**DIVINITY COURSE CATALOG 2022-2023**

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 5 each quarter, or visit our website for a preliminary/tentative schedule.

**AUTUMN 2022**

Special Courses in Divinity

DVSC 30500 – Introduction to the Study of Religion

This course is the first of a two-course introductory sequence (fall-winter) for incoming Masters students. It will focus on two questions: 1. What is religion?, and 2. What are scholars doing when they study it? The course will engage diverse approaches to religion and perspectives on it and will describe and analyze each of them critically. It will include both regular class meetings and a weekly discussion section. Course Note: All MA, AMRS, and MDiv students are required to take this course. 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. Discussion groups will be held. *Jeffrey Stackert*

DVSC 51000 – Theories and Methods in the Study of Religion

This course 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 (and the Divinity School) broadly; to give students already at the beginning of their doctoral work a clear idea of how these theoretical and methodological perspectives might impact their research; and to contribute to a sense of camaraderie within the first-year student cohort, especially across subfields. It seeks to underscore from the outset of your doctoral program that, irrespective of the particular focus of your work, studying religion will require ongoing reflection about how you conceptualize religion along with self-conscious awareness of the methods you will need to develop your work. 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 Miller*

Anthropology and Sociology of Religion

AASR 30100 – Anthropology of Christianity

This seminar explores conversations and debates in the anthropological study of Christianity. What social institutions and cultural features distinguish Christianity as a particular religious tradition and moral authority? What difference does the study of Christianity make for the study of culture, society, and politics? These two questions prompt our course’s consideration of Christianity’s specificity (compared to other styles of organizing social and moral life) and the study of Christianity’s contribution to more general categories of social scientific thought such as social structure, individualism, schism, political economy, mediation, and language ideology. *Angie Heo*

AASR 43500 – Islamic Jurisprudence, Reason, and the State

This course will explore social scientific approaches to the study of Islamic jurisprudence. We will be reading historical, legal, and anthropological literature on Islamic law, as well as introducing/revisiting anthropological theories of the state, public policy, governmentality and scientific knowledge production, in order to produce novel questions and analytics. Much of this work will be experimental and tentative as we collaboratively build on existing literature and supply our collective theoretical and conceptual toolbox. PQ: Students must have familiarity with social scientific theory. Course Note: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *Elham Mireshghi*

Equivalent Div Course(s): ISLM 43500

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 30700 – Advanced Readings in Classical Ethiopic (Ge’ez)

In this course we will read excerpts from literature written in Classical Ethiopic (Ge'ez), such as Enoch, Jubilees, Kebra Nagast, Beauty of Creation, and others, and review some basic grammatical structures of the language. Students will need a good grasp of the basic grammar of Ge'ez in order to take the class. *Rebecca Hasselbach-Andee*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 17700

BIBL 31000 – Introduction to the Hebrew Bible

The course surveys the contents of the Hebrew Bible, through the concepts of book culture, literature, history, and religion. It introduces critical questions regarding the HB's figures and ideas, its literary qualities and anomalies, the history of its composition and transmission, its relation to other artifacts from the period, its place in the history and society of ancient Israel and Judea, and its relation to the larger culture of the ancient Near East in the Iron Age and Persian period (12th–4th cents. BCE). Course Note: This course counts as a Gateway course for RLST majors/minors. *Simeon Chavel*

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

BIBL 31418 – Coptic Bible

The Coptic versions of the Bible present one of the earliest translations of Christian scripture as the new religion spread. Understanding how the Bible (canonical and non-canonical) was read and used in Egypt at this early stage implies studying the development of Christian communities in those agitated times, as well as paying attention to questions of literacy and linguistic environment, book production, Bible (both Greek and Coptic) on papyrus, and translation and interpretation in Antiquity. The course will draw on materials assembled from my work on the critical edition of the Gospel of Mark, but will also look into other materials like the Coptic Old Testament, and non-canonical scriptures such as Nag Hammadi and the Gnostic scriptures. No previous knowledge of Coptic is required. A brief introduction to the Coptic language will be part of the class, and parallel sessions of additional language instruction will be planned for those who are interested in learning more. *Sofia Torallas-Tovar*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 21450

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. *Justin Moses*

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. *Richard Zaleski*

BIBL 38301 – Reading Academic Hebrew

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 tern “Modern Hebrew” covers primarily literature from the mid 20th century to current time). PQ: 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 38640 – The Book of Ruth: Bible, Literature, Gender

The Book of Ruth offers the most elaborate tale of a woman to be found in the Bible, but even this relatively detailed account is astonishingly laconic. The Book of Ruth is not really a book. It is only four chapters long – more of a short story, or a very short story, than a book. And yet, despite its ellipses, Ruth’s cryptic tale is remarkable for its capacity to provide, with but few vignettes, a vibrant portrait of one of the most intriguing characters in the Bible. The first part of this course will be devoted to the biblical text itself. We will consider literary and feminist readings of the Book of Ruth while exploring broader issues of biblical poetics. Special attention will be given to questions of migration – to different accounts of the Book of Ruth as a paradigmatic tale of a migrant woman. The second part of the course will be devoted to the reception of the Book of Ruth – from the Midrash and the Zohar to modern literature. Among the modern and contemporary writers to be considered: S. Y. Agnon, Allen Ginsberg, Toni Morrison, and Michal Ben-Naftali. The discussion will also entail an exploration of adaptations of the Book of Ruth in art – from Nicholas Poussin to Adi Nes. *Ilana Pardes, Visiting Greenberg Professor*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 22640

BIBL 38740 – Biblical Politics: Literature, History, Political Thought

The Book of Samuel and the Book of Kings do not offer a dry chronicle but rather a remarkable mélange of royal history and literature, replete with well-wrought dialogues, that provides a close study of the inner worlds of those who preoccupy the political stage and a metaphorical base through which to explore the intricacies of political institutions. We will begin with an extensive consideration of the remarkably nuanced representations of political life in the biblical text itself. In the second part of the seminar, we will follow the ways in which biblical accounts of political rule in Samuel-Kings have travelled across their native bounds into other cultural settings, acquiring new forms and meanings. Among the topics to be addressed: Why has the biblical account of the seductions of power become a touchstone for literary reflections on political rule? To what extent do contemporary readers of the text follow the Bible’s insistence to avoid idealization and idolization of rulers? What happens to configurations of gender relations when they are transferred from biblical courts to modern literature? While focusing on the literary reception of biblical politics, we will also consider other pertinent afterlives in the realms of art and music. Our reading list will include an array of responses to biblical politics by Martin Buber, Robert Alter, Mieke Bal, Moshe Halbertal, and Stephen Holmes. Course Notes: Undergraduates may enroll with instructor permission. *Ilana Pardes, Visiting Greenberg Professor*

BIBL 41000 – Amos

This course is an exegetical study of the biblical book of Amos in Hebrew. PQ: Strong Biblical Hebrew. Course Note: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *Jeffrey Stackert*

BIBL 41400 – 2 Corinthians

An exegesis course on one of the most puzzling of Pauline texts, the letter known as 2 Corinthians, which includes such famous passages as “the letter kills, but the spirit gives life” and “we are ambassadors for Christ,” as well as biting satire against opponents as “false apostles,” a report of a journey of “a man I know” to “the third heaven,” and even two fund-raising appeals. How can one account for the shifts in tone, topics and tenor of Paul’s relationship with these Christ-believers in the Roman rebuilt city of Corinth? In addition to road-testing literary theories that the canonical letter represents a later compilation of what were originally two, three, or five separate letters, we shall try to reconstruct from various clues the historical circumstances of an unfolding conflict, and explore how Paul’s letters themselves—and their variable meanings—contributed to it, as he and his earliest readers struggled to control the meaning of words, bodies and persons in the context of suspicion, misunderstanding and dissent. PQ: BIBL 32500 (Introduction to the New Testament) recommended, but not required. Greek skills are not required, but ample opportunity will be provided for their use. Course Note: Undergraduates welcome with permission of instructor. *Margaret Mitchell*

BIBL 44500 – Philo of Alexandria

In this course we will read the Greek text of Philo’s de opificio mundi, with other brief excerpts here and there in the Philonic corpus. Our aim will be to use this treatise to elucidate the thought and character of one of the most prolific theological writers of the first century. We will seek to understand Philo as a Greek author and the nature and origins of his style, Philo as a proponent of middle Platonism, and Philo as a Jew in the context of Alexandrian Judaism. We will also examine his use of the allegorical method as an exegetical tool, and its implications for pagan, Jewish and early Christian approaches to sacred texts. PQ: At least two years of Greek. *David Martinez*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 23314

BIBL 44600 – Zion and Zaphon: Biblical Texts and Memory Studies

The course will engage memory studies to analyze how ancient authors responded to the campaigns of Assyria against Judea and Israel in the 8th–7th cents BCE. Sources will include ancient art, archaeological finds, and literature of many genres in the Hebrew Bible and outside it. PQ: Introductory Biblical Hebrew sequence (BIBL 33900–34000 + Text course) or equivalent. *Simeon Chavel*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HIJD 44600, RLST 21865

Philosophy of Religion

DVPR 33001 – Confucian Philosophy and Spirituality

The goal of this course is to introduce you to the central themes and texts of classical Confucian and Neo-Confucian traditions, both as philosophical works to be evaluated and digested for their doctrinal content and as literary artifacts from a perhaps unfamiliar cultural sphere. This will call for the development of two distinct but related sets of skills, namely, the ability to think through and comprehend philosophical arguments and ideas, and the equally crucial ability to reflect on one's own assumptions as they come into play in one's reaction to and evaluation of those ideas. Readings will include, from the classical period, the Four Books (Great Learning, Doctrine of the Mean, Analects of Confucius, Mencius), Xunzi, the Book of Changes, and from Sung-Ming Neo-Confucian writings of Zhou Dunyi, Zhang Zai, the Cheng Brothers, Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming. *Brook Ziporyn*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HREL 33001, RLST 23001

DVPR 44275 – Chinese Buddhist Omnicentrism: Tiantai and Huayan

In this class we will read and analyze the key texts (in English translation) of the two great classical "sinifying" Chinese Buddhist theoretical schools of the Sui, Tang and Song dynasties: Tiantai and Huayan, with special attention to what is arguably their biggest shared innovation: the development of the classical Mahāyāna Buddhist idea of Emptiness (sūnyata) into the "omnicentric" idea that each entity, precisely through its emptiness, is in some sense present in all times and places, is eternal and omnipresent--and the controversies arising from the different justifications and implications advanced by the two schools for this shared doctrine. Readings will include the works of Zhiyi, Zhanran and Zhili from the Tiantai school, and Dushun, Zhiyan, Chengguan and Zongmi. Some basic background in Buddhist thought is recommended. Readings will be in English, but an optional reading group working with the original texts in classical texts will likely also be convened. *Brook Ziporyn*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 24275

History of Christianity

HCHR 30200 – History of Christian Thought II

This second class in the History of Christian Thought-sequence deals with the period from late antiquity through the late Middle Ages; it stretches roughly from 450 through 1350. The following authors and themes will be analyzed and discussed: (1) the transition from Roman antiquity to the medieval period: Augustine, Boethius (and Cassiodorus); (2) the rise of asceticism in the West: the Benedictine Rule and Gregory the Great; (3) intellectual luminaries in East and West: Dionysius the Areopagite, Maximus Confessor and John Scottus Eriugena; (4) monastic and scholastic paragons: Anselm of Canterbury, Peter Abelard, and Richard of St. Victor; (5) monastic diversity: Benedictines and Cistercians (Hildegard von Bingen, Bernard of Clairvaux, William of St. Thierry) and regular canons (Hugh of St. Victor); (6) the scholastic synthesis and Franciscan discontent: Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure; (7) medieval women’s voices: Heloise and Hadewijch of Brabant; (8) late medieval mysticism: Meister Eckhart. Course Note: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *Willemien Otten*

Equivalent Div Course(s): THEO 30200

HCHR 40401 – The Contours of Twentieth Century Thought I: Between Dialectical Theology and Analogical Imagination

Well into the twenty-first century it seems a good time to look back with the benefit of 20/20 hindsight and take stock of the major theological developments of the twentieth century. Aside from the enormous impact of major historical events like the communist revolution and two World Wars, there is also the event of Vatican II and the civil rights struggle in the US. Throughout it all we see the profile of some extraordinary individual theologians (Barth, Lubac, Balthasar, Tracy a.o.) embedded in a larger story marking the end of some major theological movements (neo-scholasticism) and the beginning of others (dialectical theology and nouvelle théologie). This first of what is intended as a two-sequence course on twentieth-century theology will focus on the work of a number of Catholic and Protestant theologians, who struggle with the legacy of the Enlightenment and the need to reconceptualize theological thought in a fast secularizing and globalizing world. Course Note: Some knowledge of German and/or French will be helpful. *Willemien Otten*

Equivalent Div Course(s): THEO 40401

HCHR 41604 – The Cult of Relics in Byzantium and Beyond

The cult of relics played a vital role in Byzantine culture and, consequently, left a strong imprint on the artistic production. Not only did the veneration of relics find expression in personal devotion, but the image of the Byzantine court was largely modeled on the claim that the emperors possessed the most precious of all sacred remains, first and foremost those associated with the Passion of Christ and the Virgin Mary. The outstanding treasure of relics housed in the imperial palace significantly contributed to the understanding in the medieval Christian world of Constantinople as the “New Jerusalem.”  
We will begin our investigation in the ancient Near East, where major centers of pilgrimage developed from the fourth century on. These sites considerably fueled the early Byzantine cult of relics and the associated artistic production. The chief focus of the seminar will be on the major urban centers of the Byzantine Empire, especially the capital city of Constantinople.   
We will closely study different types of reliquaries manufactured in the Byzantine Empire over the centuries and investigate how their design responded to devotional needs, ritual practice and political claims. Historical developments and primary texts (in English translation) will be addressed throughout to better understand the circumstances of the acquisition of relics and the motivations guiding their veneration. *Karin Krause*  
Equivalent Div Course(s): RLVC 41604

History of Judaism

### HIJD 36604 – The Holocaust: History and Meaning

How unique was the Holocaust? What enabled it and what is its legacy? In this course we will consider key texts written about and during the Holocaust. We will consider the rise of racism, Fascism, colonialism, and Nazism. We will reflect about the place of the Holocaust in genocide studies and in recent political and philosophical debates. We will talk about paintings, movies, and music, but most importantly: We'll learn some history. Grad students will be asked to read key methodological texts that will enrich their historiographical and historiosophical understanding of the topic. *Nitzan Lebovic, Visiting Greenberg Professor*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 26604

### HIJD 64203 – Colloquium: The History of Jewish Time

The colloquium will discuss different conceptions of Jewish time. We will examine temporal concepts in the Bible, Talmud, and medieval and modern texts. We will consider the production of time in everyday life, but also in Jewish art, philosophy, literature, and history. Course Note: Open to masters-level and PhD students only. *Nitzan Lebovic, Visiting Greenberg Professor*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HREL 64203, DVPR 64203

History of Religions

HREL 32900 – Classical Theories of Religion

This course surveys 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, Comte, 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 56703 – Colloquium: Society & the Supernatural in Late Imperial & Modern China

Introductory studies of Chinese history and culture often ignore religion, treating Confucius's alleged agnosticism as representative of mainstream culture. But ideas about supernatural entities—souls separated from bodies, ancestral spirits, demons, immortals, the vital energies of mountains and rivers, etc.—and practices aimed at managing those spirits were important elements in pre-1949 life. Spirits testified in court cases, cured or caused illnesses, mediated disputes, changed the weather, and made the realm governable or ungovernable. After declining (1950–’70s), at least in public, various kinds of worship are again immensely popular, though usually in altered forms. This course traces changes in the intersection of ideas about spirits and daily social practices, focusing on attempts to "standardize the gods," resistance to such efforts, and the consequences for cohesion, or lack of cohesion, across classes, genders, territory, ethnicity, and other differences. The ways in which religion has been intertwined with attempts to define communities and claim rights within (or over) them will be a central concern. Another central theme is what "religion" means as a category for understanding late imperial and modern Chinese history—an issue that will take on very different valences when we look at the 20th century, in which Western models of what religions should look like became increasingly influential among would-be secularizers and many religious activists as well.

PQ: Open to masters-level and PhD students only. *Kenneth Pomeranz*

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. *Scott Doolin*

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. *Cecelia Palombo*

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. Course Note: Undergraduates must receive consent from the instructor to enroll. *Cornell Fleischer*

ISLM 32419 – Major Trends in Islamic Mysticism

This course examines Islamic mysticism, commonly known as Sufism, through an exploration of English translations of some of the greatest masterpieces of Sufi literature in Arabic and Persian. The goal is to gain first-hand knowledge of a broad spectrum of literary expressions of Islamic spirituality in their historical context, and to understand exactly what Sufis say, and how they say it. Each of the units will comprise of lectures and close readings of excerpts from the text in Arabic/Persian and English translation. The average reading load per unit is 100 pages. Course Note: No Arabic required. *Yousef Casewit*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 24550

ISLM 37601 – Women and Islam

This course is an introduction to the field of women and Islam. We will examine the literature on Islamic legal, historical, Quranic and sacred textual constructs of women as well as critically explore the lived realities and experiences of Muslim women living in Muslim-majority societies and in the west. In centering the work of Muslim feminist scholars, students will gain an understanding of the multiple and competing narratives and portrayals of women in the Qur’an and hadith literature, and will explore contemporary debates around women’s rights, violence against women, veiling, representational politics and gendered orientalism in the post. 9/11 era. The discursive constructions and social realities of Muslim women are critically examined through historic and literary representations, ethnographic accounts, human rights discourses and secular and Islamic feminism(s). This course explores this topic from an interdisciplinary perspective and primarily situates a decolonial feminist framework to understand Muslim women as complex, and multidimensional actors engaged in knowledge production and political and feminist studies. *Maliha Chishti*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 27601

ISLM 40383 – Seminar: Poetry (Al-Mutanabbi)

Al-Mutanabbī is arguably the best known and most quoted poet of the Arabic language. Scores of streets and bookstores in the Arab Middle East are named after him, as are schools, poetry festivals, markets, and even ships. What did al-Mutanabbī do to merit this enormous fame? Was it the power of the panegyrics that he composed celebrating the victories of important kings and princes? Or was it the biting humor of the satires that he wrote censuring these same potentates? Indeed, his poems provoked great political, lexical, critical, and grammatical debate, during his lifetime and beyond. A close reading of a selection of al-Mutanabbī’s poetry in various genres and medieval critique of his alleged “sariqāt,” will—inshaallah!—illuminate some of the answers. Soft PQ: 3 years of Arabic or equivalent. Graduate seminar; also open to qualified undergrads with instructor permission. *Tahera Qutbuddin*

Religions in the Americas

RAME 41440 – Fundamentalism

Is fundamentalism a useful term that allows us to compare anti-modern movements across a range of religious traditions? Or is it a hopelessly problematic term that lumps together vastly different phenomena? This course will use the troubled career of “fundamentalism” as a window onto the modern history of religion—and the people who study it. We will begin by focusing on the origins of fundamentalism: as a description of the political mobilization of conservative Protestants in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century. From there, we will broaden our perspective, considering how the term “fundamentalist” has been applied to Islamic, Jewish, and Hindu movements, as well as to secular phenomena like Marxism and nationalism. At each step of the way we will consider not only “fundamentalism” itself but also the people who study it and those who mobilize against it. Ultimately, we will ask: is fundamentalism an idea whose time has come again, or one whose time has come and gone? *William Schultz*

Equivalent Div Course(s): AASR 41440, HCHR 41440, RLST 21440

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 30100 – Minor Classics in Ethics

This is an an informal, non-credit reading group consisting of RETH Faculty and Master’s and doctoral students interested in religious ethics. Students may join the reading group in any quarter.   
  
Selected articles or chapters have revitalized forgotten themes or have launched new problems for moral philosophy, social thought, theology, and religious ethics. They exhibit ways of combining attention to concepts and arguments in moral and political theory, on the one hand, with concrete matters in practical experience and public life, on the other.  
The format is informal, and the discussions are text-focused. Students should come prepared to identify one sentence or paragraph that they find illuminating, obscure, or problematic, and explain why they think so. *William Schweiker*

RETH 30702 – Introduction to Environmental Ethics

This course will examine answers to four questions that have been foundational to environmental ethics: Are religious traditions responsible for environmental crises? To what degree can religions address environmental crises? Does the natural world have intrinsic value in addition to instrumental value to humans, and does the type of value the world has imply anything about human responsibility? What point of view (anthropocentrism, biocentrism, theocentrism) should ground an environmental ethic?   
We will examine a constellation of responses to each question through texts from a wide variety of religious and philosophical perspectives. The course prioritizes theoretical issues in environmental ethics that can relate to many different applied subjects (e.g. energy, water, animals, climate change) rather than emphasizing these applied issues themselves. Taking this focus will give you a solid background for future work in these areas. Course Note: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *Sarah Fredericks*

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 33300 – Reading Your Neighbor’s Scripture: Comparative Reading and the Logic of Scripture

This seminar will examine texts from the Hebrew Bible, The New Testament, and the Qur'an, as scriptures that overlap, resist, and share central narratives. The texts operate within the logic of their own reception communities, across temporal and geographical space, but are legible to people who are outside of each tradition. Reading them together allows for a careful analysis of the truth claims and methods of study about how they generate communities of religious practice: practices of study, of interpretation and philosophy, of ritual, and of social life. The seminar will introduce the scholarly field called Scriptural Reasoning. *Laurie Zoloth*

Equivalent Div Course(s): ISLM 33300

RETH 36002 – The Ethics of War: Foundational Texts

The decision by social movements, religious communities, nation-states, or international agencies to authorize the use of deadly force, and to expect individuals to risk their lives on behalf of a common cause, is one of the gravest and most controversial decisions that human beings make. What can justify such a decision? This course will examine answers to that question in Western theological, philosophical, and political ethics. Specifically, it will focus on texts that are foundational to the rise and development of the just-war tradition, constructive critiques of that tradition, and contemporary writings on liberation, nonviolence, and pacifism. Assigned readings are both classical and contemporary. Topics include morality and realism, natural law, justice, human rights, the rule of double effect, necessity, the value of political community, revolution, nonviolence, the use of force “short of war,” and moral injury. We will also engage in practical reasoning about concrete cases in the experience of violence and war, and on the invasion of Ukraine by Russia in the winter of 2022. PQ: Prior work in philosophy or political theory recommended but not required. *Richard Miller*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 24120

RETH 41600 – The Nature of the Good: Levinas’s Philosophical Ethics

Emmanuel Levinas is perhaps the most important Jewish philosopher of the late 20th Century. His work is critical in both Jewish thought, and in post-WWII phenomenology. This seminar will explore Levinas's work by closely reading two of his critical philosophic texts as a way to examine the complexities of philosophy as it confronted the problem of evil. *Laurie Zoloth*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HIJD 41600

RETH 55818 – Hellenistic Ethics

The three leading schools of the Hellenistic era (starting in Greece in the late fourth century B. C. E. and extending through the second century C. E. in Rome) – Epicureans, Skeptics, and Stoics – produced philosophical work of lasting value, frequently neglected because of the fragmentary nature of the Greek evidence and people’s (unjustified) contempt for Roman philosophy.  We will study in a detailed and philosophically careful way the major ethical arguments of all three schools.  Topics to be addressed include: the nature and role of pleasure; the role of the fear of death in human life; other sources of disturbance (such as having definite ethical beliefs?); the nature of the emotions and their role in a moral life; the nature of appropriate action; the meaning of the injunction to “live in accordance with nature.”  If time permits we will say something about Stoic political philosophy and its idea of global duty.  Major sources (read in English) will include the three surviving letters of Epicurus and other fragments; the skeptical writings of Sextus Empiricus; the presentation of Stoic ideas in the Greek biographer Diogenes Laertius and the Roman philosophers Cicero and Seneca. PQ: This class will begin on Tuesday, September 27 (one day before the rest of the Law classes begin).  Attendance for the class is required. This class requires a 20-25 page paper and an in-class presentation. Admission by permission of the instructor.  Permission must be sought in writing by September 15.  The class meets on the law school calendar and therefore begins the week of September 19.  PhD students in Philosophy, Classics, and Political theory do not need permission to enroll. Prerequisite for others: An undergraduate major in philosophy or some equivalent solid philosophy preparation, comparable to that of first-year PhD students, plus my permission.  This is a 500 level course.*Martha Nussbaum*

Religion, Literature, and Visual Culture

RLVC 35623 – Sexual Disorientation in Freud’s Vienna

In his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905), Sigmund Freud argued that human sexuality is born out of a series of deviations from what would seem to be a naturally given norm. The seminar will take Freud’s *Essays* as a point of departure for an exploration of the larger literary and cultural world in which his ideas came to fruition. The main authors to be considered: Otto Weininger, Arthur Schnitzler, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Lou Andreas-Salomé, and Robert Musil. Reading knowledge of German required. *Eric Santner*

Theology

THEO 36305 – Moral Reasoning Between Church and State: The Case of Abortion

What is the moral reasoning of those inspired by Christianity to overturn Roe v. Wade? Given constitutional blocks on the state’s establishment of religion, how do Christians justify legislating religiously-grounded moral beliefs? How do these Christians imagine the role of the church in secular democratic space? What is the nature of their religious lives? Under what mandates do they operate? What scriptures do they read? What worship do they participate in? This course takes a close look at those vocationally—even, “spiritually”—called to severely limit women’s reproductive rights. Specific attention will be given to how these communities understand God, scripture, gender, family, government, democracy, law, freedom, etc. While much of the course’s attention will be given to arguments and rationales (including legal and judicial arguments and rationales), equal attention will be given to ethnographically understanding the lived experience of ardent pro-life advocacy. The course will conclude by examining religiously-inspired pro-choice alternatives to pro-life positions, with specific attention to how carefully pro-choice advocates attend to the arguments and worldviews of their pro-life counterparts. A wide range of texts and types of texts will be considered. *Jonathan Tran*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 26305

THEO 38774 – Racial Capitalism

This course examines the history of race and racism in America from the perspective of “racial capitalism” as a political economy. The course will trace the development of racial capitalism as a concept within Black Marxist thought, from C.L.R. James and Oliver Cromwell Cox to Cedric J. Robinson to parallel developments and formulations among contemporary theorists Adolph Reed Jr., Barbara and Karen Fields, Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, Iyko Day, etc. Special attention will be given to the moral psychology of racial capitalist ideology in the context of American chattel slavery and its resultant “aftermarkets” in American society. The course will compare racial capitalism as a political economic approach to race and racism to rival “identarian” approaches including critical whiteness studies and Afropessimism. The course will conclude by exploring responses by religious communities to racial capitalism, visiting several ethnographic studies of how religion can facilitate radical forms of resistance to racial capitalism. *Jonathan Tran*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 28774

Religious Studies (Undergraduate Designation)

RLST 10100 – Introduction to Religious Studies

This course introduces students to the field of Religious Studies through addressing a foundational question: “What is religion?” We will approach this question from multiple angles. We will study the cults, codes, and creeds of a range of religions with reference both to their self-understandings and to modes of analysis (chiefly from the humanities and the social sciences) that concern themselves explicitly with religion. The scope of the course is in principle limitless: as old as the Vedas and the Epic of Gilgamesh and as recent as the front page of your preferred news source. The selections for the first five weeks will provide an overview of religions that have a global presence, and of theoretical perspectives that aspire to give a comprehensive account of religion. Each of the last four weeks will be a “case study” of a specific religion and its theorization that will be determined by the class from a list provided by the instructor. Three short (1-3 pp.) analytic essays (submitted on Fridays and returned the following Mondays) during the first five weeks will be followed by a final assignment synthesizing the material of the course. No prior knowledge of the religious traditions or the theoretical perspectives covered is expected. Course Note: This is the required introductory course for RLST majors/minors. *Richard Rosengarten*

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. *Tahera* *Qutbuddin (01), Adam Flowers (02), Tynan Kelly (03), Nicholas Longworth (04)*

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). *Yiftach Ofek (01), Larisa Reznik (02), Sam Catlin (03), Rachel Katz (04)*

RLST 22810 – Hinduism of the Living and the Undead

An introduction to Hinduism through the lens of everyday life, including popular shrines, roadside religion, ghost stories, digital representation, and traditions of the South Asian diaspora. *Anand Venkatkrishnan*

RLST 23250 – Introduction to Islamic Theology

Survey of ideas and arguments formulated by renowned Muslim theologians and responses that their doctrines triggered. Major doctrines will be covered, starting with early debates over the nature of belonging to the Muslim community, the nature of God, revelation, prophecy, freewill and predestination. The course roughly follows the historical development of Islamic theology in conversation with other Islamic sciences (philosophy, sufism, law), with a close examination of the confrontation between a group of rationalist theologians (Muʿtazilites), the traditionalist hadith-scholars, and the emergence of Sunni Ashʿarite theology between the 9th and 11th centuries. Course Notes: No knowledge of Arabic is required. Reading materials will be in English. Open to graduate students. *Yousef Casewit*

Equivalent Div Course(s): ISLM 36250

RLST 23809 – Pain, Truth, and Justice

Why should the truth hurt? Does pain guarantee the truth told? Is pain the price of exposure to the truth? Does that make punishment just? In this class, we will take a historical and philosophical approach to examine the relations between pain, truth, and justice. In the premodern period, we will draw from Genesis, Sophocles’ Oedipus, Augustine, Tertullian, martyrdom accounts, and public penance in medieval Christianity. To study the theme in the early modern nation-state spectacles of punishment, colonial contexts, and contemporary scenes of justice we will turn to the writings of Foucault, Fanon, and others. Over the course of the historical and philosophical examinations, we will trace the themes of body, affect, and performance; truth, law, and ritual; power, religion, and the nation-state. In the end, we will turn a critical eye to contemporary cultural discourses and representations of pain, truth, and justice in the arts, law, literature, philosophy, and politics. No prerequisites. *Maureen Kelly*

RLST 26002 – Literature and Hunger

This course pursues themes of hunger the consumption of food, the formation of community, and relation to the sacred, through a sequence of readings in the Western tradition. By reading classic works (The Odyssey, selections from the Hebrew Bible and Christian Scriptures, selections from The Divine Comedy, the Letters of St. Catherine of Siena, Paradise Lost), and modern works by Kafka, Simone Weil, and Louise Gluck, we will examine how different philosophies have imagined the acceptance or rejection of love, life, and the sacred in terms of the symbolism of food. Class work will involve close analysis of literary works, even those in translation; intensive critical writing; and secondary readings in literary criticism, anthropology, theology, and psychology. *Rosanna Warren*

RLST 26062 – Jewish Graphic Narrative: Between Memory and Caricature

Over the past decade, there has been an explosion of “graphic novels” aimed at adult readers concerning Jewish society, history, and religion. This course explores the history of comics through the lens of its Jewish creators and Jewish themes, and the history of Jewish culture and society through the lens of graphic storytelling. We learn to interpret this complex art form that combines words and hand-drawn images, translating temporal progression into a spatial form. Reading American, European, and Israeli narratives, our discussions will focus on autobiographical and journalistic accounts of uprooting, immigration, conflict, and loss. We will ask: how do Jewish graphic novelists grapple with the history of racist caricature? What is the relationship between graphic narrative and memory culture? Authors whose work we will study include: Art Spiegelman, Rutu Modan, Lianna Finck, Joann Sfar, Joe Sacco, R. Crumb. *Na’ama Rokem*

RLST 26212 – Moses and Modernity

“The story of Moses is at once the most nationalist and the most multiculturalist of narratives.”  
—Barbara Johnson  
“Moses fails to enter Canaan, not because his life is too short, but because it is a human life.”  
—Franz Kafka  
The biblical figure of Moses has furnished a diverse range of interpreters—from the early Rabbis, to Black abolitionist activists in the antebellum U.S., to mid-20th century German authors challenging Nazism—with a powerful exemplar of the potential of emancipation and the meaning of national identity. At the same time, the sheer number of interpretations and retellings of the story of Moses and the Exodus of the ancient Israelites from Egypt suggests the contradictions and ambiguities which persistently haunt those political projects. In this discussion-based seminar course, we’ll reflect on both of these aspects of the Exodus story as it is told and retold in modernity. Our journey begins with the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy as well as early rabbinic and Christian exegesis before moving on to more recent representations and interpretations. These include visual artworks (Michelangelo, Chagall); music (Schoenberg, African American spiritual songs); Cecil B. DeMille’s 1923 silent blockbuster The Ten Commandments; Freud’s Moses and Monotheism and a response to Freud by Edward Said; and literary writings by Yehuda Amichai, Shulamith Hareven, Frances E. W. Harper, Zora Neale Hurston, Alain Mabanckou, Thomas Mann, and Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg. *Sam Catlin*

RLST 26301 – Religion and AIDS

"The AIDS crisis was not an epoch that we survived. It is a battle that we are still fighting…when Americans talk about AIDS they are rarely just talking about a scientific problem or a pharmaceutical solution. They are instead offering a sociology of suffering and a plan for spiritual warfare." – Kathryn Lofton  
Is it possible to understand current debates over public health or the role of religion in the public sphere without first examining religious responses to the AIDS crisis? This course focuses on the emergence of the AIDS epidemic during the peak of the American culture wars. As such, students will analyze the fraught intersection of political power structures, medical epistemologies, and religious views on bodies, sex, and public morality. Through a varied catalog of disciplinary frameworks, e.g., history, theology, medical ethics, sociology of religion, and history of medicine, students will weigh the accuracy of Lofton's claim that for Americans, AIDS is more than just a disease. Thus, we will scrutinize moral rhetoric surrounding contraception and its public availability. We will discuss the extent to which religious philanthropy, especially on the international stage, reshaped approaches to global health. Finally, we will revisit the role of religious communities in providing both care for the sick and theological responses to suffering. Prior knowledge of religious studies and/or medical history is not required for the course. *Mark M. Lambert*

RLST 26321 – Good Vibes Only: Spiritual Energy Healing and Alternative Medicine in America

Can I manifest health and happiness by aligning my energy with “good vibes”? Which crystal can I use to cure a headache? Is spiritual energy healing just a capitalist scam? Practices of harnessing positive vibrations and energies for health and human flourishing are increasingly prevalent in the United States, flooding our Instagram and TikTok feeds with conversations centered around questions like the above. But these ideas are not new. This course introduces students to a modern tradition of alternative medicine, spanning from the nineteenth century to the present, that hinges on a spiritual interpretation of scientific discoveries about energy. This tradition of spiritual energy healing will serve as our window into examining a larger theoretical framework that articulates a medical paradigm of “holistic healing” in opposition to mainstream biomedicine. We will examine spiritual energy healing and its holistic framework through a social scientific lens. In other words, rather than evaluating its validity or efficacy, we will work to understand this tradition’s social and historical presence in American culture. Central questions include: How does spiritual energy healing interact with biomedicine, in both complementary and oppositional ways? How has it appropriated Eastern and Indigenous medical traditions? What exactly is its relationship to physics, and to scientific understandings of energy and vibration? In addition to reading historical and ethnographic accounts of energy healing, students will engage directly with primary source material from energy workers. *Rachel Carbonara*

RLST 27075 – The Latinx Religious Experience: Race and the Politics of Faith in the US

Latinos? Hispanics? Latinx? How much do we know about one of the largest minorities (18.5%) in the USA? How does their culture shape their religious experience? What is the role of religion in their politics and activism?

 In this class we will explore these and other questions drawing from biographical narratives, history, sociology, and theology. In the first part of this course, students will be introduced to foundational biographical narratives and historical sources for studying the Latinx religious experience. In the second part of the course, students will examine the diversity of Latinx religion and the multiple functions of faith and devotion in the Latinx community. The course culminates with a close examination of three authors (Roberto Goizueta, Michelle González, and Nancy Pineda-Madrid) whose work allows us to understand the complex and diverse links between theological reflection, religious practice, and political action in the Latinx community. No prerequisites. *Raul Zegarra*

RLST 28705 – Christian Iconography

In Christian culture, visual images have for many centuries played a pivotal role in ritual, devotion, intellectual thought, and religious instruction. The most important aims of this course are that students understand images convey meaning in very unique ways and learn how to decode their visual messages. The study of iconography encompasses a variety of methods used to identify the subject matter of a pictorial image, describe its contents, and analyze its discursive strategies in view of its original cultural context. We will cover some of the most important themes visualized in the arts of Christianity by analyzing imagery spanning different periods, geographical regions, pictorial media, and artistic techniques. While special emphasis is placed on the intersections of art and literature, we will also examine pictorial themes that are independent of a specific textual basis. Alongside the study of Christian iconography, this course will address broader issues of visual inquiry, such as patronage, viewer response, emotions, and gender roles. In this course, students will acquire a ‘visual literacy’ that will enable them to explore all kinds of works of art fruitfully as primary sources in their own right. *Karin Krause*

RLST 28755 – Making “I’ll Take You There: The Life of Mavis Staples” at Court Theatre

Court Theatre has acquired the rights to Greg Kot’s 2014 biography of Chicago-born music legend Mavis Staples, "I'll Take You There: Mavis Staples, the Staple Singers, and the Music that Shaped the Civil Rights Era." Kot joins Court as consultant as the theater starts the work of adapting Mavis Staples’s life for the stage. He is the former music critic for the Chicago Tribune, editorial director of the multimedia music platform the Coda Collection, and co-host of Sound Opinions. This course invites students to take a lead role in Court’s creative development process for the Mavis Staples story. Using the methods of history, dramaturgy, biography and musicology, students will work with Kot and Court’s artistic team to map the story’s rich historical landscape, excavate the essential characters and identify the key events—social, political and musical—that a playwright might explore. Students will pursue individual research projects grounded in the epic journey of the Staples family and its powerful mobilizing role in the Civil Rights movement. Mavis Staples continues to blend gospel, blues, folk, rock and protest music in her work; her collaborators have included Bob Dylan, Prince, David Byrne, and Chuck D. Students will trace the Staples family’s story via multiple archives to build a portfolio of sound recordings, oral history interviews, photographs, newspapers, film and video recordings that will help the bring the production to life. Kot will be a regular guest in class. *Nina Titone*

**WINTER 2023**

Special Courses in Divinity

DVSC 30600 – Theory and Method Man

This is the second iteration of the two-sequence introduction to the study of religion that is required for Masters students. We will select four themes in the study of religion, including but not limited to interpretation, embodiment, racialization, and materiality. Representative examples from relatively recent works will introduce students to how scholars raise and answer questions that shape the field. Course Note: All MA, AMRS, and MDiv students are required to take this course. 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. Discussion groups will be held. *Anand Venkatkrishnan*

Anthropology and Sociology of Religion

AASR 50750 – Dis/Enchantments

In a time of planetary crisis, anthropologists and other scholars are trying to think beyond the human, beyond the Enlightenment subject, beyond the anthropocentrism of received social theory. The premise of this seminar is that the human has gone beyond the human all along, albeit in ways that are not often recognized in today’s posthumanist debates. We will explore other, older genealogies of thinking and being that have at once desired and tried to harness the explosive potential of self-loss as a modality of self-knowledge. Examples will include ‘participant observation’ as fieldwork method, theologies of participation and consubstantiality, transference and telepathy in psychoanalysis, and more. The aim is to productively derail us from prevailing cliches, so that we may better draw on archives that are at once stranger and more intimate than they at first appear. *William Mazzarella*

Biblical Studies

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

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, contexts 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. *Justin Moses*

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. *Richard Zaleski*

BIBL 39402 – Language Contact: Greek and the World’s Languages

How do languages get into contact? How long do they stay in contact? What is contact-induced language change, and which are the mechanisms that govern it? What do arachnophobia, myalgia, geology, heterophagy mean?  
In this course we will study language contact and its outcomes, as well as the social and linguistic factors that regulate contact-induced changes. We will examine a wide range of language contact phenomena from both general linguistic and sociolinguistic perspectives, and survey current approaches to all of the major types of contact-induced change (e.g. borrowing). Having Greek (but also other languages) as an example, we will consider linguistic and social aspects of the contact context as well as look into how the particular language has shaped the savant vocabulary of science, philosophy, arts, etc.  
More precisely, we will offer a brief overview of the history of the Greek language with special emphasis on the Greek vocabulary that Greek language landed or borrowed at different stages of its history as a result of its linguistic contact with other nations and languages. We will start with the Pre-Hellenic phase of Greek and then we focus in Proto-Hellenic, Ancient Greek, Koine, Medieval Greek and finally Modern Greek. *Zoe Gavriilido*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 29402

BIBL 41780 – Poetry of the Hebrew Bible

The course will survey poetic genres of the Hebrew Bible, their elements and tropes, scholarship on biblical poetry specifically, and approaches to poetry in general. PQ: Introductory Biblical Hebrew I–III (BIBL 33900–34000 + Text course) or equivalent. *Simeon Chavel*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HIJD 41780, RLST 21780

BIBL 55100 – Hebrew Bible Colloquium

The course focuses on academic argumentative writing generally, with specific application to the field of Hebrew Bible. The course offers students the opportunity to revise and further develop a previously written paper into a significant piece of original research through the help of peer review. PQ: Students must have a paper min. 15–20pp written for a PhD-level course, and they must have it approved by this course's Instructor in advance. The course is open to Bible Area students focusing on the New Testament who read biblical Hebrew. *Simeon Chavel*

Philosophy of Religion

DVPR 31400 – Introduction to Philosophy of Religions

Open to graduate and undergraduate students, this course introduces major works and topics in Philosophy of Religions, with particular emphasis on works from doctoral qualifying exam bibliographies in the area. *Dan Arnold*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 25130

History of Christianity

HCHR 33829 – Foundational Readings in Christian Anthropology

What is necessary for humans to flourish? How do the soul, body, and intellect relate? How did early Christians understand the human person, the effects of sin, and the nature of revelation? This course introduces students to the ways Origen, Augustine, Ephrem the Syrian, and Gregory of Nyssa approached these foundational questions and set trajectories for the subsequent development of Christian thought. We will pay particular attention to their interpretation of scripture, especially Genesis 1-3 and the Pauline Epistles. These theologians' interpretations of scripture shaped Christian thinking about social structures, gender, class, and freedom in ways that continue to have an influence. For those unfamiliar with the intellectual history of early Christianity, this class will offer an opportunity to read consequential texts (in translation) from Latin, Greek, and Syriac authors that represent the diversity inherent within Christian literature. By the end of the course, students will have the skills to discern how these formative voices continue to shape Christian ethics and theology. For those interested in reading these authors in their original languages, I will offer optional weekly translation sessions in Latin, Greek, and Syriac. *Erin Walsh*

Equivalent Div Course(s): BIBL 33829, THEO 33829. RLST 23829

HCHR 39522 – Europe’s Intellectual Transformations, Renaissance through Enlightenment

This course will consider the foundational transformations of Western thought from the end of the Middle Ages to the threshold of modernity. It will provide an overview of the three self-conscious and interlinked intellectual revolutions which reshaped early modern Europe: the Renaissance revival of antiquity, the "new philosophy" of the seventeenth century, and the light and dark faces of the Enlightenment. It will treat scholasticism, humanism, the scientific revolution, Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, Voltaire, Diderot, and Sade. PQ: Students taking FREN 29322/39322 must read French texts in French. Course Note: First-year students and non-History majors welcome. Assignments: short and long papers, alternative projects. *Ada Palmer*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 22605

History of Judaism

HIJD 30668 – Introduction to Aggadic Literature of the Rabbinic Period

We will make acquaintance with *midrash*, the idiosyncratic rabbinic method of textual interpretation of the Bible, concentrating on *midrash aggadah*, which deals with non-legal material (biblical narrative and ethical teachings). We will deal with questions of interpretation (how did the rabbis interpret the biblical text?), relevancy (in what ways did they view the ancient text as relevant to their lives?), and literature (an appreciation of the literary aspects and genres of *midrash aggadah*). Rabbinic readings will be compared with biblical interpretations of the Second Temple period (in Philo, Josephus, Apocrypha, and the Dead Sea Scrolls). Texts will be read in the original Hebrew and Aramaic with English translation. PQ: Basic reading skills in biblical Hebrew desirable. *Paul Mandel, Visiting Greenberg Professor*

Equivalent Div Course(s): BIBL 30668, RLST 20668

HIJD 34000 – God, Self, Nation, and Revolution in East European Jewish Life and Thought, 1850–1939

The course covers the history of the Jewish encounter with modernity on the fractured political, cultural, and social terrain of Eastern Europe. Both as members of a distinct ethnic, religious, and cultural group and as ever more differentiated and divided individuals, the Jews of modern Eastern Europe collectively generated many of the modern forms of Jewish identity, politics, culture, and religion—Hasidism and ultra-Orthodoxy, Zionism and Jewish nationalism, and Jewish socialism—while individually forging a bewildering array of syntheses, hybrids, and even negations of Jewishness in relation to the unprecedented political, cultural, and social dilemmas of Eastern European life. Key foci include religious and cultural transformations within Jewish life from the late eighteenth century, which gave birth to Hasidism, Orthodoxy, and a Jewish Enlightenment movement; the nineteenth-century encounter with the invasive reformism of the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires and later with twentieth-century ethnonationalisms; the recasting of everyday life and identity in relation to imperial interventions, changing cultural norms vis-à-vis authority, tradition, and gender, and dramatic social and economic transformations in late nineteenth-century Eastern Europe; the formation of modern Jewish nationalism; encounters between Jews and East European socialism and social radicalism; the development of a secular Jewish cultural sphere and an opposing Orthodox counterculture locked in conflict with each other, with rampant assimilation, and with new kinds of popular culture; relations between Jews and the other peoples and cultures of Eastern Europe; Jewish prospects and predicaments in the postimperial nation-state. *Kenneth Moss*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 20444

HIJD 45300 – Traditions and Transmission: The Aggadic Tale

The Rabbis of the Talmudic period were authors and transmitters of numerous short tales and anecdotes (*aggadot*), both historical and ahistorical, through which they presented their views of historical/political events and persons, religious values, family relationships and the nature of mankind. We will study these tales from a literary and historical perspective, following their retelling in the major works of the Rabbinic period (Mishnah, Tosefta, Palestinian and Babylonian Talmuds and aggadic midrashim), including study of the textual transmission in medieval manuscripts. Texts will be read in the original Hebrew and Aramaic with English translation. PQ: Intermediate level of classical Hebrew. Elementary reading ability of any form of classical Aramaic desirable. Course Note: Undergraduates may petition to enroll. *Paul Mandel, Visiting Greenberg Professor*

History of Religions

HREL 33907 – Gandhi and His Critics

The moral and political writings of M.K. Gandhi constitute one of the most influential archives of ethics in the twentieth century. For a man so devoted to periodic vows of silence and withdrawal, he nevertheless left over ninety volumes of public speeches, personal correspondence, and published essays. A modernist arrayed against the brutalities of modernity, Gandhi’s thought encompassed concepts of sovereignty, the state, self and society, religion, civilization, and force. His insistence on cultivating technologies of the self as a response to both colonial and intimate violence was inspired by an eclectic range of source material. Generations of critical thinkers from around the world, including Black, feminist, Communist, and Dalit political activists, engaged with his ideas. This course explores several themes in Gandhi’s ethical thought and the responses they have generated. *Anand Venkatkrishnan*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RETH 33907, RLST 23907

HREL 41100 – Readings in the History of Religions: The ‘Chicago School’

This course will be devoted primarily to the close, critical reading and historical assessment of representative works of the most famous names associated with the History of Religions at the University of Chicago. The course will begin by considering some prior historiography of the "Chicago School" and the work of A. Eustace Haydon, before looking closely at the work of Joachim Wach, Mircea Eliade, Joseph M. Kitagawa, Charles H. Long, Jonathan Z. Smith, Wendy Doniger, and Bruce Lincoln. Students will develop and present a research paper over the course of the term, and are encouraged to consult the archived papers of Wach and Eliade, or other relevant documents in the university library system. Course Note: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *Christian Wedemeyer*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RAME 41101

HREL 42308 – Phoenician Religion (In Their Own Words And Those of Their Neighbors)

The Phoenicians were a Canaanite people who maintained their language, religion, and culture until Roman times. One of the main challenges facing the study of the Phoenician religion (and culture in general) is that most of their literature is lost. This course gathers together a variety of emic sources in the Phoenicians’ own language or stemming from the Phoenician realm but written in Greek or Latin, as well as sources written by others about the Phoenicians, with a special focus on cult and religious identity. The texts we will read and discuss range from royal, votive, and funerary inscriptions, to the views about the Phoenicians in the Hebrew Bible, and Greek and Roman writers. This course is partly a text-based, reading course, and partly a thematic, culture course. PQ: Intermediate knowledge (2 years) of a Semitic language (e.g., Hebrew, Phoenician, Aramaic, Ugaritic, Arabic) OR of ancient Greek and/or Latin. *Carolina López-Ruiz*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 22308

HREL 47518 – Praising the Gods: Greek Hymnic Poetry and Its Context

In this course we will read a broad range of Greek hymnic poetry, starting with Hesiod’s invocation to the Muses in the Theogony, followed by a selection from the Homeric Hymns, the Orphic hymns, and later literary or philosophical hymns by Callimachus and Proclus. Close readings will explore matters of language, genre, and literary tropes, as well as the evolving religious and cultural context of the hymns through the long chronological span in which the genre was productive in Greek antiquity. PQ: Two years of Greek. *Carolina López-Ruiz*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 27518

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: Open to doctoral students in HREL, AASR, RAME, SALC, EALC, HIST, ANTH, e.g. *Christian Wedemeyer*

Equivalent Div Course(s): AASR 52200

Islamic Studies

ISLM 30024 – Everyday Life in the Early Islamic Period

How did people live in the early Islamic period? How did they work and study? What do we know about their relations with family members, loved ones, and neighbors? How did they relate to the administration and to people who ruled them? Did they get together to celebrate religious festivals? Did they have parties? What sources do we have to learn about their habits, routines, and feelings? What can we learn about every-day struggles, and how much do these differ from our own? This course aims to introduce undergraduate and early graduate students to the study of social history through a combination of literary and documentary sources from the early centuries of Islam. We will learn about both opportunities and limits of studying history from the “bottom-up.” *Cecilia Palombo*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 20324

ISLM 30040 – Introduction to the Qur’an

The Qur’an, the holy book of Muslims, is not only a sacred text but also the most authoritative source for defining the Muslim way of life and one of the world’s most widely read books. The course will introduce the Qur’an through a careful study of its content, structure, form, language, style, central themes, and the process of canonization. We will examine the historical, cultural, religious and interpretive dimensions wherein the Qur’an developed. Moreover, we will discuss the traditional hermeneutical approaches to the Qur’anic text (*tafsir*), the Qur’an as a source of law, as well as the various theories, methods and approaches employed by modern scholars in the understanding of the Qur’an. *Mehmetcan Akpinar*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 11040

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. *Scott Doolin*

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. *Staff*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 20202

ISLM 30381 – Introduction to Arabic Poetry

The course is an introduction to the texts, contexts, functions, and rhythms of Arabic poetry. Students read, translate, and analyze the most eloquent verse of the Arabic poetic canon, with a view to understanding its themes, metaphors, and forms. In addition, they study the prosody and rhetoric that underpins these texts in order to acquire a feel for its music and aesthetics. The class is part lecture, part readings. Its focus is on the classical material, but modern poetry (MSA and colloquial) is also introduced. PQ: 2 years of Arabic or equivalent. *Tahera Qutbuddin*

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. PQ: 3 years of Arabic. *Ahmed El Shamsy*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 20400

ISLM 40629 – Nahj al-balagha: Virtue and Piety in the Teachings of Ali

First Shiʿa Imam, and fourth Sunni caliph, Ali ibn Abi Talib (d. 40/661) is the acknowledged master of Arabic eloquence, revered by both Sunni and Shiʿa Muslims for his piety and wisdom. Through the centuries, his words have been collected, studied, and cited by generations of Muslims as well as non-Muslim Arabs, and have inspired both litterateurs and sages. Through a close reading and analysis of his orations, epistles, and sayings from Sharīf Raḍī’s (d. 406/1016) Nahj al-balaghah compilation, this course will explore an early stage of the development of these three important prose genres of classical Arabic literature, and Ali’s key themes and stylistic features. Secondary literature will be read and discussed for context and analysis. A main focus of the class will be on themes of virtue and piety. PQ: 3 years of Arabic. Open to qualified undergraduates with Instructor's permission. *Tahera Qutbuddin*

ISLM 41500 – Ibn al-Arabi and His Commentators

This course examines the mystical philosophy of Muhyi-i-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabi (d. 637/1240), one of the most influential and original thinkers of the Islamic world. Notoriously complex, his writings have been the subject of numerous commentaries, and thinkers from virtually every discipline have drawn from his inspirations. This course systematically covers Ibn al-ʿArabī’s ontology, theology, epistemology, teleology, spiritual anthropology and eschatology, each topic building from the previous. We look closely at the commentarial tradition surrounding his works and trace the reception and transmission of his ideas. Notably, we will look at the integration of his thought within twelver Shiʿism through figures such as Haydar Amuli and dissemination of his ideas in the Ottoman Empire, India, China and East Asia via Central Asia through the likes of ʿAbd al-Rahman Jami. *Mukhtar Ali*

Religions in the Americas

RAME 41968 – The Religious and Social Thought of Martin Luther King Jr.

This graduate seminar is an intensive study of the religious life and social/religious thought of Martin Luther King, Jr. We will be reading a wide range of King’s writings and speeches from his Crozier seminary years to his major speeches up to his assassination in 1968. We will also explore some of the classic and more recent scholarship that examines the influences on and sources of King’s thought. Prominent themes in the course will include but will not be limited to King’s ethical and social critique of American society, especially its racism, his social and moral evaluation of economic inequality, his commitment to nonviolence, his conception of the beloved community, and his evolving roles as preacher, social activist, and public intellectual. *Curtis Evans*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HCHR 41968

Religious Leadership and Practice (MDiv Courses)

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 30100 – Minor Classics in Ethics

This is an an informal, non-credit reading group consisting of RETH Faculty and Master’s and doctoral students interested in religious ethics. Students may join the reading group in any quarter.   
Selected articles or chapters have revitalized forgotten themes or have launched new problems for moral philosophy, social thought, theology, and religious ethics. They exhibit ways of combining attention to concepts and arguments in moral and political theory, on the one hand, with concrete matters in practical experience and public life, on the other.  
The format is informal, and the discussions are text-focused. Students should come prepared to identify one sentence or paragraph that they find illuminating, obscure, or problematic, and explain why they think so. *William Schweiker*

RETH 30804 – Contemporary Religious Ethics III: Peril and Responsibility

This is the third of my three-quarter sequence of courses examining pioneering work in field of contemporary religious ethics. This quarter’s readings, largely drawing from work published between 2010-2020, will take up readings that address challenges posed by climate change, racial injustice, migration, international conflict, and various forms of global inequity. The schedule of readings is arranged roughly in chronological order but adjusted in places for thematic reasons. There are no prerequisites. Course Note: Undergraduates may petition by indicating their current major(s), previous background in the study of religion or ethics, and reasons for wishing to enroll in the course. *Richard Miller*

RETH 35500 – Pragmatism and Ethics

Since its beginnings in the late nineteenth century, philosophical pragmatism has emphasized the integration of theory and practice through experience to improve the world and has examined abstract philosophical ideas and informed social movements (about education, social work, civil rights, environmental justice). This course examines the mutual intersection of these trends. Special attention will be paid to the bifurcation in pragmatic thought between the theoretical and experiential/applied, particularly when this bifurcation has aligned with racial or gender differentiations. Whose knowledge and experience do and should count for whom? What do our answers to these questions imply about the scope of ethics, the resources and blind spots in pragmatism? What does it mean that knowledge and experience are intertwined, especially when discussing ethical and religious knowledge, which are often presumed to come from an epistemological or social authority? The development of this course is aided by a Swift Diversity and Inclusion Innovation Grant. *Sarah Fredericks*

RETH 41800 – The Nature of Judgement: Hannah Arendt’s Political Writing

Hannah Arendt wrote vividly about the way that societies are organized and threatened, about the political dynamics of power that resulted in the great evils of the 20th century. She also considered the relationships between responsibility and judgement; the social and the political, and the nature of truth, The seminar consider how her experience as a Jew and a refugee shaped her political writings.

Course Note: Advanced undergraduates can petition into the course. JWSC majors/minors can petition to count this course toward their degree requirement. *Laurie Zoloth*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HIJD 41800

RETH 45900 – Understanding Oneself as Anothers: The Hermeneutics and Ethics of Paul Ricoeur

What is the relation, if any, between moral goodness and human acts of meaning-making? How does understanding relate to the quest for justice? How is one to understand ambiguous meanings and actions? More fundamentally, what does it mean to be a self? And how are moral agents related to each other? Is our relation to others so basic that we are, through and through, moral beings or is morality a social construction or are both positions necessary? These questions, and others as well, are hermeneutical ones, that is, questions about the character of human understanding through interpretation. They are also ethical questions about the meaning of being human, our relations to others, and matters of what is good, right, and just. Little wonder that the relation of hermeneutics to ethics has been important in the history of thought and continues to be in our own age of threats to humanity and human endangerment of the global environment. This seminar will examine the hermeneutical theory and ethics of the French philosopher, Paul Ricoeur, by reading central works but with special focus on his Gifford Lectures, *Oneself as Another*. Ricoeur (1913-2005) was one of the major hermeneutical and phenomenological thinkers of the 20th century who central focus on human beings as willing agents profoundly related to others. Course Note: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *William Schweiker*

Equivalent Div Course(s): THEO 45900

RETH 51404 – Global Inequality

Global income and wealth are highly concentrated. The richest 2% of the population own about half of the global assets. Per capita income in the United States is around $47,000 and in Europe it is around $30,500, while in India it is $3,400 and in Congo, it is $329. There are equally unsettling inequalities in longevity, health, and education.  
In this interdisciplinary seminar, we ask what duties nations and individuals have to address these inequalities and what are the best strategies for doing so. What role must each country play in helping itself? What is the role of international agreements and agencies, of NGOs, of political institutions, and of corporations in addressing global poverty? How do we weigh policies that emphasize growth against policies that emphasize within-country equality, health, or education?  
In seeking answers to these questions, the class will combine readings on the law and economics of global development with readings on the philosophy of global justice. A particular focus will be on the role that legal institutions, both domestic and international, play in discharging these duties. For, example, we might focus on how a nation with natural resources can design legal institutions to ensure they are exploited for the benefit of the citizens of the country. PQ: Students will be expected to write a paper, which may qualify for substantial writing credit. This is a seminar scheduled through the Law School, but we are happy to admit by permission about ten non-law students. *Martha Nussbaum*

Religion, Literature, and Visual Culture

RLVC 32104 – Hymns

The course will track hymns from the early modern period through the late eighteenth century. We’ll examine the evolution of the hymn as a literary form, focusing on obsolescence and adaptation in literary transmission. We’ll start with the Psalms of the Hebrew Bible, and analyze psalters (such as the one produced by Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, and her brother, Sir Philip Sidney) and the metrical psalms of Sternhold and Hopkins that were used in Anglican services. We’ll then take up the development of congregational hymns, hymns sung by everyone in a congregation, to track the way that literary adaptation among Dissenters became both common and controversial. We’ll look at Isaac Watts’s multiple hymns for each of the Psalms, his later Hymns and Spiritual Songs, and his Divine Songs for children to get at the importance he and other Dissenters (such as Anna Letitia Barbauld) attached to supplying words to all who could sing or say them. We’ll end with a discussion of “Amazing Grace” and its use in the British abolition movement, and with a discussion of the movement of the literary hymn away from religion altogether in literary hymns, Shelley’s and Keats’s odes. *Frances Ferguson*

RLVC 38123 – Friedrich Holderlin: Poetic Media and Prophecy

The landscapes of southwest Germany and ancient Greece figure prominently in Friedrich Hölderlin’s poetic thinking and writing. What allows his poems to bridge and interlace both worlds – often in the span of a single sentence – is his understanding of nature, which is deeply informed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s retour à la nature (“return to nature”). It is through nature that the modern self can not only access the unspoiled culture of the Greeks but also commune with the divine – whether in the form of the ancient pantheon or a more Christian version of transcendence. Paradoxically, nature is mediated in a variety of ways; whether through the elemental media of water, air, earth, fire, and light, travel accounts, maps, and more generally written and printed texts. Our seminar will examine – through close readings of some of Hölderlin’s most famous and challenging poems – how the deployed poetic media structure aesthetic experience and afford travel to distant times and places. All texts will be read in English translation, but a reading knowledge of German is going to be helpful. *Christopher Wild*

RLVC 38603 – Tragedy and the Tragic: Text/Theory/Event

The course aims to think about tragedy in history: as orchestrated dramatic practice and as unanticipated historical event. We will compare the conventions of tragic drama in ancient Greece and Renaissance England and will read a range of theorists of tragedy and the tragic (including such usual suspects as Aristotle and Nietzsche, but also Weil, and those who consider events that are beyond the ken of tragedy to characterize). *Richard Rosengarten*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 28603

RLVC 48100 – Paris in the 1670’s: Quantities and Qualities

The decade of the 1670s saw an astonishing convergence of brilliant people in Paris. Blaise Pascal, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Christian Huygens, Nicolas Malebranche, met and debated mathematical concepts, logic, engineering (calculating machines in particular), microscopy, theology, and world peace. All were also in contact with Baruch Spinoza by letter. In the salons, men and women, nobles and bourgeois, clerics and secular people conversed about matters of general interest (that is, not likely to involve politics or religion): art, history, and aesthetics. The novel of introspection attained full development in Marie-Madeleine de Lafayette’s La Princesse de Clèves; the art of polemic was displayed in all its sarcastic majesty in Charles Perrault’s defense of Lully’s opera Alceste against the neo-classicist traditionalists. We will explore the connections among art, literature, the investigation of antiquity, mathematics, and philosophy, seeking them most energetically where they are not obvious, with calculus, ie., the reduction of differences to a regular trend, the proposed common thread. *Haun Saussy*

Theology

THEO 40801 – Theology and Cultural Studies

This course will study models of cultural studies and we will put these theoretical constructs in conversation with models of theology. Indeed, all theologies arise out of human culture and the attempt of human beings to make ultimate meaning out of all that humans have created. *Dwight Hopkins*

THEO 40900 – Black Theology: Pros and Cons

This course puts black theology of liberation in conversation with those authors who have offered trenchant critiques of black theology. And we examine if black theology has withstood, denied, or corrected its intellectual arguments vis-à-vis its critics and despisers. We are doing a self-assessment and a critical, challenging review of the scholarly claims of black theology. One way is to allow its critics to have a full say and put both sides into dialogue. On academic grounds, is there is a basis for the existence of black liberation theology? *Dwight Hopkins*

THEO 48701 – Late Medieval Women: Authorship and Authority

In recent decades there has been a great deal of interest in medieval vernacular theology, as complementing the more traditional division of medieval theological texts into monastic and scholastic. This course will focus on a number of medieval women writers, dealing mainly albeit not exclusively with vernacular texts. After a historical overview of the position of women in the early Middle Ages, the course will focus on Heloise and Hildegard of Bingen as transitional figures, and continue with four women writers writing in the vernacular, i.e., Mechtild of Magdeburg, Hadewijch, Marguerite Porete and Julian of Norwich. The course will link the spectrum of vernacular languages which they represent to the diversity of their individual positions and analyze that diversity in terms of ecclesiastical developments, gender division, authorial identity, and theological criticism. The final aim is to come to an assessment of the constructive contribution of these vernacular treatises to the tradition of late medieval theology and spirituality. *Willemien Otten*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HCHR 48700

Religious Studies (Undergraduate Designation)

RLST 20270 – Islam in African History

From the early years of the spread of Islam to contemporary forms of religious expressive cultures, Islam has and continues to shape the lives of Muslims across Africa, where today roughly a third of the global Muslim populations resides. This course examines Islamic history in Africa as a religious orientation that informs architectural traditions, political elections, creative prose, and artistic expression. This class investigates the diversity of Islamic cultures in Africa through historical writings, art, literature, and film, as well as examining the experiences of diasporic African Muslims in North America and Europe and the writings of Black American Muslims on the continent. Students will examine debates that animate this field of scholarship: from the politics of the study of Islam, to debates about race and slavery within Islamic societies, to diverse encounters with colonial states and struggles for decolonization. In addition to scholarship based on textual analysis, students will use visual and material sources including mosque architecture, paintings, photography, films, and music to examine the past, present, and imagined futures of African Islamic expressive cultures in a global context. *Katie Hickerson*

RLST 20315 – Ancient Empires: The Umayyads

The Umayyads ruled over the last “great empire” of late antiquity: the early Islamic empire, spanning from the Atlas to the Hindu Kush, from the Atlantic to the Amu Darya, and embracing regions with different cultural and political traditions. This course introduces to the history of the Umayyad caliphate, focusing on some of the visible legacies its inhabitants left behind: texts, objects, and monumental buildings that are still standing in cities of the Middle East and Europe. But we will also reflect upon less material legacies: for example, cities with a long-lasting urban culture, infrastructures for communicating across a vast empire, the consolidation of religious traditions, and exchanges and cohabitation of different religious groups. *Cecilia Palombo*

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.

RLST 21304 – Religion and the American Civil Rights Movement

This undergraduate course examines the religious actors and institutions of the Civil Rights movement from the late 1950s to the early 1970s. We look at the evolution of religious and racial change from a number of different angles, trying especially to understand what the various reformers hoped to accomplish. We also will study the opponents of the black freedom struggle, paying attention to the religious and theological defenses of segregation and trying to understand how they persisted in different forms even when legal segregation in the South ended. Some time is devoted to understanding key concepts and moments: desegregation, integration, freedom, and equality, and the different meanings of personal and social transformation. Primary attention is on the black-white divide and most of my examples come from Christian individuals and traditions since they comprised the majority of activists on both sides of Civil Rights activism. Course Note: This course counts as an elective course for the Democracy Studies program. *Curtis Evans*

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). *Staff*

RLST 22040 – Religion in 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 23620 – The Problem of Evil

"Epicurus's old questions are yet unanswered. Is he [God] willing to prevent evil, but not able? then is he impotent. Is he able, but not willing? then is he malevolent. Is he both able and willing? whence then is evil?" (Hume, Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion)This course will consider the challenge posed by the existence of evil to the rationality of traditional theistic belief. Drawing on both classic and contemporary readings, we will analyze atheistic arguments from evil, and attempts by theistic philosophers to construct "theodicies" and "defenses" in response to these arguments, including the "free-will defense," "soul-making theodicies," and "suffering God theodicies." We will also consider critiques of such theodicies as philosophically confused, morally depraved, or both; and we will discuss the problem of divinely commanded or enacted evil (for example the doctrine of hell). *Michael Kremer*

RLST 23808 – Suffering, Grief, and Consolation

Why do people suffer and die? How can we find comfort? Should we hope for a better future, focus our energies on making peace with the present, or attempt to do both? How do we cultivate joy in the midst of adversity? Can pain be productive? The literature of ancient consolation engages these questions as it bears witness to the myriad ways in which ancient Greeks, Romans, Jews, and Christians attempted to comfort suffering people. The goal was not simply to defeat grief, but to replace grief with its opposite, joy. This course introduces students to ancient consolation literature, a genre composed of various literary forms (e.g., funeral orations, consolatory letters, apocalypses, prophecies) but united by a common store of vocabulary, expressions of sympathy, arguments against grief, and exhortations to admirable behavior amid hardship. At the end of the course, we will bridge the horizons between ancient approaches to consolation and current debates about how to treat grief and facilitate human flourishing during hardship. If there is sufficient interest, the course may feature Languages Across the Curriculum sessions in which students who have knowledge of Latin will be able to read select course texts in Latin. Participation in the LxC sessions is elective and separate from the main course sessions. *Christine R. Trotter*

RLST 24003 – Death and Dying

Death happens to everyone. However, dying is as much a social process as an individual one. The factors that impact how, when and where people die, and how societies handle death and dying, are shaped by the structural and cultural forces in our world. These range from economic, geographic, and religious forces to the institutional politics of health care systems. The sociology of death and dying is the systematic study of the structure of the human response to death, dying, and bereavement in their socio-cultural, interpersonal, and individual contexts. Often conceptualized as a discrete event, death is a process that is shaped over the life course. In this course, we will analyze the socio-demographic patterns of death, the factors that shape the process of dying, the economics of dying, and the ways that individuals and groups respond to death. We will also consider the social factors that shape a “good death” and discuss current policies and debates surrounding end-of-life care and aid-in-dying. *Alex Tate*

RLST 24114 – Justice in the Struggle of History

From the Black Lives Matter and #MeToo movements back to the dawn of history, people have always struggled for justice. This simple observation arises important, even burning, philosophical and religious questions. What do we mean by justice? What are the types of justice? Who defines what is just unjust: God, those in power, prophets, lawgivers? Is it possible to realize a just society within the complexity of history? How is the struggle for justice related to hope? This course examines those kinds of questions at the crossroads of religion and social ethics with a focus on two intertwine topics: (1) the meaning and justification of conceptions of justice, and (2) the possibility of realizing justice within the flux of human history. The course moves in interlocking steps: (1) an inquiry into ancient religious and non-religious ideas of justice (The book of *Amos*, the Hebrew Prophet, and Plato's *Gorgias*), the first Christian theology of History (Augustine's *City of God*, selections), and Martin Luther's *Temporal Authority*; (2) modern accounts (Immanuel Kant's *Perpetual Peace* and John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*); and, (3) contemporary accounts (Martin Luther King, Jr., *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, Martha Nussbaum, *Creating Capabilities*, and Paul Tillich, *Love, Power, and Justice*). By the end of the course, we will have then come full circle to the questions, if not the answers, found in the ancient texts. Course Note: Graduate students must petition to enroll. *William Schweiker*

RLST 25377 – #Blessed: The Prosperity Gospel, The Bible, and Economic Ethics

Is wealth a sign of divine favor? What would Jesus do when it comes to money? How does the Bible inform contemporary views of charity, economic ethics, and material possessions? This class examines the multiple messages about material wealth contained within biblical literature and the diverse ways these passages have been interpreted. After a survey of shifting approaches to economic ethics among Christians over the centuries, students will turn to the phenomenon of the “Prosperity Gospel” within the modern period. The class will query the ways the Bible has been harnessed to an economic vision tied to capitalism and ostentatious displays of personal wealth. Previous knowledge of the Bible and the historical periods covered is not expected. *Erin Walsh and William Schultz*

RLST 25560 – Race, Religion, and the Formation of the Latinx Identity

In this class, we will focus on the conditions of possibility, development, and problems surrounding the formation of the Latinx identity. We will pay special attention to how such an identity is expressed through and informed by our race, gender, and religion, and to how such experiences are theoretically articulated in Latinx theology and religious thought.

To pursue this task, we will devote the first part of the class to the examination of the conditions of possibility of *latinidad* by focusing on the formation of the Latinx self. What makes Latines, Latines? Is this a forcefully assigned identity or one that can be claimed and embraced with pride? What is the role of gender and sexuality in the Latinx self? Is there such a thing as a unified Latinx self or shall we favor approaches that stress hybridity or multiplicity? In the second part of the class, we will shift from self-formation to community-formation by examining the experience of *mestizaje* (racial mixing) and its theoretical articulation in Latinx theology. Is this concept useful to describe the Latinx experience or does it romanticize the violence of European colonialism? Lastly, we will return to the formation of Latinx identity considering the ambiguities of *religious* ethnic identity through the examples of tensions between Catholic and Evangelical Latinos, and those emerging from the experiences of Latinos converting to non-Christian religions. *Raul Zegarra*

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: Graduate students need permission to enroll and will have additional requirements. *Sarah Fredericks*

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-theolical thought in Israel, and their actual appearance in the political sphere. *David Barak-Gorodetsky*

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

RLST 25910 – bell hooks and Cornel West: Education for Resistance

Cornel West and bell hooks are two of the most influential philosophers and cultural critics of the past half-century. Their writings—including their co-authored book—address pressing questions about politics, religion, race, education, film, and gender. In different ways, they each find resources for hope, love, and liberation in an unjust social order. In this course, we will read selections from their writings over the last forty years alongside the authors who influenced their thinking (including Du Bois, Freire, Morrison, King, and Baldwin). We will pay special attention to how hooks and West communicate to popular audiences, how they engage religious traditions (their own and others’), and the role of dialogue in their thought and practice. The goal of the course is not just to think about hooks and West, but to think with them about ethics, writing, American culture, and the aims of education. No prior familiarity with either author is required. *Russell Johnson*

RLST 26316 – Medical Innovation and Religious Reform in the Enlightenment

Through a survey of innovative medical authorities and religious reformers, students will investigate the co-constitution of two bodies of knowledge at a historical moment (the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) when questions of authority and epistemology are in considerable flux. This period has long been implicated in the "conflict thesis"—a hugely influential argument that portrays the centuries-long relationship between religion and science/medicine as an inherently adversarial one. This course shall scrutinize that argument through a discussion of seemingly contradictory examples where reformers that touted the all-encompassing reach of divine providence also promoted intricate public health infrastructures; where the Vatican increasingly relied on university-trained physicians to validate saints and their miracles; where theologians were viewed as authorities on Galen and responsible for medical breakthroughs; and where medicine and metaphysics were considered complementary pursuits. Ultimately, students will unveil a portrait not of conflict, but of a symbiotic relationship between religion and medicine. The goal of our course will then be to query why religious reformers were not only unthreatened by but also actively esteemed the medical arts as a valuable ally. *Mark M. Lambert*

RLST 26322 – Healing Traditions

This seminar is a comparative exploration of medical and healing traditions and their religious, spiritual, and cultural intersections. Students will gain an understanding of the history of medicine in the Middle East, India, China, and the West, including the metaphysical systems that inform those traditions. Within the frameworks of Islamic Medicine, i.e. “prophetic medicine” and Sufi healing practices, Avicenna and the Galenic tradition, Chinese Medicine, Ayurveda and Buddhist medicine, we will discuss the following topics: Ritual healing, faith and prayer, divine healers and medical authority, etiology and pathology, religious pharmacology and drugs, mental health, spiritual states and possession, and near death experiences, among others. Students will conduct research on a particular modality in conversation with recent trends in health in modern allopathy while evaluating efficacy, scope and place of traditional modalities. *Mukhtar Ali*

RLST 26336 – Religion, Nation, Race

Religion, nation, race: as familiar as these terms and the categories they name may be, they prove strangely resistant to definition—especially when, as often happens, they are entangled with one another. This seminar course orients students in the busy field of contemporary theoretical writing on these categories and the myriad ways they mutually complicate one another. Our central texts will be two recent books addressing a pair of historically, culturally, and geographically disparate examples: Anustup Basu, *Hindutva as Political Monotheism* (2021), on Hindu right-wing nationalism in contemporary India, and Adi Ophir and Ishay Rosen-Zvi, *Goy*(2018), on the figure of the non-Jewish other in late-ancient Jewish literature. These books will be supplemented by shorter texts by philosophers, religionists, literary theorists, political scientists, and anthropologists. The major assignment for this course (in lieu of a final paper) is the collaborative production of a critical lexicon of keywords for the study of religion, nation, and race. Prerequisite: completion of a Social Sciences Core sequence. *Sam Catlin*

RLST 26673 – Non-Violence: Gandhi, Mandela, and MLK

How is non-violence relevant for global protest movements? This course will give students a multi-religious and transnational understanding of non-violence, focused on, but not limited to, three of its most famous practitioners: Mohandas Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, and Martin Luther King. Starting with the Indian term ahiṃsā (literally “non-injury”), we will examine classical Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain traditions of non-violence as the foundations for its later adaptations in Christian and secular contexts. Gandhi’s reinterpretation of Hindu sacred texts informed his anti-colonial movement, which directly influenced Mandela and MLK. Studying the interconnected biographies of these three figures, we will consider the powers and limitations of non-violence for their movements against colonization, apartheid, and systemic racism. Students’ final projects will then argue how non-violence impacts a protest movement of their choice: for example, Black Lives Matter, the farmers’ protests in India, or civil disobedience in Hong Kong. No prior knowledge or coursework is required. *Andrew Kunze*

RLST 26910 – Religion, Sex, and Law in American History

Religion and law both offer frameworks for how we ought to live and behave, and often these frameworks become entangled in ways that affect who we are, what we can do, and with whom we can do it. To make things even more complicated, religion is also an object of the law—the law tries to adjudicate the rights of religious Americans under a system of religious freedom, with varying degrees of success. Often, the tension between law and religion comes to a head on issues of sex. The collision of religion, sex, and law presents a whole host of problems and questions: How have religion and law historically related to each other when it comes to sex? How has religion shaped the law on issues of sex, and vice versa? What is, or should be, the role of the law in adjudicating issues of sexual morality and religion?

In this class, we will begin with the question: how do religion and law shape our lives? Through attention to issues of sex and gender, we will explore what it means to live within the institutions of law and religion and how those institutions interrelate. The class will focus on topics such as: marriage, anti-miscegenation laws, reproductive justice, sexual education, and religious freedom. This class is intended to be interdisciplinary and assumes no prior knowledge. This class is especially suitable for students interested in religious studies, law and letters/pre-law, gender studies, and history. *Erin Simmonds*

RLST 27392 – Global Connections before Globalization: Sufis and Seafarers across the Indian Ocean

This course introduces students to the history of the Indian Ocean as a connected space in the centuries preceding widespread colonialism (ca. 1200-1600). In recent years, scholars have highlighted the Indian Ocean as a critical economic region in the 19th and 20th centuries. But before the industrial revolution and the invention of the steam engine, people from a variety of social backgrounds established contact with each other across Indian Ocean spaces. They formed religious communities, introduced new commodities and goods across space, or were forcibly enslaved and brought across the ocean against their will. By focusing on primary sources and first-person accounts—travelogues, letters, memoirs, and histories—we will explore the question of what we can learn about Indian Ocean worlds before globalization through consideration of individual lives. What picture do we get of a world on the brink of major social, political, and technological changes from reading about individuals’ experiences? How can they decenter modern conceptions of space and periodization? In the course, we will pay special attention to the formation of religious networks, religious interactions, and histories of enslavement across the Indian Ocean. *Zoe W. High*

RLST 27501 – Indigenous Religions, Health, and Healing

This course introduces students to the dynamic, often-contested understandings of health, healing, and religion among the Indigenous peoples of the Americas. Our task will be threefold: first, to examine the drastic effects of settler colonialism upon the social determinants of health for Indigenous peoples throughout the Americas, including the Caribbean, Mexico, United States, and Hawaii. Second, we shall attempt to understand healing practices as they are steeped in and curated by Indigenous traditions and religious beliefs. Our goal is to counteract centuries-old stereotypical images of Native peoples and challenge our preconceived notions of wellness, selfhood, and the boundaries of medicine. Third, we will reflect upon contemporary Indigenous approaches to health and healing with particular attention to the postcolonial hybridity of these practices. Throughout the course we will attend to a generative diversity of epistemologies, anthropologies, and religious worldviews with the ultimate goal that a renewed understanding of Indigenous healing traditions will augment our own approaches to global/public health and the study of religion. *Mark M. Lambert*

### RLST 27651 – Anthropology of Revolution: Orientalism, Islam, and the Middle East in Global Perspective

The rise of political Islam in the Middle East as a revolutionary force has provoked concern among commentators fearing that without separation between “church and state,” the region is doomed to religious conflict. But what’s Islamic about political Islam, or religious about religious conflict? What does it mean to frame secularism as a solution to this “problem”? How do Orientalist narratives complicate our understanding of political movements?  
In this class, we deploy anthropological methods to interrogate how religion and secularism are defined by exploring Islam as a lived religion and political practice in the contemporary Middle East. Reading ethnographic texts from Iran, Lebanon, and Egypt, we explore how political activists have framed challenges and their responses. Are “political Islam” and “secularism” useful analytics for examining Middle Eastern revolutions and uprisings? What makes a government “secular”? And what roles have Western powers played in shaping contemporary conflicts and how they are framed?  
Course discussion is driven by both texts and popular films. Drawing on an interdisciplinary body of works from anthropology, history, and sociology, in addition to primary sources, we ask what answers ethnographic methods can provide. We critically engage with films from the region as well as popular Western media representations and news articles. *Abhishek Bhattatcharyya*

RLST 29060 – Freedom of Religion

This course will consider the place of religious freedom in the modern pluralistic liberal order and introduce students to some of the interpretive issues and legal doctrines associated with the Religion Clauses of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Readings will come from a mixture of classical writings on the relationship between religion and civil government, more recent scholarly works on the place of religious commitments and religious diversity in the liberal political order, scholarly works on the Religion Clauses, and U.S. case law on the freedom of religion. *David Lyons*

**SPRING 2023**

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 pro-seminar 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 42214 – Transnational Religious Movements

This course examines the transnational reach of various religious movements drawing mainly from literature in anthropology and cultural studies. Topics that will be considered include inter-religious encounters, refugees and migrant communities, diasporic nationalism, cultural politics of globalization, and post-socialist capitalism. *Angie Heo*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HREL 42214

AASR 53817 – Charisma in the Age of Trumpism

Everyone knows what ‘charisma’ feels like – but who can explain it? Today, the word is everywhere. It describes politicians and leaders, celebrities and crooks. It’s light and it’s dark – how are we supposed to tell the difference? It’s secular and it’s theological. Liberal political theory struggles with its implications, tending to dismiss it as the sort of unreason ill befitting a mature democracy. And yet those same political theorists are only too happy to ascribe it, condescendingly, to those ‘other polities’ in the Global South, the ones that anthropologists have traditionally tried to theorize. In the age of Trumpism, this kind of boundary drawing between the politics of the West and those of the rest, always dubious, is no longer credible. So what tools do we have for making sense of charisma in the present? Is it, as some insist, a fuzzy stand-in for a serious concept, or can we do serious work with it?  
In this seminar, we’ll engage Max Weber’s seminal work on charismatic authority. But we will not presume that the matter begins or ends there. Instead, we will trace genealogies backwards and forwards from Weber’s canonical intervention, exploring theological, ethnological, literary, and psychoanalytic perspectives. *William Mazzarella*

Biblical Studies

BIBL 33909 – Stoics and Epicureans

Stoicism and Epicureanism became two major strands of philosophy after Aristotle and attracted many followers. They are fundamentally opposed. The Stoics believed in an immanent deity who issued moral laws to humans. They were also the first to develop a robust theory of cosmopolitanism and natural law. The Epicureans rejected divine governance, leaving it up to humans to achieve their own happiness by following the goal of pleasure. Much derided as hedonists, they sought to purify the quest for pleasure by understanding the height of pleasure as the absence of pain. Surprisingly, both groups discovered in time that had something in common. This course will examine their differences and interactions in Greek and Roman antiquity, as well as trace the impact of both philosophies in modern times. *Elizabeth Asmis*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 21909

BIBL 43803 – Biblical Notions of Covenant

This is a reading course in biblical texts that engage the notion of covenant. Covenant is a central religious idea in many biblical texts, even as different authors conceptualized it in very different ways. In this course, we will examine the ways that covenant is understood in a selection of texts from the Hebrew Bible. All biblical texts will be read in Hebrew. This course serves as the third quarter of the Hebrew language sequence in the Divinity School, but it is also open to other students with the proper language preparation. PQ: BIBL 33900 and 34000 Introductory Biblical Hebrew I and II, or equivalent. Course Note: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *Jeffrey Stackert*

BIBL 44904 – Paul’s First and Last Letters—The Macedonian Correspondence

A Greek exegesis course on 1 Thessalonians and Philippians, likely (though not uncontestedly) Paul’s first and last letters. We shall engage in close reading of these letters with attention to lexicography, grammar, syntax, and style, and put these philological skills to work on the study of key issues such: as Paul’s mode of writing and argumentation, his development of a Christian “idiolect” (in-group language), his opponents and modes of response to them, and his theology and ethics. We shall also ask whether one can see evolution in his thought from his first to likely final letter, Philippians, written from Rome as he contemplates his death. 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 Introductory 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 45300 – Disability Studies and Biblical Studies

This course will consider the application of disabilities studies theory in the interpretation of biblical texts. It will introduce students to the recent history of scholarship in this subspecialty and the various ends pursued by those studying disability in ancient literary representations. While focused mainly on the Hebrew Bible, students of the New Testament/early Christianity or ancient Judaism may choose to take the course and write their paper on a relevant text. PQ: Strong Biblical Hebrew. *Jeffrey Stackert*

BIBL 46000 – Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible

In this course, students will learn the basic concepts, methods, theories, resources, and scholarly history of the textual criticism of the books making up the Hebrew Bible. They will practice comparing the Massoretic Text with relevant other manuscripts and text-traditions in Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic; evaluating variants; and considering unattested emendations. Students will explore the overlap between composition-history and manuscript-history. At the conclusion of this course, students will have the knowledge and tools to embark on their own text-critical examination of passages in the Hebrew Bible. PQ: Students need to have working knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic, especially Hebrew and Greek. *Sarah Yardney*

Philosophy of Religion

DVPR 31800 – Introduction to Phenomenology

Phenomenology has exerted an unparalleled influence on the history of twentieth century and twenty-first century continental thought. In this course we will examine its development as well as its impact on related areas of inquiry: existentialism, hermeneutics, critical theory, and deconstruction. We will focus our attention on the problematic status of phenomenology as what Edmund Husserl called “universal knowledge.”  Readings will be drawn from: Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Emmanuel Levinas, Simone de Beauvoir, Frantz Fanon, Hannah Arendt, and Jacques Derrida, among others. *Ryan Coyne*

Equivalent Div Course(s): THEO 33905, RLST 24905

DVPR 40002 – Time and Eternity: Philosophical and Theological Perspectives

Does modern philosophy succeed in divorcing the question of time from that of eternity? Does it reject eternity as a theological remnant of a bygone era? Not at all: since Nietzsche, philosophers -- no less than their counterparts in theology -- have been obsessed with the connection between time and eternity. In this course we will adopt two perspectives on this obsession: first, we will examine ancient and medieval sources on the issue (e.g. Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Augustine, etc.). Second, we will focus our attention on the enigma of eternity, its strangely resilient character, in three thinkers: Spinoza, Nietzsche, Heidegger. We will then use these thinkers to ask how eternity is conceived in more recent philosophical and theological sources. PQ: Instructor consent required. Undergraduates may petition the instructor to enroll. *Ryan Coyne*

Equivalent Div Course(s): THEO 40002

DVPR 47300 – Philosophical Traditions in Indian Buddhist Thought

In this seminar, we will consider representative texts from what traditional doxographical schemas take to be the principal schools of Buddhist thought in India in the first millennium CE. PQ: Some background in Buddhist thought and/or classical Buddhist languages is desirable. *Dan Arnold*

History of Christianity

HCHR 30300 – History of Christian Thought III

This course covers the early modern era from the 14th through the 16th century. The emphasis is on intellectual history, particularly that of the reformation and the Council of Trent. The course includes readings from 14th century mystics and late-medieval dissidents such as John Hus, Luther, Zwingli and Calvin, as well as Ignatius of Loyola and the Council of Trent. *Paul C.H. Lim*

Equivalent Div Course(s): THEO 30300

HCHR 35200 – Medieval Latin

The Practice of Carolingian Saints’ Tales. Spoken “Lingua Romana rustica” departed from canonical Ancient Latin long before the late eighth century. But at this time the renewed study of the Classics and grammar soon prompted scholars and poets to update the stories of their favorite saints and to inscribe some for the first time. We shall examine examples of ninth-century Carolingian “réécriture” and of tandem new hagiography in both prose and verse by authors such as Lupus of Ferrières, Marcward of Prüm, Wandalbert of Prüm, Hildegar of Meaux, and Heiric of Auxerre. All source readings in Classical Latin adapted to new Carolingian purposes, which we shall also explore historically in their own right. *Michael Allen*

HCHR 43200 – Colloquium: Ancient Christianity

A critical reading of influential narratives--both ancient and modern--of “the rise of Christianity” in the first four centuries, and the sources from which they are composed, asking the question: can such a narrative be told (if it can be told) in a way other than as a romance or a tragedy? Each week we shall analyze select primary sources (textual, artistic, architectural, on which students will give presentations) that illuminate crucial issues (e.g. demographics, conversion, race, persecution, martyrdom, asceticism, gender, ecclesiological and ritual structures, intellectual lineages, orthodoxy and heresy), personalities (e.g., Ignatius, Perpetua and Felicitas, Irenaeus, Antony, Melania the Elder and Melania the Younger, Eusebius, desert Fathers and Mothers, Constantine, Macrina, Augustine) and events. On-going reflection on the nature of historiography as a science and an art, involving both discovery and invention. Course Note: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *Margaret Mitchell*

History of Judaism

HIJD 30751 – Global Jewish History since the 1960s

Jewish history around the globe since the mid-century watershed of the Holocaust of European Jewries; the establishment of a Jewish nation-state and a majority-Jewish Israeli society marked by radically new forms of Jewish culture and profound divisions of identity, ideology, and inequity; the unmaking of Jewish life in the Middle East and North Africa; the unprecedentedly full integration of American Jews into the political, economic, and cultural life of a global power; the total assimilation but stigmatization of Soviet Jews, and the further entanglement of Jewish and Palestinian life after 1967. Examines Jewish political, cultural, religious, and intellectual life with a particular focus on the creation and then ongoing crisis of secular Jewishness in Israel, the complexities of full integration in a dynamic but deeply fissured United States, the evolution of the Israeli-Arab conflict, and the deepening of Israeli domination over Palestinian life, feminism and the transformation of Jewish communal life, resurgent traditionalist religiosity, and rising disagreements over Zionism, identity, politics, and the Jewish future roiling Jewish communities. *Kenneth Moss*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 20751

HIJD 37652 – Broken Mirrors: Writing the Other from Herodotus to the Jewish/Christian Schism

How are Others represented in Greco-Roman, Jewish, and Christian canons?Is the Other purely a mirror of the self who represents it? Or do self and Other interact? Can we trace and compare patterns of representation and taxonomies for human difference across cultures, genres, regions, periods, and sciences? How can we develop new critical frameworks and concepts for this task, if we refuse to take for granted the categories and conventions of today's academic disciplines? What might this new approach to the Other help us to learn, or unlearn, about the making of "the West"?

### In order to answer those questions, our course will survey the most influential literary models of the Other, from Herodotus to the early medieval "Life of Jesus" polemic tradition. Beyond developing a new framework for exploring and connecting these diverse sources, it has three historical aims. First, to interrogate the limits of modern anthropology as the institutionalized site for writing and knowing the Other. Second, to reveal the centrality of the figure of the Jew in the prehistory of anthropology, where it plays a neglected but crucial role in the European history of human difference in general. Finally, to expose the premodern roots of "scientific" categories–"primitive," "civilized," "Oriental," "Aryan," "Semite," etc.–where racial, linguistic, religious, and cultural differences still intersect today. *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

HREL 38404 – Zen and Translation

In terms of their teachings and practices the Ch’an / Son / Zen (禅) Buddhist traditions in China, Korea, and Japan differed significantly in their respective cultural parameters even as they shared a Sino-centric body of textual materials. The translation of these shared materials into English occurred sporadically from as early as the late 19th century but was first systematically addressed in Kyoto from the 1960s. Ruth Fuller Sasaki created a Zen practice center and a translation atelier at the Ryosen-an (龍泉庵), a cloister within the Daitokuji (大徳寺) Zen Buddhist temple complex, and staffed it with both leading scholars of Buddhism in Japan and a new generation of Zen practitioners and writers from the West. Many of the original materials from these efforts are now held in the Special Collections of the Regenstein Library here at the University of Chicago.

This course will be an examination of how Zen was initially interpreted, translated, and transmitted from the Sino-centric to the Anglophone world in the mid-20th century. The focus will be the actual notes and draft translations of key Zen texts as worked on at the Ryosen-an and its team of Japan-based scholars and practitioners. Supplemental readings will contextualize these efforts more generally with the history of Zen in the West. *James Ketelaar*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 28404

HREL 38499 – How Did The Ancients Interpret Their Myths?

How did the ancient Greeks interpret their own narratives about the gods? How did their encounter with Near Eastern mythologies shape their own story-telling, and how did their understanding and use of myths evolve with time? In this course, we will explore the ancient interpretation of myth from the archaic Greek to the Roman periods. First, we will focus on the cross-cultural adaptations of Near Eastern traditions in Greek epic (Homer and Hesiod), as a form of interpretation itself. Then we will discuss how ancient poets and thinkers interpreted and reinterpreted divine narratives, paying attention to their philosophical, literary, and cultural strategies, from Orphism and Plato to the Stoics and later philosophical schools, including Euhemerism and its engagement with Phoenician mythology. *Carolina López-Ruiz*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 28499

HREL 49100 – “History of Religions” and Japan

Edmund Buckley was one of the first recipients of the Ph.D. degree from the University of Chicago. His dissertation was published in 1895 with the title *Phallicism in Japan*. As a practitioner of the new “science of religions,” Buckley carried out his field work in Japan and collected hundreds of objects to supplement his historical and comparative research with copious examples of contemporary material culture. These talismans, ritual objects, amulets, maps and guides to Buddhist and Shinto pilgrimage sites, portable statues, shrines for traveling and the home, as well as numerous folk curios (such as phalli and kteis related to his research), were kept by the University of Chicago and, over the decades, were moved many times. They now, or much of them at any rate, reside within the Smart Museum of Art. They are uncatalogued, merely stored there, and are largely unknown.

This course will be an examination of the discipline of *religionswissenschaft* as it was applied to Japan and the religious worlds therein. Buckley’s work, as well as the remnants of his collection, will serve as a major resource. Moreover, close readings of the works of Anesaki Masaharu, Hori Ichiro, Joseph Kitagawa, Helen Hardacre, and others, will enhance our understanding of the history of this discipline as applied to the religious world of Japan. *James Ketelaar*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 29100

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. *Staff*

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. *Scott Doolin*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 15300

ISLM 30050 – Introduction to Hadith Literature

This course offers an introduction to hadith literature, which encompasses traditions about the life of the prophet Muhammad, his speeches and deeds. The aim is to familiarize students with the basic terminology, the different genres of hadith literature, the development of the classical hadith scholarship, the most important hadith collections, as well as studies on hadith criticism. We will examine the methods of collecting and transmitting the hadiths in Islamic history, their evaluation and assessment by Muslim scholars, the role of hadiths in law, theology and Sufism, and the modern academic debates on the authenticity of the hadiths. Additionally, the course will engage with the genesis of Twelve Shiite and Zaidi hadith. *Mehmetcan Akpinar*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 11050

ISLM 40010 – Introduction to Islamic Studies

This course is designed for graduate students who wish to learn about the tools, primary and secondary sources, references, journals, distinct subfields, and electronic resources available to researchers in Arabic and Islamic Studies. We will acquire first-hand knowledge and practice of basic skills that will help professionalize students in the field, and will discuss methodological issues related to the study of Islamicate civilization in various historical, cultural, political, and religious frameworks. PQ: Basic Ability to work with Classical Arabic. *Yousef Casewit*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 20410

Religions in the Americas

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: 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. *Curtis Evans*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HCHR 42901, RLST 21303

RAME 47722 – Evangelicals and Race

This graduate seminar will examine the complex ways, overtly and in more subtle, implicit ways, that Protestant evangelical Christianity has shaped race, the lived experience of race, and conversations about race in the US in the 20th and 21st centuries. Roughly half of the course will engage historical, sociological, and anthropological works on evangelicalism and race as a way of understanding how evangelicals have constructed, supported, and (in rarer instances) challenged racial categories and racism in the US. The course will also spend some time looking at primary sources where key evangelical figures write about and self-consciously reflect on race matters as theological and social phenomena. Some attention will be given to African American Protestants who identify as evangelical or who are regarded as such in scholarly studies. While a host of topics will be addressed, some of the more prominent will include evangelical individualism and resistance to structural understandings of racism, color-blindness as a response to the decline of legal segregation and a way of avoiding or critiquing attention to race in contemporary American life, and the continuing and enduring salience of race in evangelical political practices and voting preferences. *Curtis Evans*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HCHR 47722, RLST 27722

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 50403 – Advanced Seminar in Chaplaincy/Spiritual Care

The Advanced Seminar in Chaplaincy/Spiritual Care is offered every other year to create a forum for exploring developments in the field, reading new publications, engaging leading professionals, and helping students to articulate their own intellectual projects with regard to the professions of chaplaincy/spiritual care. Prerequisite: RELP 35202 or permission of instructor. *Sunil Yacav*

Religious Ethics

RETH 30100 – Minor Classics in Ethics

This is an an informal, non-credit reading group consisting of RETH Faculty and Master’s and doctoral students interested in religious ethics. Students may join the reading group in any quarter.   
Selected articles or chapters have revitalized forgotten themes or have launched new problems for moral philosophy, social thought, theology, and religious ethics. They exhibit ways of combining attention to concepts and arguments in moral and political theory, on the one hand, with concrete matters in practical experience and public life, on the other.  
The format is informal, and the discussions are text-focused. Students should come prepared to identify one sentence or paragraph that they find illuminating, obscure, or problematic, and explain why they think so. *William Schweiker*

RETH 37000 – Moral Theory and Philosophical Ethics

How ought we live? That is the basic question of ethics or moral philosophy and religious ethics. It is a deceptively simple question. How to live: why is it that human beings ask let alone are perplexed by this question? Other social animals do not seem bothered about how to live. Is this a matter of human distinctiveness? Who is the "we" in question: is it a specific community defined by race, language, ethnicity, history, or gender, or does it include all human beings? What is the origin and meaning of an obligation, an "ought," about how to live: is it from God or the gods, nature, human reason, social mores and custom or some combination of these sources? And what does it mean to live, to be genuinely alive amid the daily routines and demands of staying alive? Does our living include obligations to others and their well-being and to the common good, or should we be self-seeking creatures interested only in our own happiness? This course explores the major thinkers and texts in Western moral theory and philosophical ethics that address these and other questions that surround every human life and the existence of every human society. Course Note: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *William Schweiker*

Eqivalent Div Course(s): THEO 37000

Religion, Literature, and Visual Culture

RLVC 30101 – Introduction to Religion, Literature, and Visual Culture

This course will be a synoptic examination of a series of case studies concerning the evolution of modes of representation of religions by its practitioners, toward the articulation of the complementarity – inherent for the religions, necessary to be recognized and addressed by the scholar – of literary and visual cultures. Materials will be drawn chiefly from Buddhist, Greco-Roman, Jewish, and Christian materials. The course will meet in person on an intensive schedule in the first five weeks of the quarter, with the final three weeks devoted to the research and writing of a scholarly paper on a selected “case” of this complementarity. *Richard Rosengarten and Jaś Elsner*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 26000

RLVC 38100 – Gender and Salvation in Jainism and Buddhism

In 1991, Padmanbh Jaini published *Gender and Salvation*, a monograph that tracks the unfolding of debates within Jainism about the spiritual liberation of women. The book persuasively demonstrates how Jainism and, by extension, Buddhism began to question and subsequently answer questions about women and gender non-conforming people’s bodies, specific paths of women’s religiosity, and the (im)possibility of women’s liberation. This course takes Jaini’s book as its starting point, to explore secondary scholarship on Jainism and Buddhism published in its wake alongside primary source materials. *Sarah Pierce Taylor*

RLVC 34623 – The Psalms: Communication, Conversion, and Meditation

Arguably, the Book of Psalms is the most-read piece of literature in the Judeo-Christian world. Both the Jewish and Christian tradition made the Psalms the foundation of their liturgy. The Psalter was the one book of the Bible that every Christian monk knew intimately, shaping the rhythm of his daily life. The Psalms are the most cited book of the Old Testament in the New Testament. No book of the Bible received more commentary by early Christian and medieval theologians, representing the foundation of all religious knowledge. Lay people through the ages used it in personal prayer and meditation, drawing strength and consolation from this unique Biblical genre. Teachers employed the Psalms to teach children how to write, ensuring that they became part of the linguistic vocabulary and mental imagery of literate people. Not surprisingly, the poetic sensibility and practice of major Western writers from Augustine, Judah Halevi, and George Herbert to Emily Dickinson and Paul Celan was informed by their reading of the Psalms. Given their importance for the religious and literary culture of the Judeo-Christian world, we will begin our course by closely reading a good number of the 150 Psalms, focusing on how they model a paradoxical communication, namely the conversation between a fallible self and an almighty and distant God. We will then hone in on the role of the Psalms for the conversion and formation of the self in number of seminal Christian thinkers such as Augustine, John Cassian, Saint Benedict, Martin Luther, among others. Since the Psalms were disseminated so widely, we will pay particular attention the material and medial forms in which they were read and performed. Readings and discussions in English. *Christopher Wild*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 22623

RLVC 38330 – Art and Religion from the Roman to the Christian Worlds

This course will be an introduction to Roman and early Christian art from the early empire to late antiquity. It will explore the significance of the changes in visual production in relation to different attitudes to religion and society; its specific and conflictive historiography; the particular issues involved in the move to Christianity and a Christian visual culture. We shall veer between an empirical inductive approach, looking at lots of stuff and a more general account of theoretical overviews that have been offered for Roman and late art – overviews that have been influential in the broader historiography of art history as a discipline. Course Note: The course will be taught over 5 weeks in the Spring Quarter on an intensive schedule. *Jaś Elsner*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 28330

Theology

THEO 34400 – Radical Theologies and Heretical Praxis in Reformation Europe: From Luther to Quaker Prophetesses

Reformation and post-Reformation Europe was a persecuting society, caught up in the agonistic journey toward a greater instantiation of toleration and liberty of conscience. Radical religious ideas were perceived to be threats to the well-being of politics and religion and the emerging public sphere, and innumerable texts were printed to circumscribe, control and quell such blasphemous rumors from turning into reality. In this seminar, ideas of the following individuals will be explored to see the nexus between tolerable orthodoxy and heterodoxy as historical artefacts and theological consequences, such as Luther, Servetus, Müntzer, Milton, Hobbes, the Quakers, various anti-trinitarians, and Thomas Woolston – whose radical views on the resurrection of Jesus shaped that of Voltaire, Lessing and D.F. Strauss. Consequently, we will see that notions of orthodoxy and heresy are historically contingent, processual, and predicated on the structures and systems of power, whether religious or political, real or imaginary. *Paul C.H. Lim*

THEO 35006 – Theology and Polycrisis

The existential challenge of our contemporary time is how to think and live in a world in polycrisis. The convergence of many extreme crises—climate change, war, racism, the ongoing violence of the patriarchy, the inordinate wealth discrepancy between rich and poor—has led many to see these days as the beginning of the end of the world. This course asks what theology might contribute to understanding world’s intersecting crises and what resources it offers for contending with them. How might theology address a world seemingly facing apocalypse? On what grounds do theologians speak responsibly of God today?  
Thematizing the topic of apocalypse in the history of theology, we examine how theology takes up the challenge of navigating the incommensurability between the world’s vast problems and the perceived smallness of human action. We investigate how the systematic aspect of theological thinking becomes relevant in discussions of evil and how theology’s speculative dimension introduces ways to think about God in relation to the world’s end. We also apply exegetical, interpretive, and imaginative skills to make diagnostic sense of the self-world relation. The course concludes by orienting theology to the current discussion of “world-building” and by considering spiritual disciplines that are attuned to this theme.   
Texts by, among others: Boethius, Schleiermacher, Meister Eckhart, Barth, Baldwin, McCord Adams, Haraway, McGinn, Iman Jackson, and Keller. *Christine Helmer*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 25006

THEO 38000 – Theology and Difference

The challenge of difference informs modern religion, culture, and politics; it is also a central issue in theology. The energy around difference has to do with conversations about the critique of binaries and the recovery of “the real” in order to secure alterity for ethical and hermeneutical purposes. The course focuses on varying accounts of “difference” (such as conceptual distinctions, social constructions, binaries, the “really real”) to explore their significance for contemporary thought in theology and the humanities. Gender and human-animal relation are of particular interest. In the process of thinking about difference, we also explore difference in meta-cognitive terms, such that we investigate how difference is constitutive of thinking and how aspects of difference must be maintained in order to subvert the tendency that subsumes difference under sameness.   
Theological approaches to difference will be discussed in relation to: 1) Critical theory, particularly contemporary criticisms of “critique” that focus on binaries vulnerable to the machinations of power; 2) Dialectics as a historical and hermeneutical philosophical/theological movement of reason and how difference and sameness are posited; 3) Reciprocities between difference and how they can be sustained without being collapsed into sameness; 4) Constructions of “singularity” in theologies of belonging. Texts by, among others: Schleiermacher, Aquinas, Luther, Tonstad, Moten, and Nash. *Christine Helmer*

THEO 39700 – Theological Genealogies of Modernity

Narratives about the origins of modernity typically attribute a key role to religious and theological considerations, although their significance is understood in various ways. The different roles ascribed to religious factors most often relate to whether the emergence of Western modernity is imagined to be a story of progress or decline. This seminar will explore the general form of genealogical approaches to modernity and how they serve to vindicate or critique aspects of the present. Indicative sources are works by Löwith, Blumbenberg, MacIntyre, Merchant, Taylor, Milbank, and Gregory. We will consider such questions as the extent to which secular conceptions of history continue to draw upon covert theological principles; whether secular modernity lacks normative foundations; the nature of secularization and secularism; the historical relations between science and religion and their respective roles in the trajectory of the modern West. PQ: Undergraduates may enroll themselves after obtaining instructor permission. *Peter Harrison*

Equivalent Div Course(s): AASR 39700, RETH 39700, RLST 28710

THEO 40102 – Womanist Theology: 1st Generation

Womanist Theology is a contemporary theological discipline in the American academy. It emerged in 1979 and has differentiated into various other disciplines, foci, and methodologies All scholars agree that womanist theology does the following work: (1) expands the theory and method of the academy; (2) broadens the intellectual conversation; (3) welcomes new voices into theological explorations; and (4) challenges the very notion of assumed epistemology. In 1979 Jacquelyn Grant wrote what has now been recognized as the first "womanist" article, "Black Theology and the Black Woman". In that essay, Grant astutely pointed out certain blind spots in black theology of liberation, the larger discussions about the academic study of religion, and the relation between theology and faith communities. *Dwight Hopkins*

THEO 50701 – Will, Life, Value

With advances in genetics and technology as well environmental endangerments, the claim living beings make upon human responsibility has been a dominate theme in modern Western philosophical and theological ethics. Some thinkers have turned to non-Western modes of thought to address this topic or sought to reclaim ancient conceptions against modern ethics. This seminar moves through levels of reflection, ranging from what defines “life” through the relation between human existence and other creatures, to, finally, the theological question of the significance of life raised within the compass of ethical reflection. The seminar starts with Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche, and so a debate within *Lebensphilosophie.* Next, we will consider 20th century thinkers, specifically Hans Jonas’ philosophical biology and theory of responsibility, Paul Ricoeur’s philosophy of will and attestation, and Iris Murdoch’s account of the good as ways which challenge the modern emphasis on the power of will. The course concludes with reflection on the importance of claims about human nature and our relation to other animals (Midgley), ethical naturalism (Foot) and future generations (Habermas). The seminar, accordingly, explores the range of positions on this topic, debates about founding attributes towards life (reverence, resignation, attestation, etc.,), and to trace the significance of claims about the divine and moral responsibility. Course Note: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *William Schweiker*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RETH 50701

Religious Studies (Undergraduate Designation)

RLST 20113 – Heaven, Hell, and Life After Death

What happens after people die? Nothing at all? Does the same thing happen to everyone after death, or is there some form of postmortem reward and punishment? If heaven exists, what is heaven like? How do beliefs about life after death influence behavior in this life? This course engages with these questions as we explore the development and diversity of afterlife beliefs in Judaism and Christianity, from antiquity to the present day. We will pay special attention to the various functions of afterlife beliefs at different points in history, including in our contemporary society. Is Marx correct that belief in heaven and eternal life legitimizes the social order and contributes to oppression on earth? Conversely, does the idea of postmortem rewards and punishments actually contribute to a more just society by motivating individuals to strive to live virtuously? By the end of the course, students will not only be familiar with Jewish and Christian conceptions of the afterlife, but also conversant in perspectives on postmortem existence found in classical philosophy that continue to inform how we think about death in the contemporary world. There are no prerequisites. *Christine R. Trotter*

RLST 20210 – Greek and Near Eastern Creation Stories

This course will offer a comparative view of Greek traditions about the origin of the world (cosmogony) and the origin of the gods (theogony), and the multiple layers on which they were entangled with Near Eastern narratives. On the Greek side, we will focus on Hesiod, Homer, and the Orphic poems. Near Eastern sources will include Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Hittite, Phoenician, and Hebrew texts. The reading of primary sources will be done in translation (though students are always encouraged to check the texts in the original language for closer reading and discussion, if training allows). We will engage with secondary bibliography, especially works that take a comparative approach or discuss the comparative method. We will discuss the methodological challenges and advantages of comparative mythology and the phenomenon of cultural exchange, as revealed in these mythical and literary connection. *Carolina López-Ruiz*

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.

RLST 20904 – Introduction to Jainism

Jainism has long been on the margins of Religious Studies, little known beyond its otherworldly emphasis on extreme forms of asceticism, nonviolence, and vegetarianism. This course seeks to expand this popular understanding of Jainism by posing a question: What does it mean to be a Jain in the world when the Jain religion is fundamentally otherworldly in its orientation? By reading ethnographies and historical studies alongside primary sources, this course will introduce students to Jainism as an enduring lived religion whose meaning and practice has changed over time, across regions, between sectarian communities, and in conversation with Buddhism and Hinduism. By the end of the quarter, students can expect to understand Jainism as a minor religion with a major impact. Course Note: This course counts as a Gateway course for RLST majors/minors. *Sarah Pierce Taylor*

RLST 22015 – Jewish Spaces and Places, Imagined and Real

What makes a ghetto, a ghetto? What defines a Jewish neighborhood? What determined the architectural form of synagogues? Making extensive use of Jewish law and customary practice, cookbooks, etiquette guides, prints, films, novels, maps, memoirs, architectural drawings and photographs, and tourist guides, this course will analyze how Jews (in all their diversity) and non-Jews defined Jewish spaces and places. The focus will be on Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries, but we will also venture back into the early modern period and across the Mediterranean to Palestine/Israel and North Africa and the Atlantic to the Caribbean and the Americas. We will study both actually existing structures—synagogues, ritual baths, schools, kosher (and kosher-style) butcher shops, bakeries and restaurants, social and political clubs, hospitals, orphanages, old age homes, museums and memorials—but also texts and visual culture in which Jewish places and spaces are imagined or vilified. Parallel to our work with primary sources we will read in the recent, very rich, scholarly literature on this topic. This is not a survey course; we will undertake a series of intensive case-studies through which we will address the larger issues. This is a limited-enrollment, discussion-based course in which both undergraduates and graduate students are welcome. No previous knowledge of Jewish history is expected. Course Notes: In order for a Spring course to qualify as a civilization course for the general education requirement, the student must also take Jewish Civilization I and II. A Spring course, however, may also be taken as an independent elective. *Leora Auslander*

RLST 22707 – Rumi: Poetry, Wisdom, and Metaphysics

Hailed as one of the world’s greatest mystical poets, Jalal al-Din Rumi (d. 1273) transcends the boundaries of language, religion and ethnicity. Today Rumi’s poems can be heard in mosques, monasteries, churches and synagogues. This course examines Rumi’s teachings, the metaphysics of love and his perennial wisdom through translations of his sublime verse, the quintessential art form of the Sufis. Students will engage with the field of Persian Sufi literature and understand the methods employed by scholars in studying Sufi poetry. *Mukhtar Ali*

RLST 23150 – Capitalism and Doing Good?

This class asks the question: is it possible to believe in capitalism (i.e., the private ownership of wealth) and do good for society? Restated, are there values that can accompany capital accumulation for positive social impact on people and the environment? *Dwight Hopkins*

RLST 23311 – The Past, Present, and Future of Feminist Ethics

Many injustices in the world are related to gender oppression and inequality. In this introductory course, we will examine the ways that feminist ethics aims to identify, assess, and correct gender biases that cause this harm. We will begin by situating feminist ethics within its historical context to understand how and why it developed. We will then consider different methods that feminists use to identify and critique oppressive social structures, including race and class in addition to gender. With these tools in hand, we will assess several acute sources of gender oppression and inequality, giving particular to attention to the global labor market, reproductive mores, and climate change. Throughout the course, we will consider the intersection of gender with religion, race, class, and global location, while being attentive to the role that Western feminism has had in shaping global views on oppression and inequality. We will focus on the influence of religion on feminist ethics. As we read, we will explore the normative commitments that are expressed in the texts, as well as the bases for these commitments and the religious and secular sources of authority to which the authors appeal as they claim to advance gender justice. This will include texts by feminists that engage with religious traditions, such as Judaism, Buddhism, and Indigenous religions. This course is an undergraduate course that assumes no prior knowledge in ethics, feminist studies, or religious studies. Course Note: This course counts as a Foundations course for GNSE majors. *Kat Myers*

RLST 23607 – Nietzsche, European Culture, and the Death of God

This course introduces students to the period of cultural turmoil culminating in what Nietzsche called the “death of God.” On Nietzsche’s view, European culture in the 19th century was characterized by a profound rupture with its own history that could be seen in the domains of art, religion, and philosophy. Our task is to understand why Nietzsche believed that such a radical break had occurred, whether he was right, and what this tells us about our relation to our own traditions and values. The course will be divided into two parts. The first will explore theories of cultural collapse. Can a society lose touch with its past? What would it mean to live in such a society? How could we go on if we ceased to recognize ourselves in our cultural way of life? In addition to Nietzsche, readings will include such pivotal thinkers for the modern era as Ludwig Feuerbach, Karl Marx, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jonathan Lear, and Cora Diamond. In the second part of the course, we will test these theories by looking for examples of rupture in literary texts of the period. Our questions: does a comparison of these works suggest a rupture in culture as Nietzsche claimed? And is it plausible to understand the social, political, and religious developments of this period in terms of the death of God? How does the “death of God” still shape our modern world? No prior study of the literature or philosophy discussed is expected. *Joseph Haydt*

RLST 23510 – Ethics of Ethnographic Encounter

How can anthropological perspectives help us rethink issues of current global concern? We will be attending to critiques of ethnographic method: calls to decolonize the discipline, demands to make it more collaborative. At that level, we will be exploring anthropology as a distinctive way of engaging the world, and how the ethos of ethnography sits with the difference between scholarship and activism. At the same time, we will be considering what kind of light anthropology can shed on present-day problems such as the politics of indigeneity, scientific authority, environmental crisis, and interspecies relations. *William Mazzarella*

RLST 24103 – Bioethics

This is a seminar that will explore how a variety of philosophic and religious thinkers approach the 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 medicine and science. We will pay particular attention to how issues of race, class, and gender potentiate ethical dilemmas in health care and research.

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: Graduate students will meet in a separate section. *Laurie Zoloth*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RETH 30600

RLST 24223 – *Parrhesia:* Fearless Speech from Socrates to Greta von Thunberg

The course will examine the long history of parrhesia, the Greek term for free and fearless speech, from ancient Athens to its current renaissance through the rediscovery by Michel Foucault. Focusing on the relation of truth and discourse, the course will consider not only the extraction of truth as a form of subjection to disciplinary power but also acts of telling truth to power as a practice of self- formation and exercise of freedom. Parrhesia implies a relation between the human self and the act of truth-telling that is suffused with interesting political, philosophical, and ethical possibilities, which students will be encouraged to explore. The course will begin by reviewing Foucault’s final lectures on parrhesia and “the courage of truth.” It will then examine some of the ancient Greek and Christian texts that Foucault analyzed. It will go on to consider early modern instances of parrhesia (e.g. Galileo and Descartes) and will conclude by surveying relatively recent versions (e.g. Greta von Thunberg and James Comey, JD’85), including contemporary feminist and queer practices of parrhesia. Lectures and discussions in English. No prerequisites. *Christopher Wild*

RLST 24240 – Buddhism and Science: A Critical Introduction

“Buddhism is the only religion able to cope with modern scientific needs.” This quotation, often erroneously attributed to Albert Einstein, prompts the question: Why are such statements about Buddhism so easily taken nowadays as credible and plausible? Currently, it seems no other religion is held as compatible with science as Buddhism: From the recent ‘mindfulness’ craze in psychology and medicine, to the ‘Emptiness’ of quantum physics, Buddhism is uniquely hailed as a ‘rational religion’ whose insights anticipated modern science by millennia. Some even suggest it is not a ‘religion’ at all, but rather a sort of ‘mind-science.’ This course functions as both an introduction to Buddhism and a critical survey of its modern scientific reception. As we explore Buddhism's relationship to contemporary scientific theories in psychology and physics, we will be guided by questions such as: What methodological principles distinguish the practices of religion and science? What are the different ways they can be brought into relation? Why is Buddhism, in particular, singled out as uniquely scientific? What modern historical factors, like colonialism and secularization, contribute to this contemporary meme? Why does it matter whether Buddhism is compatible with science or not? What, exactly, is at stake in this relationship? And for whom? No prior study of Buddhism or the philosophy of science is expected. Course Note: This course counts as a Cognitive Science extra-disciplinary course. *Jesse Berger*

RLST 24803 – History of Sexuality and Sin

Since Foucault’s groundbreaking work on *The History of Sexuality*, we have become attuned to the effects of power and the political implications of the science of sexuality. While Foucault’s text has offered a critical avenue to examine the secular state’s administrations of sexuality, it begins with Christianity’s techniques of power based on the confession of one’s sex. The Christian formulation of the relationship between ‘sex’ and ‘sin’ is essential to understanding the techniques of power that connect sexuality, legality, criminality, normality, and transgression in modern secular contexts. In this class, we will begin with the critical questions of *The History of Sexuality*, then turn to primary texts in order to examine the way ‘sex’ and ‘sin’ became conceptually connected in Christianity, and finally interrogate the effects of this relation for medieval and modern politics. Over the course of these readings, we will trace the relation between the concepts and their effects to discern the histories of sexuality that lie at the root of contemporary debates on freedom, power, resistance, and desire. No prerequisites. *Maureen Kelly*

RLST 25102 – Reading Augustine’s *Confessions*

This course will carry out a close reading of Augustine’s *Confessions*. We will study the work not only as a spiritual autobiography—a common approach—but also as a philosophical argument against various alternatives to Christian faith and practice in the late fourth century. With this bifocal approach in place, we’ll examine how Confessions interrogates the quality of human love, fear, hatred, and regret; moral responsibilities to ourselves and others; the (anxious) awareness that we are limited in body and time; and how to craft an honest narrative of self-understanding. We will ask, Is religion a source of psychic health, or an obstacle to it? What sorts of problems is religion meant to cure? What problems do religious beliefs create? How does religion bear on the self’s loves, its past, its mortality, its doubts? Along the way we’ll ask whether it is possible to want to do evil, whether it is possible to love or grieve too much, what it means to be a friend—and how Augustine’s answers to these questions presuppose a wider account of the order of the cosmos. *Richard B. Miller*

RLST 26269 – Religious Authority in Comparative Perspective

When somebody tells us about the nature of God or the gods, about what such beings want from us, about our experiences before this life or our destinies after it—why should we believe them? With equal and opposite force, why *shouldn’t* we believe them? Are the standards of acceptable belief entirely independent of what we’re told by religious authorities, or is it impossible to arrive at any such standards without presuming something we’ve been told? When confronted with diverse claims about the divine, should we try to ascertain which ones are true, should we combine or harmonize them in some way, or should we dismiss the entire conversation as wrongheaded? In this course, we’ll think through these questions with the help of influential texts drawn from the Buddhist, Hindu, Platonic, and classical Chinese traditions. *Stephen C. Walker*

RLST 26802 – Epic Religion: From the *Ramayana* to *Game of Thrones*

What can epic literature and media teach us about religion? In this introductory seminar, students explore answers to this question, focusing on the ways epics dramatize the human relationship to divinity. We read the epics through the relationships of its central characters—humans, heroes, and gods. By following the winding quests and gory battles of these narratives, students examine how epics present various forms of human-divine relationships—transactional, intimate, inspirational, and manipulative. We employ a comparative approach to the genre; our readings originate in different world regions and historical periods—from ancient India and Greece to West Africa, England, and the contemporary US. We will read these texts closely and examine how they reflect particular views of the human condition within religious worldviews. Considering the contexts of post-colonization, nationalism, and globalization, we analyze how mass media—comic books, TV series, films, and social media—shape and spread those views to new popular audiences. *Andrew Kunze*

RLST 27552 – Race, Religion, and the Idea of Emancipation

In this course we will interrogate the complex relationship between race, religion, and emancipation in the modern period. Drawing on both historical and philosophical approaches, we will ask: What is emancipation, and who is it for? How has emancipation been articulated in relation to religion, and how has this relationship revealed complications in modern ideas of freedom? How has religion functioned as a vehicle for racialization, and how has it been racialized itself? Is religion an impediment to freedom or a means for its actualization? Beginning in the European Enlightenment, we will consider these questions in relation to two distinct, though (crucially) related sites: Jewish emancipation in 18th and 19th century Europe, and Black emancipation in the United States. In doing so, we will treat the relationship between religion, race, and emancipation as a central tension of the modern period, the continuing importance of which has significant consequences for liberatory intellectual and political movements in the present. Readings will include philosophical, historical, and theological approaches by authors including Immanuel Kant, Karl Marx, W.E.B. DuBois, Saidiya Hartman, and James Cone. No prior knowledge is required, though students with background knowledge in race and ethnic studies, religious studies, and philosophy may find it helpful. *William Underwood*

RLST 27659 – Parties and Feasting in/as Religion

Are parties and feasts—a *quinceañera*, a rave, Thanksgiving dinner—sacred or secular? How do we know, and how can we describe and analyze their religious significance? In this course, we will survey parties, feasts, and festivals from antiquity to the present. Topics will include sacrifice and communal meals, drinking and (divine) hangover cures, dance and communal ecstasy, pilgrimage (Mecca and Burning Man), party-associated violence, and the ethics and power dynamics of partying. Students will become familiar with selected texts (all in translation) from ancient Near Eastern, Greek, and Roman sources to modern journalism and ethnography of Islamic pilgrimage. We will also consider material evidence of parties and feasts ancient and modern (trash!). Students will begin to analyze these events comparatively and as ritual. Along the way, we will briefly consider difficulties for such analysis and/or for material studies of religion. No prior knowledge of texts, languages, or periods is assumed or required, but those enrolled must have previously attended at least one party or feast. *Doren Snoek*

RLST 28506 – Jesus: From Scripture to the Silver Screen

Jesus holds particular significance for believers all around the world. But how is he portrayed in modern films? How faithful are these depictions to the Bible? Do these portrayals push a certain kind of theological position? In this course, we will examine film adaptations of Jesus, including biopics, dramas, comedies, and musicals. As we watch everything from Martin Scorsese’s *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988) to Monty Python’s *Life of Brian* (1979), we will compare these modern depictions to ancient texts and theology. During the course, students will become familiar with significant aspects of Jesus’s life both in canonical and noncanonical Gospels, as well as to how those texts have been understood in the antiquity and today. After the class, students will be able to analyze critically portrayals of Jesus in order to understand why certain decisions are made and address pivotal questions about biblical interpretation, cinema and adaptation, and the ethical challenges of representing religious figures in media. No prior familiarity with biblical studies or film criticism is required. *Richard Zaleski*

RLST 28511 – Star Wars and Religion

This course puts religious texts into conversation with George Lucas's popular Star Wars film franchise with an eye toward understanding the power of myth in human life. In interviews, Lucas said he took bits and pieces from a variety of religious traditions to create the mythology of Star Wars. Through close readings of the films and primary texts, students will analyze these influences and evaluate how well the films hold these religious elements together. This course is not an in-depth study of any one religious tradition, but draws elements from different traditions to shed light on the portrayal of religion within Star Wars (i.e., the Force) and the metaphysical and moral themes found in the Star Wars films. *Russell Johnson*

RLST 28612 – The Global Revolt Against Liberalism

Is liberalism in crisis? Only ten years ago, the ideology that won the Cold War seemed to reign supreme. Values such as individualism, free enterprise, representative government, and religious tolerance, were seen as more than hallmarks of order, but the very goals to which every nation should aspire. Since then, however, in the United States and across the globe, the liberal consensus has been challenged by populists, socialists, religious traditionalists, and others. Some have protested the close relationship between liberalism and capitalism. Some objected to liberalism’s breakup of “organic” ethno-religious communities. And some maintained that liberalism is no more than Western imperialism with a human face. What happened? Were these revolts mere setbacks on the long ‘arc of history’? Or were they, rather, a reflection of a deep philosophic unease with the very premises of modernity? Is this the end of the liberal world order? What will replace it? And what is the role of religion in the contemporary political imagination? This class will combine readings in political theory, the philosophy of history, and current events, to understand better these criticisms and gain some perspective on our present discontents. No prior knowledge is required. Course Note: This course counts as an elective course for the Democracy Studies program. *Yiftach Ofek*

RLST 28901 – Religion, Science, Naturalism: Is There a Problem?

The idea that “religion” and “science” are basically at odds with one another — that they involve, indeed, essentially different kinds of rationality — is surely foremost among the ideas that arguably distinguish modernity. This class will consider some of the various ways in which that conclusion has been resisted by some twentieth- and twenty-first-century thinkers, drawing on a range of philosophical and religious perspectives — those, for example, of the Anglo-Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (who would complicate our understanding of what it means to “believe” anything); the German theologian Rudolf Bultmann (whose method precisely distinguished *existential* questions from scientific ones); and the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet (who thinks it imperative that the limits of scientific understanding be acknowledged in light of a Buddhist critique). Particular attention will be given to early writings from American pragmatist philosopher-scientists (William James, C. S. Peirce, and John Dewey), who argued that it is a mistake in the first place to think religion necessarily concerns anything “supernatural”; religion, for these thinkers, can therefore be understood as wholly consistent with *naturalism*. *Dan Arnold*