**DIVINITY COURSE CATALOG 2021-2022**

This is a reference document only. All courses are organized by their parent identity. Similarly, just because a course is in the RLST category does not mean it is not open to graduate students as well, and vice versa. This catalog does not include cross-listed idents outside of the Divinity School. For dates and times, please refer to the Registrar’s website at the top of week 6 each quarter, or visit our website for a preliminary/tentative schedule.

**AUTUMN 2021**

Special Courses in Divinity

DVSC 30400 – Introduction to the Study of Religion: On the Fetish

There are many ways to tell the story of the history of the study of Religion. This course will trace out the history of a single concept both within the field and through its dissemination in the broader culture. The concept of the “fetish” will be our guide. It will provide us a lens to consider 1) the cultural presumptions and biases that often undergird claims to comparison 2) the power and mobility of a concept that has been used to talk about everything from idolatry to capitalism, sex to semiotics. Ironically, despite its enduring power in the Philosophy of Religions, Marxism, and Psychoanalysis, the term “fetish” mostly disappeared from the taxonomic lexicon of scholarship within the field of Religious Studies once it was deemed a "category mistake" in the early 20th century. In recent years, however, it has re-emerged in the work of anthropologist J. Lorand Matory and philosopher Bruno Latour, among others. The history of the term will help us tell the story of the construction of Comparative Religions as a European endeavor, as well as the reverberations of that story across the social sciences. We will also consider alternatives to this approach by inviting other scholars from inside and outside the university to discuss the intersection between the study of religion and other key concepts. Course Notes: All MA and AMRS students are required to take this course. MDiv students are required to take this course or Classical Theories of Religion (HREL 32900). This class is one of the Divinity School's courses that requires a quality grade. Students must earn a B- or above to fulfill the requirement. *Sarah Hammerschlag*

DVSC 51000 – Theories and Methods in the Study of Religion

This course is required for all first-year doctoral students in the Divinity School. It is meant to introduce basic issues in theory and method in the contemporary study of religion in the academy, with special focus on the range of approaches and disciplines represented in the field. Course Notes: This course is limited to 1st-year Divinity PhD students only. It is a required course for all 1st-year Divinity PhD students. *Richard Rosengarten*

Anthropology and Sociology of Religion

AASR 30100 – Anthropology of Christianity

This seminar explores conversations and debates in the anthropology of Christianity. We will engage ethnographic approaches to Protestantism, Catholicism, and Orthodoxy in various geographic regions. We will also cover related subjects such as language ideology, media, economy, colonialism, nationalism, and globalization. *Angie Heo*

AASR 49000 – Secularism

This seminar explores theories and ethnographies of secularism with an emphasis on the global reach of secular ideals and their various historical materializations. We will engage a wide range of topics such as tolerance and religious difference, the legal regulation of customs and traditions, relations between liberalism and socialism, the politics of art and architecture, and technological cultures of life and death. *Angie Heo*

AASR 58505 – Rethinking Alienability: Landscapes of Attachment and Dispossession

This course will survey environmental, religious, and phenomenological approaches to landscape in anthropology, political ecology, critical race studies, legal history, and religious studies in order to attend to the interplay of attachment and alienation, spatial boundedness and racialized dispossession. The aim is to develop new ways of thinking about the constraints and possibilities of mobility and traffic over space and time. We will consider various cases of so-called “unpropertied” relations to land and material livelihoods to ask what challenges they pose to alienability as an arc of inexorable cultural loss or as a foundational condition of human absence (terra nullius). Suspending alienability as an explanatory framework allows us to instead track its genealogy as a legal and ethical paradigm and, moreover, to consider practices and histories of attachment to place (including through narrative, nostalgia, spirit possession, and ritual) that do not take possessive ownership as their goal. In dialogue with these interdisciplinary debates, we will consider how phenomenological and affective attachments to land, spirits, and object worlds differentially construct landscapes and thereby unsettle more familiar secular heuristics of environment, labor, and natural resources. *Mareike Winchell*

Biblical Studies

BIBL 31000 – Introduction to the Hebrew Bible

Critical introduction to the genres, ideas, styles, and formation of the Hebrew Bible (the ancient Jewish treasury of literature from Israel, Judea, and Babylonia), framed by ancient comparative material and modern literary theory. Course Note: This course counts as a Gateway course for RLST majors/minors. *Simeon Chavel*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HIJD 31004, RLST 11004

BIBL 34400 – Greek Prose Composition

The goal of this course is to pick up habits from introductory Greek class: producing Attic Greek sentences and longer pieces. The most obvious benefits of this exercise will be thorough review of basic morphology and syntax as well as fine-tuning our grasp of the more subtle nuances of the language, which should pay off when we go back to reading the ancient Greek texts themselves — or teach them! While this is a graduate level course, undergraduates are welcome to petition to take it. *David Martinez*

BIBL 33900 – Introductory Biblical Hebrew I

This course is the first of a two-quarter sequence designed to introduce students to the language of biblical Hebrew, with special emphasis on the fundamentals of its morphology, syntax, and vocabulary. The course follows a standard textbook supplemented by lectures, exercises, and oral drills aimed at refining the student’s grasp of grammatically sound interpretation and translation. At the conclusion of the two-quarter sequence students will be prepared to take a biblical Hebrew reading course in the spring quarter. *Aslan Mizrahi Cohen*

BIBL 35100 – Introductory Koine Greek I

In this two-course sequence, students will learn the basic mechanics of Koine Greek and begin reading texts from the Greek New Testament and Septuagint. The autumn course and the first three-fourths or so of the winter course will introduce the vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and style of the Greek New Testament, and to a limited degree those of the Septuagint, after which point we will focus on reading and interpreting a New Testament document in Greek at length. Upon the conclusion of the sequence, students will be able to read and comprehend entire passages of Koine Greek text with the aid of a dictionary. This sequence aims to prepare students to successfully participate in a Greek exegesis course. *Jonathan Wegner*

BIBL 38300 – Reading Modern Hebrew for Research Purposes I

The course concentrates on the written language and aims at enabling students to use Modern Hebrew for research purposes. The course is designed to enable students to read Hebrew freely. Major grammatical & syntactical aspects will be covered, and students will acquire substantial vocabulary with attention paid to lexical collocations and semantic fields. By the end of the course, students are expected not only to be able to successfully satisfy their departmental language requirements but also to have a great set of skills that would allow them to read any given text, written in Modern Hebrew. (The term “Modern Hebrew” covers primarily literature from the mid 20th century to current time). Prerequisites: Students should have at least two levels of Modern and/or Biblical Hebrew. Students should be able to read vocalized Hebrew texts as well as to be able to read and write in cursive. *Ari Almog*

BIBL 47500 – The Apostolic Fathers

This course focuses on the general body of works whose authors are collectively known as the Apostolic Fathers, a remarkable group of theologians who lived and wrote during the late first and second centuries AD, immediately after the New Testament. Among the works and writers whom we will consider are the Didache, Clement of Rome (1 Clement), Ignatius of Antioch, and, as time permits, Diognetus or 2 Clement. We will carefully read the Greek text, with careful attention to the style of the Greek, how it compares to that of the New Testament, and its relationship to other important materials such as the Septuagint and the Greco-Egyptian papyri.

This was a period of amazing ferment and intellectual diversity. Since no rigid standard of orthodoxy had yet been set, a wide array of ideas were put forth and examined on the theological market place. We will focus on the exegetical methods of Biblical interpretation used by the Fathers, their reflections on the person and work of Jesus, and their ideas on the structure and mission of the emerging Church as the body of Christ. PQ: Two years of Greek required. *David Martinez*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 21505

BIBL 48402 – The Book of Judges

A text-course (text in biblical Hebrew only). It will cover the book's concept of a "judge," its themes, plot, and values, its sources and formation, the real beginning and end of the book, and its historical referents. Framed by theory of history and of narrative. PQ: One year Biblical Hebrew. Course Note: JWSC majors/minors can petition to count this course toward their degree requirement. *Simeon Chavel*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HIJD 48402, RLST 22302

Philosophy of Religion

DVPR 34300 – Buddhist Poetry in India

The substantial Buddhist contribution to Indian poetry is of interest for what it teaches us of both Buddhism and the broad development of Indian literature. The present course will focus upon three phases in this history, with attention to what changes of language and literary genre tell us of the transformations of Indian religious culture from the last centuries B.C.E. to about the year 1000. Readings (all in translation) will include the Therīgāthā, a collection of verses written in Pali and the most ancient Indian example of womens’ literature, selections from the work of the great Sanskrit poets Aśvaghoṣa, Āryaśūra, and Mātṛceta, and the mystical songs, in the Apabhraṃśa language, of the Buddhist tantric saints. PQ: General knowledge of Buddhism is desirable. *Matthew Kapstein*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HREL 34300, RLVC 34300, RLST 26250

DVPR 34350 – Introduction to Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit

Complementing the course on Buddhist Poetry in India, we will be reading a celebrated verse scripture, the Prajñā-pāramitā-ratnaguṇa-sañcaya-gāthā (“Verses Gathering the Jewel-like Qualities of the Perfection of Wisdom”) in both its Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit original and its Tibetan translation. (Students are required to have had at least two years of either Sanskrit or Tibetan – it will not be necessary to do both.) Those wishing to take the course for Sanskrit credit should enroll in SALC. PQ: Students must have had two years of Tibetan OR Sanskrit. Course Note: This course is open to undergrads ONLY by petition. *Matthew Kapstein*

DVPR 40205 – Schelling’s Relation to Spinoza: A Love-Hate Romance

Schelling's philosophical career can appear to be a bewildering tale of sharp reversals, disparate phases, abandoned systems, massive overhauls, heroic overreach, tragic defeats, and extravagant creativity. One thing that remains constant throughout this fabled career is his obsession with Spinoza, whether pro and con. This course will attempt, after a few weeks working with Spinoza's Ethics itself, to track the many stances Schelling takes to Spinoza, as both inspiration and irritant, in his early, middle and late phases, his shifting interpretations and assessments, and the role these play in his various philosophical endeavors. All readings will be in English. Course Note: Undergraduates can petition to enroll. *Brook Ziporyn*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HREL 40205

DVPR 41100 – Anglo-American Philosophy of/and Religion

This course will examine key texts and figures in twentieth-century Anglo-American philosophy, with particular attention to their implications for the study of religion. The course is thus meant to correlate with, and prepare students for, the PR2 Exam, though exam-preparation is not its primary goal. Course Note: Undergraduates can enroll via petition. *Kevin Hector*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RAME 41100

DVPR 50112 – Deconstruction and Religion

In this seminar we will carefully consider selected works by French philosopher Jacques Derrida. We will address the emergence of religious themes in his early work and reconsider the relation between deconstruction and theology as divergent modes of discourse. We will then examine the roles of messianism, belief, and confession in his later work. *Ryan Coyne*

Equivalent Div Course(s): THEO 50112, RLST 23112

History of Christianity

HCHR 30100 – History of Christian Thought I

This first course in the History of Christian Thought sequence deals with the post New Testament period until Augustine, stretching roughly from 150 through 450CE. The aim of the course is to follow the development of Christian thought by relating its structural features to the historical context in which they arose without adhering to schematic models such as East vs. West, orthodoxy vs. heresy, Alexandrian vs. Antiochene exegesis. The following authors and themes will be analyzed and discussed:

1.Martyrdom and the Authority of Christian Witness: Ignatius of Antioch, Justin Martyr

2. Platonism and Exegesis: Philo and Origen

3. Incarnation and Asceticism: Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa

4. Ecclesial Unity and Episcopal Authority: Cyprian, Ambrose and Chrysostom

5. Projecting Historical Authority: Eusebius and Jerome

6. Normative Belief and Gnostic Dissent: All About the Creeds

7. Ancient Thought Baptized: Augustine of Hippo

Course Note: Undergraduates may petition to enroll.

*Willemien Otten*

Equivalent Div Course(s): THEO 30100

HCHR 32122 – Writing Christian Poetry

Christianity begins with God's creative Word: "In the beginning was the Word." This course approaches the study of Christian poetry as an exercise in creativity, encouraging students to explore the history of Christianity as an expression of the poetic imagination. Readings will be taken from across the ancient, medieval, and modern Christian tradition, focusing particularly on works originally written in Old, Middle or modern English as models for writing our own poems, but drawing on a wide range of exegetical, liturgical, and visionary works to support appreciation of the symbolism and narrative embedded in these models. Is there such a thing as a distinctively Christian perspective on history, morality, beauty, and art? What role does irony play? Is Christian poetry fundamentally tragic or comic? What is the relationship between Christianity and culture? *Rachel F. Brown*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 27517

HCHR 50400 – Early Christian Rhetoric

An examination of the rhetorics (persuasive strategies) of early Christian literature, and how they were rooted in the ancient paideia (education system) and forms of public life in the Greco-Roman world. We shall focus on significant points of intersection with the Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition in terms of the five “works of the rhētor” (invention, arrangement, style, memory and delivery) by triangulated close readings each week in samples of rhetorical theory and textbooks, majority culture (Greco-Roman) rhetorical compositions and select early Christian Greek texts. The early Christian sources will range from the Pauline letters to the fourth century, and (depending upon student interests) may include, in addition to Pauline texts and speeches in Acts, such authors and works as 1 Clement, Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Origen, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, and John Chrysostom. PQ: Strong Greek skills. Course Notes: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *Margaret Mitchell*

Equivalent Div Course(s): BIBL 50400

History of Judaism

HIJD 34592 – Jewish and Islamic Ethics in al-Andalus

This course will include readings in Jewish and Islamic ethics from al-Andalus and the Maghrib with a focus on the writings of Maimonides (d. 1204) -- especially his "Eight Chapters" and Commentary on Avot (completed in the 1160s) and Ibn al-Mar'a of Malaga (d. 1214) -- especially his commentary on Ibn al-'Arif. *Jim Robinson* and *Yousef Casewit*

Equivalent Div Course(s): ISLM 34592, RETH 34592, RLST 24592

HIJD 40506 – Martin Buber’s Conception of Religion and Judaism

Martin Buber was a major philosopher of religion and Judaism. His contributions range from conceptual studies, poetic theology (I and Thou), studies on general and Jewish religiosity (especially Hasidism), and studies in the Bible. The course will focus on his book 'I and Thou', selected writings from 'Eclipse of God' and 'Moses'; and his correspondence with F. Rosenzweig on religious commandments. The course will include lectures and close readings of primary sources in translation. Students will be expected to write several short prompt papers and a final essay. *Michael Fishbane*

Equivalent Div Course(s): DVPR 40506, HREL 40506, RLST 20506

History of Religions

HREL 32900 – Classical Theories of Religion

This course will survey the development of theoretical perspectives on religion and religions in the 19th and 20th centuries and the institutional and historical contexts within which they developed. Thinkers to be studied include Kant, Hume, Schleiermacher, Feuerbach, Marx, Muller, Tiele, Tylor, Robertson Smith, Frazer, Durkheim, Weber, Freud, James, Otto, van der Leeuw, Wach, and Eliade. Course Notes: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *Christian Wedemeyer*

Equivalent Div Course(s): AASR 32900

HREL 34441 - Theravada Buddhism: History and Philosophy

This course studies the history and philosophy of Theravada Buddhism in India and other Southeast Asia countries. We first introduce the life of the Buddha and his major teachings within the context of the social and cultural environments in which Buddhism emerged about 2500 years ago. Having thus grasped some fundamental knowledge on Buddhism based on Pali texts, we then embark on examining its philosophical and historical developments from primitive Buddhism to sectarian Buddhism, and to the ramification of Theravada Buddhism in various countries such as Sri Lanka and Thai Land throughout its long history. Towards the end of the quarter, the class briefly discusses the revival of Theravada Buddhism in Indian in connection with the arising of Protestant Buddhism in Sri Lanka in the early 20th century. It is hoped that students having completed this course will be equipped with sufficient knowledge on general history, major philosophy and outstanding cultural tradition of Theravada Buddhism. *Yu Xue*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 20441

HREL 36265 – Comparative Study of Humanistic Buddhism and Engaged Buddhism

This course is designed for students who would like to explore further social philosophy and implication of Humanistic Buddhism and Engaged Buddhism, the two mainstreams of Buddhist development in modern world. We first examine historical background for the arising of Humanistic Buddhism from Mahayana tradition in China and Buddhist revivalism or Protestant Buddhism, the forerunner of Engaged Buddhism in Sri Lanka almost simultaneously at the beginning of 20th century, and their subsequent developments respectively. Having then briefly reviewed some prominent figures such as Taixu (1898-1947), Dhammapala (1864-1933), and their major advocates, we undertake thorough comparative studies of the two Buddhisms by exploring several topics, including modern education and science, environment and ecology, human rights and feminism, politics and violence, suffering and happiness, and others. While discussing these topics, we also examine how Buddhism has transformed itself from the religion of other world to that of this world, how Buddhists have reinterpreted Buddhism in order to fit the idea and practice of modernity, an how new cultures have thus been recreated to cater for the needs of contemporary life both in the East and West. Toward the end of the quarter, discussion may be extended to compare other new religious movements so that students may have a broader vision on religions and their social advocates in contemporary world. PQ: Some knowledge on the general history and basic philosophy of Buddhism. *Yu Xue*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 26265

HREL 43456 – Settler Religion: Searching for Indians

This course examines the study of religion as a settler practice through the intertwined histories of Indians, both of the Americas and in the subcontinent. It demonstrates how the motif of the "Indian" has been central to the history of religious studies. The course explores religion itself as a settler colonial enterprise, through the spread of Christianity in the Americas at the nexus of race and religion, and missionary forms of political Hinduism in colonial and postcolonial India. By tracing the figure of the Indian across time and place, this course uncovers an alternative history of indigenous and subaltern resistance alongside histories of cultural appropriation and genocide that are absorbed, elided, and challenged by the consolidation of the study of religion. *Anand Venkatkrishnan* and *Sarah Pierce Taylor*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLVC 43456, RAME 43456

HREL 45705 – Sources and Methods in the Study of Chinese Religion

A survey of recent work in the study of premodern Chinese religion, with an emphasis on questions of method. PQ: Working ability in literary Chinese helpful but not necessary. *Paul Copp*

Islamic Studies

ISLM 30100 – Introductory Qur’anic Arabic I

This course is the first in a 3-quarter sequence “Introduction to Qur’anic Arabic” (IQA), which aims to provide students with foundational philological and reading skills by covering the essentials of Qur’anic/Classical Arabic grammar. The 3 quarters of IQA are sequential, and students are strongly encouraged to join in the first quarter. Exceptions can be made on a case by case basis. Prerequisites: Graduate and undergraduate students from any department are welcome to register. The absolute minimum prerequisite for IQA I is knowledge of the Arabic script. Training equivalent to at least a quarter of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is highly desirable. The IQA sequence is also open to students who may have had more exposure to Arabic (modern or classical) but wish to acquire a solid foundation in Arabic grammar, and/or students who feel they are not yet ready for third-year Arabic courses. *Izzet Coban*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 15100

ISLM 30201 – Islamicate Civilization I: 600-950

This course covers the rise and spread of Islam, the Islamic empire under the Umayyad and early Abbasid caliphs, and the emergence of regional Islamic states from Afghanistan and eastern Iran to North Africa and Spain. The main focus will be on political, economic and social history. *Ahmed El Shamsy*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 20201

ISLM 30852 – The Ottoman World in the Age of Suleyman the Magnificent

This seminar/colloquim focuses on the transformation of the Muslim Ottoman principality into an imperial entity--after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453--that laid claim to inheritance of Alexandrine, Roman/Byzantine, Mongol/Chinggisid, and Islamic models of Old World Empire at the dawn of the early modern era. Usually taught as a two-quarter reseach seminar, this year only the first quarter is offered, with a 15-20 paper due at the end. Special attention is paid to the transformation of Ottoman imperialism in the reign of Sultan Süleyman the Lawgiver (1520-1566), who appeared to give the Empire its "classical" form. Topics include: the Mongol legacy; the reformulation of the relationship between political and religious institutions; mysticism and the creation of divine kingship; Muslim-Christian competition (with special reference to Spain and Italy) and the formation of early modernity; the articulation of bureaucratized hierarchy; and comparison of Muslim Ottoman, Iranian Safavid, and Christian European imperialisms. The quarter-long colloquium comprises a chronological overview of major themes in Ottoman history, 1300-1600. In addition to papers, students will be required to give an oral presentation on a designated primary or secondary source in the course of the seminar. *Cornell Fleischer*

ISLM 39400 – The History of Sunnism

This course surveys primary and secondary scholarship to answer the deceptively simple questions of what Sunnism is, when it began, and how it developed. We will read primary sources from the fields of history, theology, and hadith studies, and compare these texts with influential narratives of Sunni history in secondary scholarship. Prerequisites: 3 years of Arabic. *Ahmed El Shamsy*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 20400

ISLM 40101 – Advanced Arabic Syntax I

This two-quarter sequence is an introduction to the classical Arabic language. It is useful for students whose research includes the reading of classical Arabic texts in varied fields such as literature, history, political science, theology and philosophy. In the class 1) rules of Arabic grammar are studied intensively, topic by topic; 2) parsing (i'rab) is an important component, with a view to understanding the structure of the language; 3) brief texts from different fields of classical Arabic are read focusing on their grammatical structure, and 4) some theory about the development of the grammatical genre is introduced, as are the basic features of prosody ('arud) and rhetoric (balagha). Prerequisites: Three years (or equivalent) of Modern Standard Arabic. Open to grads and undergrads. *Tahera Qutbuddin*

ISLM 40384 – Pre-Islamic Poetry: Mu’allaqat, Sa’alik, Ritha’

Pre-Islamic poetry laid the foundation for all subsequent Arabic poetry, and formed a key referent for Arabic grammar and Qurʾān exegesis. Its structure, motifs, and images constituted a literary model for Umayyad, Abbasid, Fatimid, Andalusian, and Mamluk poetry, and its grammatical and lexical usages formed a tool to understand the Qurʾānic message and to measure the purity of later Arabic expressions. In this class, we will read closely some of the best known poems of the pre-Islamic period. An assessment by the medieval critics of our poets and some of their poetic theory will also be introduced. Secondary literature will be assigned in order to provide a theoretical framework for the material. Prerequisites: 3 years of Arabic or instructor's permission. Graduate seminar. Open to qualified undergraduates. *Tahera Qutbuddin*

Religions in the Americas

RAME 31410 – American Religion Since 1865

Why is religion more vital in the United States than in almost any other industrialized nation? This course will address that question by tracing the religious history of America from Reconstruction to the present. We will examine how religion has influenced every aspect of American society, from everyday life to presidential politics. We will look at religion’s role in major events like World War I, the Great Depression, and the Civil Rights Movement. And we will explore how in recent decades the United States has become a nation of incredible religious diversity. This course is grounded in secondary literature; its goal is to introduce students to both the history and historiography of religion in the modern United States. *Will Schultz*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HCHR 31410, RLST 21410

RAME 42901 – Christianity and Slavery in America, 1619-1865

This seminar will examine the relationship between Christian thought and the practice of slavery as they evolved historically, especially in the context of European enslavement of peoples of African descent in the colonies of British North America and in the antebellum South. Emphasis will be placed on the ways in which Christianity functioned as an ideological justification of the institution of slavery and an amelioration of practices deemed abusive within slave societies. The following questions will be addressed in some form through our readings and class discussions: Why did some Christians oppose slavery at a specific time and in a particular historical context? In other words, why did slavery become a moral problem for an influential though minority segment of the United States by the early 19th century? What was the process by which and why did white evangelical Christians, especially in the South, become the most prominent defenders of slavery as it was increasingly confined to the South? What were some of the consequences of debates about slavery in regard to efforts to engage broader social reform? What role did race play in the historical development of slavery? How did people of African descent shape and practice Christianity in British North America and the Southern States of the United States? Although our focus is on what became the United States of America, we also linger on discussions about the broader international dimensions of slavery and slavery’s importance in the development of the Americas. Course Note: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *Curtis Evans*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HCHR 42901

RAME 45600 – African American Religion in the 20th Century: History and Historiography

This graduate seminar examines the history of African American religion alongside the work and social world of interpreters. We explore historical changes in African American life, paying close attention to urbanization, struggles with racial and economic oppression, and scholarly debates about the “function” of black religion in particular black communities and in American society. As we turn to more recent works (since the 1970s), we investigate the extent to which these studies differ from older studies and if or how they remain indebted to older debates. One central aim of the course is to ascertain why black churches have been so frequently criticized and why scholars and activists have placed such demands for liberation on black churches in particular. *Curtis Evans*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HCHR 45600

Religious Leadership and Practice (MDiv Courses)

RELP 30500 – Colloquium: Introduction to Religious Leadership and Practice

This year-long integration seminar grounds first year M.Div. students in habits and perspectives essential to the practice of religious life and leadership. Students will cultivate the discipline of attention--learning to read closely, to listen deeply, to interrogate their experience, and to participate in rigorous critical conversation, across religious traditions. During the first quarter, students will explore the relationship of language, narrative; and belief: the second quarter will engage students in a close encounter with urban ministry; during the third quarter, students will integrate tradition, reason, and experience as they articulate definitions of ministry. First year MDiv students only. *Cynthia Lindner*

RELP 35150 – Arts of Religious Leadership and Practice: Ritual and Speaking

This is the first of a three-course sequence in the arts of religious leadership that spans the entire year in the second year MDiv curriculum. In this course students will explore the world-making power of ritual--religious and secular, personal and corporat-- and practice the craft of speaking as meaning-making. Open to second year MDivs; others by permission of instructor. *Cynthia Lindner*

RELP 40600 – Field Work Practicum I

The course provides a forum for practical theological reflection through ongoing discussion with classmates of both field experience and general issues of ministerial practice. Practicum complements the field placement experience of MDiv students as a source of accountability for student, site, and university, as well as provides space for critical reflection on the experience. Open to Second Year M.Div students only. Must have completed RELP 30500. *Erika Dornfeld*

RELP 42800 – Senior MDiv Thesis Seminar

The senior thesis is the culminating project of the M.Div. degree, bringing the student’s academic and field work to bear on an issue of significance for religious leadership and practice or public theology, broadly construed. The project involves a written thesis, a public "presentation" of some aspect of the thesis' learning, and a short essay that brings some insight from the project to bear on a contemporary situation or issue. The seminar focuses on thinking and writing in a constructive genre that is at once academically responsible and publicly accessible. and is often interdisciplinary in nature. The seminar meets once a month throughout the entire academic year--October through May--and involves engaged dialogue around portions of student theses in progress. PQ: Third or Fourth year M.Div. students only. Course Notes: Required seminar for M.Div. students in the year in which they are writing and presenting their theses. *Cynthia Lindner*

Religious Ethics

RETH 30204 – Veracity: The Ethics of Truth and Truthtelling  
You are alone in the world and you are faced with a decision to act. Because you are a human being, there is no “no-action” possible, for the way that the world is constituted, both choosing to act and choosing not to act is in itself a decision about moral action. Philosophers call this being born into the “plight of moral agency.” You are a “moral agent” meaning a rational, choosing, sentient being, with a sense of the past, and a sense that actions and outcomes are connected causally, You are in important ways free, even if you are living within very constrained social and economic circumstances. Among the most critical of the choices you make as a moral agent is to be utterly honest—to yourself and in your speech. Your choice is made in private and within you, and in many cases, no one will know how you came to decide, or what else was possible. For Adam Smith, among others, the source of much of the evil in the world is self-deception. Why is this the case? What a would a life lived as a completely honest person look like? Are lies every justified? This seminar is about personal morality and ethical choices to lie or to tell the truth, largely the choices of character and being that start with the way one acts when you believe you are alone, choices that are small and large, that shape you and allow you to become a responsible, self-aware and decent human being. We will deal with some basic concepts in the discipline of ethics— the experience of being within a “plight,” the capacity to speak and listen, the reliance on the words of others, the capacity to make promises, and the ideas of moral imagination, reason and empathy that make ethical action possible. We will focus on the issue of veracity, or the act of telling the truth. I will try to argue a case—that one must always tell the truth. We will discuss this claim, what it can and have been rebutted and whether this principle is possible in modernity. Course Note: Undergraduates can enroll via petition. Course Note: Undergraduates can enroll via petition. *Laurie Zoloth*

RETH 31101 – History of Religious and Theological Ethics I

This is a history of Western Ethics from the Greeks through the Biblical thought and up to the Middle ages in Christian thought but with comparisons to Jewish and Islamic thought. Course Note: Undergraduates can enroll via petition. *William Schweiker*

Equivalent Div Course(s): THEO 31101

RETH 53025 – Philosophy of Animal Rights

A close study of some recent philosophical classics about animal ethics and animal rights, including Christine Korsgaard’s Fellow Creatures, Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka’s Zoopolis, and a manuscript of my own, Justice for Animals, that is due at the end of 2021.  We will also read some of the recent work by scientists such as Frans De Waal, Mark Bekoff, and Victoria Braithwaite on animal cognition. Course Notes: Admission by permission of the instructor.  Permission must be sought in writing at least ten days before the beginning of Law School classes, not yet determined.  The class will be offered on the Law School calendar. An undergraduate major in philosophy or some equivalent solid philosophy preparation.  Ph.D. students in Philosophy and Political Theory may enroll without permission. *Martha Nussbaum*

Religion, Literature, and Visual Culture

RLVC 36102 – Ecstasy

The concept of ecstasy is often associated with an extraordinary experience of the philosophical, sexual, and religious varieties, but in what way is ecstasy also bound to rituals of the ordinary? In this course we will explore numerous ways that ecstasy and synonymous terms like “orgasm,” “bliss,” and “*jouissance*” have been conceptualized in philosophical, theological, and literary texts from late antiquity to the present. What does the figural relationship between ecstasy and orgasm suggest about the broader relationship between philosophy, theology, sexuality, and desire? What role do pleasure and pain play in philosophical and theological reflection? How has ecstasy been deployed both as a form of political resistance and as complicit in the perpetuation of histories of violence? Focusing on the Christian tradition and its impact on queer theory, our readings may include, but are not limited to, texts by Plotinus, Pseudo-Dionysius, Margaret Ebner, Hadewijch, Margery Kempe, Teresa of Ávila, Lacan, Glück, Edelman, and Muñoz. *Kris Trujillo*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 26102

RLVC 47100 – History of Criticism: Plato to Dante

A survey of major figures in the history of criticism (poetics, biblical exegesis, etc.) from Plato and Aristotle to Dante. Course Note: Required for all PhD students taking the RLVC 1 qualifying examination. *Richard Rosengarten*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 27001

Theology

THEO 35501 – Saints and Other Exemplars

This course will consider recent work on the nature and significance of spiritual & moral exemplars, and will then use this work as a framework with which to analyze the lives of exemplars such as Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Oscar Romero. *Kevin Hector*

Equivalent Div Course(s): DVPR 35501, RLST 25501

Religious Studies (Undergraduate Designation)

RLST 20111 – History of Death

This course introduces students to the historical study of death and the methods and approaches scholars have developed to understand the roles death has played in shaping societies across time and space. Drawing from the rich scholarship on the history of death, it will demonstrate the methodical diversity (textual, visual, and material culture studies) and analytical approaches (history of the body, religious studies, and the study of slavery and colonialism) used to examine the multivalent ways the dead have been sources of meaning-making for individuals, institutions, religious communities, and nations from early Islam to the aftermath of the Vietnam War. It examines how ruptures in ways of death through military encounters, epidemics, and colonialism have shaped and transformed societies. While the history of death is strongly situated in narratives of the rise of the West, students will consider case studies from across regional scholarly specializations, including Africa, the Middle East, the Caribbean, North America, Europe, and Southeast Asia. *Katie Hickerson*

RLST 20401 – Islamic Thought and Literature I

This sequence explores the thought and literature of the Islamic world from the coming of Islam in the seventh century C.E. through the development and spread of its civilization in the medieval period and into the modern world. Including historical framework to establish chronology and geography, the course focuses on key aspects of Islamic intellectual history: scripture, law, theology, philosophy, literature, mysticism, political thought, historical writing, and archaeology. In addition to lectures and secondary background readings, students read and discuss samples of key primary texts, with a view to exploring Islamic civilization in the direct voices of the people who participated in creating it. All readings are in English translation. No prior background in the subject is required. This course sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies. *Erin Atwell (1); Mohammed Sagha (2); Tynan Kelly (3)*

RLST 22010 – Jewish Civilization I: Ancient Beginnings to Medieval Period  
Jewish Civilization is a three-quarter sequence that explores the development of Jewish culture and tradition from its ancient beginnings through its rabbinic and medieval transformations to its modern manifestations. Through investigation of primary texts-biblical, Talmudic, philosophical, mystical, historical, documentary, and literary-students will acquire a broad overview of Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness while reflecting in greater depth on major themes, ideas, and events in Jewish history. The autumn course will deal with antiquity through the Middle Ages. Its readings will include material from the Bible and writings from the second temple, Hellenistic, rabbinic, and medieval periods. All sections of this course will share a common core of readings; individual instructors will supplement with other materials. It is recommended, though not required, that students take the three Jewish Civilization courses in sequence. Students who register for the Autumn Quarter course will automatically be pre-registered for the winter segment. In the Spring Quarter students have the option of taking a third unit of Jewish Civilization, a course whose topics will vary (JWSC 1200X). *Yonatan Shemesh (1); David Barak-Gorodetsky (2); Bevin Blaber (3)*

RLST 22100 – Introduction to Zen Buddhism

This course will consist of the close reading and discussion of primary texts (in translation) of the Chan Buddhism of China and Zen Buddhism of Japan (禪宗--more commonly known in Engish by the Japanese name, Zen), supplemented by secondary readings on Zen institutions and cultural influences. As our foundation, we will be begin with an overview of basic Buddhist tenets, and then work through key Mahāyāna ideas and sūtra passages, focusing on the ideas of Emptiness, Buddha-nature, and Mind-only. Then we will turn to the unique syntheses of these ideas in the early Chan movement in medieval China and their various deployments in the contending interpretations and methodologies of later Chan and Zen, including the Platform Sutra of Huineng, the kōan (Ch: gong-an) literature of the Song dynasty, and the essays of Dōgen. This will be done both with an eye to the historical development of these schools of thought and practice within the context of East Asian Buddhism in general, and for whatever transhistorical philosophical and religious valences we care to derive from the texts. All readings will be in English. Course Note: This course counts as a Gateway course for RLST majors/minors. *Brook Ziporyn*

Equivalent Div Course(s): DVPR 32100, HREL 32100

RLST 24114 – Justice in History

This course explore various theories of justice, especially in the modern West, with an eye to the challenge of achieving justice in history. *William Schweiker*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RETH 34114

RLST 24802 – Foucault and the Christians: On Ethics, Desire, and *The History of Sexuality*

In this course, we will examine the importance of early Christianity in Foucault’s History of Sexuality project, with attention to the grounds on which he contrasts sexual ethics in Greco-Roman Antiquity and early Christianity. The course will proceed through close readings of passages of Foucault’s late work, in conversation with his interlocutors, and key texts by Plato, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, Tertullian, Cassian, and Augustine. Over the course of the readings, we will understand the question Foucault poses on sexual ethics in Antiquity, the nature of the shift in early Christianity, and the stakes of these distinctions for the genealogy of the modern subject. In our philosophical and historical investigation, we will address themes of body, sexuality, and desire; history, tradition, and religion; and the relationship between politics, ethics, and truth. *Maureen Kelly*

RLST 25301 – History, Religion, and Politics in Augustine’s *City of God*

Augustine’s City of God is a major work of history, politics, and religion. Written after Rome was sacked by the Visigoths in 410, the work begins an apology (justification) of the Empire’s turn to Christianity and expands to offer a sweeping and deeply theological account of human history and society in terms of earth-bound versus heaven-centered community. Augustine’s citizenship and politics entails living out membership in either fellowship while commingled on earth with the other. Augustine analyzes Roman history and politics as well as the new religion first encouraged and eventually imposed in the wake of Constantine’s conversion.

We shall read the entire work in translation, attending to historical observations, political stances, and religious views. Augustine made arguments of his own but saved huge swaths of Varro and other otherwise lost sources to fashion his historical critique of Rome, social analysis, and many ultimately fresh views on matters like human sexuality in paradise and in heaven.  
The class will meet once a week. A supplementary Latin reading group will also convene once a week for close reading of important and demanding selections in the original. There will be some invited international guest speakers. Course Notes: There will be a weekly Latin reading group (F. afternoon, 90 minutes) for classics and other students who want to tackle Augustine's Latin.

*Willemien Otten* and *Michael I. Allen*

Equivalent Div Course(s): BIBL 35301, HCHR 35301, THEO 35301, RETH 35301

RLST 25678 – Narratives of the End of Faith

There seems to be consensus around the notion that the loss of religious faith is one of the defining features of modern society. What does this mean for human life going forward, however? Is what Nietzsche called the “death of God” a catastrophe, or an opportunity? Or is it an event that only seems revolutionary, which in fact masks a deep social continuity? In this course, we will examine some of the various responses to these questions in the 19th and 20th century, from Karl Marx and Max Weber, through Nietzsche and Heidegger, to “death of God theology.” A guiding thread throughout the course will be the relationship of secularization to freedom. Along the way we will reflect on the meaning of “modernity” and “postmodernity.” *Mat Messerschmidt*

RLST 26013 – Drinking with God: An Introduction to Sufism

Who is the 13th-century Muslim mystic Jalaluddin Rumi - and why is he so popular on Instagram? Can inebriation lead to divine revelation? Who are the friends of God, and how did they develop fantastic superpowers? How have mystical practices sought to both abandon the world and radically transform it? In this class, we will explore these questions through the study of Sufism - a diverse set of Islamic mystical traditions - from its formative period in the early decades of Islam to the present day. Through poetry, philosophy, music, esoteric sciences, politics, and devotional practices, we will analyze Sufism as a global phenomenon that, while demonstrating remarkable adaptation to local cultural contexts, firmly locates itself within the Islamic tradition. This course will also include a visit to a local Sufi circle in Chicago. *Francesca Chubb-Confer*

RLST 26101 – Buddhism

This course will survey central features of the Buddhist traditions in South, Central, and East Asia, over its roughly 2500-year history. Attention will be paid to the variety of disciplinary orientations (historical, philological, anthropological, sociological, economic, archaeological, philosophical) that may be taken to illuminate various aspects of the traditions. Consideration will also be given to the globalization of Buddhism since the late nineteenth century, and the concurrent rise of distinctive Buddhist responses to modernity and the modern/academic study of Buddhism. *Christian Wedemeyer*

RLST 28613 – God of Manga: Osamu Tezuka's "Phoenix," Buddhism, and Post-WWII Manga and Anime

How can the Buddhist axiom "All Life is Sacred" describe a universe that contains the atrocities of WWII? Osamu Tezuka, creator of Astro Boy and father of modern Japanese animation, wrestled with this problem over decades in his science fiction epic Phoenix (Hi no Tori), celebrated as the philosophical masterpiece of modern manga. Through a close reading of Phoenix and related texts, this course explores the challenges genocide and other atrocities pose to traditional forms of ethics, and how we understand the human species and our role in nature. The course will also examine the flowering of manga after WWII, how manga authors bypassed censorship to help people understand the war and its causes, and the role manga and anime have played in Japan's global contributions to politics, science, medicine, technology, techno-utopianism, environmentalism, ethics, theories of war and peace, global popular culture, and contemporary Buddhism. Readings will be mainly manga, and the final paper will have a creative option including the possibility of creating graphic work. *Ada Palmer*

RLST 28991 – The Prophet Q

In the wake of the January 6th 2021 storming of the United States Capitol, the QAnon phenomenon has received sustained global attention as news and government agencies scramble to understand this online movement’s role in the attack, the threat it continues to pose, and why it is that one out of every six Americans believes that former President Trump is secretly battling an elite group of politicians, media moguls, and academics who are deeply involved in child sex trafficking and satanic sacrifice.   
This course will investigate the phenomenon of QAnon through the lens of New Religious Movements (NRMs)—seeking to understand the complex interplay of factors that incites people to become immersed in these groups. Using examples from American New Religious Movements of the 20th century such as Scientology, the Rajneesh movement, and Jonestown, we will delve into the history of these groups in order to examine the motivations that drive individuals into these “fringe” religious movements. In the process, we will interrogate the usefulness of such labels as “religion” and “cult” and ultimately hope to better understand how power, race, gender, and practices of dissimulation play active roles in both these new religious movements and within QAnon. *Marielle Harrison*

RLST 29000 – The American Culture Wars

Should we rename institutions named for people who advocated--or accepted--white supremacy? Should the religious views of judges be subject to public scrutiny? Should religious institutions be exempt from certain public health regulations? These questions are only the latest battlefields in the “culture wars,” the long-running conversation—or, more often, shouting match—about what the United States ought to stand for and how Americans ought to live. This course will explore how Americans have wrestled with questions of morality and national identity since the country’s founding. It will put contemporary struggles in context by examining past cultural conflicts. Potential topics include: the establishment and disestablishment of religion in the early United States; debates over how many and what kind of immigrants to allow into the country; conflicts over the regulation of sexuality; and campaigns to control or prohibit dangerous substances, especially alcohol. *Will Schultz*

**WINTER 2022**

Anthropology and Sociology of Religion

AASR 33000 – Problems in the Anthropology of Religion I

This is the first half of a two-quarter sequence examining some of the key problems in the anthropology of religion. Topics include definitions of religion, belief, performativity, embodiment, power, and authority. Course Note: Undergraduates can petition to enroll. *Alireza Doostdar*

AASR 50092 – Seminar: Religion and Politics

In this seminar we will consider meanings of religion and politics, and examine their interactions from a comparative perspective. After digesting alternative theoretical understandings of the relationship between religion, states, and political processes, we will turn to empirical accounts that illuminate historical and local issues at points around the globe. Among other phenomena, students will explore patterns of secularization, religious nationalism, fundamentalisms, and policy-oriented religious social movements. *Omar McRoberts*

Biblical Studies

BIBL 32500 – Intro to the New Testament: Texts and Contexts

An immersion in the texts of the New Testament with the following goals: 1. through careful reading to come to know well some representative pieces of this literature; 2. to gain useful knowledge of the historical, geographical, social, religious, cultural and political contexts of these texts and the events they relate; 3. to learn the major literary genres represented in the canon (“gospels,” “acts,” “letters,” and “apocalypses”) and strategies for reading them; 4. to comprehend the various theological visions and cultural worldviews to which these texts give expression; 5. to situate oneself and one's prevailing questions about this material in the history of research, and to reflect on the goals and methods of interpretation; 6. to become intelligent and critical “consumers” of biblical scholarship as it appears in academic and popular media.; 7. to raise questions for further study. PQ: Interest in this literature, and willingness to enter into conversation with like-minded and non-like-minded others on the texts and the issues involved in their interpretation. Course Note: This course counts as a Gateway course for RLST majors/minors. *Margaret Mitchell*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 12000

BIBL 34000 – Introductory Biblical Hebrew II

This course is the second of a two-quarter sequence designed to introduce students to the language of biblical Hebrew, with special emphasis on the fundamentals of its morphology, syntax, and vocabulary. The course follows a standard textbook supplemented by lectures, exercises, and oral drills aimed at refining the student’s grasp of grammatically sound interpretation and translation. At the conclusion of the two-quarter sequence students will be prepared to take a biblical Hebrew reading course in the spring quarter. Prerequisites: BIBL 33900 in Autumn Quarter. *Aslan Mizrahi Cohen*

BIBL 35300 – Introductory Koine Greek II

In this two-course sequence, students will learn the basic mechanics of Koine Greek and begin reading texts from the Greek New Testament and Septuagint. The autumn course and the first three-fourths or so of the winter course will introduce the vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and style of the Greek New Testament, and to a limited degree those of the Septuagint, after which point we will focus on reading and interpreting a New Testament document in Greek at length. Upon the conclusion of the sequence, students will be able to read and comprehend entire passages of Koine Greek text with the aid of a dictionary. This sequence aims to prepare students to successfully participate in a Greek exegesis course in Spring quarter or thereafter. Prerequisites: Must have taken BIBL 35100 in Autumn quarter. *Jonathan Wegner*

BIBL 36521 – Three Greek Philosophical Texts

The three texts are: Epicurus’ Letter to Menoeceus; Epictetus, Discourses; and Diogenes of Oenoanda, Inscription. What all have in common is an urgent desire to inspire the reader to do philosophy—not just any philosophy, but the sort that will make a person happy. The first text is designed to inspire young and old alike to learn the basic principles of Epicurean hedonism; it’s up to us—not the gods, or fate, or chance—to attain the goal of life, pleasure. The second is intended for young men, who have just finished their secondary education. They have been sent by their family to Epictetus’ school on the edge of the Adriatic Sea to be steeped in Stoic morality prior to starting a career. The third text is an inscription by Diogenes of Oenoanda, a prominent local citizen, who confesses he was moved by the dire suffering of his fellow humans to erect a very long wall, inscribed with Epicurean teachings. It is intended for any passerby. We will look closely at the Greek text to investigate both the medium and the message. Open to advanced undergraduates and graduate students. Requirement: intermediate level Ancient Greek or higher. *Elizabeth Asmis*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 26521

BIBL 37213 – Partings, Encounters, and Entangled Histories: The Formation of Judaism and Christianity

When did the fault lines between Judaism and Christianity emerge? This course explores this question by examining the formation of Judaism and Christianity within the world of the Ancient Mediterranean. What religious views, texts, and practices did Jews and Christians hold in common? How did early writers construct communal boundaries and project “ideal” belief and practice? What role did the changing political tides of the Roman and Persian empires play? We will explore continuities and growing distinctions between Jews and Christians in the areas of scriptural interpretation, ritual practices, and structures of authority. Special attention will be paid to debates around gender and sexuality, healing, and views of government and economics. We will approach these issues through material evidence and close readings of early literature in light of contemporary scholarship. Students interested in modern histories of Judaism and Christianity will gain a firm foundation in the pivotal debates, texts, and events that set the trajectories for later centuries. PQ: No prerequisite knowledge of the historical periods, literature, or religious traditions covered is expected.*Erin Galgay Walsh*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HCHR 37213, HIJD 37213, RLST 27213

BIBL 38301 – Reading Modern Hebrew for Research Purposes II

The course concentrates on the written language and aims at enabling students to use Modern Hebrew for research purposes. The course is designed to enable students to read Hebrew freely. Major grammatical & syntactical aspects will be covered, and students will acquire substantial vocabulary with attention paid to lexical collocations and semantic fields. By the end of the course, students are expected not only to be able to successfully satisfy their departmental language requirements but also to have a great set of skills that would allow them to read any given text, written in Modern Hebrew. (The term “Modern Hebrew” covers primarily literature from the mid 20th century to current time). Prerequisites: Students should have at least two levels of Modern and/or Biblical Hebrew. Students should be able to read vocalized Hebrew texts as well as to be able to read and write in cursive. *Ari Almog*

BIBL 43801 – Ritual, Cult, and Magic in the Hebrew Bible

This course will explore the variety and nature of religious practice in ancient Israel and the wider ancient Near East. We will consider topics such as sacrifice, purity and holiness, temple cult, priesthood, analogical ritual, and popular and enigmatic rites. We will reflect on all of these subjects in light of modern theories of religion and ritual. PQ: Students should have taken a critical Introduction to the Hebrew Bible. *Jeffery Stackert*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 20811

BIBL 44800 – Words of the Wise: Proverbs and Qohelet

Text-course (text in biblical Hebrew only) covering the literary genres, discursive styles, and philosophical ideas of Proverbs and Qohelet (Ecclesiastes), with attention to voicing, double-voicing, and intertextuality. PQ: One year of Biblical Hebrew. *Simeon Chavel*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HIJD 44800, RLST 22304

BIBL 49999 – Race and the Bible

The course will cover race in the Bible, race in the ancient world of the Bible, American use of the Bible on race, and the critique of race as a formative and constructed concept. PQ: BIBL 31000 (Introduction to the Hebrew Bible) or BIBL 32500 (Introduction to the New Testament). BIBL 32500 can be taken concurrently. Course Note: JWSC majors/minors can petition to count this course toward their degree requirement. *Erin Galgay Walsh* and *Simeon Chavel*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HCHR 49999, HIJD 49999, RLST 29109

BIBL 54700 – Critical Methods in the Study of the Hebrew Bible

This course will consider the development and application of critical methods in the study of the Hebrew Bible. We will focus especially upon the questions that each critical method is meant to address and what kinds of conclusions can plausibly be drawn from their use. We will apply these methods to texts from the book of Exodus. However, this is not a course on Exodus, and we will actually read very little of Exodus together during this quarter. PQ: Strong biblical Hebrew required; other biblical and ancient Near Eastern languages desirable. Course Notes: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *Jeffrey Stackert*

BIBL 56101 – The Philosophical Interpretation of Scripture in the Middle Ages: The Problem of Evil and the Book of Job

One of the major genres of philosophical writing during the Middle Ages was the commentary, both on Aristotle and other canonical philosophers and on Scripture.  This course will examine philosophical discussions of the problem of evil by three medieval philosophers through close reading and analysis of both their discursive expositions of the problem of evil and providence and their commentaries on the Book of Job. The three philosophers will be Saadia Gaon, Moses Maimonides, and Thomas Aquinas. Apart from close analysis of their different conceptions of the problem, their theodicies, and accounts of providence, we will also be concerned with ways in which the thinkers’ ‘straight’ philosophical discursive expositions differ from their commentaries, the sense in which Scripture might be a philosophical text that deserves philosophical commentary, and how the scriptural context influences the philosophy by which it is interpreted? *Josef Stern*

Equivalent Div Course(s): DVPR 56101

Philosophy of Religion

History of Christianity

HCHR 50500 – Origen’s *Contra Celsum*

A seminar on the eight-book work of apologetics that Origen of Alexandria composed ca. 244-249 to offer a detailed rebuttal to the arguments made against the illegality, crudity and irrationality of Christians that had been published decades before by Celsus “the Epicurean” in his Alēthēs logos (The True Word). We shall combine close reading of the Greek text of significant sections of the work with investigation of larger critical questions such as a) the identity of “Celsus” and the reconstruction of his text, b) the placement of both Celsus and Origen in the history of ancient philosophy; c) the reality or fiction of the figure of “Celsus’ Jew” who appears in books 1 and 2; d) the possible social facts about ancient Christians that may be embedded in these debates; e) the rhetoric of apologetic and invective, and its conventional and creative employment in both works; f) the logic and rhetorical power or weaknesses (and anxieties) of Origen’s argumentation. PQ: strong Greek skills (and, ideally, HCHR 50400 Early Christian Rhetoric - Autumn '21, but not required). Course Note: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *Margaret Mitchell*

History of Judaism

HIJD 35915 – The Jewish Question in the 21st Century

In these early decades of the 21st century, how does the history of the "Jewish Question" continue to reverberate through current discussions of religion and race, religion and post-coloniality, liberal, neo-liberal and post-liberal constructions of political identity?  This course will take the contemporary context as its initiation point, but will consider it along with the history of the Jewish Question going back to late 18th century debates surrounding emancipation, and its 20th century manifestations both in Europe and the American context. We will compare the rhetoric of contemporary sources on race and religion to earlier articulations, and will ask in what ways Jewishness can and cannot be understood as exemplary for other marginalized communities and traditions. Contemporary theorists such as Fred Moten, J. Lorand Matory, Houria Bouteldja and Christina Sharpe will be considered alongside sources such as Moses Mendelssohn, Hannah Arendt and Jean-Paul Sartre. Some examples from fiction will also be included. *Sarah Hammerschlag*

Equivalent Div Course(s): DVPR 35915, RLST 25915

History of Religions

HREL 33700 – Special Topics in Hinduism

This course is a research-oriented seminar that focuses on contemporary themes and methodologies in the study of Hinduism. Readings come from prominent books in the field published in the last five to ten years. Themes explored will include Hinduism and politics, ritual theory, wonder, modernity, yoga, gender, caste, class, sexuality, pluralism, and bhakti. Students will develop research projects of their own choosing in close consultation with the instructor. *Anand Venkatkrishnan*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLVC 33700

HREL 38219 – Understanding Buddhism through Meditation

Meditation is one of core practices in Buddhism and it has now become popularized worldwide. This course studies succinct theories and systematic practices of Buddhist meditation based on both Theravada and Mahayana texts and traditions. In general, the course is divided into 4 parts. 1. Theories and practices of meditation in Pali texts and Theravada tradition—we examine idea and practice of Samadha and Vipassana mainly based on the *Satipatthana Sutta* and *Visuddhimagga*; 2. Chinese Texts and Chan/Zen Buddhism—*Mohe Zhiguan* (摩訶止觀)—*The Great Concentration and Contemplation*, and the *Platform Sutra*, two of the most important texts in Chinese Buddhism will be read and discussed; the influence of Daoist meditation such as breathing technique on Buddhism will be examined to show how Buddhist practice of meditation underwent the process of sinicization; 3. Scientific studies and understanding of Buddhist meditation, and dialogue between Buddhist meditation and science—we read and discuss research papers and experimental reports on mediation practice by modern scholars through neuroscience and psychotherapy in the West. A special attention is paid to the discussion on the Western derivatives of Buddhist meditation for different purposes other than the final enlightenment of Buddhism, and on arising of variety of meditation practices such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), Loving-Kindness Meditation (LKM), Cognitively-Based Compassion Training (CBCT), Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT). And 4. Meditation session—the course instructor or meditation masters will provide instructions for students to practice meditation based on theories and methods discussed in the class and through readings. Having completed the course, students are expected to grasp not only the fundamental idea but also basic techniques of Buddhist meditation either for their physical relaxation or mental development. PQ: Some basic knowledge of Buddhism recommended. *Yu Xue*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 28219

HREL 52200 – Problems in the History of Religions

A seminar for students either in the PhD program in the History of Religions (allgemeine Religionswissenschaft, la science des religions) or doctoral students working in related fields in the scientific study of religions (anthropology, sociology, history, area studies, e.g.). Participants will both present an original written work-in-progress and give a formal oral response to the work of another; typical examples include colloquium ("second-year conference”) papers, orals statements for the Qualifying Examination, or dissertation chapters. PQ: PhD students in HREL, AASR, or by permission of instructor. *Christian Wedemeyer*

Equivalent Div Course(s): AASR 52200

Islamic Studies

ISLM 30030 – Introduction to the Qur’an

The Qur'an's historical setting, thematic and literary features, major biblical figures, and foundational narratives of the Quran. Explorations of medieval exegetical literature on the Quran and its reception in the early (8th-10th century CE) and medieval periods (11th - 15th century CE) will feature heavily in this course. Readings consist primarily of English translations of the Quran alongside a running commentary, as well as secondary articles. Course Note: This course counts as a Gateway course for RLST majors/minors. *Yousef Casewit*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 11030

ISLM 30200 – Introductory Qur’anic Arabic II

This course is the second in a 3-quarter sequence “Introduction to Qur’anic Arabic” (IQA), which aims to provide students with foundational philological and reading skills by covering the essentials of Qur’anic/Classical Arabic grammar. This course also features readings of select passages from the Qur'an, Ḥadīth and Tafsīr. The 3 quarters of IQA are sequential, and students are strongly encouraged to join in the first quarter. Exceptions can be made on a case by case basis. Prerequisites: Successful completion of Introductory Qur'anic Arabic I. *Izzet Coban*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 15200

ISLM 30202 – Islamicate Civilization II: 950-1750

This course, a continuation of Islamicate Civilization I, surveys intellectual, cultural, religious and political developments in the Islamic world from Andalusia to the South Asian sub-continent during the periods from ca. 950 to 1750. We trace the arrival and incorporation of the Steppe Peoples (Turks and Mongols) into the central Islamic lands; the splintering of the Abbasid Caliphate and the impact on political theory; the flowering of literature of Arabic, Turkic and Persian expression; the evolution of religious and legal scholarship and devotional life; transformations in the intellectual and philosophical traditions; the emergence of Shi`i states (Buyids and Fatimids); the Crusades and Mongol conquests; the Mamluks and Timurids, and the "gunpowder empires" of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Moghuls; the dynamics of gender and class relations; etc. This class partially fulfills the requirement for MA students in CMES, as well as for NELC majors and PhD students. *Franklin Lewis*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 20202

ISLM 42780 – Readings: Sufism in Morocco

A close reading of primary and secondary literature on the Moroccan Sufi tradition, including key texts from the Shadhiliya order. PQ: Arabic reading proficiency required. *Yousef Casewit*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 22780

Religions in the Americas

RAME 32418 – The Scopes Trial in Historical Context

This course will explore in depth the 1925 Scopes Trial in Dayton, Tennessee. We will examine the transcript of the trial, newspaper editorials, cartoons, scholarly analyses, and various contemporary observations on the meaning and significance of the trial. Among the topics covered are the fundamentalist/modernist controversy of the 1920s and its consequences, interpretations of the origins and tenacity of the anti-evolution campaign, and broader debates about science and religion and the contested authority of experts in American society. Though much of the historical analysis will focus on the 1920s, some attention will be paid to the implications of this highly publicized trial and what it came to signify about larger cultural debates in the United States. PQ: Undergraduates may enroll themselves only after getting approval from the instructor. *Curtis Evans*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HCHR 32418, RLST 22418

RAME 34900 – The Age of Walter Rauschenbusch: The Social Gospel

This course is a critical evaluation of the theological and social thought and the historical contributions of the Social Gospel, which is regarded as a relatively distinct effort to reform the American social, economic and political order from the 1880s to the 1920s. We will explore a number of themes that preoccupied leading thinkers, including but not limited to the Kingdom of God, a critique of individualism, social solidarity, revisions of divine immanence or God’s relation to the world, the person and ethics of Jesus, and human progress. These themes will not be treated abstractly, but as theological and social ideas regarded as instruments of concrete engagement with and attempts to transform America’s increasingly urban, industrial and pluralistic society. Particular emphasis is placed on the work and writings of Walter Rauschenbusch, a prominent Baptist preacher and church historian who provided a sustained revision of Christian social thought, a radical critique of capitalism and the growing power and influence of corporations in US economic and political life. Although primary focus will be on Protestant Christianity as the exponent of Social Gospel reform, some effort is made to understand how Catholics challenged and reflected some of these critiques of American society. Course Note: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *Curtis Evans*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HCHR 34900

RAME 35700 – The Christian Right

From the Gilded Age to the age of Donald Trump, conservatives Christians have played a major role in shaping American politics and culture. This course will use primary and secondary sources to explore the development of the Christian Right in the United States. We will answer essential questions about the movement: Who joins it? Who leads it? And who funds it? We will examine how conservative Christians approach not only “moral” issues like abortion but also issues like economic regulation and foreign policy. Finally, we will seek to answer the question: What is the future of the Christian Right in an increasingly diverse America? *Will Schultz*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HCHR 35700, RLST 22667

RAME 40200 – Religion and American Capitalism

This course will introduce students to the intersection of religion and capitalism in the United States. Through a variety of primary and secondary readings, we will explore how religious people and institutions have interacted with, affirmed, and challenged American capitalism. We will pay particularly close attention to the alternative moral economics envisioned by religious communities in the United States. The first part of the course will provide a historical introduction to the interplay of religion and American capitalism; the latter part will deal with the role of religion in contemporary debates over work, sustenance, and inequality. *Will Schultz*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HCHR 40200, RLST 21430

Religious Leadership and Practice (MDiv Courses)

RELP 32500 – Theology in the Public Square

This course explores the transformative role of religion in public life, primarily by examining mid-twentieth century figures whose thought and leadership remain essential reference points in American public life today, such as Dorothy Day, Thich Nhat Hanh, Abraham Joshua Heschel, Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and Reinhold Niebuhr. These figures are placed in conversation with each other and engaged as potential resources for contemporary public life. Course Notes: This is a required course for first year MDivs; open to MA students in the Divinity School only with consent of instructor. *Kristine Culp*

RELP 35202 - Arts of Religious Leadership and Practice: Spiritual Care and Counseling

This course is the second of a three-quarter sequence introducing students to essential aspects of religious leadership; the sequence is required for second-year M.Div. students and complements their work in field education. In this course, students explore and practice the requisite skills for spiritual care and counseling in congregations, hospitals, university chaplaincies and other settings. Participants will interrogate human experience through several lenses, including theological and philosophical anthropologies, family systems theory, and relational and self-psychologies, with special attention to theories of race, ethnicity and gender. Practice labs will help students hone listening skills and narrative therapies, diagnosis and referrals, and healing rituals. *Cynthia Lindner*

RELP 40700 - Field Work Practicum II

The course provides a forum for practical theological reflection through ongoing discussion with classmates of both field experience and general issues of ministerial practice. *Erika Dornfeld*

Religious Ethics

RETH 31201 – History of Religious and Theological Ethics II

This is a history of Western Ethics from the Reformation and Renaissance to the 20th Century in Christian thought but with comparisons to Jewish and Islamic thought. Course Note: Undergraduates can enroll via petition. *William Schweiker*

Equivalent Div Course(s): THEO 31201

RETH 36500 – Jewish Ethics: Arendt, Susman, Rand, Peixotto

The history of modern Jewish ethics is often taught through the work of seminal thinkers Hermann Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig, Martin Buber, and Gershom Scholem. But each of these men were in conversation with women contemporaries who, during the interwar years in Europe, were writing, publishing and organizing. While Hannah Arendt became well known, and while Jessica Peixotto was recognized for her government service, Rosa Rand, and Margaret Susman fell into obscurity. This course will introduce the student to these thinkers and explore their contribution to Jewish thought and Jewish ethics. Course Note: Undergraduates can enroll via petition. *Laurie Zoloth*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HIJD 36500

RETH 59903 – Modern Indian Political and Legal Thought

India has made important contributions to political and legal thought, most of which are too little-known in the West.  These contributions draw on ancient traditions, Hindu and Buddhist, but transform them, often radically, to fit the needs of an anti-imperial nation aspiring to inclusiveness and equality.  We will study the thought of Rabindranath Tagore (Nationalism, The Religion of Man, selected literary works); Mohandas Gandhi (Hind Swaraj (Indian Self-Rule), Autobiography, and selected speeches); B. R. Ambedkar, the chief architect of the Indian Constitution (The Annihilation of Caste, The Buddha and his Dhamma, and selected speeches and interventions in the Constituent Assembly); and, most recently, Amartya Sen, whose The Idea of Justice is rooted, as he describes, both in ancient Indian traditions and in the thought of Tagore. Course Note: Students not from Law or Philosophy need instructor's permission.  Undergraduates are not eligible. *Martha Nussbaum*

Religion, Literature, and Visual Culture

RLVC 41290 – Blake’s Theopoetics

William Blake (1757-1827) was a remarkable poet, an unusually skilled painter, and an utterly idiosyncratic yet supremely skilled printmaker -- each and altogether in the service of communicating a theology radical in both its vision and its revision. The course studies the products of Blake's texts that interweave his skill sets -- especially the "Song" sets and his culminating epic, "Jerusalem," but also looks at his illustrations of, e.g., The Book of Job and other biblical texts. *Richard Rosengarten*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HCHR 41290, RLST 27290

Theology

THEO 57900 – Brauer Seminar: Theology of Nature and Nature of Theology

This Brauer seminar will explore historical, ethical, legal and theological conceptions of “nature” and extrapolating from these reflect on the “nature of theological reflection” and so connect the various meanings of the seminar’s title. The question of nature—human and non-human—is hotly debated today. This is true in the face of the global environmental crisis but no less so in important matters brought before the Supreme Court, which might lead to the overturning of Roe vs. Wade or the undoing of same-sex marriage and are often grounded in appeals to “nature” and the natural. The topic has occupied thinkers throughout Western history ranging from natural law ethics, moral naturalism, definitions of the existence and essence of God and, for Christians, the “nature”, i.e., hypostatic union of the Christ, questions about creation and the natural order, and the possibility and task of natural theology. Even current questions about transhumanism and posthumanism find historical forerunners in ideas about theosis or divinization of human nature as well as in debates about resurrection and the possibility of mystical self-transcendence. Each of these topics implies something about nature and also about the nature and task of theological thinking. The seminar will explore these matters with a focus on and shifting understanding of human and divine nature, sustained throughout by a deep interest in the question of “natural religion,” “natural law,” and “natural theology." PQ: Course admission is based on application. Course Notes: There is a stipend for admitted students. More information about Brauer Seminar classes can be found here: <https://divinity.uchicago.edu/martin-marty-center/brauer-seminar>.

*Willemien Otten and William Schweiker*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HCHR 57900, RETH 57900

Religious Studies (Undergraduate)

RLST 10100 – Introduction to Religious Studies

What is religion? Is it truth or an illusion? Is it an opiate or an effervescent? Is it the origin of civilization or the end of it? Is it some of these things, or none, or all? The task of defining religion has bedeviled scholars for centuries and remains a perennial concern in the academic field of Religious Studies. In this course we will explore some of the definitions of religion offered by scholars like Marx, Freud, Durkheim, James, Hurston, Long, de Beauvoir, DuBois, and Mahmood, as well as the methods, motivations, and historical contexts that made those definitions possible. Along the way we will survey some fundamental themes and issues in the field of Religious Studies. We will then apply what we learn to data outside the field, analyzing how religion is defined and deployed in films, novels, music, TikToks, Instagram reels, and our own brains. Ultimately the tools we acquire in the course will enable us to think through how we as humans organize and make sense of our world and our place in it. Course Note: This course counts as a Gateway course for RLST majors/minors. *Emily Crews*

RLST 20402 – Islamic Thought and Literature II

What are the major developments in thinking and in literature in the Islamic world of the “middle periods” (c. 950-1800 C.E.). How did noteworthy Muslims at various points and places think through questions of life and death, man and God, faith and belief, the sacred and the profane, law and ethics, tradition vs. innovation, power and politics, class and gender, self and other? How did they wage war; make love; shape the built environment; eat and drink; tell stories; educate their youth; preserve the past; imagine the future; perform piety, devotion, and spirituality; construe the virtuous life and righteous community, etc.? How did these ideas change over time? What are some of the famous, funny, naughty, and nice books read in the pre-modern Muslim world? We will survey a broad geographic area stretching from Morocco and Iberia to the Maldives and India--even into the New World--through lectures, secondary readings, and discussion. We will engage with a variety of primary texts in English translation, as well as various visual, aural, and material artifacts. Notes: Taking these courses in sequence is recommended but not required. This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies. *Franklin Lewis*

RLST 20505 – Pagans and Christians: Greek Background to Early Christianity

This course will examine some of the ancient Greek roots of early Christianity. We will focus on affinities between Christianity and the classical tradition as well as ways in which the Christian faith may be considered radically different from it. Some of the more important issues that we will analyze are: "The spell of Homer." How the Homeric poems exerted immeasurable influence on the religious attitudes and practices of the Greeks. The theme of creation in Greek and Roman authors such as Hesiod and Ovid. The Orphic account of human origins. The early Christian theme of Christ as Creator/Savior. Greek, specifically Homeric conceptions of the afterlife. The response to the Homeric orientation in the form of the great mystery cults of Demeter, Dionysus, and Orpheus. The views of the philosophers (esp. Plato) of the immortality of the soul compared with the New Testament conception of resurrection of the body. Ancient Greek conceptions of sacrifice and the crucifixion of Christ as archetypal sacrifice. The attempted synthesis of Jewish and Greek philosophic thought by Philo of Alexandria and its importance for early Christianity. *David Martinez*

RLST 22011 – Jewish Civilization II: Early Modern Period to 21st Century

Jewish Civilization is a three-quarter sequence that explores the development of Jewish culture and tradition from its ancient beginnings through its rabbinic and medieval transformations to its modern manifestations. Through investigation of primary texts-biblical, Talmudic, philosophical, mystical, historical, documentary, and literary-students will acquire a broad overview of Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness while reflecting in greater depth on major themes, ideas, and events in Jewish history. The Winter course will begin with the early modern period and continue to the present. It will include discussions of mysticism, the works of Spinoza and Mendelssohn, the nineteenth-century reform, the Holocaust and its reflection in writers such as Primo Levi and Paul Celan, and literary pieces from postwar American Jewish and Israeli authors. All sections of this course will share a common core of readings; individual instructors will supplement with other materials. It is recommended, though not required, that students take the three Jewish Civilization courses in sequence. Students who register for the Autumn Quarter course will automatically be pre-registered for the winter segment. In the Spring Quarter students have the option of taking a third unit of Jewish Civilization, a course whose topics will vary (JWSC 1200X). *Kenneth Moss (1); Jessica Kirzane (2); Bevin Blaber (3)*

RLST 23823 – Melancholy: Readings in Medieval Christian Literature

The idea of melancholy, a persistent affective orientation toward sadness and/or despair, is ubiquitous in Christian writings from the Middle Ages. This course considers the nature and function of melancholy and possible remedies in Christian discourses, and in so doing it provides a survey of medieval Christian literature. Readings may be drawn from authors such as Boethius, Alan of Lille, Jean de Meun, Marguerite Porete, Dante, and Christine de Pizan. Special attention will be given to the role of literary form in Christian writing, competing accounts of despair and hope, and the relationship of Christianity to non-Christian discourses. There are no language prerequisites, though reading groups may be formed if sufficient students possess relevant language skills. *M. Vanderpoel*

RLST 23880 – Villains: Evil in Philosophy, Religion, and Film

“You don’t really understand an antagonist,” screenwriter John Rogers writes, “until you understand why he’s a protagonist in his own version of the world.”   
This principle holds true of movie villains, but also raises important questions about disagreement, dehumanization, and the diabolical in the real world. Are our enemies truly malicious, or just misunderstood? How does a person become a monster, and how does a person avoid it? Why are some villains so compelling, and what does this say about the good life? Do Hollywood movies enrich or distort how we imagine and respond to real-world evil? Did Thanos do anything wrong?

This course combines readings from philosophical classics and religious traditions with comparative analyses of villains in films from 101 Dalmatians (1956) and Jaws (1975) to The Dark Knight (2008) and Black Panther (2018). Students will discuss antagonists’ motivations, evaluate the visions of morality filmmakers are presupposing, and develop more nuanced understandings of ethics and moral psychology. No prior experience in religious studies or film criticism is required. *Russell Johnson*

RLST 23905 – Is Buddhism a Religion?

One often hears it said that Buddhism is not a *religion*, it is (e.g.) a “mind science,” or perhaps a therapy, or a philosophical way of life, etc. What would it mean, though, to say either that Buddhism is or is not a “religion”? Why does the answer matter, and (more significantly) to whom does it matter? And why is the question familiarly asked only of Buddhism? The latter question turns out to involve a great many historical developments involving colonialism and empire, power and representation, science and religion, tradition and conversion, and the life of a 2,500-year-old tradition in the modern and postmodern worlds. Engaging something of this history, this course will explore the origins and function of the “Buddhism isn’t a religion” meme, in light of the more general questions of what “religion” is anyway, and of the difference it makes who says so. *Daniel Arnold*

RLST 24110 – The Ethics of War: Reading Michael Walzer’s *Just and Unjust Wars*

Questions about war, the taking of human life, the obligations of citizenship, the role of state power, and international justice are among the most pressing topics in ethics and political life. This class will examine these matters through a close reading of Michael Walzer’s *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, first published in 1977 and now in its 5th edition. Widely considered a classic in the ethics of war, JUW develops a theory for evaluating whether to enter war as well as decisions within war—what are known as the jus ad bellum and the jus in bello. Walzer applies his theory to a number of actual cases, ranging from military interventions to reprisals to terrorism to insurgencies to nuclear policy, all informed by the history of warfare and arguments in the history of Western thought. We will critically examine Walzer’s theory, his use of cases, and the conclusions to which his arguments lead. Along the way, we’ll examine core ideas in political morality, e.g., human rights; state sovereignty; morality, necessity, and extremity; liability and punishment, nonviolence, and killing and murder. *John Sianghio*

RLST 24402 – Religion, Writing, Revolution

In this course, we will attend to the role of religion in founding texts of self-government in early modern and Enlightenment philosophy. Starting with Hobbes and Locke, we will examine the relationship between the picture of religion and the grounding of government from philosophical, historical, and literary perspectives, following the logic of their relation, the historical context in which it takes shape, and the formal and rhetorical strategies of each text. In the middle of the course, we will pursue these questions as we read texts by Rousseau and his exchange with Christophe de Beaumont, the Archbishop of Paris. We will consider the mode of exchange that takes shape and its relation to the negotiations of religion and government, with attention to themes of the public, authority, and genre. In the final turn, we will read texts by Hume, Jefferson, and Kant to examine the legacies of these texts for notions of revolution, the new ways we can trace the role of religion in public discourse, and the political stakes of these questions today. *Maureen Kelly*

RLST 25806 – The Political Theologies of Zionism

The relationship between nationalism and religion has throughout history been a stormy one, often characterized by antagonisms and antipathy. In this course we will examine from various aspects the complex nexus of these two sources of repeated ideological and political dispute within Judaism, and more specifically within Zionism as its political manifestation. Zionism has mostly been considered a secular project, yet recently, Zionist theory is scrutinized to identify and unearth its supposedly hidden theological origins. In nowadays Israel, a rise in religious identification alongside an increasing religionization of the political discourse calls for the consideration of new theopolitical models of Zionism applicable in a post-secular environment.  
The aim of this course is to explore this complex intertwining of politics and religion in Israel from both historical and contemporary perspectives. The first part of the course will outline the theoretical foundation of post-secular and political-theological discourses. The second part will address the explicit and implicit political theologies of Zionism. The third part will outline contemporary aspects of political-theological thought in Israel, and their actual appearance in the political sphere. *David Barak-Gorodetsky*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HIJD 35806, THEO 35806

RLST 25821 – Psychology of Conflict: Lessons from Jerusalem

Conflict is an inescapable aspect of life. Psychological theories help us to understand the origin of conflict, its escalation and resolution. In this course students will learn about the psychology of power, perspective taking and competition. We will also explore the various barriers to mutually-beneficial solutions. We will study all this in the context of Jerusalem, an ancient city that is sacred to many religions. It is a kaleidoscope of diversity, with multitudes of holy places, traditions, languages, identities and nationalities. Jerusalem will provide the prism through which to look at the intersection of linguistic and cultural landscapes, tensions between and within religions and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In this multi-disciplinary course, we will consider concepts from Psychology, History, Sociology, Religion and Political Science. Students will engage in role plays to simulate real-life events, learning from direct experience as well as from discussions of research findings. We will use a variety of media including short videos, art, a virtual tour, and lectures by visiting experts. *Boaz Keysar*

RLST 26302 – Religion, Medicine, and the Experience of Illness

This course introduces students to both the dynamic relationship between religion and medicine and the role of religion as it relates to the experience of illness. Through a survey of a broad selection of religious traditions, textual genres, and case studies, students will evaluate how religion offers a pliable explanatory system (through myths, symbols, rituals, etc.) to address questions of causation, coping, and curing vis-à-vis illness. The historical relationship between religions and medical systems has been fascinatingly complex. We will encounter examples where religion and medicine work in tandem as complementary explanatory systems, e.g., with devotion to holy figures such as Saint Jude. We will also discuss what happens when religion usurps the explanatory role of medicine, e.g., when the activity of spirits becomes the diagnostic explanation for a medical condition such as epilepsy. Drawing upon literature from art history, medical anthropology, sociology, history, and theology, this course surveys the impressive variety of responses to illness both across religious traditions and within those traditions. Prior knowledge of religious studies and/or medical history is not required for the course. *Mark Lambert*

RLST 26670 – Religious Autobiographies

The self who writes their life is a remarkably protean form of religious narrative.  Autobiographical texts aim to be representative and at the same time are almost always idiosyncratic: they want to instruct, and they must disclose to do so.  The course begins by considering two outstanding examples of the genre, Augustine’s *Confessions* (ca. 400 C.E.) and Malcolm X’s *Autobiography*(1965), before proceeding to examine a range of autobiographical narratives whose relation to religion is somewhat less paradigmatic. Our reading of these texts will be structured around four of the genre's major themes: conversion, confession, memory, and identity. Possible authors to be considered include Mahmoud Darwish, Frederick Douglass, and Maggie Nelson, among many others.

For the writing component of the course, students will have the option of producing either 1) a series of short, analytic papers on a selected autobiography concerning each of the course themes, or 2) of composing one chapter of their own autobiography. *Richard Rosengarten*

RLST 26945 – Settler Colonialism: From the US to Palestine

In this course, we will consider settler colonialism as a contemporary, ongoing process as it unfolds in both North America and the Middle East, thinking through the problems of state formation, citizenship, land expropriation, and the law in these two contexts. While US and the state of Israel share a (tentative) commitment to liberal democracy, this has hinged on the erasure of indigenous populations even as the states expanded to envelop greater swaths of territory. In the process, settler and indigenous peoples have been moved, as well as transformed, producing new subjectivities in relation to both the state and international law. Over the quarter, we will examine the transformations of space and subjects effected by the settler colonial project, drawing on historical, anthropological, and theoretical literature. *Callie Maidhof*

RLST 27075 – The Latinx Religious Experience in the US

This course examines the diverse nature of Latinx religion, from its roots to present day forms, within the social and political context of the United States. The main goal of this class is to understand the distinctiveness of Latinx culture, its challenges, and possibilities, and to discern the role religion has in the Latinx experience. In order to do so, this course is structured around three central themes: 1) What Is the Latinx Experience? 2) Latinx Religion as Lived Experience, and 3) Latinx Theology, Ethics, and Politics. The first section gives us the lay of the land, relying on biographical narratives and historical sources to understand what the Latinx experience is all about. The second section turns to sociological and ethnographic material to study the diversity of Latinx religion and the multiple functions of faith and devotion in the Latinx community. The third section turns to the constructive work of scholars who study the distinct contributions of the Latinx experience to theological reflection, ethical discernment, and political action. *Raul Zegarra*

RLST 27721 – Race and Religion: Theorizing Blackness and Jewishness

Founded on ideals of universalism, pluralism and secularism, France and the United States are fraught with contradictions when it comes to race and religion. Which religions are accepted? Which religions are suspect? Is it minority that defines the difference—or only particular kinds of minority, such as race? To untangle the intersections of race and religion, we will examine Blackness and Jewishness as they are represented in political polemic, fiction, memoir and philosophy from the 1960s to the present. This course introduces students to the foundational concepts for the critical study of race and religion through exploring the constructions of Black and Jewish identity.  We will examine the contradictions of secular politics and culture in France and the United States, and discuss how religion, race, and intersecting categories such as gender and sexuality, can become tools of critique. Readings include works by thinkers such as Césaire, Fanon, Memmi, Levinas and Foucault, along with literary classics by Nella Larsen and Sarah Kofman, and contemporary critical essays by Judith Butler, Christina Sharpe and Talal Asad. Throughout this course, we will examine how the concepts of race and religion are key components of the political, philosophical and ethical projects of these authors. No prerequisite knowledge of critical theory, or this historical period, is expected. *Kirsten Collins*

RLST 27880 – Gendering Arabs: Embodiment, Agency, Affect

This course explores the diverse ways that gender and sexuality are represented in contemporary cultural texts—film, fiction, and art—from the Middle East and North Africa. These creative works will be paired with critical writings from a variety of disciplinary and theoretical perspectives (gender studies, queer theory, affect theory, literary and cultural studies, anthropology, Islamic studies, and activist literature). While we will attend to the layered histories and legacies of colonialism, orientalism, globalization, military occupation, and war, our goal is to center gender discourses and practices as they are negotiated, performed, and contested by artists, writers, and thinkers in and from the region. Our readings and films emphasize how questions of agency, affect, and embodiment shape the lifeworlds and creative imaginaries of cultural producers from the Middle East and North Africa. Course Notes: This course is designed for advanced undergraduates. Graduate students who wish  to take the course, should get prior approval from their department/division and then send a consent request via self-service enrollment, or email to the instructor ([helshakry@Uchicago.edu](mailto:helshakry@Uchicago.edu)) explaining why you wish to take the course. *Hoda El Shakry*

Equivalent Div Course(s): ISLM 37880, AASR 37880

RLST 27991 – Mythologies of Labor

Whether fighting incredible monsters or baking bread, mythological texts invite us to consider the value of labor in unique ways. By reading across a number of premodern traditions (including Greek, Roman, Near Eastern, Scandinavian, Iranian, South African, Indian), this course looks at differences between heroic labor and manual or domestic labor, labors usually expected of men and of women, labors with religious value versus labors with material consequences, as well as the role of affective labor in the ancient world. As we learn about labor in the past through these texts, the readings will allow us to raise new questions about labor today in the world of global capitalism. Examples of primary texts we will cover are portions of the Homeric epics, Hesiod’s *Works and Days*, Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Livy’s *History of Rome*,the Norse *Edda*and “Prose Edda,” Xhosa narratives, the Near Eastern *Gilgamesh*and *Enuma Elish*, chapters from the *Vendidad*, and some Vedic hymns. The course readings will be given in translation, and no prior language knowledge is expected, but students with knowledge of a relevant language can take the class for credit toward their major on the basis of a specifically tailored midterm exam and/or final paper. *Claudio Sansone*

RLST 28308 – Introduction to Byzantine Art

In this course we will explore works of art and architecture as primary sources on the civilization of Byzantium. Through the close investigation of artifacts of different media and techniques, students will gain insight into the artistic production of the Byzantine Empire from its beginnings in the fourth century C.E. to the Ottoman conquest in 1453. We will employ different methodological approaches and scholarly resources that are relevant for the fruitful investigation of artifacts in their respective cultural setting. In order to fully assess the pivotal importance of the visual arts in Byzantine culture, we will address a wide array of topics, including art and ritual, patronage, the interrelation of art and text, the classical heritage, art and theology, Iconoclasm, etc. Course Note: For nonmajors, this course meets the arts, music, drama general education requirements. *Karin Krause*

RLST 28992 – Arguing on the Internet: Persuasion and Polarization

Everyone knows it’s a bad idea to argue about religion and politics on the internet. But is this actually true, and if so, why? What is it about religion and politics that makes it so difficult to convince people to change their views? And what effects do social media platforms have upon these arguments? In this class, we will discuss philosophical and psychological theories to help make sense of the challenges facing anyone who seeks to challenge others’ deeply held convictions. We will compare classic texts about faith and reason with recent studies on political polarization, rhetoric, and new media. By analyzing actual disagreements from different corners of the internet, we will collaboratively develop our own guide to online argumentation which will be published online as a resource for people courageous enough to post in a comments section. *Russell Johnson*

RLST 29067 – Christianity Confronts Capitalism: Natural Law, Economics, and Social Reform

Christianity’s relationship with commerce was fraught long before the industrial era. After all, it upheld property rights alongside the poor’s beatitude. And, even as Marx declared religion “the opium of the masses,” Christian thinkers popularized ideas of social justice and the Social Gospel to critique laissez faire’s limits. This course will combine intellectual, social, and legal history to examine how various Christian traditions have grappled with liberal capitalism—and its revolutionary critics. We will explore these traditions’ competing visions of a moral political economy, how their adherents attempted to put them into action, and where these attempts placed them vis-à-vis society and civil authorities. After a brief unit on key Judeo-Christian texts bearing on political and economic activity, we will consider various churches’ alternatives to liberal capitalism and revolutionary movements’ materialism—including Catholic Social Thought from 1891’s Rerum novarum to Pope Francis’s Laudato si’ and Abraham Kuyper’s neo-Calvinist tradition. We will put these in dialogue with practical efforts from Social Gospel reformers, Catholic Workers, and Latin American devotees of Liberation Theology to Hobby Lobby or Chick-Fil-A’s attempt at Evangelical business. Throughout, students will consider questions about the relationships between church and state, doctrine and practice, and natural law and the law of the market. *Robert Kaminski*

**SPRING 2022**

Special Courses in Divinity

DVSC 77000 – Pro Seminar: Creating an Academic Profile and Dossier

This course serves as an intensive introduction to the academic job market from the nitty-gritty of where to find job advertisements to developing a dossier and preparation for interviews and on-campus visits. Students will have the opportunity to develop job materials from scratch or refine existing materials through peer and faculty feedback. Different faculty will be brought in each week to share their expertise and interface with students. This proseminar is open to students currently on the job market or preparing to go on the job market in the near future. *Sarah Pierce Taylor*

Anthropology and Sociology of Religion

AASR 44400 – Public Policy and Bureaucracy

This course will introduce some of the central questions and methodologies in the anthropology of public policy and bureaucracy. Students interested in ethnographically studying religious institutions and practice will be able to incorporate street-level bureaucrats, public administrators, as well as documents, statistical reports, and other mundane material and intellectual objects into analytic focus as they ask larger questions about secular and religious states, and the making of public policies. As the bulk of the theoretical literature is not specific to religion, this course will be useful for any student engaging public policy and state governance from an anthropological perspective. General familiarity with anthropological theory and ethnographic methods will be necessary. Course Note: Undergraduates may petition the instructor for permission to enroll. *Elham Mireshghi*

Biblical Studies

BIBL 42000 – The Gospel According to Mark

This course, through close reading of the Greek text (with attention to characteristic vocabulary, grammar, syntax and style), will investigate the composition, genre, plot structure, theology, purpose and impact of the first Christian narrative text. Particular emphases include the depiction of the disciples, the so-called “Messianic Secret,” the role of irony, and the relationship between Mark and Paul. This course serves as the third quarter exegesis course in the Introduction to Koine Greek sequence, even as various levels of Greek skills are welcome. PQ: BIBL 35100 and 35300 Introduction to Koine Greek I and II, or equivalent (please contact the instructor with questions; undergraduates welcome). Course Note: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *Margaret Mitchell*

BIBL 44100 – Reading the Psalms

In this course, we will read closely a selection of biblical psalms, paying special attention to their genre and poetry. We will also consider the import of these psalms for understanding ancient Israelite religious thought. All biblical texts will be read in Hebrew. This course is meant especially for students who have taken the fall-winter biblical Hebrew sequence in the Divinity School. PQ: At least one year of biblical Hebrew or equivalent (BIBL 33900 and BIBL 34000 Introductory Biblical Hebrew). Course Notes: Undergraduates can petition to enroll. *Jeffrey Stackert*

BIBL 48900 – Reading Course: Hebrew

This course assumes that students have full mastery of the grammatical and lexical content of the advanced level.  The main objective is literary fluency. By the end of the course, students should have an excellent command of Hebrew. The course concentrates on the written language, especially scientific writing, as well as elements of Biblical Hebrew, literature from earlier periods and sophisticated journalistic writing. Students read the various Israeli daily newspapers as well as Israeli literature, scientific articles and legal documents (with the help of a dictionary) of varying lengths. They have a good command of synonyms and idiomatic Hebrew, and also understand the subtle differences between words. Their already substantial vocabularies now include many words from a wide variety of genres. Students considerably improve their ability to write long essays in Hebrew on a wide range of topics, incorporating idiomatic language. Prerequisites: Students should have at least four years of Modern Hebrew studies and/or passing grade of a reading exam and/or graduated the Reading Hebrew for Research Purposes. *Ari Almog*

BIBL 51401 – The Documentary Hypothesis

This course will be an in-depth study of the Documentary Hypothesis for the composition of the Pentateuch/Torah. We will begin with analysis of pentateuchal texts, which is the starting point for understanding the theory and its value. Only after working with the texts will we engage the scholarly discussion of pentateuchal theory, including the development of the Documentary Hypothesis in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, objections raised against it, and its current revision and reinvigoration among Neodocumentarians. All biblical texts will be read in Hebrew. PQ: Strong Biblical Hebrew language skills required. Course Notes: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *Jeffrey Stackert*

Philosophy of Religion

DVPR 33750 - New Cartesian Questions

The course shall be divided, in each class, in two moments. First moment: a close reading of Descartes' Meditations on first Philosophy to allow students to reach a direct knowledge of cartesian thought, by presenting text explanations. Second, in each class will be addressed one of the most debated issues in the past or today among the allegedly well-known cartesian doctrines. For instance: Was Descartes more a skeptic than a dogmatic philosopher? (b) How far Descartes has followed Montaigne more than he opposed him? (c) Is the ego in the cogito argument really a “subject” or a “substance”? (c) Why a finite mind can enjoy an infinite will, and why the successors (even the self-proclaimed followers) of Descartes have given up this claim? (d) Is phenomenology (from Husserl to Levinas) qualified to understand itself as “cartesian”? (e) Is there or not a cartesian metaphysics, and why the answer remains difficult today? (f) Which role, if any, play sensation and non-conceptual knowledge in Descartes doctrine of morals. *Jean-Luc Marion*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 23750

DVPR 38100 – Whitehead’s *Process and Reality*

A close reading of Alfred North Whitehead's seminal work. Course Note: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *Daniel Arnold* and *Tom Pashby*

DVPR 46333 – Comparative Trinitarianisms

This course will be an experiment in juxtaposition. The concept is no more and no less than trying to read in tandem a number of religious and philosophical writings from various corners of world culture which focus on some form of triplicity, triads, trinities, including the Three Hypostases of Neoplatonism, the Christian Trinity, the Hindu Trimurti, the Daoist triad of vitality/energy/spirit, the inter-nested triadic structures of Yang Xiong's Taixuanjing and those of the Hegelian system, the Tiantai Three Truths and its reconfiguration of the Buddhist trikaya, triple gem and other triads, and perhaps others. We will enter into this experiment without any preconceived thesis about what we will find when these things are looked at all together, working together to develop ad hoc hypotheses about how these triads function, why they are so prevalent, what each one can teach us about all the others and vice versa. It is a genuine experiment in that we do not know what will happen when these elements are combined, and we adopt an attitude of reverent expectation and a willingness to follow it wherever it may lead. *Brook Ziporyn*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HREL 46333, RLST 26333

DVPR 48790 – Chinese Responses to Christianity in the Ming Dynasty

This course will focus on close readings of primary texts in Chinese concerning the polemics around the introduction of Christianity into China in the Ming Dynasty, starting with Matteo Ricci's introduction of Catholic doctrine in his 天主實義 and the polemical responses to it from mainly Confucian and Buddhist authors, with special attention to the metaphysical premises of the conflicting traditions, and more generally what might be at stake in them. PQ: Reading proficiency in Chinese. Course Note: Undergraduates can petition to enroll. *Brook Ziporyn*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HREL 48790

DVPR 53330 - Revelation, Temporality, Being  
Following up the previous seminars on the history of the concept of Revelation and its alternative models (metaphysical, phenomenological, biblical, a.s.o.), this class will be devoted to a reverse interrogation: provided first that the concept of Revelation, in a christian perspective, can only be understood from a trinitarian viewpoint (Barth and Balthasar, Basile of Cesarea and Augustine); provided then that the most crucial issues about Revelation should be addressed from this trinitarian viewpoint, one may try to understand not Trinity on the basis of the philosophical concepts of time and history (as Hegel and Schelling did) or of being (as Thomas Aquinas and Heidegger did), but on a contrary order, to consider being and time on the basis of Trinity and according to the logic of agapê. This means a reinterpretation of time as eschatology or krisis, and of being as givenness. *Jean-Luc Marion*

History of Christianity

History of Judaism

HIJD 37652 – Ethnography Before Modernity Although the culture concept and the science of anthropology are a product of modernity, ethnographic inquiry and prose genres go back to Greek, Near Eastern, and Huaxia historians. These sophisticated styles of thinking and writing about one's own people in light of others–styles which crossed a broad range of premodern disciplines like medicine, geography, and law–shaped the identities of ancient imperial/colonial powers and of minorities within their borders. As ethnography developed and spread throughout Roman, Persian, and Islamic civilizations, it continued to function as a crossroads for traffic between politics and the sciences, where both durable and long-forgotten ideas about the nature of humanity were drafted and sedimented. By tracing a wide arc of ethnographic inquiry and writing from Herodotus to the Renaissance, we will examine patterns in ethnographers' self-representations across periods and genres, considering both the political and the scientific implications of ethnographic literature. We will conclude with a reflection on the afterlife of ancient ethnographic tropes (e.g. "barbarian") and the reception of ancient ethnography in the invention of modern categories (e.g. "Aryan" and "Semite") which continue to circulate at the intersection of race, religion, and culture. PQ: Graduate students may enroll themselves after obtaining instructor permission with one or two paragraphs explaining their interest in the course and any prior preparation. *James A. Redfield* Equivalent Div Course(s): HREL 37652, RLST 27652

HIJD 39300 – Law and Culture in Rabbinic Literature

An introduction to the legal genres of classical rabbinic Judaism by applying the standard tools of source-, form-, redaction-, and literary criticism. Having established a working vocabulary, a map of the sources, and some facility with the tools, we will proceed to complicate the boundaries between law and aggadah (non-legal tradition) in its various forms (aphorism, parable, narrative cycle, case-law, ethical instruction, and more.) Having appreciated how law and aggadah interact in rabbinic literature to produce meaning, we will work on contextualizing their dialectic in light of multiple branches of a specific theory of meaning, culture, with a special focus on interpretive/symbolic anthropology.

*James A. Redfield*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLVC 39400

History of Religions

Islamic Studies

ISLM 30203 – Islamicate Civilization III: 1750-Present

This course covers the period from ca. 1750 to the present, focusing on Western military, economic, and ideological encroachment; the impact of such ideas as nationalism and liberalism; efforts at reform in the Islamic states; the emergence of the "modern" Middle East after World War I; the struggle for liberation from Western colonial and imperial control; the Middle Eastern states in the cold war era; and local and regional conflicts. *Holly Shissler*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 20203

ISLM 30300 – Introductory Qur’anic Arabic III

This course is the third in a 3-quarter sequence "Introduction to Qur'anic Arabic" (IQA), which aims to provide students with foundational philological and reading skills by covering the essentials of Qur'anic/Classical Arabic grammar. This course also features readings of select passages from the Qur'an, Ḥadīth and Tafsīr. The 3 quarters of IQA are sequential, and students are strongly encouraged to join in the first quarter. Exceptions can be made on a case by case basis. Prerequisites: Graduate and undergraduate students from any department are welcome to register. The minimum prerequisite for IQA III is the successful completion of IQA II or equivalent training. The IQA sequence is also open to students who may have had more exposure to Arabic (modern or classical) but wish to acquire a solid foundation in Arabic grammar, and/or students who feel they are not yet ready for third-year Arabic courses. *Izzet Coban*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 15300

ISLM 30840 – Radical Islamic Pieties, 1200 to 1600

Some knowledge of primary languages (i.e., Arabic, French, German, Greek, Latin, Persian, Spanish, Turkish) helpful. This course examines responses to the Mongol destruction of the Abbasid caliphate in 1258 and the background to formation of regional Muslim empires. Topics include the opening of confessional boundaries; Ibn Arabi, Ibn Taymiyya, and Ibn Khaldun; the development of alternative spiritualities, mysticism, and messianism in the fifteenth century; and transconfessionalism, antinomianism, and the articulation of sacral sovereignties in the sixteenth century. All work in English. This course is offered in alternate years. Prerequisites: Consent of instructor. *Cornell Fleischer*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 20840

ISLM 40102 – Advanced Arabic Syntax II

This two-quarter sequence is an introduction to the classical Arabic language. It is useful for students whose research includes the reading of classical Arabic texts in varied fields such as literature, history, political science, theology and philosophy. In the class 1) rules of Arabic grammar are studied intensively, topic by topic; 2) parsing (i'rab) is an important component, with a view to understanding the structure of the language; 3) brief texts from different fields of classical Arabic are read focusing on their grammatical structure, and 4) some theory about the development of the grammatical genre is introduced, as are the basic features of prosody ('arud) and rhetoric (balagha). Prerequisites: ARAB 40101 or equivalent. This is the second part of a 2 quarter sequence; open to grads and undergrads. *Tahera Qutbuddin*

Religions in the Americas

Religious Leadership and Practice (MDiv Courses)

RELP 35300 – Arts of Religious Leadership and Practice: Community, Leadership, and Change

This course is the third of a three-quarter sequence introducing students to essential aspects of religious leadership; the sequence is required for second-year M.Div. students and complements their field education experience. In this final quarter of the year-long sequence, students study varieties of communities that form the ecologies of public life, and their facilitators and leaders as responsible agents of change. Through research projects and case studies, students practice the skills of analysis, decision-making, negotiation and visioning that are essential to organizational vitality and constructive community engagement. This course is the third of a three-quarter sequence introducing students to essential aspects of religious leadership; the sequence is required for second-year M.Div. students and complements their field education experience. In this final quarter of the year-long sequence, students study varieties of communities that form the ecologies of public life, and their facilitators and leaders as responsible agents of change. Through research projects and case studies, students practice the skills of analysis, decision-making, negotiation and visioning that are essential to organizational vitality and constructive community engagement. *Cynthia Lindner*

RELP 40800 – Field Work Practicum III

The Practicum sequence complements the MDiv Congregational Placement and offers opportunities for students to engage in critical reflection of their respective practical experiences of ministry leadership. In addition to this element of personal and practical reflections, students will engage a range of readings, written exercises, and classroom conversations to assist in articulating and refining their own practice of ministry. *Erika Dornfeld*

RELP 50406 – Advanced Seminar: Preaching as Pedagogy

Teaching and Learning in Twenty-first Century Spiritual Communities:  
This course will consider the significance of religious education and faith formation for children, youth and adults--historical foundations, best practices, and contemporary challenges and innovations. The seminar will engage contemporary practitioners at the forefront of contemporary faith formation and will offer opportunities for students to practice a variety of preaching and teaching forms. Prerequisite: RELP 35202 or permission of instructor. *Cynthia Lindner*

Religious Ethics

RETH 32700 – Religion, Society, and Culture

Classic and contemporary theories of society and culture help frame concepts of religion and ethics. This course will examine social and cultural sources of and challenges to ethics, religion, and the relationship of individuals, culture, and society. Universal theories of society that do not necessarily take account of race, class, and gender will be considered alongside those self-consciously informed by these issues. The relationship between human and nonhuman animals will also be considered. This class will emphasize engaging with and understanding the texts to give students a solid foundation for other classes and comprehensive exams. Course Notes: Undergraduates can enroll via petition. *Sarah Fredericks*

RETH 41000 – Feminist Philosophy

This course is an introduction to the major varieties of philosophical feminism.  After studying some key historical texts in the Western tradition (Wollstonecraft, Rousseau, J. S. Mill), we examine four types of contemporary philosophical feminism: Liberal Feminism (Susan Moller Okin, Martha Nussbaum), Radical Feminism (Catharine MacKinnon, Andrea Dworkin), Difference Feminism (Carol Gilligan, Annette Baier, Nel Noddings), and Postmodern "Queer" Gender Theory (Judith Butler, Michael Warner), and recent writing on trans feminism.  After studying each of these approaches, we will focus on political and ethical problems of contemporary international feminism, asking how well each of the approaches addresses these problems. Course Notes: Undergraduates may enroll only with the permission of the instructor.  Only junior or senior philosophy concentrators are eligible, and you will need a letter of recommendation from a faculty member in the Philosophy department who has taught you*.* *Martha Nussbaum*

Religion, Literature, and Visual Culture

RLVC 37490 – Art as Buddhism in Ancient India: Explorations in the Stupa of Amaravati and Other Monuments

This course will examine the visual construction of early Buddhism in India, focusing in particular on stūpas and especially on the art of the great stūpa (mahachaitya) at Amarāvatī in Andhra Pradesh. We will examine questions of Buddhology, of the diversity and range of conversations within early Buddhism, leading to the rise of the Mahāyāna, in relation to the visualization of Buddhist theory and narrative in the extensive and extraordinary decorations of the major sites. The course will introduce those taking it to the rich visual, material and epigraphic culture of the Buddhist stūpas as well as the vibrant textual world of Indian Buddhist writing – from stories to suttas to commentaries. Students will have the opportunity to develop their own final papers in relation to this material or comparatively with other material in which they also retain an interest (not necessarily only Buddhist). If the course is taught in person, depending on the Covid situation in Spring 2022, then it is likely to be on a speeded up twice per week basis over the first half of the quarter. *Jaś Elsner*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 27490

RLVC 43010 – Art and Ritual in Byzantium

What was the place of architecture, images and objects in the various rituals of Byzantium – public and private, sacred and secular? In what ways did works of art respond to the ritualistic purpose for which they were created? To what extent is the latter reflected in the design of buildings, their urban setting, their pictorial decoration, their furnishings and mobile equipment? These are the key questions underlying this course, to which must be added: What are the limitations encountered by those aiming to reconstruct the function of buildings that have survived in a fragmentary or refurbished state and of artifacts now isolated from their original context? We will approach this topic by critically confronting surviving visual material from Byzantium with various written sources. We will also explore these texts as a key source of information on works of art and architecture that no longer exist. *Karin Krause*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HCHR 43010

RLVC 44004 – The Veneration of Icons in Byzantium: History, Theory, and Practice

In order to appreciate the pivotal religious significance icons had in Byzantium for private devotion, in the liturgy, in civic ritual, and in military campaigns, we will survey the visual evidence along with a vast array of written sources. We will explore the origins of the Christian cult of icons in the Early Byzantine period and its roots in the Greco-Roman world of paganism. Through the close analysis of icons executed over the centuries in different artistic techniques, we will examine matters of iconography, style and aesthetics. We will also have a close look at image theory, as developed by Byzantine theologians and codified in the era of Iconoclasm. Typically, meetings will consist of both lecture and interactive discussion sections. Students are expected to prepare the mandatory readings for each week, which serve as a basis for an informed, and thus productive, classroom discussion. PQ: This is a graduate course but advanced undergraduate students may enroll in exceptional cases (instructor's consent required). The course is not recommended for students without an at least basic familiarity with Christian culture and the major protagonists of the New Testament. *Karin Krause*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HCHR 44004, RLST 28704

RLVC 49002 – Ekphrasis: Description, Vision and Imagination in Art and Religion

This course explores the rich traditions of the description – ekphrasis -- from Greco-Roman antiquity to modernity. It tackles texts (both prose and verse) in order to establish the ramifications of a genre in the European tradition, and its applications in particular to visual culture and religion. There will be opportunity in the final paper to range beyond these into questions of comparative literature, art (history) writing, religious imagination and ekphrasis in all periods or contexts, as well as into the use of images or films as themselves forms of descriptive response. The course is primarily intended for graduates but interested undergraduates are welcome. The course will be taught over 5 weeks in the Spring Quarter on an intensive schedule. It will be examined on the basis of a paper, due on a subject to be agreed and on a date to be agreed at the end of the Spring quarter. Note: Consent of instructor required for undergraduates; email Professors Meltzer and Elsner a paragraph long description about what you bring and what you hope to get out of this seminar. (CDI seminar enrollment is capped at 18 students.) *Jaś Elsner* and *Francoise Meltzer*

Equivalent Div Course(s): DVPR 49002

Theology

THEO 31600 – Introduction to Theology

This course will consider theology as an aid to practical wisdom; toward that end, we will examine a variety of theologies that exhibit the wisdom implicit in various religious traditions. Course Note: This course is open to undergrads by Petition. *Kevin Hector*

THEO 42001 – Feminist Theory and Theology: de Beauvoir’s *Second Sex*

In 1949, Simone de Beauvoir’s *Le Deuxième Sexe* took up the old question of sexual difference; it was never the same question again. This seminar will engage a close reading of The Second Sex in English translation and with reference to the original French, focusing on Beauvoir’s picture of freedom, desire, and subjectivity as situated, and attending to her interpretation of mysticism, "vocation," and transcendence. We will consider the reception of Beauvoir’s work by selected feminist theologians and critically assess that legacy in relation to recent directions. *Kristine Culp*

THEO 45800 – Black Ownership of Wealth: A Theological Consideration

Since Africans were brought to the Virginia Colony (August 1619), throughout slavery and segregation until today, black Americans (men and women) have always owned wealth. They have always had human agency. These black families accumulated wealth and offered a concurrent narrative and framing from the mainstream understanding of black Americans as victims. Who are these black families who remain mainly invisible from the dominant black story? What is material, financial wealth? Who has it? And how did they get it? *Dwight Hopkins*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 25800

Religious Studies (Undergraduate)

RLST 20403 – Islamic Thought and Literature III

This course covers the period from ca. 1700 to the present. It explores Muslim intellectuals’ engagement with tradition and modernity in the realms of religion, politics, literature, and law. We discuss debates concerning the role of religion in a modern society, perceptions of Europe and European influence, the challenges of maintaining religious and cultural authenticity, and Muslim views of nation-states and nationalism in the Middle East. We also give consideration to the modern developments of transnational jihadism and the Arab Spring. This course sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies. *A. Holly Schissler*

RLST 22013 – Jewish Civilization III: Mothers and Motherhood in Modern Jewish Culture

Jewish Civilization is a three-quarter sequence that explores the development of Jewish culture and tradition from its ancient beginnings through its rabbinic and medieval transformations to its modern manifestations. Through investigation of primary texts—biblical, Talmudic, philosophical, mystical, historical, documentary, and literary—students will acquire a broad overview of Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness while reflecting in greater depth on major themes, ideas, and events in Jewish history. The Spring course in 2022 will focus on mothers and motherhood in modern Jewish culture. From sentimentalized keepers of Jewish tradition to objects of ridicule burdened by stereotypes of overbearing, guilt-inducing behavior, Jewish mothers hold a prominent role in Jewish self-representations. Writing alongside or against these stereotypes, Jewish mothers themselves have struggled with the obligations and expectations of Jewish motherhood. Engaging with a variety of literary, theological, historical, and pop culture texts, this class explores Jewish feminisms in relation to motherhood, Jewish fictions of motherhood, and the role of motherhood in Jewish religious life and thought. This course includes material from a variety of different contexts for modern Jewish life, but places particular emphasis on American Jewish history and culture. Course Notes: Students who wish to take this course for Civilization Studies credit, must also take Jewish Civilization I and II. The course may also be taken as an independent elective. *Jessica Kirzane*

RLST 22014 – Jewish Civilization III: Narratives of Assimilation

This course offers a survey into the manifold strategies of representing the Jewish community in East Central Europe beginning from the nineteenth century to the Holocaust. Engaging the concept of liminality-of a society at the threshold of radical transformation-it will analyze Jewry facing uncertainties and challenges of the modern era and its radical changes. Students will be acquainted with problems of cultural and linguistic isolation, hybrid identity, assimilation, and cultural transmission through a wide array of genres-novel, short story, epic poem, memoir, painting, illustration, film. The course draws on both Jewish and Polish-Jewish sources; all texts are read in English translation. *Bozena Shallcross*

RLST 22040 – Religion in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and Peacemaking

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is arguably the most intractable political conflict at present. The conflict has been subjected to various historiographies and narrative explorations, offering often-competing explanations in an attempt to understand its origin and evolvement, and also the failure of its resolution. This course explores the role of religion in the historical development of the conflict and in its contemporary manifestation, while at the same time probing the potential role of religion in the resolution of the conflict and outlining the history of attempts for religious peace-making in Israel/Palestine. Combining concrete historical analysis and intellectual history, the course will focus on the Jewish, Muslim and Christian views of the conflict and its potential resolution, relating to such themes as covenant, messianism, political theology, the sanctity of the land and the role of Jerusalem. These concepts and others will be explored against the backdrop of the concrete history of the conflict, focusing initially on the formative period of 1897-1948, pivoting to the 1967 war and its aftermath and concluding with the religionization of politics in recent decades and its far-reaching consequences. *David Barak-Gorodetsky*

RLST 22812 – Introduction to Hinduism

What is Hinduism? Variously described as a world religion, a way of life, the basis of a national culture, and more, this course will critically consider and interrogate the historical multiplicity of traditions that comprise what we might today call “Classical Hinduism.” Beginning with the Vedic period in the first-millennium B.C.E and moving to the early modern, we will track the development of classical religious tenants, literatures, and practices. In so doing, students will become familiar with central beliefs (including dharma, artha, kāma, and mokṣa), sectarian traditions such as Vaiṣṇavism, Śavism, and Śaktism, and religious literatures ranging from epic to devotional poetry. As we will see, while Hinduism is a flexible and elastic term that brings together shifting religious identities and communities, the concept of the classical names the solidification of both a real and imagined religious past. *Sarah Pierce Taylor*

RLST 23111 – Black Theology: Hopkins Versus Cone

Black Theology of Liberation, an indigenous USA discipline and movement, began on July 31, 1966 and spread nationally and internationally when James H. Cone published his first book in March 1969. Since that time, a second generation has emerged. In this course, we will create a debate between the second generation (represented by Dwight N. Hopkins) and the first generation (represented by James H. Cone). We will look at the political, economic, cultural, gender, and sexual orientation parts of this debate. *Dwight Hopkins*

RLST 24103 – Bioethics

This is a lecture and discussion class that will explore how a variety of philosophic and religious thinkers approach the issues and problems of modern dilemmas in medicine and science in a field called bioethics. We will consider a general argument for your consideration: that the arguments and the practices from faith traditions and from philosophy offer significant contributions that underlie policies and practices in bioethics. We will use a case-based method to study how different traditions describe and defend differences in moral choices in contemporary bioethics. This class is based on the understanding that case narratives serve as another core text for the discipline of bioethics and that complex ethical issues are best considered by a careful examination of the competing theories as work themselves out in specific cases. We will examine both classic cases that have shaped our understanding of the field of bioethics and cases that are newly emerging, including the case of research done at our University. Through these cases, we will ask how religious traditions both collide and cohere over such topics as embryo research, health care reform, terminal illness, issues in epidemics and public health, and our central research question, synthetic biology research. This class will also explore how the discipline of bioethics has emerged to reflect upon such dilemmas, with particular attention to the role that theology and philosophy have played in such reflection. We will look at both how the practice of theologians and philosophers has historically shaped the field of bioethics and at how these claims, methodology, and praxis have continued to shape and inflect bioethics. We will examine the issue of epistemic stance, of truth claims, and of how normative policies are created amid serious controversy. We will explore the nature of the relationship between religion and public policy and study how religious traditions and moral philosophy shape our view of issues as “bioethics controversies” in the first place. Course Note: This course counts as the 3rd year Theories and Methods course for the undergraduate Religious Studies major/minor. *Laurie Zoloth*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RETH 30600

RLST 25563 – Does American Democracy Need Religion?

In the United States, we find ourselves living as part of a democracy. But that simple fact doesn’t necessarily make us fans of democracy. In fact, it leaves many questions unanswered: Is democracy a good thing? If so, why and on what grounds? Why should you or I esteem or believe in democracy and its ideals (e.g. equality, liberty, fraternity)? If we do, what grounds our devotion to this shared political tradition, if anything? Does, can, or should religion have a role to play?   
In this course, we will explore American democracy as a normative tradition and its relationship to various religious traditions in American society. Specifically, we will explore three influential trends in conceptualizing the relationship between religion and democracy by examining the statements of key interpreters of American democracy, with an emphasis on the 20th century. First, we’ll investigate the relative independence of democracy and religion, focusing on philosophers who emphasize American democracy as tradition in its own right. Second, we’ll consider “Civil Religion in America,” focusing on sociologists and historians who suggest the dependence of the democratic on the quasi-religious. Third, we'll examine the relative interdependence of American democracy and religious traditions by turning to statements made by influential religious and political leaders and activists who provide interpretations of American democracy’s ideals during periods of major political and social change. *Derek Buyan*

RLST 25704 – Environmental Justice in Chicago

This course will examine the development of environmental justice theory and practice through social scientific and ethical literature about the subject as well as primary source accounts of environmental injustices. We will focus on environmental justice issues in Chicago including, but not limited to waste disposal, toxic air and water, the Chicago heat wave, and climate change. Particular attention will be paid to environmental racism and the often understudied role of religion in environmental justice theory and practice. Throughout the course we will explore how normative commitments are expressed in different types of literature as well as the basis for normative judgments and the types of authorities authors utilize and claim as they consider environmental justice. Course Notes: Graduates can petition to enroll by emailing the professor. *Sarah Fredericks*

RLST 25705 – The Bible and Ecology

In 2010, HarperCollins published The Green Bible, which claims to help readers “understand the Bible’s powerful message for the earth.” What precisely is the Bible’s “message for the earth”? Does the Bible even contain one unified message about the relationship between God, human beings, and the natural world? For many, the question of “what the Bible says” about the environment has become urgent in the midst of the intersecting environmental crises of our day, from global warming to the sixth mass extinction. And yet, there does not seem to be an easy answer to this question; the Bible has been used both to support ethics of conservation and to justify exploitation of the earth’s resources. In this course, we will analyze key passages employed in contemporary discourse about the Bible and the environment from a historical-critical perspective. At the same time, we will investigate how these texts are being invoked today in support of various agendas. Along the way, we will discover and interrogate the profound influence of biblical cosmologies, anthropologies, and eschatologies in shaping attitudes towards the earth and its nonhuman inhabitants. No prior knowledge of biblical literature is expected. *Christine Trotter*

RLST 27305 – Haj to Utopia: Race, Religion, and Revolution in South Asian America

With the election of Kamala Harris to the office of Vice President in the 2020 election, it would appear that Americans of South Asian descent find themselves nearer than ever to the center of U.S. political power. But what if one narrated the history of South Asian Americans not according to their inevitable embrace of imperialist politics, economic and cultural capital, but as fraught subjects of a settler colonial regime? What are the alternative futures, of life, love, and liberation, imagined by transnational revolutionaries? How does the politics of immigrant identity operate at the nexus of race and caste? How does religion index race in the eyes of the surveillance state? How do South Asian histories of migration prefigure the mass displacements, border enforcements, and unequal labor conditions that have defined the politics of globalization in the 21st century? *Anand Venkatkrishnan*

RLST 27713 – Israel and American Jewry: Peoplehood, Religion, and Politics

Israel and North America currently constitute the two leading centers of Jewish demography, identity and existence. Broadly speaking, they represent the two major Jewish responses to modernity – Zionism as a form of modern nationalism on the one hand, and integration into a liberal western society and body politic on the other. Their relations respond to this initial divide, while at the same time trying to coalesce a collective notion of Jewish peoplehood, based on culture, identity and a sense of a shared history and fate. The aim of this course is to learn more about the emergence of these two centers, and then explore the past, present and future of their relations. In recent years, the issue of religion has emerged as a crucial factor in Israel-Diaspora relations, especially in relation to the Jewish center in North America. The historical development of progressive Jewish strands in the United States, together with the fundamental changes in the religious makeup of Jewish society and the perception of the political role of religion in the state of Israel, have led to tension and strife regarding such issues as religious praxis, social identity and the public sphere. Religion with therefore be the main theme through which the relations will be explored, both historically and in relation to current affairs and issues. *David Barak-Gorodetsky*

RLST 27716 – Tel Aviv: Urban Culture and Urban Image

This course deals with Tel Aviv as a cultural-social and demographic locus in the Israeli imagination. Since its establishment in 1909 as the `First Hebrew City` and a realization of Theodor Herzl vision for Alt-Neu-Land (Old New Land), Tel Aviv has held a huge significance in the Zionist and Israeli imagination as a cultural-economic capital, attracting young people from all over the world and offering a liberal state of mind inspired by big world cities like New York, Berlin and Vienna.

In this course, we will examine the different representations of Tel Aviv in Israeli culture and the gaps between the public image of the city and the reality.

Readings and film screenings will include critical writing like White City Black City: Architecture and War in Tel Aviv and Jaffa, latest popular movies taking place in TLV and poems and short stories about the city. *Ehud Har Even*

RLST 27723 – Health, Healing, and Religion in East Asia

This course will consider the intersections between health, healing, and primarily non-Abrahamic religions across East Asia. By reading about, considering, and analyzing conceptions of health and associated healing methods, you will develop the ability to better understand the medical and religious traditions of peoples in East Asia. You will learn to makes sense of religious features such as ritual, spells, pilgrimage, and meditation, including various ways that healers instill calm and confidence in those they treat. These religious features appear strongly in some medical instances, and subtly in “non-religious” medical and psychological contexts. We will compare and contrast these features in the East Asian context and reflect upon their implications for healthcare in the U.S.A. today. *H.S. Sum Cheuk Shing*

RLST 28005 – Illicit Religion: Contesting Religious Freedom under the Law in Modern America

The “freedom of religion” is one of the United States’ most enduring and celebrated national ideals. And yet, rights of religious belief and practice have been contested consistently throughout the history of the nation, transforming both cultural practices and legal definitions of religion. Can American religion be radically free \*and\* fundamentally subject to the legal definitions and executive constraints of the state? Or is religious freedom under the law impossible, as some scholars have it? In this course, we will examine historical events, legal principles and academic debates over the meaning of religion’s “free exercise” in the United States. Three case studies will ground our investigations: the Pueblo Indian dance controversy of the 1920s, the organization of the Church of Scientology in the 1950s and, finally, conflict over property and political rights at Oregon’s Rajneeshpuram in the 1980s. Historical and cultural study will be augmented with theory and legal analysis by scholars of American religion and law. The term will end with student presentations on controversial developments in the exercise of religion since 1993’s Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), including its enforcement of religious boundaries around drug use, gay marriage and women’s reproductive health. No prerequisite knowledge of religious tradition, historical period or legal principle is necessary. *Greg Chatterley*

RLST 28009 – God-Given Whites: Christianity and White Supremacy in the United States from Colonization to Trump

In this course, we will survey the enduring history of Christianity and white supremacy in regions that became the United States after three centuries of transatlantic colonialism. Starting in the colonial era, we will review successive episodes of white racial formation under Christian social orders, including among others: Catholic and Protestant missions to indigenous tribes, the Christianization of Afro-American enslavement, the Protestant popularization of the Ku Klux Klan, the southern evangelical defense of segregation, urban Catholicism’s flee to the white suburbs and more recent cultural and political projects of conservative white evangelicalism. In each episode, we will identify historical and religious nuances of disparate racial regimes while aiming more generally to cultivate analytical frameworks for the study of religion and white supremacy in American culture over time. How do religions shape racial orders, and vice versa? No prerequisite knowledge of course subjects necessary. *Greg Chatterley*

RLST 28013 – Love, Desire, and Sexuality in Islamic Texts and Contexts

What separates love from lust? How do our erotic desires and sexual practices intersect with our beliefs? This interdisciplinary class explores these questions in conversation with foundational thinkers from the Islamic tradition alongside insights from feminist and queer theory. We will delve into questions on the relationship between romantic, familial, and divine love; gender, sexuality, and the body; and Orientalism and the politics of reading desire cross-culturally.

Exploring a diverse set of primary sources that range from the Qur’ān to Rūmī’s *Masnāvī* to contemporary Bollywood, we will encounter different representations of love, desire, and sexuality in religious and philosophical discourses, literary representations, and visual media. We will examine not only how these representations reflect different historical norms, but also how and to what extent texts and images can inform or impact the norms of their contexts as well. No prerequisite knowledge of the topics or time periods discussed is needed, and students will have the opportunity over the course of the class to develop a project that relates our content to their own interests. Course Note: This course counts as a Concepts course for GNSE majors. *Allison Kanner-Botan*

RLST 28307 – Transfiguration: Changing Bodies and Genders in Premodern Christianity

This course surveys ancient and medieval Christian views on the body and gender with a particular interest in ideas of transformation, supplemented by contemporary readings in trans studies. The course explores a number of themes diachronically: the creation of human bodies, debates about matter, doctrines of the resurrection, eunuchs, possession, gender (non)conformity, and various modes of gender crossing. Thus, it provides both an introduction to major figures in the history of Christianity and a primer in religious-studies and historical methods in light of trans and queer studies. Potential primary readings include Gospel of Judas, The Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine of Hippo, Alan of Lille, Julian of Norwich, Joan of Arc, Heinrich Kramer, and others. *M. Vanderpoel*

RLST 29050 – Religion, Race, and Gender in the (Un)Making of American Mass Incarceration

The United States has the largest population of incarcerated people in the world; it imprisons a greater percentage of its citizens than any other country. Scholars, activists, and lawmakers have offered a number of explanations for the situation of mass incarceration, from theories about the war on drugs, the prison industrial complex, and “the new Jim Crow.” What the majority of these theories have in common is the significance given to race and gender in the long process of criminalization and incarceration. What most of them fail to take into account is the significance of religion, which has since the nation’s origins played an important role in shaping that process, and the growing resistance to it amongst activists, scholars, and currently and formerly incarcerated people themselves. This course will help us to interrogate the prevailing theories about mass incarceration by exploring the importance of not just race and gender, but also religion. Together we will trace the ways in which these factors are intertwined with the billion-dollar correctional industry in the United States, beginning with the Christian and racist origins of the American legal system and the underlying assumptions about our central categories in criminology and policing protocols. We will then proceed through sentencing, the experience of incarceration, and post-release rehabilitation and parole. Along the way we will consider, inter alia, the criminalization of blackness; the school to prison pipeline; discourses on mercy and penitence in judge and jury decisions; how prison policies on acceptable religious officiants and types of “scripture” produce local definitions of religion; the gendered divisions of prison labor; the gendering and sexualizing of inmates’ bodies; the role of faith-based prisons and prison ministries in rehabilitation programs and narratives; and the religious nature of radical Black feminist abolition activism. We will ultimately discover that mass incarceration has indelibly shaped and been shaped by the ways that gender, race, and religion are defined, performed, and contested in the United States. *Emily Crews*