americas. This course critically reconsiders varying ways that racial and religious mixtures have been imagined, defined, challenged, negotiated, and survived under imaginative and legal rubrics of *mestizaje*, creolization, transculturation, passing, syncretism, religious hybridity, and mixed race studies.

**Class Format:** mostly discussion

**Requirements/Evaluation:** participation, short writing exercises, a 3-page first essay, a 5- to 8-page second essay, and a 10- to 14-page final paper

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Enrollment Preferences:** seniors, concentrators, majors, those with prior relevant coursework

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2) (DPE)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 314 (D2) LATS 327 (D2) AFR 357 (D2) AMST 327 (D2)

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** Focusing on how different peoples have critically theorized and made meaning about and out of racial and religious differences and interconnections, this Difference, Power, and Equity course investigates the ways that knowledge about mixture and difference--and their roles in hierarchical distributions of social and political power--have been critically constructed and transformed.

**Attributes:** AMST Comp Studies in Race, Ethnicity, Diaspora

Not offered current academic year

### REL 315 (F) Gender and Sexuality in Buddhism

This course introduces students to the core concepts of Buddhism, as well as historical Buddhist perspectives on gender equality, homosexuality and queerness, the body (masculine, feminine, androgynous), birth (literally and figuratively), sex, contraception, abortion, and clerical marriages throughout Buddhist Asia. We will investigate these issues through close readings of specific sections of the Buddhist canon, alongside secondary sources. Is Buddhism equitable regarding these issues? Does it depend on how one interprets texts? In addition to scriptural interpretations of these issues, we will explore socio-cultural developments beyond the text, including recent challenges to traditional interpretations. In this course, students will sample case studies that include an exploration of: pre-modern South Asian ideals of masculinity; the gender transformation of the bodhisattva *Avalokitesvara* or *Guanyin* in China; love and grief; birth and fertility; abortion and ritual aftermath in contemporary Japan; the struggle for official recognition of Buddhist nuns in contemporary Thailand; as well as mindfulness practices for racial equality. Finally, this course includes brief experiential components on Buddhist meditation and ritual. No prior knowledge about Buddhism is required.

**Class Format:** This class is remote with a mix of synchronous and asynchronous requirements. Synchronous meetings are limited to once a week for roughly one hour (between 60-75 minutes). Many of our synchronous requirements will feature breakout sessions into small groups for intimate, peer exchanges, followed by discussions with the entire class. A few asynchronous sessions will require community-building with your peers through some form of work exchange or reflection related to the weekly topic.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Attendance and active participation 25%; Short writing assignments 25% (one-page, single-space, critical response based on class reading x 4 total); Mid-term exam 25% (identification terms, short essay); Final project and presentation 25% (initial consultation with the instructor regarding topic selection, annotated bibliography and project outline, formal written report (4-5 single-space pages), presentation, and final reflection)

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 12

**Enrollment Preferences:** REL, ASST, and WGSS majors

**Expected Class Size:** 8

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

Not offered current academic year

### REL 316 (F) Social Ontology

**Cross-listings:** STS 316 REL 316

#### Primary Cross-listing

**What is society? What is the social world made of?** The obvious answer--individual people--was for a long time dominant in the social sciences. Indeed, many theorists argued that there was no such thing as society distinct from individual humans and their intentional actions. While this mode of theorizing had some advantages, it has recently fallen out of vogue because of its inability to explain group norms, institutions, corporations, and other collectives. Explanations at the individual level are not necessarily incorrect, but rather philosophers have increasingly come to see them as incomplete. Society seems to more than an aggregate of individuals. Hence, philosophers have increasingly turned to questions of social ontology and produced fresh theories about the nature of the fundamental constituents of the social world. We will explore this research, but with the added intuition that looking beyond humans to other social animals can provide a fresh theoretical vantage. **We will set out from the idea that the social world is composed not just out of humans, but also out of materialized signs produced by social animals** (e.g., a no-smoking sign or an ant's chemical trail). This seminar will offer an advanced survey of current debates about the ontology, methodology, and aims of the humanities and social sciences. We will address questions such as: *Is there a difference between explaining and understanding social actions? Should explanation in the humanities and social sciences follow the model of explanation in the natural sciences, or are there peculiarities about social phenomena that demand a different approach? What are social structures, practices, norms, institutions? How might social structures exist over and above individuals? Do social groups have agency in their own right? What are social kinds and what is their relationship to natural kinds? How do debates in the social sciences look different if we attend to other social animals and their materialized signs?* Course readings will come from a variety of areas including: sociology, semiotics, feminist theory, philosophy of science, and philosophy of mind. When possible, we will supplement these with readings on research into animal behavior.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Attendance and participation. Weekly critical responses/comments. 10-12 page final research paper.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** STS concentrators, Religion or Biology majors, and then other students majoring/concentrating in DIV II areas.

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Unit Notes:** advanced theory seminar with difficult readings.

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

STS 316 (D2) REL 316 (D2)

Fall 2021

SEM Section: 01 W 1:10 pm - 3:50 pm Jason Josephson Storm

### REL 319 (S) Milton's Paradise Lost

**Cross-listings:** REL 319 ENGL 315

#### Secondary Cross-listing

If you know anything about John Milton, you probably think of him as some blind guy who wrote a really long poem about the Bible. It's hard to shake the feeling that Milton is the fustiest of English poets--dull, pious, brilliant and all, and not someone you would read if you didn't have to. But then what are we to make of the following? The first piece that Milton wrote that was read widely throughout Europe was a boisterous defense of the English

Revolution. Milton was most famous in his lifetime as the poet who went to bat for the Puritan insurgents--the poet who came right out and said that the king looked better without his head. Of all the major English poets, Milton is the revolutionary. So a course on Milton is by necessity a course on literature and revolution. We will read *Paradise Lost*, widely regarded as the greatest non-dramatic poem in English, and a few other books to help us prepare for that big one. Some questions: How did the mid-seventeenth century, probably the most tumultuous decades in the history of modern Britain, transform the culture of the English-speaking world? What is the relationship between literature and the state or between literature and radical politics? Is there a poetics of revolution? How can a poet who seems to be writing for Sunday school--about God and Adam and Eve and the serpent--really have been writing about rebellion all along?

**Requirements/Evaluation:** one 6- to 8-page paper, one 10- to 12-page paper, informal weekly writing assignments, and active seminar participation

**Prerequisites:** a 100-level ENGL course, or a score of 5 on the AP English Literature exam, or a score of 6 or 7 on the Higher Level IB English exam. If you are interested in taking the course without the prereq, do contact Prof. Thorne.

**Enrollment Limit:** 25

**Enrollment Preferences:** English majors

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 319 (D2) ENGL 315 (D1)

**Attributes:** ENGL Literary Histories A

Spring 2022

SEM Section: 01 TF 1:10 pm - 2:25 pm Christian Thorne

### **REL 321 (F) Happy Holidays! A Comparative History of Commemorations and Festivals**

**Cross-listings:** REL 321 HIST 411 ARAB 411

**Secondary Cross-listing**

What do our holidays tell us about ourselves and our societies? This seminar in religious, political and cultural history is in two parts. In the first half, we will explore the major holidays and festivals that emerged in the Middle East among the three monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). It will examine how certain events became ritualized and then spread to different parts of the globe and were adapted to specific cultural situations. We will consider the role of myth and commemoration and how various religious holidays are celebrated in different ways around the world. The second part of the seminar focuses on secular holidays with particular attention to the Modern Middle East. Which events are commemorated and how and what are the political implications of these celebrations?

**Requirements/Evaluation:** several short response papers and a 20- to 25-page final paper

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 12

**Enrollment Preferences:** seniors, especially History and Arabic Studies majors

**Expected Class Size:** 12

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 321 (D2) HIST 411 (D2) ARAB 411 (D2)

**Attributes:** HIST Group E Electives - Middle East

**Not offered current academic year**

### **REL 330 (S) Modern Jewish Political Theory**

**Cross-listings:** JWST 492 PSCI 375 REL 330

**Primary Cross-listing**

By the late 19th century, Jews across Europe were faced with an urgent political problem. Amidst burgeoning national self-consciousness throughout the continent, despite the liberatory promises of the Enlightenment, Jews remained a vulnerable, segregated, and stigmatized minority population. Jews had to decide where to pin their hopes. Should they ally themselves with the liberals or the communists? Should they embrace nationalism or cosmopolitanism? Should they, perhaps, abandon Europe altogether and re-constitute themselves elsewhere? If so, should they focus their efforts on relocation to the historical land of Israel? Or could they go anywhere? Wherever they might go, should they aspire to build a modern Jewish nation-state, a semi-autonomous Jewish community, or some other arrangement? Should this coincide with the cultivation of a distinctively Jewish modern language? If so, should it be Hebrew or Yiddish? In this course we will assess various answers to these questions proffered by Jewish political thinkers in the modern period. We will pay particular attention to the construction of "Jews" and "Judaism" in these arguments. And we will ask persistently: what constitutes a "Jewish justification" for a political claim in modern Jewish political theory? Coverage will include: Jewish liberalism, political Zionism, Yiddishist autonomism, messianic quietism, and other views. We will read mostly primary sources, including texts by: Hermann Cohen, Theodore Herzl, Chaim Zhitlowsky, Franz Rosenzweig, Leo Strauss, Hannah Arendt, and many others.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** six short (1-2 pages) response papers; two 6- to 8-page papers, each analyzing a different view in depth; a final 18- to 20-page paper that incorporates the two previously submitted 6-8 page papers, but also compares the two views and adjudicates between them

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion majors, Jewish Studies concentrators, and Political Science students on the "Theory" track

**Expected Class Size:** 18

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

JWST 492 (D2) PSCI 375 (D2) REL 330 (D2)

**Attributes:** JWST Capstone Course JWST Core Electives

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 332 (F) Islam and Feminism**

**Cross-listings:** WGSS 334 REL 332 ARAB 332

Primary Cross-listing

This course examines the relationship between feminism and Islam, focusing particularly on Islamic feminist scholarship. We will take a genealogical approach to our study of Islamic feminism tracing the different discourses that have informed and shaped the field. The first part of the course will begin with a critical examination of orientalist and colonial representations of Muslim women as oppressed and in need of liberation. We will then explore Muslim responses to such critiques that were entwined with nationalist and independence movements. This historical backdrop is critical to understanding why the question of women and their rights and roles become crucial to Muslim self-understanding and Islamic reform. The second part of the course will focus on major intellectuals and thinkers who have influenced Islamic feminism. Finally, the last part of our course will explore the breadth of Islamic feminist literature, covering the following themes: 1) feminist readings of scripture; 2) feminist critiques of Islamic law; and 3) feminist theology.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** weekly responses, four 2- to 3-page essays

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion, Arabic Studies, Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, History majors

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

WGSS 334 (D2) REL 332 (D2) ARAB 332 (D2)

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 333 (S) The Politics of Myth**

Myths animate ethical and political life. Shared stories that function as sources of justification and motivation are reflected in our anxieties and aspirations, in how we talk, and in how we perform our identities. These are stories about the origins of our world, the founding of the political order, the forging of groups, the menace of enemies, the triumph of heroes, the ultimate destiny of humankind. In this course, we will explore the meaning of "myth" in our ethical and political lives. We will read and discuss a wide range of approaches to myth. For instance, readings may include works by Plato, medieval Jewish and Islamic philosophers, Friedrich Nietzsche, Georges Sorel, Ernst Cassirer, and Walter Benjamin. Particular attention will be given to a set of mid-twentieth century theorists of myth who have had an especially strong impact on the meaning of myth in American popular culture: Carl Jung, Mircea Eliade, and Joseph Campbell. We will assess the enduring resonance of their ideas and explore new opportunities to think critically and imaginatively about myth in this tradition, reading works by Wendy Doniger, Jeffrey Kripal, and other contemporary scholars in religious studies. These theoretical explorations will serve to enrich our efforts, throughout the course, to uncover the myths that animate our own lives. We will explore *our myths* through sustained introspection, interpretations of popular culture, and opportunities for myth-criticism and myth-making. Thus, in addition to the critical analysis of myths and myth theories, students will have the opportunity to play creatively with the possibilities of myth. The course will culminate in a final creative project engaging with the idea of myth.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Two 5-7 page papers and either a final annotated creative project or a final 7-10 page paper.

**Prerequisites:** None

**Enrollment Limit:** 18

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion majors and students who have taken a course in the Religion department.

**Expected Class Size:** 18

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 334 (S) Imagining Joseph**

**Cross-listings:** REL 334 JWST 334 COMP 334 ANTH 334

Secondary Cross-listing

Beloved son, rival brother, faithful servant, dreamer, seer, object of desire, lover, husband, bureaucrat, Joseph is one of the most fully-limned and compelling figures in the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim scriptural traditions. The story of Joseph unfolds over fourteen chapters in the Hebrew Bible, and is the subject of the fourth longest sura in the Qur'an. Through millennia, the story of Joseph has inspired a wealth of interpretations, commentary, apocrypha, re-tellings, and back-story, including an apocryphal book of scripture about Joseph and his wife, Asenath, Sufi poetry about Joseph and Zuleikha (Potiphar's wife), a trilogy by the 20th century German novelist Thomas Mann, a musical by Andrew Lloyd Weber, and many expressions in Western visual art. The course will explore these various expressions, looking to them for the ways in which Joseph has captured the imaginations of peoples and cultures across time and space. The course will be organized as a collaborative seminar in which the class will read the foundational scriptures together, followed by thematic discussions to which students will contribute insights from their own readings of particular peripheral texts. Students will learn the pleasures of close and intense exegetical reading in approaching the Hebrew Bible and Qur'an, as well as the more expansive pleasures of linking post-scriptural expressions together.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** 3- to 5-page weekly response papers; 15-page final paper; class participation

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 12

**Enrollment Preferences:** based on responses to a questionnaire

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 334 (D2) JWST 334 (D2) COMP 334 (D1) ANTH 334 (D2)

**Attributes:** JWST Core Electives

Spring 2022

SEM Section: 01 W 1:10 pm - 3:50 pm Peter Just

## REL 335 (S) The Meaning of Diaspora and the Jews of Europe (WS)

**Cross-listings:** REL 335 HIST 434 JWST 434

### Secondary Cross-listing

Dispersion, exile, migration, statelessness are all aspects of diaspora. In the study of diasporic peoples and cultures, the Jews have long figured as the archetype. As a result, Jewish political figures, intellectuals, social activists and scholars have played a central role in discussions of the meaning of diaspora, including debates about its political and social implications, economic value, and cultural significance. In the first half of the semester, in discussions of common readings, we will examine various historical interpretations of Jews' diasporic existence from the nineteenth century to the present and its implications for humanitarianism. Beginning in the first half of the semester and with greater intensity in the second half of the semester, you will conduct independent archival research on some aspect of the history of the Jewish diaspora using the digitized archives of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee that will culminate in a twenty-plus-page paper. In the second half, the seminar will continue to meet weekly as a research colloquium, to provide a forum for you to present your research and drafts in progress and to give feedback on fellow students' work. In this seminar, we are not merely studying history; you are actually doing history. That is to say, you will be more than students of history in this course: you will become historians in your own right. Over the semester, you will learn how to pose historical questions; to engage critically with readings beyond summarizing them; to synthesize an enormous amount of source material; and to learn how to write more clearly. By the end of the semester, the goal is for each student to produce a polished research paper based on substantial engagement with archival sources and relevant secondary literature that will serve as a capstone to your coursework at Williams or as a potential jumping-off point for future research projects, including a senior thesis in History or Jewish Studies.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class participation, several short papers, oral presentations, and a 20-page research paper

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** History majors and Jewish Studies concentrators

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2) (WS)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 335 (D2) HIST 434 (D2) JWST 434 (D2)

**Writing Skills Notes:** Students will write two drafts of their research paper before submitting the final paper for a grade. They will receive timely comments on drafts from professor and peers, to be incorporated into their final paper.

**Attributes:** HIST Group C Electives - Europe and Russia JWST Capstone Course JWST Core Electives

Not offered current academic year

## REL 338 (F) Transhumanism: Religion, Technoscience, Obsolescence

**Cross-listings:** HSCI 338 SOC 338 STS 338 REL 338

### Secondary Cross-listing

This interdisciplinary seminar invites students to pursue sociohistorical analysis and sustained critical discussion of the transhumanist movement and its overriding aims: the augmentation, transformation, and eventual transcendence of human biological constitution; the realization, through speculative technoscientific means, of an enhanced or even "postbiological existence"--a "posthuman condition," "Humanity 2.0." Through close readings of primary historical documents, transhumanist texts, scholarship on transhumanism, works of science-fiction film, literature, and popular culture, we will position the movement as an empirical conduit through which to explore the sociohistorical conditions under which transhumanist ideas and practices have emerged, circulated, and taken up residence. To that end, we will consider the ties of transhumanism to eugenics and massive investments in pharmaceuticals, anti-aging medicine, and so-called "GNR" technologies (i.e. genetics, nanotechnology, and artificial intelligence and robotics); the movement's affinities with neoliberalism and what some have pointed to as transhumanism's racialized subtext of whiteness. We will furthermore devote considerable attention to the technological singularity, the figure of the cyborg, mind-uploading, space colonization, and cryonic suspension, all of which, like transhumanism broadly, suggest that science and technology have in some sense come to operate as powerful channeling agents for the very sorts of beliefs, practices, and forms of association that theorists of secularization expected modernity to displace. Lastly, throughout the course of the seminar we will take transhumanism as a provocation to think broadly and seriously about religion, technology, embodiment, and ways of being human.

**Class Format:** Remote

**Requirements/Evaluation:** informal weekly writing, two short review essays, and one 15-page seminar paper

**Prerequisites:** Prior coursework in sociology-anthropology, history, religion, or science and technology studies.

**Enrollment Limit:** 14

**Enrollment Preferences:** Anthropology and Sociology majors and Science and Technology Studies concentrators

**Expected Class Size:** 14

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

HSCI 338 (D2) SOC 338 (D2) STS 338 (D2) REL 338 (D2)

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 340 Science, Religion, and the (post)colony: Critical approaches to the global history of knowledge (DPE)**

Histories of science and religion have been deeply intertwined with colonial and postcolonial history. Colonial claims to legitimacy were often rooted in perceptions of scientific and technological superiority, and colonial expansion often marched in lockstep with missionary activity and forced conversions. In the process, race and human difference emerged as concepts at the intersection of scientific and religious discourses and was forged within the colonial framework. This colonial history of science and religion impacted how scientific and religious thought, practices and institutions developed through the period of decolonization and into today. Similarly, the attendant history of race and human difference continues to influence postcolonial and contemporary discourses around race, ethnicity, identity and migration. In this course, we will trace key moments in the history of science and religion and their relation to coloniality. We will start in the sixteenth century with the rise of modern European empires, move into the height of modern colonialism, indigenous genocides and chattel slavery, and trace decolonization from the middle of the nineteenth into today. Throughout, we will investigate how science and religion emerged as concepts, practices and institutions, and how these narratives impacted, and were impacted by colonial expansion and history. We will pay particular attention to questions of race, gender, sexuality and human difference as key concepts and practices that emerged at the intersections of science, religion and (post)colonialism

**Requirements/Evaluation:** 2 response papers (3-5pages each) + final project (could be a 10-15p paper or creative project of any kind)

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Enrollment Preferences:** Concentrators, followed by seniors and juniors

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:**

**Distributions:** (D2) (DPE)

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** The course addresses questions of race, gender, sexuality and human difference as seen through the history of science, technology and medicine. Students will creatively engage with critical race theory, postcolonial theory and queer theory. They will also investigate human suffering as a category that provides a deeper understanding of difference, diversity and equality.

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 348 (S) Religion and Reason**

In his most famous and provocative book, *The End of Faith*, the "New Atheist" author Sam Harris very forcefully brings our attention to the dangerous clash between faith and reason, lamenting humanity's willingness to suspend reason in favor of religious beliefs. This represents a pervasive trend of thought in the modern world that sees religion as being diametrically opposed to reason and rationality. This course is an in-depth investigation of this notion through the lenses of philosophy, theology, anthropology, and history, asking questions such as: What is reason, and what counts as a rational belief? Are there other grounds that might make one justified in holding a belief? What is the nature of religious belief or faith? Is religious belief uniquely irrational? What gave rise to this discourse on religion? We will be reading primary and secondary materials representing a variety academic disciplines, intellectual traditions, and geographic contexts.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** regular reading responses, 6- to 8-page midterm essay, final 10- to 12-page essay

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Expected Class Size:** 10



**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**Attributes:** PHIL Related Courses

Not offered current academic year

**REL 352 (S) Mystic Spirituality in Black Women's Social Justice Activism: Brazil-USA**

**Cross-listings:** AFR 352 REL 352 WGSS 352

**Secondary Cross-listing**

This course examines the meanings and manifestations of mystic spirituality in the lives and work of selected Black women artists/activists in the USA and Brazil. The writings of Lucille Clifton (poet), Rosemarie Freeney Harding (activist and counselor) and Makota Valdina Pinto (activist and Candomblé ritual elder) are key texts for our exploration of the uses of mystic sensibilities and Afro-Atlantic ritual traditions--such as dreams and visions, prayer, divination, sacred dance, healing rites and other forms of unmediated intimate encounter with the sacred--as resources for creativity, community organizing, self-care and as aspects of political and social critique in African American and Afro-Brazilian contexts. The methodology of the course blends historical, literary and womanist approaches in an investigation of the conjunctions of spiritual practice and activism in the experience of women in the Afro-Atlantic diaspora.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class participation, 2-3 short papers (5-7 pages) and a final project

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** AFR, REL, and WGSS concentrators

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

AFR 352 (D2) REL 352 (D2) WGSS 352 (D2)

Not offered current academic year

**REL 354 (S) Friedrich Nietzsche: Philosophizing with a Hammer**

**Cross-listings:** REL 354 COMP 351

**Primary Cross-listing**

In one of his last major writings, *Twilight of the Idols (Götzen-Dämmerung, 1889)*, Friedrich Nietzsche described his project as an attempt to sound out various established philosophical truths or intellectual "idols," saying, "they will be touched here with a hammer as with a tuning fork, these are the oldest, most convinced, puffed-up, and fat-headed idols you will ever find...And also the most hollow." To be sure, Nietzsche directed his often combative prose against everything from traditional religion to philosophy itself. Nietzsche is one of the most frequently cited and most frequently misunderstood philosophers of our current era. By reading Nietzsche's writings in context, this course will attempt to liberate Nietzsche from his later reputation. We will think with and sometimes against Nietzsche, focusing on his notions of religion, mythology, power, morality, and enlightenment, and we will pay special attention to his reflections on the limits of reason/knowledge. Along the way, students will get a new sense of Nietzsche's most famous theoretical formulations including "the death of God," the *Übermensch*, and the split between Dionysian/Apollonian modes of thought.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class participation, weekly responses, 10- to 12-page final paper

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Unit Notes:** in-depth seminar on a difficult philosopher who we'll be reading closely

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 354 (D2) COMP 351 (D1)



**Attributes:** PHIL Related Courses

Not offered current academic year

**REL 355 (S) Foucault: Confessions of the Flesh**

**Cross-listings:** REL 355 COMP 359 STS 355

**Primary Cross-listing**

The French philosopher, historian, and social critic, **Michel Foucault** (1926-1984) has had a massive influence across a range of disciplines. Indeed, in 2019, Google Scholar ranked Foucault as **the number one most highly cited scholar in the Humanities and Social Sciences**. While many of his contemporaries have faded in importance, Foucault's writings on power, madness, the history of sexuality, and the structures of domination and governmentality have become central to the theoretical canon of a range of academic disciplines. To be a scholar in the humanities today is often to be in Foucault's shadow. But despite the many references to his work, Foucault is frequently misunderstood and subsequent scholars often attribute to him positions he would have repudiated. Now almost forty years after his death, his work is also long overdue for a reappraisal as we come to understand Foucault better as a person and especially as the final, and posthumous, volume of his History of Sexuality, ***Confessions of the Flesh***, has only just appeared and been translated into English. In this course we will mainly read Foucault supplemented with occasional contextual readings. Although we will touch on his earlier writings, this seminar will emphasize his middle-to-late period (beginning with ***The Archaeology of Knowledge***) and including selections from his later monographs, lectures, interviews, and short writings. It will culminate in the unfinished intellectual and political project that occupied Foucault in his last days. We will think with and often against Foucault, focusing primarily on questions of power, knowledge, truth, and addressing his later emancipatory gesture toward "technologies of the self." We will also appraise the methodologies that Foucault described as "archaeology" and "genealogy." We will historicize Foucault in his life and cultural context and ask how much of his arguments still apply today. What blind-spots did he have? Which of his ideas are worth consolidating and which need repudiating? How might we go beyond Foucault?

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class participation, weekly critical responses, 10- to 12-page final paper

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** In order of preference, Religion majors, STS concentrators, Comp Lit majors, and then Philosophy majors.

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Unit Notes:** in-depth seminar on a difficult philosopher who we'll be reading closely

**Distributions:** (D2)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 355 (D2) COMP 359 (D1) STS 355 (D2)

Spring 2022

SEM Section: 01 W 1:10 pm - 3:50 pm Jason Josephson Storm

**REL 358 (S) Religion and Law (DPE)**

**Cross-listings:** GBST 358 REL 358

**Primary Cross-listing**

This course explores the concept of "law" through an investigation of the complex relationship between law, ethics, and religion. In doing so, we will look at legal theoretical texts as well as legal anthropological studies to pose critical questions about the nature of law, the functioning logic of law, the relationship between law and lived experience, and the legal construction of categories and facts. In the course, we will consider two intersections of religion and law: the particularities of religious legal traditions and the relationship between religion and secular law. Topics will include the secular legal construction of religion, the relationship between law and ethics, the nature of legal hermeneutics, and the racial, gender, and sexual politics of legal interpretation.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** reading response, two essays, final research paper

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** Religion majors

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2) (DPE)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

GBST 358 (D2) REL 358 (D2)

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** Law is seen as both a repressive and liberatory force. In taking a critical approach to the nature of law and legal interpretation, this course prepares students to think about the language of "rule of law," "order," and "justice" as a complex relationship between law and power.

Not offered current academic year

**REL 374 (S) Mysticism: Vision, Writing, History (WS)**

**Cross-listings:** REL 374 COMP 352 ENGL 374

Secondary Cross-listing

The promise of God's real presence in the world lies at the heart of Christianity as a messianic and scriptural faith. But mystics, who seek out and bear witness to their own experiences of the divine, have often been viewed with suspicion by church and state authorities. At stake in these confrontations between orthodoxy and the individual witness are questions of knowledge and power. To whom does God speak, who speaks for God, and how can anyone, whether mystic or priest, be certain? We will learn how these questions have inflected certain passages in the history of Christian belief and practice: the flourishing culture of mystical writing by medieval women, the efforts of some Protestant sects to distribute authority more horizontally, and early modern philosophers' criticisms of prophecy and fanaticism. But our deepest concerns will be literary and aesthetic. What modes of writing did mystics use to express what was, in fact, inexpressible? What role did visual art play in visionary experience? And how has mysticism influenced the work two of the twentieth century's most significant theorists of language, Ludwig Wittgenstein and Jacques Derrida?

**Requirements/Evaluation:** biweekly 5-page papers, biweekly 2-page response papers, thoughtful participation in class discussions

**Prerequisites:** a 100-level ENGL course, or a score of 5 on the AP English Literature exam, or a score of 6 or 7 on the Higher Level IB English exam

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** English majors and those intending to major in English

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D1) (WS)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 374 (D2) COMP 352 (D1) ENGL 374 (D1)

**Writing Skills Notes:** This course will develop students' writing skills through biweekly 5-page analytical papers and biweekly 2-page response papers. Written feedback will be provided by the instructor and by the tutorial partner. Students will receive from the instructor timely comments on their writing skills, with suggestions for improvement.

**Attributes:** ENGL Literary Histories A

Not offered current academic year

**REL 376 (F) Islam and Capitalism (DPE)**

Islam and Capitalism are two widely debated and yet increasingly elusive phenomena of our contemporary age. This course offers a chronological and thematic study of the conceptual and material entanglements between Islam and Capitalism. The mere juxtaposition of Islam and Capitalism is beset with conceptual difficulty and anachronism: can Islam be conceived as a religion proper given the Shari'a's extensive regulation of commercial life? Is faith in the providence of free markets akin to religious belief? Are Islam and Capitalism universal goods, or are they isomorphic to distinct cultures? Does the simultaneous rise of Islamic banking and "halal" consumerism signal a revolt against capitalist modernity, or does it mark the domestication of religion by forces of the market? How do Islamic conceptions of socioeconomic justice and ecological preservation respond to the environmental crises of Capitalism and the Anthropocene? We will explore these questions and address their underlying assumptions from within the disciplinary frameworks of History, Anthropology, and Religious Studies. In terms of theory, students will comprehend key debates and methodological approaches to the broader study of religion and capitalism, including formal resemblances between theological concepts and theorizations of the

market; the analytical purchase of binary oppositions between religion (enchantment) and economics (rationality); the cultural embeddedness of markets versus their formalistic autonomy; postcolonial critiques of corporate sovereignty and neoliberalism; and, finally, economic/ecological assemblages and "religious economies." In addition to harnessing theoretical tools of analysis, students will also acquire substantial knowledge of the Shari'a, its commercial laws, institutions, and contracts by studying the history of commerce in Muslim societies from 7th-century agrarianism to contemporary Islamic finance. The diverse topics, regions, and periods covered in the course are organized into 5 modules: (1) theoretical concepts in religion and economics; (2) the Shari'a and Islamic commercial law; (3) commerce in medieval Islam; (4) modernity, colonialism, and industrial capitalism; and, finally, (5) globalization, modern Islamic finance, and environmentalism.

**Class Format:** This course will be conducted online in its entirety and will rely on a combination of synchronous and asynchronous modes of learning. The synchronous component will consist of weekly class meetings via Zoom. A discussion leader will be assigned for each session and, depending on enrollment, students will be separated into break-out sessions to facilitate group discussion. The asynchronous component will consist of weekly reading responses, the mid-term, and final paper.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Weekly Reading Responses (approx. 300 words): 20%; Class Participation (based on a weekly assignment of in-class discussion leaders): 20%; Take-home Midterm Exam (5 double-spaced pages/1250 words max.): 20%; Term Paper (10 double-spaced pages/2500 words max.): 40%

**Prerequisites:** There are no prerequisites for enrollment. However, an elementary exposure to the history of economic thought will be useful.

**Enrollment Limit:** 19

**Enrollment Preferences:** Seniors

**Expected Class Size:** 19

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2) (DPE)

**Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:** This course examines trajectories of capitalism--beyond its isomorphic relationship with Western culture--in the Muslim world. It offers a critical perspective on economic inequality and underdevelopment in postcolonial Muslim states and their historical linkages with extractive/settler colonialism. Students explore connections between petrodollar capitalism, climate change, exploitation of migrant labor in the Arabian Gulf, and the fight for regional domination through proxy religious wars.

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 397 (F) Independent Study: Religion**

Religion independent study.

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

Fall 2021

IND Section: 01 TBA Jason Josephson Storm

### **REL 398 (S) Independent Study: Religion**

Religion independent study.

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

Spring 2022

IND Section: 01 TBA Jason Josephson Storm

### **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.

**Class Format:** Remote

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class reports, papers, and substantial research projects

**Prerequisites:** senior Religion major or permission of instructor

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** senior Religion majors

**Expected Class Size:** 15

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

Fall 2021

SEM Section: 01 W 1:10 pm - 3:50 pm Jeffrey I. Israel

**REL 412 (F) Gandhi: History, Ideas and Legacy (WS)**

**Cross-listings:** REL 412 LEAD 412 ASIA 412 GBST 412 ASST 412 HIST 496 LEAD 322

**Secondary Cross-listing**

This course studies the life, work, and ideas of M.K. Gandhi (1869-1948), one of the most influential thinkers of the non-western world. Gandhi is well known today for his philosophy of non-violent resistance and its application in India's freedom struggle as well as his influence on the work of leaders like Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela. Hailed as the 'father of the Indian nation', however, Gandhi is not only known for his political ideas but also for his deep engagement with aspect of everyday human behavior and morality: truth, vegetarianism, sex and celibacy, to name just a few of his obsessions which contributed to making his broader philosophy. It is this commitment to a morally pure life that earned him the title of 'Mahatma' or Great Soul in India. This tutorial will focus on three key aspects of Gandhi: his ideas of peaceful protest as means of social and political change, his contemplations on moral philosophy, and on his legacy in modern India and the world. Students will read a combination of Gandhi's own writings as well as journal articles, monographs and films. The course will probe questions such as: What was the context and nature of Gandhian nationalism? Did it help to integrate the Indian nation? Was Gandhi truly a Great Soul, a saint or a shrewd politician? In what ways is Gandhi received and remembered by the Indian nation today? How does understanding a figure like Gandhi facilitate our understanding of modern nationalism, citizenship and political action?

**Class Format:** REMOTE. This tutorial will be taught remotely but will otherwise follow the usual tutorial format of weekly hour-long meetings, pairing students who will alternatively write papers and critiques each week.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** 5-7-page essays or 2-page critique due each week and a final report (3-4 pages) at the end of the semester.

**Prerequisites:** None, except students who have taken HIST488T will not be permitted to take this class.

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** Senior history majors and students who have previously taken HIST221. Students who have previously taken HIST488T will not be permitted to take this class.

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2) (WS)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 412 (D2) LEAD 412 (D2) ASIA 412 (D2) GBST 412 (D2) ASST 412 (D2) HIST 496 (D2) LEAD 322 (D2)

**Writing Skills Notes:** As a tutorial, this course is Writing Intensive as students not only write weekly papers but they also develop critical tools to engage in close reading of texts and interpret them and the facts therein. Each week, they will develop their writing by providing constructive criticism of their partner's paper, and in turn, learn to receive and build on critiques of their own work. Students will be given the opportunity to substantively revise their work on a regular basis.

**Attributes:** HIST Group B Electives - Asia

**Not offered current academic year**

**REL 421 (S) Picturing God in the Middle Ages**

**Cross-listings:** REL 421 ARTH 421

**Secondary Cross-listing**

How did medieval Europeans imagine their God and how did they give what they imagined pictorial form? How were these pictures used, both in public and in private life, and why? Paying particular attention to the function and experience of medieval works of art, this seminar will examine the evolution of images of God, in both the Eastern and Western halves of Europe, and the problems these images often generated. Through readings and class discussion, the course will investigate, among other specific topics: the varied attitudes toward the representability of God in Judaism, Islam, and Christianity; the impact of the Roman cult of the emperor and of images of the dead on the earliest portraits of Christ; the cult of the icon, concerns over idolatry, and the destruction of images; ideas about spiritual versus physical vision and their influence on the making and viewing of pictures; the relationship of sacred images to relics, the Eucharist, and other aspects of Christian ritual; and the pictorial exploration of both the torture and sexuality of Christ. Students will also pursue an individual research project, in which they will examine in greater depth a specific depiction of divinity of their choosing, in light of what we have considered together in the seminar.

**Class Format:** Class will meet online at first but may shift to in-person if circumstances allow

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class participation, oral presentation, one short paper (2-3 pages), final research paper (15-20 pages)

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** Preference given to Art majors and seniors.

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D1)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 421 (D1) ARTH 421 (D1)

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 422 (S) Art, Architecture, and Poetry: Islamic Devotional Culture in South Asia**

**Cross-listings:** COMP 422 ARTH 422 REL 422

Secondary Cross-listing

How have scholars interpreted and classified terms such as "Islamic art" and "Muslim culture," and how have these classifications affected the interpretation of the arts in South Asia? There are different points of view regarding what constitutes as "Islamic" art and culture. Is an imperial wine cup with "God is Great" inscribed on it an "Islamic" object? How is an erotic epic narrating the romance of a Hindu prince understood as embodying the principles of Muslim devotion? This interdisciplinary seminar, focusing on South Asian Muslim devotional culture as articulated through the material culture, the arts of the book, architecture, and poetry, will navigate these questions from two perspectives. The first is to understand how Muslim devotional cultural expression in South Asia circumscribes and interprets itself. The second viewpoint is that of scholarship and the various interpretive voices that have framed the field over the last century.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** class participation, 2-page response papers on class readings, leading class discussion, final 15-20-page research paper

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 14

**Enrollment Preferences:** Art Majors, and then to students of any major interested in art and culture of Islam

**Expected Class Size:** 12

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D1)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

COMP 422 (D1) ARTH 422 (D1) REL 422 (D2)

Not offered current academic year

### **REL 493 (F) Senior Thesis: Religion**

Religion senior thesis; this is part of a full-year thesis (493-494).

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

Fall 2021

HON Section: 01 TBA Jeffrey I. Israel

**REL 494 (S) Senior Thesis: Religion**

Religion senior thesis; this is part of a full-year thesis (493-494).

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

Spring 2022

HON Section: 01 TBA Jeffrey I. Israel

**REL 497 (F) Independent Study: Religion**

Religion independent study.

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

Fall 2021

IND Section: 01 TBA Jeffrey I. Israel

**REL 498 (S) Independent Study: Religion**

Religion independent study.

**Grading:** yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D2)

Spring 2022

IND Section: 01 TBA Jeffrey I. Israel

**Winter Study -----**

**REL 12 (W) Civil Disobedience**

**Cross-listings:** HIST 12 REL 12

**Secondary Cross-listing**

Are citizens obligated to obey unjust laws? When are they justified in breaking them? Is civil disobedience an effective political strategy? Does it matter, or is bearing witness against injustice enough? And who gets to determine whether a law is 'unjust' in the first place? Such questions have long bedeviled those looking to transform our world. In this course, students will grapple with their many answers. In a seminar-style format, we will explore case studies of civil disobedience in the United States, reflecting on the history of its theory and practice. In the process, we will pay particular attention to how religion has shaped civil disobedience in the U.S. context. Sources will include classic texts, films, and guest speakers. We will meet two mornings per week, for a total of six hours. Students will be evaluated based on their participation and a final project.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** final project or presentation

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 15

**Enrollment Preferences:** in order of seniority, with a preference for History and Religion majors

**Grading:** pass/fail only

**Materials/Lab Fee:** none

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

HIST 12 REL 12

Winter 2022

LEC Section: 01 TBA Casey D. Bohlen

**REL 15 (W) A Politics of Compassion for the 21st Century**

**Cross-listings:** REL 15 PSCI 15

**Primary Cross-listing**

Purpose: Here is a simple question: do you believe the American political system is working well today and will adequately address the country's needs in the 21st century? If not, what might a different model, a different attitude about politics and "who gets what in society," might look like. This course, offered by a political science professor who is also an ordained Zen Buddhist priest, explores a radical alternative based on the simple idea that if we are to survive and thrive as a global community in 100 years from now, we must move from a philosophy of "me" to one of "we." Based on the professor's 30 years of college-level political science teaching and over 40 years of a Zen Buddhist meditation practice, the course will explore a "Politics of Compassion," drawing from the teachings of the Buddha through the "Engaged Buddhists," such as the Dalai Lama, today. In addition to the historical and philosophical treatment of politics from a Buddhist point of view, we will practice Zen meditation on a daily basis. Regardless of one's particular religious, or non-religious, background, the course will provide a supportive opportunity to explore one's moral and political beliefs and at the end of the day ask oneself the proverbial question: what is my life really about? Is it about my ego in the form of making money and/or becoming famous, or is it about how to use my privileges and education to help alleviate suffering in the world? We will explore the issues of the climate crisis, poverty, race, sexism, violence, criminal justice, etc. in the process of reflecting on these questions.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** 10-page paper; all students will do a class presentation of their 10-page research paper

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 30

**Enrollment Preferences:** seniority: seniors, juniors, etc.

**Grading:** pass/fail only

**Unit Notes:** Tom Redden '77 is a political scientist and ordained Zen Buddhist priest, who is writing a book on 'Buddhist politics.' He holds a doctorate in political science and masters in education as well as 'Third World' Development Studies from the University of Geneva, Switzerland. He has lived and travelled all over the world, continues a 40-plus year daily meditation practice, and was voted Faculty of the Year five times by students at Southern Vermont College where he taught.

**Materials/Lab Fee:** none

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 15 PSCI 15

Winter 2022

LEC Section: 01

**REL 16 (W) Experiments in Mindfulness and Art Museums**

**Cross-listings:** REL 16 ARTH 16

**Primary Cross-listing**

Vietnamese Buddhist Thich Nhat Hanh said, "Always there is the opportunity to live our life fully. When we drink water, we can be aware that we are drinking water. When we walk, we can be aware that we are walking." It could be added: When we view and create art, we can be aware that we are viewing and being creative. How can we learn to become more alert and conscious to our surroundings and then apply these skills so we can enjoy a fuller, more vivid experience of life? Using MASS MoCA's contemporary art exhibitions, we will explore how objects can bring us to the present and urge us to slow down and be aware of their embedded messages. This experiential course takes place at MASS MoCA twice weekly for 3 hours each session. Students will work with MASS MoCA's director of education and curator of Kidspac to experiment with "ArtInSight," the museum's three-pronged pedagogy that includes arts-based conversations, mindfulness-based insight activities, and art-making exercises to deepen connections

to the art on view and to one's own creativity. Guest artists and yogis will be brought in to further explore mindfulness and the arts. While this is a great opportunity for art/art history and religion majors, students are not required to already have mindfulness or art-making practices. Rather, a goal of this course is to collectively try out socio-emotional mindfulness skills that can be useful in our everyday life to become more stress resilient, have more meaningful interpersonal connections, and nurture compassion towards ourselves and others. In addition to being fully engaged in hands-on class activities and discussions, we will read a selection of aesthetics philosophy, and Buddhist and secular mindfulness texts. For a final project, we will design mindfulness-based gallery experiments that can be conducted at the MASS MoCA.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** final project or presentation

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 30

**Enrollment Preferences:** preference will be given to art and religion majors, juniors and seniors

**Grading:** pass/fail only

**Unit Notes:** Laura Thompson, Ed.D. is MASS MoCA's director of education and curator of Kidspace. She is a long term meditator and incorporates mindfulness into her work and family life; has conducted many mindfulness-based art training programs; and has designed the museum's signature education pedagogy ArtInSight that includes meditation practices.

**Materials/Lab Fee:** none

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

REL 16 ARTH 16

Winter 2022

LEC Section: 01

### **REL 23 (W) Gaudino Fellowship: Immersive Engagement and Reflection**

**Cross-listings:** REL 23

#### **Primary Cross-listing**

The Gaudino Fund is offering Gaudino Fellowships for a group of 2 to 4 students during Winter Study 2022, based upon a proposed domestic or foreign collaborative project. Student teams should organize their proposed projects around two main components: direct encounter with otherness and self-reflection. Projects will be evaluated on whether they subject the students to "uncomfortable learning", i.e. having an experience that challenges and perhaps alters one's view of what it is to live a good life and the group's commitment to incorporate separate home stays for each fellow as part of their project, either joint or separate work/engagement internships, and a structure to facilitate collaborative action and learning. The team selected will be guided and overseen by the Gaudino Scholar who will conduct appropriate preparatory discussions and follow-up sessions to optimize and help students articulate lessons learned from the overall experience. The intent of the program is to open the student to an understanding (of both the familiar and unfamiliar), and to a development of empathy, that could not be achieved without the fellowship experience. N.B. Although this course is housed in Religion, projects are not limited to religion. Each prospective team needs to meet with the Gaudino Scholar as early as possible, but no later than September, and submit their group application by September 30, 2021. Application guidelines can be found at [winterstudy.williams.edu](http://winterstudy.williams.edu). Each student is expected to write a short (3-4 page) self-reflection before leaving for the WSP, keep a journal of their experience, as well as write a 8-10 page paper by the end of the Winter Study period reflecting on the WSP experiences and what has changed in the student's perceptions and beliefs from the opening essay. They will also meet the other members of the team on a weekly basis during Winter Study and regularly update the Gaudino Scholar by email and/or Skype calls. The team that receives the Gaudino Fellowship will give a brief presentation to the Board about their experience at the Board's spring meeting in April. The team whose project is approved will receive the Gaudino Fellow designation. In addition, students on Financial Aid will receive Gaudino funding from a minimum of 50% to a maximum of 90% of the budget for the project up to \$2,500, as determined by the Financial Aid office. No additional funding for students' projects will be provided by the College.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** 10-page paper

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** selection is made on basis of proposal

**Grading:** pass/fail only

**Materials/Lab Fee:** none

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**



REL 23

**Attributes:** EXPE Experiential Education Courses

Not offered current academic year

**REL 30 (W) Senior Project: Religion**

An advanced course for senior Religion majors (who are not writing theses) to further develop their senior seminar paper into a polished 25 page research paper (which will also be the focus of a brown-bag presentation during the spring semester). The course will help the students with general research methods, workshopping, paper writing, and presentation practice.

**Class Format:** senior project

**Grading:** pass/fail only

Winter 2022

IND Section: 01 TBA Jeffrey I. Israel

**REL 31 (W) Senior Thesis: Religion**

Religion senior thesis.

**Class Format:** thesis

**Grading:** pass/fail only

Winter 2022

HON Section: 01 TBA Jeffrey I. Israel

**REL 99 (W) Independent Study: Religion**

Open to upperclass students. Students interested in doing an independent project (99) during Winter Study must make prior arrangements with a faculty sponsor. The student and professor then complete the independent study proposal form available online. The deadline is typically in late September. Proposals are reviewed by the pertinent department and the Winter Study Committee. Students will be notified if their proposal is approved prior to the Winter Study registration period.

**Class Format:** independent study

**Grading:** pass/fail only

Winter 2022

IND Section: 01 TBA Jeffrey I. Israel