**DIVINITY COURSE CATALOG 2023-2024**

This is a reference document only. All courses are organized by their parent identity code (ie BIBL). 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. Keep an eye on the codes—100 and 200 level is the undergraduate class designation, 300 level and above for graduate students. A class that has both a 100 or 200 level and a 300 level or above means that the class is open to both graduates and undergraduates. This catalog does not include cross-listed idents outside of the Divinity School. For dates and times, please refer to the Registrar’s website at the top of week 6 each quarter. You can also visit our website for a preliminary/tentative schedule.

**AUTUMN 2023**

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 is the required course for all entering doctoral students in the Divinity School. It has these goals: 1. It aims to introduce you to basic issues in theory and method in the study of religion and to provide you with ways of thinking about how these theories and methods might guide your research. It seeks to make plain that, regardless of your proposed area of study or specialization, you will be contributing to the study of religion, and that you need to develop conscious awareness of the tools and terms according to which the study of religion is carried out. 2. At the same time, the course aims to interrogate the theories and methods under review and to assess their strengths and weaknesses. 3. The principal focus will be on how the study of religion is practiced, but we will also aim to ascertain whether, or to what extent, the materials under review say something about why the study of religion has value. 4. The course also aims to familiarize you with models of scholarship in different areas of specialization, e.g., biblical interpretation, American religious history, theology, philosophy of religion. 5. Finally, the course aims to foster intellectual community and camaraderie among ourselves and to create a context in which we can learn from each other. 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 B. Miller*

Anthropology and Sociology of Religion

AASR 35305 – Anthropology of Food and Cuisine

Contemporary human foodways are not only highly differentiated in cultural and social terms, but often have long and complicated histories. Anthropologists have long given attention to food. But, until quite recently, they did so in an unsystematic, haphazard fashion. This course explores several related themes with a view towards both the micro- and macro-politics of food by examining a range of ethnographic and historical case studies and theoretical texts. It takes the format of a seminar augmented by lectures (during the first few weeks), scheduled video screenings, and individual student presentations during the rest of the course. *Stephan Palmié*

AASR 35500 – Money and Morality

In this course we will study anthropological perspectives on economic behaviors and the moral ideas that guide them. We will ask how material conditions and specific cultural contexts shape religious and moral attitudes towards the exchange of various things (e.g., human body parts, heirlooms, and commodity goods). This course will be of benefit to students interested in bringing the theoretical tools of economic anthropology to bear on the study of religious practice and ideology, as well as those more broadly interested in critical perspectives on capitalism and social theories of gift and commodity exchange. Students are expected to be adept at reading and applying social theory. PQ: Enrollment by Consent Only. Students must email the professor one to two paragraphs explaining how their academic interests and research relate to the course, and their level of preparedness to read and apply anthropological theory. Course Note: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *Elham Mireshghi*

AASR 36311 – Aspirations of Justice

This class thinks through questions of what justice means, what justice promises, what justice betrays, and what possibilities for politics are opened by aspirations of justice at moments of radical rupture. It does so through a focus on critical conceptual terms that also become the frameworks for praxis and institutionalization after war/violence/trauma/revolution/colonialism/slavery/casteism: terms such as transition, transformation, restoration, reconstruction, and repair. The readings will be comparative but grounded out of South Africa’s experience of transition from apartheid, a process that remains frictioned, fractured and far from finished. At the core of the class are two concerns. First: how does one think about non-retributive forms of justice, and what aporias of forgiveness lie at their core? Second, how do these imaginaries and forms of justice get constituted and instituted, out of different histories of foundational violence, different transitional processes, at different moments in time? How, in the process, do histories themselves get rewritten through a process of rewriting wrongs? *Kaushik Sunder Rajan*

AASR 52132 – Advanced Seminar: Science/Fiction/Theory

Science fiction has enjoyed an extraordinary and still growing resurgence in popularity over the last two decades - through literature, film, video games, and even universities, where it is the subject of ever more courses being taught. Why has science fiction become so popular? Does it express the anxieties of a way of life that can't be sustained, is in decline, and might soon end, in the face of intractable war, lurching financial crises, recurrent pandemics, and unchecked climate change? Does it speak to the senses of radical hope and irreparable despair about the future that seem to characterize our time? If so, then science fiction today is grappling with traditionally theological themes: fate and finitude, immortality and the nature of divinity, the place of the human within a cosmic scale, and the possibilities for redemption and messianic rupture. This advanced seminar will explore these themes by pairing sci-fi literature and film with readings of philosophy, ethnography, science and social theory. Throughout, we will ask how science fiction's propensity toward the theological allows it to grapple with the unique forms of hope and despair in our time. *Hussein Ali Agrama*

Biblical Studies

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 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. *Tyler J. Harris*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 13900

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*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 14100

BIBL 38300 – Reading Modern Hebrew for Research Purposes I

The course concentrates on the written language and aims at enabling students to use Modern Hebrew for research purposes. The course is designed to enable students to read Hebrew freely. Major grammatical & syntactical aspects will be covered, and students will acquire substantial vocabulary with attention paid to lexical collocations and semantic fields.   
By the end of the course, students are expected not only to be able to successfully satisfy their departmental language requirements but also to have a great set of skills that would allow them to read any given text, written in Modern Hebrew. (The 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. *Ehud Har-Even*

BIBL 41900 – Priestly Texts in the *Book of Numbers*

This course will focus on the Priestly texts in the book of Numbers and their relationship to the rest of the pentateuchal Priestly source. We will attend to issues of compositional history as well as the religious imagination of the Numbers texts. All texts will be read in Hebrew. PQ: Strong Biblical Hebrew. *Jeffrey Stackert*

BIBL 42035 – *The Acts of Paul and Thecla* and the Pastoral Epistles

In the early second century there were bitter battles over the legacy of Paul and his preserved letters in terms of gender, sexuality, family life, asceticism, church administration, and theological vision. We can see these well by reading the narrative text *The Acts of Paul and Thecla* alongside the “Pastoral Epistles” (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus), the former championing a female, cross-dressing ascetic Christ-missionary and the latter, in pseudepigraphical epistolary texts written in the dead Paul’s name, insisting on patriarchal family life and women’s adherence to traditional roles. In this course we shall read both sets of texts carefully in Greek, noting points of similarity and contestation, and test various models of how these sources—each of which seeks to “fix” the Pauline legacy in its own way—are related to one another. Time allowing, we shall also look at the later reception of the cult of Saint Thecla and late antique interpretations of “the apostle,” Paul, on these issues of sexuality and gender roles, and their perduring influence in contemporary debates. PQ: At least one year of Greek, or equivalent. *Margaret Mitchell*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HCHR 42035, RLST 22035

Philosophy of Religion

DVPR 33202 – Li Zhi and 16th Century China: The Self, Tradition, and Dissent in Comparative Context

The 16th century Chinese iconoclast Li Zhi (Li Zhuowu) has been rightly celebrated as a pioneer of individualism, one of history’s great voices of social protest, an original mind powerfully arguing for genuine self-expression, and more. He was a Confucian official and erudite in the classics, yet in his sixties he takes the Buddhist tonsure, and late in life befriends the Jesuit Matteo Ricci. He sought refuge in a quiet monastery devoting his life to scholarship, yet invited constant scandal. His *A Book to Burn* “sold like hotcakes,” and attracted enough trouble that reportedly readers would surreptitiously hide their copies tucked up their sleeves, and was later banned by the state soon after his death. In this seminar, we will place Li both within the context of the history of “Confucian” thought, and within the literary, religious, and philosophical conversations of the late Ming. Using his writings as a productive case study, we will think about topics including “religion,” tradition and innovation, “spontaneity” and “authenticity,” and the relationship between “classics” and commentaries. Throughout, we will bring our discussions into comparative analysis, considering views of thinkers and traditions from other times and places. Chinese not required; for those interested, we will read select essays of Li’s in Chinese and students may choose translation as a final project. *Pauline Lee, Visiting Professor in Divinity*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HREL 33202, RLST 23202

History of Christianity

HCHR 34523 – The Ecumenical Church Councils and the Making of Christian Doctrine

The Church Councils of late antiquity (fourth-seventh centuries) were huge conferences of bishops, priests, monks, secular officials, and emperors, who met to decide on the rules that would govern the Church and the doctrines that all Christians had to believe. They combined philosophical debate, criminal trials, committee meetings, and Senate procedure. Some were rowdy and acrimonious, while others were meticulously organized in advance, usually by the court. Some remain obscure, while others are the most thoroughly documented events in all ancient history and reveal in detail how the later Roman government operated. In this course we will read, in Greek, a number of fascinating narratives and official acts stemming from the most important Councils, including Nicaea I (325), Ephesos I (431), and Chalcedon (451). We will also discuss the Councils from a historical perspective to understand the complex negotiations that gave rise to Christian doctrine and canon law. *Anthony Kaldellis*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 20523

History of Judaism

### HIJD 45400 – Readings in Maimonides’ *Guide of the Perplexed*

A careful study of select passages in Maimonides’ *Guide of the Perplexed*, focusing on the method of the work and its major philosophical-theological themes, including: divine attributes, creation vs. eternity, prophecy, the problem of evil and divine providence, law and ethics, and the final aim of human existence. *James T. Robinson, Dean of Divinity*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HREL 45401, ISLM 45400, RLVC 45400, RLST 21107

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 45705 – Sources and Methods in the Study of Chinese Religion

A survey of recent work in the study of premodern Chinese religion, with an emphasis on questions of method. This quarter we’ll focus on methods for the use of archaeological reports in the study of ritual and other forms of religious practice, from Eastern Han tombs to excavations of sites in Gansu and the Tarim Basin dating to later periods. A significant percentage of the readings will be in (modern) Chinese, so reading competence in that language is required. PQ: Working ability in literary Chinese helpful but not necessary. *Paul Copp*

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 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. *Staff*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 20201

ISLM 32419 – Major Trends in Islamic Mysticism

This course examines Islamic mysticism, commonly known as Sufism, through an exploration of English translations premodern and contemporary Sufi literature in Arabic and Persian. The goal is to gain firsthand exposure of a broad spectrum of literary expressions of Islamic spirituality in their historical context, and to understand exactly what, how, and why Sufis say what they say. 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 week is 80 pages. *Yousef Casewit*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 24550

ISLM 36103 – Dreams, Visions, and Mystical Experiences

An exploration of primary literature and secondary scholarship on dream interpretation, luminous vision, and religious experience, with a focus on the writings of figures from the late North African Sufi tradition such as 'Ali al-Jamal and 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Dabbagh. No prerequisites. *Yousef Casewit*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 26103

ISLM 40612 – Critical Arabic Philology

This course introduces students to the indigenous tools and techniques devised for the critical study of texts within the classical Arabic-Islamic scholarly tradition, comparing and contrasting them with modern critical philology. We begin with an examination of two modern accounts of philology from the early 1930s, put forward by a German Orientalist and a Yemeni corrector working in India, respectively. Parallel to these readings, students edit collaboratively sections of a medieval manuscript in order to gain a direct insight into the problems of deciphering and editing manuscripts. We then examine the explicit textual methodologies developed in the field of Hadith collection and reproduction. The course ends with discussion of a fourteenth-century philological analysis that uncovered a historical forgery of a document allegedly written by Muḥammad. PQ: 3 years of Arabic. *Ahmed El Shamsy*

ISLM 49003 – Islam Beyond the Human: Spirits, Demons, Devils, and Ghosts

This seminar explores the diverse spiritual and sentient lifeforms within Islamic cosmology that exist beyond the human—from jinn, angels, and ghosts to demons and devils. We will focus on theological, scientific, philosophical, anthropological, and historical accounts of these creatures across a variety of texts, as well as their literary and filmic afterlives in contemporary cultural representations. In so doing, we consider the various religious, social, and cultural inflections that shape local cosmological imaginaries. We ask how reflecting on the nonhuman world puts the human itself in question, including such concerns as sexuality and sexual difference, the boundaries of the body, reason and madness, as well as the limits of knowledge. PQ: Enrollment by Consent Only (for both grads and undergrads). Students should send the instructors a paragraph explaining their interest and prior preparation or familiarity with the themes in the course. *Alireza Doostdar and Hoda El Shakry*

Equivalent Div Course(s): AASR 49003, RLST 29003

Religions in the Americas

RAME 40200 – Religion and American Capitalism

This course will introduce students to the intersection of religion and capitalism in the United States. Through a variety of primary and secondary readings, we will explore how religious people and institutions have interacted with, affirmed, and challenged American capitalism. We will pay particularly close attention to the alternative moral economics envisioned by religious communities in the United States. *William Schultz*

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

RAME 41315 – Narratives of American Religious History

How do we tell the story of religion in America? Is it a story of Protestant dominance? Of religious diversity? Of transnational connections? Of secularization? This course examines how historians have grappled with such questions. We will read the work of scholars who have offered narratives explaining American religious history, including figures like Sydney Ahlstrom, Albert Raboteau, Mark Noll, Ann Braude, Catherine Albanese, and Thomas Tweed. This course will introduce students to key historiographical questions in the study of American religion, as well as to classic texts which have shaped the field’s development. *Curtis Evans and William Schultz*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HCHR 41315, RLST 21315

RAME 43302 – Becoming Modern: American Religion in the 1920’s

Terms such as “acids of modernity” and the “modern temper” were commonly used in the 1920s to describe a new phenomenon in American history. Historians still regard the 1920s as a significant moment in US History, even while revising older narratives that viewed such changes as leading to a decline in church attendance and religious practice. In the 1920s, the nation struggled with the effects of massive immigration, decades of urbanization, and significant cultural and social changes that had profound implications for religious practice and belief. This course takes an extended look at the 1925 Scopes Trial, the fundamentalist modernist controversy, and the intellectual and cultural challenges to traditional religious beliefs and practices. Some attention is devoted to increasing religious and cultural diversity as a challenge to Protestant dominance. Course Note: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *Curtis Evans*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HCHR 43303

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 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. *Richard B. Miller*

RETH 31000 – Good Hands: Research Ethics

Basic research is intended to explore and evaluate truth claims at the edge of our understanding of the natural and physical world, and it is this very quality that renders it useful as science. Yet, this often creates significant ethical questions for the research as well as for the social order in which all research takes place. Often, courses in research ethics focus on the establishment and enforcement of canonical rules of behavior, where the goal is to inform the investigator about how to follow these established rules. This course will turn to a different set of problems in research ethics. While we will begin with a foundation in the history of research ethics, reviewing the key cases that shaped the policies about which we have consensus, (human and animal subject protections; authorship, etc.) will consider the problems about which there is not yet a clear ethical course: what are the limits of human mastery? Why is research deception so prevalent? Are there experiments which are impermissible and why? What is the obligation of the researcher toward their community? How can we think clearly and ethically in situations of deep uncertainty? We will consider how moral philosophy as well as theological arguments have shaped research science and reflect on the nature, goal and meaning of basic and translational research in modernity. Course Note: Required course for new MS program in Biological Sciences. *Laurie Zoloth*

RETH 31101 – History of Religious and Theological Ethics I

The religions are moral forces in our age of global dynamics and interactions. Understanding the history of these moral forces is crucial for contemporary life and thought. This course is part one of a two-part history of theological and religious ethics. It is conducted through lectures and the study of classic texts. The course moves from Greek and Roman moral philosophies through strands of the Hebrew scriptures, the origins of the Christian movement, the end of the Roman Empire to the emergence of Islam, and, finally, scholastic and mystical thought (Christian, Jewish and Islamic) in the Western Middle Ages. The golden thread of the history is the origin and differentiation of Christian ethical and theological thinking. Yet Christian theological ethics is set within and compared to other traditions (Hellenistic philosophical, Jewish, Islamic) that intersect and collide throughout the formative centuries of Western thought. The exploration of traditions shows, first, how their internal complexity and reflexive relations to other traditions opens onto comparative religious and ethical reflection, and, second, the birth and trajectory of the monotheistic religions. The purpose of the course is threefold: (1) to enable one a grasp of part of the history of theological and religious ethics in the West; (2) to explore the thought of specific thinkers; and, (3) to engage in reflection on the task and topics of the discipline in a global and comparative context. Course Note: Undergraduates must get consent to enroll. *William Schweiker*

Equivalent Div Course(s): THEO 31101

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

Scriptural Reasoning is a method of approaching the scholarly study of texts of the Hebrew Bible, New Testament, and the Quran, by reading them as if they are to be understood as in conversation with one another, and as in reception communities that have historically understood them as such. This seminar will explore the practices and methods of a distinctive academic methodology of study, as well as the theoretical and philosophical scaffolding that has emerged from these practices. We will consider both the scholarly work that extends and recommends the practice, and the critiques of the practice. Reading from the perspectives of theology and philosophy, we will consider how the academic reading of Scriptures frames the narrative and the ethical perspectives within the text and how that framing might be disrupted/repaired/interrogated by new exegetical interpretations. Scriptural Reasoning is both a method and a feature of the academy (in journals, in a section at the AAR, and in scholarly books and articles); and it is also a way of making Scriptural reception and interpretation publicly legible. The seminar will allow graduate students an entrance into understanding the Scriptures of their own tradition or research interest, and those of others, with which they may not be conversant, and thus create the possibility for new avenues of comparative scholarship. *Laurie Zoloth*

Equivalent Div Course(s): ISLM 33300, THEO 33300

RETH 50250 – Greek Tragedy and Philosophy

Ancient Greek tragedy has been of continuous interest to philosophers, whether they love it or hate it. But they do not agree about what it is and does, or about what insights it offers. This seminar will study the tragic festivals and a select number of tragedies, also consulting some modern studies of ancient Greek tragedy. Then we shall turn to philosophical accounts of the tragic genre, including those of Plato, Aristotle, the Greek and Roman Stoics (especially Seneca), Lessing, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Iris Murdoch, Sartre, and Bernard Williams. PQ: Admission by permission of the instructor. Permission must be sought in writing by the start of registration week. An undergraduate major in philosophy or some equivalent solid philosophy preparation, plus my permission. PhD students in Philosophy, Social Thought, Classics, and Political Theory may enroll without permission. MA students need permission, and the MAPH and MAPSS programs discourage 500 level courses in a student’s first quarter. Law students with ample philosophical background are welcome to enroll but should ask me first. Undergraduates may not enroll. *Martha Nussbaum*

Religion, Literature, and Visual Culture

RLVC 36423 – Improvisation

What sort of action is improvisation? This seminar aims (1) to elaborate an understanding of improvisation in action-theoretical terms (Can we distinguish between improvised and nonimprovised action?); (2) to consider the political implications (Does improvisation produce its performers' identities or suspend them, and what are the power relations at work in improvisation?); (3) reflect on aesthetic improvisation specifically (What is involved in accounting for improvisation in music, poetry, dance, and the arts in general?). Taking as its main examples the traditions of Jazz, Free Improvisation, and Performance Art, the seminar includes readings by Derek Bailey, Beth Preston, George E. Lewis, Lydia Goehr, Dieter Mersch, Fred Moten, Georg Bertram, Alessandro Bertinetto, Claus Beisbart and Lucia Angelino. The seminar will also seek to include a visit at the improvisation event *Freedom From and Freedom To*at Chicago's Elastic Arts. Readings and discussion in English. Undergraduates by permission only. *Florian Klinger*

RLVC 50100 – Writing Religion

This will be a course about the craft of scholarly writing. It will consider the conventions and conflicts of writing in a field as interdisciplinary as the study of religion and will explore the opportunities for creativity, voice and style within its various forms through reading and writing. We will work on everything from the sentence to the structuring of book-length manuscripts. The class will be organized to accommodate analysis, discussion and workshop and the final assignment will be the revision of a seminar paper into an essay suitable for publication. PQ: This is a course for masters and PhD students only. *Sarah Hammerschlag*

Theology

THEO 33600 – Evil: Myth, Symbol, and Reality

From the horrors of the Shoah to violence suffered by individuals, the question of the origin, meaning, and reality of evil done by humans has vexed thinkers throughout the ages. This seminar is an inquiry into the problem of evil on three registers of reflection: myth, symbol, and reality. We will be exploring important philosophical, Jewish, and Christian texts. These include Martin Buber, *Good and Evil*, Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, Edward Farley, *Good and Evil*, Hans Jonas, *Mortality and Morality* and Claudia Card, *The Atrocity Paradigm*. There will also be a viewing of the movie Seven (1995) directed by David Fincher and written by Andrew Kevin Walker. Accordingly, the seminar probes the reality of evil and the symbolic and mythic resources of religious traditions to articulate the meaning and origin of human evil. The question of “theodicy” is then not the primary focus given the seminar’s inquiry into the fact and reality of human evil. Each student will submit a 5-7 page critical review of either Jonathan Glover’s *Humanity: A Moral History of the 20th Century* or Susan Neiman’s, *Evil in Modern Thought*. Each Student also will write a 15 page (double spaced;12pt font) paper on one or more of the texts read in the course with respect to her or his own research interests. *William Schweiker*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RETH 33600, RLST 23600

THEO 45590 – Memory, Identity, and Religion

This course will consider recent scientific and philosophical work on memory and its relation to personal identity, and then use this work to think about religious approaches to memory (and vice versa). *Kevin Hector*

Equivalent Div Course(s): DVPR 45590, RLST 25590

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. Course Note: Assignments: short papers, in-class presentation, alternative projects. *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. *Staff*

RLST 20808 – The Biography of the Prophet Muhammad

This introductory course offers an overview of Prophet Muhammad’s life as portrayed in the early and medieval Arabic narrative tradition and through the lens of modern scholarship. We will discuss a diverse range of topics, such as life in pre-Islamic Arabia, the Prophet’s early life before prophethood, the first revelations, the Meccan period, his migration to Medina, his religio-political leadership and the military expeditions during the Medinan period, his reported miracles, etc. At the same time, students will gain an overview of the sira/maghaz’ literature, i.e., the texts devoted to the life of the Prophet Muhammad in the Muslim tradition. Modern methodological questions which concern the reliability of the narrative traditions in reconstructing the biography of the “historical Muhammad” and a wide range of approaches developed in Western academia to overcome problems related to the source material will also be addressed. PQ: No background in Islamic studies or Arabic language required. *Mehmetcan Akpinar*

Equivalent Div Course(s): ISLM 30808

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). *Staff*

RLST 24115 – Chinese Thought and The Good Life

This course examines the ideas of thinkers with vastly different responses to the question: What is the life well lived? In our study, we will focus on early China (5th century to 221 BCE), a seminal and vibrant period in Chinese thought. Some thinkers (such as “Laozi”) argue the good life is the simple one, others (Xunzi) insist that it is the life of achieved great intellectual, aesthetic, or moral ambition. Yet others argue that central to the life well lived are rich, nuanced, and strong ties to family (Confucius), acting on one’s developed intuitions (Mengzi), or developing one’s capacity to play in the moment whatever the circumstances (Zhuangzi). Two thinkers we will study focus on the means for making the social world supportive of a life that is good. Hanfeizi argues for the importance of well-defined, objective, enforced laws. Sunzi illuminates the art of war. We will explore topics such as notions of the self, conceptions of the greater cosmos, the role of rituals, ideas about human nature, and the tension between tradition and self-expression. The course includes lectures, class discussions, self-designed spiritual exercises, creating a class “Commentary” on the Analects, essays of varied lengths, and writers’ circles. *Pauline Lee, Visiting Professor in Divinity*

RLST 24901 – Religion and Human Rights

Religion played a crucial, but often overlooked, role in the development of post-World War II conceptions of human rights, providing principles and ideas that continue to influence contemporary human rights debates in the fields of law, public policy, and international relations. This no-prior-knowledge-necessary course explores the complex, sometimes fraught, relationship between religion and human rights from World War II to the present. We will begin by juxtaposing the role religious ideas played in the drafting of core post-war human rights documents (e.g. the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, etc.) with the decision by drafters to omit direct references to the divine or the beliefs of specific religious communities. Using case study analysis and close reading of primary religious texts, scholarly commentary, and historical accounts, we will examine the ways in which individuals and groups from multiple religious (and non-religious) traditions both apply and push back against existing human rights norms. Throughout the course we will discuss the role religion might play in debates surrounding emerging, but still contentious, conceptions of human rights. This includes: universal healthcare, LGBTQIA+ rights, ever more complex manifestations of religious freedom, as well as whether human rights as conceived of in the mid-20th Century can be reconciled with decolonial and post-colonial perspectives. Course Note: This course counts as an approved course for the Democracy Studies minor. *John Sianghio*

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 25561 – Justice at the Margins: Race, Religion, and Resistance Ethics

How does race shape what we think about what is right and wrong, just and unjust? How about religion? Is “justice” a universal idea that stretches across social groups, or do our experiences as members of a religious and/or racial group have fundamentally affect our understanding(s) of justice? We’ll begin by examining works by Aristotle, King, Rawls, and Nussbaum, asking what each theorist thinks justice entails and why. Along the way, we’ll ask how stated and suppressed understandings of both “race” and “religion” inform their theories, as well as complicate and challenge them. Then we’ll set these theories of justice in conversation with works by Francisco de Vitoria, W.E.B. Du Bois, James Baldwin, Cornel West, Traci C. West, and the Movement for Black Lives, each of which offers a protest against injustice in which “race” and “religion” play a prominent role. No previous knowledge required. Course Note: This course counts as an elective course for the "Inequality, Social Problems, and Change" minor and as an approved course for the Democracy Studies minor.. *Derek Buyan*

RLST 26105 – Queering God

Can God be an ally in queer worldmaking? Is God queer? What does queerness have to do with Judaism, Christianity, or Islam? This course introduces students to foundational concepts in queer and trans studies by focusing on queer Jewish, Christian, and Islamic theologies. We will analyze the ways that contemporary artists, activists, and scholars are using theology to reimagine gender and experiment with new relational forms. Our readings will include a variety of genres: memoir, letters, scriptural interpretation, and a novel. There will be no presumption of previous acquaintance with any of the readings or topics discussed, or indeed with any academic theology or queer theory at all. *Olivia Bustion*

RLST 26313 – Judaism, Medicine, and the Body

For centuries the “Jewish doctor” has existed as an archetype, but is there such a thing as Jewish medicine? Does Judaism teach a distinct approach to the body, illness, and healing? And more significantly, why should religion have anything to do with one’s health today? In this course we will grapple with our assumptions regarding modern Western medicine by discussing topics in Jewish medical thought and ethics. We will study how Judaism – its texts, history, laws, and traditions – intersect with issues of science, medicine, and the body. In particular we will think about how a Jewish approach to medicine, and more broadly a religious approach, might complicate contemporary assumptions about the body and healing. We will also consider how Jewish bodies have been imagined and stereotyped, and think about how that might affect Jewish approaches to disease and medical ethics. This course will thus offer students a way to think about alternatives to assumptions about medicine, the body, and ethics in the secular West, which will be explored both in class materials and in personal projects. No prior work in Jewish studies, medical ethics, or religious studies necessary. *Ranana Dine*

RLST 27555 – Staging Islam: Traps and Trappings of Representation

From terrorists to "good Muslims," standards in the racial, cultural, and religious representations surrounding Islam have fluctuated across U.S. media. How do we conceptualize the nature of visual perception and reception? The history of colonialism, secular modernity, gender, patriarchy, and the blurred distinctions between religion and racialization have all contributed to a milieu of visual cultures that stage visions of and arguments about Islam. Hostility towards Muslims has not abated as we venture well into the 21st century, and many remain quick to blame an amorphous media for fomenting animosity towards the “real” Islam. We take these essentialist terms of engagement as the start of our inquiry: what is the promise of a meaningful image? What processes of secular translation are at work in its creation and consumption? Is there room for resistance, legibility, and representation in U.S. popular culture, and what does representation buy you in this age?

We will pair theoretical methods for thinking about imagery, optics, perception, and perspective alongside case studies from film, stage, comedy, streaming content, and television shows, among others. Students will critically engage and analyze these theories in the contexts from which these works emerge and meld into a mobile and diasporic U.S. context. Together, we will reflect on the moral, political, and categorical commitments vested in different forms of media against historical trends of the 20th and 21st century. *Samah Choudhury*

RLST 27601 – Women and Islam

This course is an introduction to the field of women, gender 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 contemporary debates around women’s rights, sexuality, roles, responsibilities and gender relations in the context of Islamic law and the hadith literature. The discursive constructions and social realities of Muslim women are critically examined through historic and literary representations, ethnographic accounts, human rights discourses, sexual politics and secular and Islamic feminism(s). Moreover, this course situates Muslim women as complex, multidimensional actors engaged in knowledge production and political and feminist struggles, as opposed to the oppressed, victim-centered images that have regained currency in the representation of Muslim women in the post 9/11 era. *Maliha Chishti*

Equivalent Div Course(s): ISLM 37601

RLST 28449 – The End is Near: The Bible and Apocalypse

The rise of nuclear weapons, the global warming crisis, and the Covid-19 pandemic have reignited debates about the fate and meaning of human history. If it is the end of the world as we know it, how should we act, and what—if anything—comes next? For centuries, the Bible has been a source for people thinking about end of time. In this course, we examine how the Bible and other ancient texts portray human catastrophe and the possibility of new beginnings. From national upheavals and the dawn of a final political order, down to the fate of the individual and the destiny of the cosmos at large, this course exposes students to the multiplicity of ways that the End is envisioned throughout the Bible and later interpretation. How do biblical authors interpret the meaning of existence in light of the End? What stands out about ancient literature when we understand it as anticipating the End, and how can these texts help us understand contemporary fears about the End? No background knowledge about the Bible or the ancient world is required for the course. *Jonathan D. Wegner*

RLST 28613 – God of Manga: Osamu Tezuka’s “Phoenix,” Buddhism, and Post-WWII Manga and Anime

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

RLST 28755 – Making of “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 is the former music critic for the Chicago Tribune, editorial director of the music platform the Coda Collection, and co-host of Sound Opinions. Playwright Tyla Abercrumbie is leading the work of adapting the life of Mavis Staples for Court's stage. A cast member on Showtime's *The Chi*, Abercrumbie has been hailed by critics as "the next August Wilson." Using the methods of history, dramaturgy, biography and musicology, students in this course will work with 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, rock and protest music in her work; her collaborators include Bob Dylan, Prince, 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 bring the production to life. Kot and Abercrumbie will be regular guests in class. Course Note: Students enrolled in this course will be invited on an immersive research expedition in the southern US in Summer 2023, traveling to Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi and Washington, D.C., in order to trace the steps of the Staple Singers as they made music—and Civil Rights—history. *Nora Titone*

RLST 29800 – BA Research Seminar I

This class meets weekly to provide guidance for planning, researching, and writing the BA research paper. The two-quarter senior sequence will assist students in the Research Track with the preparation of the required BA paper. During May of their third year, students will work with the preceptor to choose a faculty adviser and a topic for research, and to plan a course of study for the following year. These must be approved by the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Students will take part in the BA Research Seminar convened by a preceptor during Autumn and Winter Quarters of their senior year. This seminar will allow students to prepare their bibliographies, hone their writing, and present their research. PQ: Consent of faculty supervisor and Director of Undergraduate Studies. Course Note: RLST 29800 and 29900 form a two-quarter sequence that is required of fourth-year students who are majoring in Religious Studies. Students are required to submit the College Reading and Research Course Form. *Foster Pinkney*

**WINTER 2024**

Special Courses in Divinity

DVSC 30600 – Theory and Method

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 ritual, nature, the relation of individuals and collectives, and emotions. 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. *Sarah Fredericks*

Anthropology and Sociology of Religion

AASR 41300 – Anthropology of History

Anthropologists have long been concerned with the temporal dimension of human culture and sociality, but, until fairly recently (and with significant exceptions), have rarely gone beyond processual modeling. This has dramatically changed. Anthropologists have played a prominent role in the so-called “historic turn in the social sciences”, acknowledging and theorizing the historical subjectivities and historical agency of the ethnographic “other”, but also problematizing the historicity of the ethnographic endeavor itself. The last decades have not only seen a proliferation of empirically rich and theoretically sophisticated historical ethnographies, but also a decisive move towards ethnographies of the historical imagination. Taking its point of departure from a concise introduction to the genealogy of the trope of “historicity” in anthropological discourse, this course aims to explore the possibilities of an anthropology of historical consciousness, discourse and praxis – i.e. the ways in which human groups select, represent, give meaning to, and strategically manipulate constructions of the past. In this, our discussion will not just focus on non-western forms of historical knowledge, but include the analysis of western disciplined historiography as a culturally and historically specific form of promulgating conceptions of the past and its relation to the present. *Stephan Palmié*

AASR 45000 – Religion and Revolution

Modern social and political theory emerged in a world wracked by revolutions. While religion has occupied a complicated place in modern revolutionary movements (and counterrevolutionary reaction) from the very beginning, it was only in the second half of the twentieth century that many theorists began to imagine religion as anything but an obstacle for radical political change. In this seminar, we consider theories of religion and revolution in light of historical studies of revolutionary movements around the world. On the side of theory, we will read selected texts from some or all of the following: Ibn Khaldun, Karl Marx, Walter Benjamin, Hannah Arendt, Michel Foucault, Michael Walzer, David Scott. Our case-studies of revolutions may include Mesmerism in France, Voodoo in Haiti, Puritanism in England, and Shi‘i Islam in Iran. PQ: Consent only. To enroll, students must submit a one-page description of their interest in the course and prior preparation. Course Note: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *Alireza Doostdar and Angie Heo*

AASR 50092 – Sem: Religion and Politics

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

Biblical Studies

BIBL 32500 – Introduction 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 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 32906 – The Book of Ezekiel

A seminar for reading the Book of Ezekiel (in English; optional reading group for those who read biblical Hebrew), the Bible's most bizarre and challenging Prophetic work. It features Ezekiel's close encounters with a brutal divine, instantaneous transportation to future spaces and faraway places, dream-scenes that become real, mortifying dramatizations, and surreal sensory overload. Ezekiel says he played the role of a crude mime, a confounding cryptic, and an erotic singer. This charged and disturbing work generated a variety of literary and speculative Jewish and Christian traditions, like the Apocalyptic and the Mystical. Modern Bible critics discount its retrospective frame, consider it a repository of historical materials, and probe Ezekiel for personality disorders. We will engage it the way it presents itself to us, as literature, in a which a character tells his glorious and troubled story, and explore its frame, content, poetics, Judean literary traditions, contemporary Babylonian scene, and historical message. *Simeon Chavel*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HIJD 32906, RLST 22906

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. *Tyler J. Harris*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 14000

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. *Doug Hoffer*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 14200

BIBL 38301 – Reading Modern Hebrew for Research Purposes II

The course concentrates on the written language and aims at enabling students to use Modern Hebrew for research purposes. The course is designed to enable students to read Hebrew freely. Major grammatical & syntactical aspects will be covered, and students will acquire substantial vocabulary with attention paid to lexical collocations and semantic fields.   
By the end of the course, students are expected not only to be able to successfully satisfy their departmental language requirements but also to have a great set of skills that would allow them to read any given text, written in Modern Hebrew. (The 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. *Ehud Har-Even*

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. *Zoi Gavriilidou*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 29402

BIBL 49900 – The Corpus Hermeticum

According to Clement of Alexandria Hermes Trismegistus authored 42 "fundamental books" on Egyptian religion. The writings under his name which are extant, dating between the first and third centuries AD, incorporate many styles and genres, including cosmogony, prophecy, gospel, popular philosophy, anthropology, magic, hymn, and apocalypse. The first treatise in the collection well represents the whole. It tells how the god Poimandres manifests to his follower a vision, revealing the origin of the kosmos and humanity, and how archetypal man descends to his fallen state and may be redeemed. We will begin with the Poimandres and then read other sections of this strange but absorbing body of material (we will read the following treatises in this order: 1, 3, 4, 7, 13, 10, 5, 11, 16). PQ: At least two years of ancient Greek. *David Martinez*

BIBL 55800 – Novellas of the Hebrew Bible: Jonah, Ruth, Esther, Job

Seminar using theory of narrative to interact with scholarship on biblical narrative and analyze four narrative works in the Hebrew Bible. PQ: 1 yr Biblical Hebrew + 1 text course. *Simeon Chavel*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HIJD 55800

Philosophy of Religion

DVPR 34001 – Modern European Philosophy of Religion: 17th Century to the Present

This course will examine the historical emergence of the philosophy of religion, in the European context, as a discrete area of inquiry. Thinkers to be considered include Descartes, Pascal, Spinoza, Locke, Leibniz, Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Feuerbach, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Arendt. No prerequisites. *Ryan Coyne*

Equivalent Div Course(s): THEO 34001, RLST 24001

DVPR 36524 – Hannah Arendt’s Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy

This seminar is a study of Arendt's lecture course on Kant's aesthetics – a text that Arendt did not live to turn into the book titled *Judging* that was supposed to conclude the trilogy *The Life of the Mind*. We will consider the conception of the political that Arendt proposes in the lecture. What does it mean to be free? Why is freedom found only in our relating to one another? How can I include an other in my view? What is it to be a citizen of the world? Can we conceive of a planetary right to pay visits? We will also include other text by Arendt that help to understand the lecture, and we will read the texts by Kant on which Arendt draws: selections from the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*and from the *Anthropology*,and the essays *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim*, and*On Eternal Peace*. The class is designed for Arendt novices and returning readers alike. Readings and discussion in English. Undergraduates by permission only. *Florian Klinger*

DVPR 42410 – Proust: The First Volume

This course will undertake in-depth readings of the first volume of Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time*. While we will use a translation, any student who can read the French is strongly encouraged to do so (alongside the English, to facilitate class discussion).   
By doing close readings, we will explore the famous Proustian world, its textual and cultural complexities, the literary style it inaugurates, as well as the belle époque it depicts. The course will thus consider social, literary, historical, and critical approaches to this seminal text. PQ: The course is intended for graduate students, but advanced undergraduates (third or fourth years) can take the course with the permission of the instructor. *Francoise Meltzer*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 28410

DVPR 47900 – The Philosophical Career of Vasubandhu

In this course we will take some soundings in the huge corpus of the Indian Buddhist philosopher Vasubandhu (c. 4th century C.E.), who produced works influentially expressing what have been taken as several different schools of Buddhist thought – in particular, the Sarvāstivāda and Sautrāntika trends of Abhidharma literature, and the Mahāyāna philosophical program of Yogācāra. Canvassing examples of many of Vasubandhu’s major writings, we will particularly consider the sense it makes for all of these works to have been written by the same person; we will consider, that is, the philosophical coherence of the diverse body of work that’s generally attributed to this one thinker. PQ: This class presupposes some understanding of Buddhist doctrine. Course Note: Undergraduates may petition to enroll. *Daniel A. Arnold*

History of Christianity

HCHR 52101 – Reading the Psalms with Ancient Christian Biblical Interpreters

A hugely significant source for ancient Christian interpreters, the Psalms (as read in Greek translation) also posed perplexing problems of language and diction, and of speaking voice and referents. This course will engage in close readings of Athanasius’ Epistula ad Marcellinum, which argues that the Psalter is a garden that resounds with all of scriptural wisdom, set to song; on the fascinating Greek homilies by Origen of Alexandria on the Psalms from the mid-third century (newly discovered and published in 2015); and the Commentary/Homilies by John Chrysostom on the Psalms from the late fourth century. PQ: Greek skills (preferably Attic and Koine); please contact the instructor with questions. Course Note: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *Margaret Mitchell*

Equivalent Div Course(s): BIBL 52101

History of Judaism

(none)

History of Religions

HREL 31500 – The Globalization of Japanese Religions: From the 19th Century to the Present

This course will explore the processes that led to the present situation of Japanese religions both within and outside of Japan. It focuses on the encounter and exchanges between Japanese and non-Japanese actors in order to question overly simplified models of globalization and modernization from the point of view of a global history of religions. We will first consider the formation of the concept of “religion” itself in the second half of the nineteenth century in both Europe and Japan. Building on these considerations, we will consider a selection of primary sources to trace the main developments of Japanese religious traditions and institutions into the present. Particular attention will be paid to both the inculturation of “foreign” religious traditions in Japan and the spread of “Japanese” religious traditions outside of Japan. If possible, the course will also incorporate field trips to Japanese religious groups in the Chicago area. *Stephan Licha*

HREL 31880 – *The Birth of the Gods:* A Close Reading of Hesiod’s *Theogony*

In this course we will read in Greek the Theogony by Hesiod, one of the earliest preserved literary pieces in ancient Greek and a text that became a point of reference for cosmogonic literature and thought in later centuries. We will conduct a close reading, commenting on both poetic/literary aspects and mythical tropes, and will read (in English) comparative materials from other Greek and Near Eastern cosmogonies, as well as some interpretive essays. Exams will be based on translation work as well as engagement in discussions. PQ: Two years of Greek (intermediate level) required. *Carolina Lopez-Ruiz*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 21880

HREL 42907 – Contemporary Theories of Religion

This course will explore developments in the study of religion from the Marburg Declaration of 1960 to the present. Participants will attend to the recent history of the field, intellectually and institutionally; to the analysis of select theoretical developments in this period, their prospects, accomplishments, and challenges; to the relationships between the History of Religions and work on religion in related fields of study (e.g., anthropology, sociology, history); and to the social location(s) of the study of religion in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. PQ: HREL 32900 / AASR 32900 "Classical Theories of Religion". Course Note: Undergraduates may petition to enroll. *Christian Wedemeyer*

Equivalent Div Course(s): AASR 42907

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 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 34590 – Early Islamic Theological (Kalām) Texts

This course offers the opportunity of engaging first-hand with the Arabic texts that define the discussions and polemics in Islamic theology of the formative period (7-10th centuries). Besides studying texts from different genres and produced by authors of differing theological orientations, we will discuss a wide range of themes, such as faith, free will, God’s attributes, revelation, etc., in their intellectual and polemical contexts. The study of the primary readings will be supplemented by secondary scholarly literature. The main objective of this course is to enable students to understand the early theological texts in their religious and historical contexts, which will also inform their study of the major theological works of the Islamic tradition in the later periods. PQ: 2 years of Arabic required. *Mehmetcan Akpinar*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 24590

Religions in the Americas

RAME 35700 – The Christian Right

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

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

RAME 42202 – Black Religious Protest in the U.S.

This course examines African American religious protest against the American nation for its actual history and its ideals in view of black oppression. The course begins with David Walker’s *Appeal* (1829) and ends with debates around Jeremiah Wright’s “God damn America” sermon. The course situates black religious protest amidst discussions of the *American Jeremiad*, a particular critique of the nation in relation to the divine, American exceptionalism, and racial injustice. We attempt to trace continuity and discontinuity, hope versus pessimism, and visions of a more perfect union in these public critiques of the nation. *Curtis Evans*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HCHR 42202, RLST 22202

RAME 45050 – Social Christianity in the U.S.: Origins and Legacies

This course is an intensive analysis of the origins, development, and historical significance of the Social Gospel (as it was called during its emergence) as a religious and social reform movement in America. We begin the course with one of the major works of Walter Rauschenbusch in the early 20th century. But we look at the development and influence of Social Christianity later and in the Civil Rights movement (and beyond) to grasp its enduring influence. Some attention will be devoted to the relationship between theological innovation, historical criticism of the Bible, and social reform. One of the aims of the course is to explore the impetus for social and political reform in light of a more expansive and this-worldly conception of Christian teaching on the Kingdom of God. Course Note: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *Curtis Evans*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HCHR 45050

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. *Richard B. Miller*

RETH 31201 – History of Religious and Theological Ethics II

The religions are moral forces in our age of global dynamics and interactions. Understanding the history of these moral forces is crucial for contemporary life and thought. This course is part one of a two-part history of theological and religious ethics. It is conducted through lectures and the study of classic texts. This course is the second part of a two-part history of religious and theological ethics. It is conducted through lectures and the study of basic, classic texts. The course moves from the moral philosophies in the Christian Reformations in the West and the Renaissance to the 20th century and the emergence of global challenges. The golden thread of the history is the modern challenges to Christian ethical and theological thinking. Yet Christian theological ethics is set within and compared to other traditions (Philosophical, Jewish, Islamic) that intersect and collide throughout the centuries of modern Western thought. The exploration of traditions shows, first, how their internal complexity and reflexive relations to other traditions opens onto comparative reflection, and, second, explores the modern trajectories of the monotheistic religions. The purpose of the course is threefold: (1) to enable one a grasp of part of the history of theological and religious ethics in the West; (2) to explore the thought of specific thinkers; and, (3) to engage in reflection on the task and topics of the discipline in a global and comparative context. Course Note: Undergraduates must get consent to enroll. *William Schweiker*

Equivalent Div Course(s): THEO 31201

RETH 53510 – Augustine, Kierkegaard, and the Problem of Love

This advanced seminar will examine how Augustine and Kierkegaard theorized about the virtues and obligations of love, focusing on their respective theologies, moral psychologies, and normative accounts of interpersonal relationships. We will also examine how their ideas about love served as a basis for their political and cultural commentary. Ranging across theological ethics, moral theory, political thought, and social criticism, topics include power and domination; inclination and duty; attraction and alienation; love and law; memory, time, and death; faith and ethics; constancy and change; freedom and necessity; and the right and the good. *Richard B. Miller*

RETH 54320 – Contagion: Ethics and the Other

This is a graduate seminar which explores the complex ways that epidemic disease has shaped and been shaped by religion, philosophy, literature, and the emerging sciences of modernity. Contagion has long been a central moral problem in theology and philosophy, the organizing terror of all human civilization because of the sudden, stochastic, and terrifying spread of visible, embodied changes. Contagion is our most intimate companion: Plague as punishment, as test, and as a sign of divine judgement have long been a topic of sacred texts, defining how societies thought about, duties, telos, meaning, and salvation. Contagious diseases raise stark ethical choices as well. The uses of quarantine as a defense, the establishment of isolation, and the fear of the stranger mark the historical responses to plagues. In this course, we will consider both the science behind the plagues that have torn across the course of human history, and the sacred and secular textual responses to them. Plagues leave behind cultural artifacts and traces of the puzzle of human behavior in response to epidemics: compliance, resistance imagination, and innovation. We will explore this theme in all its complexity, focusing on the textual and literary responses to the challenge of contagion. *Laurie Zoloth*

RETH 59903 – Modern Indian Political and Legal Thought

India has made important contributions to political and legal thought, most of which are too little-known in the West. These contributions draw on ancient traditions, Hindu and Buddhist, but transform them, often radically, to fit the needs of an anti-imperial nation aspiring to inclusiveness and equality. We will study the thought of Rabindranath Tagore (Nationalism, The Religion of Man, selected literary works); Mohandas Gandhi (Hind Swaraj (Indian Self-Rule), Autobiography, and selected speeches); B. R. Ambedkar, the chief architect of the Indian Constitution (The Annihilation of Caste, The Buddha and his Dhamma, and selected speeches and interventions in the Constituent Assembly); and, most recently, Amartya Sen, whose The Idea of Justice is rooted, as he describes, both in ancient Indian traditions and in the thought of Tagore. We will periodically contrast the thought of the founding generation with the ideas of the Hindu Right, dominant today. PQ: This is a seminar open to all law students, and to others by permission. *Martha Nussbaum*

Religion, Literature, and Visual Culture

RLVC 32400 – Theory of Literature: The Twentieth Century

This course will cover the major movements in Twentieth Century Criticism from New Criticism to Psychoanalytic theory, Structuralism and Post-Structuralism, Gender Theory, Marxist Theory and Post-Colonial Theory. One central issue for us as students of religion will be thinking through the difference in our relationship to “literary” texts, versus to “religious” texts. We will be asking how does a literary text stimulate commentary, as opposed to a religious text? Or more fundamentally, why do we read? In pursuit of these questions, we will begin by reading Henry James, perhaps the most volubly written about writer of the Twentieth Century, or at the very least, the writer through which almost every major literary movement has defined its approach. While James will weave in out of the course, his work will provide a touchstone for us as we consider the stakes of reading in each of the Twentieth Century’s major movements of criticism. Course Note: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *Sarah Hammerschlag*

RLVC 42100 – Religion in the Enlightenment: England and America

Study in the historiographies of the Enlightenment in England and in America, with special attention to the "trans-Atlantic" communication of ideas regarding the nature of the person, religion, and the role of the political order. *Richard Rosengarten*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HCHR 42200, RAME 42100, RLST 22110

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

In order to appreciate the pivotal religious significance icons had in Byzantium for private devotion, in the liturgy, in civic ritual, and in military campaigns, we will survey the visual evidence along with a vast array of written sources. We will explore the origins of the Christian cult of icons in the Early Byzantine period and its roots in the ancient Greco-Roman world. Through the close analysis of icons executed over the centuries in different artistic techniques, we will examine matters of iconography, style, and aesthetics. We will also have a close look at image theory, as developed by Byzantine theologians and codified in the era of Iconoclasm.

Typically, meetings will consist of both lecture and interactive discussion sections. Students are expected to prepare the mandatory readings for each week, which serve as a basis for an informed, and thus productive, classroom discussion. *Karin Krause*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HCHR 44004

Theology

THEO 41101 – Being Human

What does it mean to be a human being – a person who fulfills individual capabilities and also contributes to a community’s well-being? What connects the individual and community to an ultimate vision, spirituality, or God? These questions and investigations can be described as an examination of and argument for constructing a theological anthropology. When one thinks intentionally about the being of a human and that human’s ties to some concern or force greater than the limited self, then transcendence and materiality involve themselves in a complex dynamic. How does one construct an individual and a community of individuals? We investigate different models of being human and engage other disciplines to help unpack “being human.” We expand texts from folktales to theory. Course Note: Undergraduates may petition to enroll. *Dwight Hopkins*

THEO 42610 – Theologies from Africa, Asia, and Latin America

What were the life factors and specific contexts that amazingly gave rise to religious thinking in the 1960s Third World theologies? And what are the relationships among gender, culture, politics, and economics in these global theologies? This class compares and contrasts various systems and methods in contemporary theologies, male and female, in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. As a backdrop for this critical inter-conversational engagement, we will use the recent theological dialouges taking place in the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT). As we engage these systems of thought, we want to examine the logic of their theologies and the sources used to construct theology – particularity the relation between the materiality of context and the imagination of theology. *Dwight Hopkins*

THEO 45300 – Mid-Century Modernist Theology

Borrowing the term "modernist" from art critics and historians, this seminar aims to explore the interpretive, dialogical, and constructive “art” of classic theological works from the mid-twentieth century. For example, Howard Thurman’s Jesus and the Disinherited, Paul Tillich’s The Courage to Be, and H. Richard Niebuhr’s Radical Monotheism and Western Culture are accessible to a first reading and yet generative of complex interactions and multiple readings. How do these works critically engage myth and symbol? How do they express theological ideas and religious sensibilities—might they even be interpreted as “abstract expressionist” works? How are transformative dialogues created between theology and concrete life and between the work and its readers? David Tracy’s notion of the classic, Meyer Schapiro’s essay on “The Liberating Quality of Avant-Garde Art,” and Charles Long’s discussion of the opacity vs. the transparency of reality are among critical perspectives to be engaged. Additional possible readings include works by Baldwin, Buber, Bultmann, Cone, Day, Deloria, Merton, R. Niebuhr. *Kristine Culp*

Religious Studies (Undergraduate Designation)

RLST 20124 – The Bible Throughout History: From the Dead Sea Scrolls to King James

While the collection of ancient texts found in modern Bibles appears fixed and is read by many people as a source of edification or theological insight, it has not always been this way. Though absent from most Bibles, there is an entire body of literature commonly known as “rewritten bible”: early translations, retellings, or entirely new stories with familiar names and faces that update, retcon, or subvert their “biblical” sources. How might we understand these ancient forms of fan fiction? The class will introduce this corpus (including some of the Dead Sea Scrolls) and its sources, production, and historical contexts. We will confront significant problems in understanding religious texts: how is it that some texts become authoritative while other very similar texts do not? Who gets to retell foundational religious narratives, and within what social or political constraints? What does it mean to relate to sacred texts as artistic prompts or imperfect points of departure? Can a biblical text be rewritten for an entirely different religious tradition? We will consider similar questions for contemporary religious practice, asking: how did rewriting the Bible get started, and has it stopped? *Doren Snoek*

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. *Staff*

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 23104 – Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of Practical Reason*

Contemporary ideas about Human Rights, the relation of moral norms and the good life, the character of human freedom, conceptions of human evil, and the very definition of morality and ethics have been decisively shaped by the work of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). This course is the examination of one of Immanuel Kant’s magisterial works in moral philosophy, *The Critique of Practical Reason.* The course is a careful reading of Kant’s text in order to grasp the argument and to assess its significance for current work in Ethics. The course ends with one of Kant’s famous political essays, “On Perpetual Peace.” Engaging Kant's work will enable student to engage a wide range of thinkers from the 19th to the 21st centuries who accept, modify, and reject his work. In this way, the course is crucial for further work in philosophical and religious ethics.

This class will be conducted through conversation over assigned reading. Those who can read German may use those texts and bring them to class. There will be two papers for the class on topics assigned by the instructor. The papers are to be 5-7 pages in length, double spaced. Course Note: Graduate students must petition to enroll. *William Schweiker*

RLST 23503 – What is Nature? 20th Century Continental Philosophy

In this course, we follow the topic of the meaning of nature in philosophy, beginning our exploration right around the point in time when explicit discussion of nature becomes less prominent. Our intention is to develop a coherent narrative about major philosophical developments from Nietzsche through Derrida through the lens offered by this question, examining existentialism, phenomenology, and deconstruction along the way. Students should come away from this course with a grounded sense of what each of these terms means, resulting in foundational knowledge of Continental philosophy after Nietzsche. We will take an interdisciplinary approach, as the question of nature often emerges for our authors in engagement with art, whether drama, poetry, or painting, all of which will be addressed.  
Recurrent themes will be: nature and eros, nature and human finitude, the human being as (un)natural, and the very viability of the concept of nature. Main authors are Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida. We will also read Aristotle, Plato, Sappho, Sophocles, Friedrich Hölderlin, Leo Strauss, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Judith Butler, and discuss paintings by Paul Cézanne and Vincent van Gogh. An interesting question to pose along the way will be the relationship (or lack thereof) between the views of nature on offer to our ecological concerns today. *Mat Messerschmidt*

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

“You don't really understand an antagonist," screenwriter John Rogers writes, "until you understand why he's a protagonist in his own version of the world." This principle holds true of movie villains, but also raises important questions about disagreement, dehumanization, and the diabolical in the real world. Are our enemies truly malicious, or just misunderstood? How does a person become a monster, and how does a person avoid it? Why are some villains so compelling, and what does this say about the good life? Do Hollywood movies enrich or distort how we imagine and respond to real-world evil? Did Thanos do anything wrong? This course combines readings from philosophical classics and religious traditions with comparative analyses of villains in films from *101 Dalmatians* (1956) and *Jaws* (1975) to *The Dark Knight* (2008) and *Black Panther* (2018). Students will discuss antagonists' motivations, evaluate the visions of morality filmmakers are presupposing, and develop more nuanced understandings of ethics and moral psychology. No prior experience in religious studies or film criticism is required. *Russell Johnson*

RLST 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 25323 – Tolerance and Intolerance in South Asia

Few places in the world are as embroiled in the problem of diversity as South Asia, where sectarian violence—fought mainly along religious lines, but also along caste, gender, and linguistic lines—is at the center of political maneuvering. South Asia offers important lessons in how people manage to live together despite histories of mutual strife and conflict about communities and castes.   
Focusing on the period of British colonial rule, this class explores different instances and ideologies of toleration and conflict. How were South Asian discourses of toleration by such leaders as Gandhi and Nehru different from their European counterparts (e.g., John Locke and John Rawls)? How did their ideologies differ from those articulated by their minority peers such as Ambedkar, Azad, and Madani?  
We will analyze constitutive precepts, namely secularism, syncretism, toleration. Our attention here will be on the universal connotations of these ideas and their South Asian expression. Fifth week onward, we will turn our attention to select thinkers: Gandhi, Ambedkar, Azad, Madani. Our focus here will be on the ways that each intellectual negotiated the thorny issues of toleration, difference, ethnicity, and belonging. All the thinkers covered in this class had an active presence in nationalist era politics. Finally, we will read historical accounts of some of the most frequent causes of intolerance, namely cow slaughter, music played before the mosque, and desecration of sacred objects. *Taimur Reza*

RLST 25706 – Climate Justice

Climate injustice includes the disproportionate effects of climate change on people who benefit little from the activities that cause it, generally the poor, people of color, and people marginalized in other ways. Given the complex economic, physical, social, and political realities of climate change, what might climate justice entail? This course explores this complex question through an examination of classical and contemporary theories of justice; the gendered, colonial, and racial dimensions of climate change; and climate justice movements. Course Note: Graduate students may enroll only with permission of the instructor. *Sarah Fredericks*

RLST 26660 – Global Studies and Religion

Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Christianity have all flourished in the contexts of neoliberal capitalism, mass migration, and online communities. While many predicted that globalization would bring a wave of secularization, it has actually given rise to a global revival of religious life and religious institutions. This undergraduate seminar seeks to understand this phenomenon through a series of case studies of globalized religions in China, Indonesia, India, Nigeria, Italy, and the US. These case studies will highlight historical through-lines from colonization to globalization, ethnographic data of religious motivations and belonging, and social scientific theory of diaspora and nationalism. This course is tailored for Global Studies and Religious Studies majors or double majors, but all undergraduates are welcome. *Andrew Kunze*

RLST 27140 – Truth, Half-Truth, and Post-Truth

This course examines the philosophical and ethical issues surrounding lying, truth-telling, and everything in between. Students will put classics of the Indian and Western philosophical traditions into conversation with contemporary analyses of “alternative facts” and postmodern criticisms of absolute truth. Questions to be considered include: Are half-truths just another kind of lie, or stepping-stones to a more complex understanding? Is it even possible to tell “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth”? Is it morally permissible to mislead someone for their own good, or for a leader to deceive their citizens? How can we act responsibly when there are two sides to every story? *Russell Johnson*

RLST 27617 – Introduction to Global Catholicism

With over a billion adherents, Catholicism is both the largest Christian denomination and a global religious tradition. This course introduces students to multiple ways Catholicism shapes the moral and political commitments of believers and how it informs politics and the larger society. How does the Catholic church, at once centralized and internally diverse, exist as a multilingual and multicultural community? How has Catholicism responded to increasingly secularized cultures in industrialized nations? What place do religious beliefs have in the public sphere? We will examine the different ways Catholics approach these moral, social, and theological questions and how their answers shape and are shaped by their cultural locations. No previous coursework is required to enroll. *Joseph Haydt*

RLST 28328 – Africa’s Byzantine Heritage: Religion and Art in Pluralistic Societies

This quarter-length course is conceived around themes and artifacts of an innovative special exhibition titled Africa & Byzantium at the Metropolitan Museum of Art that we will be visiting together (Feb. 16–18, 2024). It will be the first time a museum has showcased the important contributions of Africa’s multiethnic societies to the cultural and religious life of the Christian Empire of Byzantium. In addition, the Met boasts a world-renowned permanent collection of Byzantine artifacts, several of which we will be studying as well during our field trip.  
The Byzantine Empire (4th cent.–1453) encompassed large parts of the Mediterranean, the Balkans, Anatolia, and the Middle East, with North and East Africa forming part of the empire from the fourth century CE to the Islamic conquest (early 7th cent.). Under Islamic rule, the African continent’s Byzantine-Christian legacy continued to be influential and has a rich afterlife to this day.  
The field trip will enable students hone their competence in visual analysis through close-up study of artworks representing a range of artistic media and techniques. The classroom sessions will illuminate the historical and cultural framework in which the artifacts are situated. Africa’s Byzantine heritage is an emerging field of study and in this course students who wish to pursue their own research projects will have ample opportunity to do so. Students will also attend weekly discussion sections led by the TA. PQ: Students enrolled in this course will participate in a \*mandatory\* three-day field trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Feb. 16–18, 2024). Travel and lodging will be fully covered through a Curricular Innovation and Undergraduate Research grant provided by the College. *Karin Krause*

RLST 28405 – Religion in Anime and Japanese Pop Culture

How does *Spirited Away* reflect teachings of Japanese Buddhism and Shinto? Or what about *Neon Genesis Evangelion*? What can pop culture tell us about religion? In this course, we will consider what Japanese religions are (and are not) by looking at their representations in popular cultural forms of past and present. Sources are drawn from a range of popular cultural forms including anime and manga, but also literature, artistic performances, visual arts, and live-action movies. The course covers foundational aspects of Japanese religious life through non-traditional sources like *Bleach*, *The Tale of Genji*, and *Your Name*. At the end of the course, students will be able to speak to the great diversity of religious practices and viewpoints in Japan, not only its centers but also its peripheries and minorities. Meanwhile, we will consider broader questions about the complex connections between religion and popular culture. No prior knowledge of Buddhism, Shinto, or Japanese history is expected. *Bruce Winkelman*

RLST 28882 – Magic and Divination in the Islamic World

From weather forecasts to stock market speculations, our modern world is saturated with predictions for the future. In spite of this, other divinatory methods such as astrology are often portrayed as superstitious, irrational, or unreligious. This course will introduce students to the unexpected interaction of science, magic, and religion through the exploration of divination in the Islamic world. We will ask how divination can be a part of religious practice and how methods of future-telling are said to “work” from the perspective of the philosophers and scientists who practiced them. We will also explore the arguments against divination and identify and understand religious and/or scientific objections to the practice. All readings will be in English translation. *Alex Matthews*

RLST 29000 – The American Culture Wars

Should we tear down statues of Confederate soldiers? Should religious institutions be exempt from public health regulations? How (if at all) should we regulate abortion? These questions are only the latest battlefields in the “culture wars,” the long-running conversation—or, more often, shouting match—about how Americans ought to live. This seminar will explore how Americans have wrestled with questions of morality and national identity since the country’s founding. Two questions will drive our discussion. First, why do certain issues become the subject of fierce cultural conflict? Second, do these conflicts enrich or undermine American democracy? Course Note: This course counts as an approved course for the Democracy Studies minor. *William Schultz*

RLST 29030 – Islam, Race, and Decoloniality

This course explores the historical and discursive practices through which the racialization of Muslims and Islamic cultures developed and remains sustained within colonial and neo-colonial contexts, modalities and relations. Particular attention to the “threat of Islam” is examined in various literary, media and ethnographic narratives. This course examines how race is constituted within contemporary imperialist practices, specifically the global war on terror’s focus on constructing Islam and Muslim cultures as uncivilized, inferior, and oppressive. Using a de-colonial framework, the course will engage the politics of pluralism, multivocality and resistance. *Maliha Chishti*

Equivalent Div Course(s): ISLM 39030

RLST 29900 – BA Research Seminar II

This class meets weekly to assist students in the preparation of drafts of their BA paper, which are formally presented and critiqued. The two-quarter senior sequence will assist students in the Research Track with the preparation of the required BA paper. During May of their third year, students will work with the preceptor to choose a faculty adviser and a topic for research, and to plan a course of study for the following year. These must be approved by the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Students will take part in the BA Paper Seminar convened by a preceptor during Autumn and Winter Quarters of their senior year. This seminar will allow students to prepare their bibliographies, hone their writing, and present their research. Course Note: Students are required to submit the College Reading and Research Course Form. *Foster Pinkney*

**SPRING 2024**

Anthropology and Sociology of Religion

(none)

Biblical Studies

BIBL 32700 – Biblical Law

This course will examine the laws in the Torah/Pentateuch and elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible for their legal, social, and moral reasoning; their style; their meaning in literary works, as literature; and their historical setting. It will compare them to laws in other ancient works like the Hammurabi monument(s). *Simeon Chavel*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HIJD 32700, RLST 22700

BIBL 34400 – Greek Prose Composition

The goal of this course is to write accurate sentences and paragraphs in classical Attic Greek. We are not concerned here with stylistic imitation, but rather to write Attic prose clearly and correctly. The most obvious benefits of this exercise will be thorough review of basic morphology and syntax as well as fine-tuning one's grasp of the more subtle nuances of the Greek language. Another important benefit is cultivating Attic prose as a kind of linguistic standard or canon by which we are able to better understand other Greek styles of writing and types of diction. The vantage point of a standard allows us to analyze and understand other styles on their own terms and merits, whether Herodotus, epic, tragedy, New Testament, etc. *David Martinez*

BIBL 34723 – Guardians of Knowledge: Scribes and Books from Antiquity to the Middle Ages

Books have been a fundamental part of the transmission of knowledge and more generally, human communication. They collect thoughts, experiences, feelings, knowledge and ideas into a material artifact that is distributed to an audience of readers. The work of scribes and scholars is the silent agent of this millennial enterprise. The process of book-production involves a large number of different skills from these artisans: material manufacture, preparation of writing surfaces and inks, writing skills, calligraphy, binding, distribution. In this course students will study the history of books, from Antiquity to the invention of the printing press, and their makers. The topics covered will include scribal training, book manufacture, circulation and trade of books, readership, and other such topics around the world of books and scholars. The course will focus on books as artifacts, as transmitters of knowledge and literary creativity. *Sofia Torallas-Tovar*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 22723

BIBL 42021 – The Gospel According to John

A Greek exegesis course on the text known since the third century as the pneumatikon euangelion, “spiritual gospel.” Students will learn the characteristic diction and vocabulary by which this author sought to craft the story of the heavenly legate, Jesus, the “man from heaven” who comes down to earth to draw believers back up there with him. We shall engage with the literary form and flow of this enigmatic text, in its combination of narrative and extended monologues. Our close readings will confront us with this text’s cosmological and theological claims, and in particular the vexing question of whether it maintains that the cosmic destiny of human beings is predetermined, or if change is possible. This course serves as the third quarter of the Koine Greek sequence, even as various levels of Greek skills are welcome. PQ: BIBL 35100 and 35300 (Koine I and II) or equivalent; please contact the instructor with questions. Course Note: Undergraduates are welcome to enroll by emailing instructor. *Margaret Mitchell*

BIBL 45100 – Innerbiblical Exegesis

This course will explore the phenomenon of literary revision in the Hebrew Bible and, to a limited extent, its precursors and successor texts. In addition to analyzing various examples of innerbiblical exegesis, we will consider the theoretical issues related to literary revision, including the question of criteria for determining literary dependence and direction of dependence and the intents of texts that reuse source material. All biblical texts will be read in their original languages. PQ: Strong Biblical Hebrew. *Jeffrey Stackert*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 21550

BIBL 45400 – Second Isaiah

This course is a reading course on Second Isaiah (Isaiah 40–66). It is meant both for students who have completed the first year Hebrew sequence in the Divinity School and others who would like to read Second Isaiah in Hebrew. We will focus on interpreting texts by attending to their grammatical, literary, and historical features. PQ: One year of Biblical Hebrew. *Jeffrey Stackert*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 22303

Philosophy of Religion

DVPR 35840 – Philosophical Approaches to Peace of Mind: The *Zhuangzi* in Dialogue

Philosophical activity across cultures and times has been closely associated with the management of affective states. One common goal is to minimize negative emotions by changing how events are interpreted and appraised. This course will focus on three strategies that appear across different traditions. The first argues that events are outside of our control, in some cases appealing to fate but in other cases appealing to chance. The second strategy is a skeptical approach that attacks our ability to judge any event as bad or good. The third strategy undermines the ontological status of the kinds of things we become attached to, either by rejecting the ultimate reality of individual substances or arguing that diverse things form a single whole. All of these strategies appear prominently in the classical Chinese text the Zhuangzi. The core of this course will consist of a close reading of parts of the Zhuangzi, considering these strategies as they intersect with and shed light on its various philosophies. We will also read in a comparative context. The other traditions used will be guided by student interest, but the most likely choices would be Stoicism and Epicureanism (for the first strategy), Sextus Empiricus (for the second), and arguments appearing South Asian Buddhist philosophies (for the third). Aside from better understanding the Zhuangzi, the goal of the course is to consider how similar strategies function in significantly different cultural contexts. *Frank Perkins, Visiting Professor in Divinity*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HREL 35840, RLST 25840

DVPR 37326 – Leo Strauss’ Philosophical “Autobiography”

Leo Strauss did not write an autobiography. However, he did mark out his path of thought through autobiographical reflections on the decisive challenges to which his oeuvre responded. The philosophically most demanding confrontation that Strauss presented on the question of how he became what he was is the so-called *Autobiographical Preface of 1965*, which he included in the American translation of his first book, “Spinoza’s Critique of Religion” (originally published in 1930). Two decades earlier, in the lecture *The Living Issues of German Postwar Philosophy* (1940), he made a first autobiographical attempt to publicly ascertain himself and determine his position. And in 1970 he published the concise retrospective *A Giving of Accounts*. The seminar will make these writings – which illuminate the significance of Nietzsche and Heidegger for Strauss and address his early engagement with revealed religion and politics, in a constellation ranging from Hermann Cohen and Franz Rosenzweig to Karl Barth and Carl Schmitt – the subject of a close reading. Selected letters to Karl Löwith, Gershom Scholem and others will be used as supplementary texts. *Heinrich Meier*

DVPR 43200 – Indian Philosophy of Language

In this course, we will consider representative topics and thinkers in the history of Indian philosophy, with a particular focus on developments in the latter half of the first millennium. PQ: This class presupposes some philosophical understanding, as well as some acquaintance with South Asian intellectual history. *Daniel A. Arnold and Andrew Ollett*

DVPR 44302 – Pragmatism and Religion

C.I. Lewis famously described pragmatism as “the doctrine that all problems are at bottom problems of conduct, that all judgments are, implicitly, judgments of value, and that, as there can be ultimately no valid distinction of theoretical and practical, so there can be no final separation of questions of truth of any kind from questions of the justifiable ends of action.” This course will examine key texts of post-WWII American pragmatism—including Richard Rorty, Cheryl Misak, Cornel West, and Eddie Glaude--in order to assess their implications for theology and the philosophy of religions. *Kevin Hector*

Equivalent Div Course(s): THEO 44302, RLST 24302

DVPR 46150 – Heidegger and the Poets

An investigation of the role(s) that poetry plays in Martin Heidegger’s thinking. We will begin by focusing our attention on Heidegger's reading of the German poet Friedrich Hölderlin. We will then consider his interpretations of figures such as Rainer Maria Rilke, Stefan Georg, and Georg Trakl. We shall conclude by examining poetic responses to Heideggerian thought by figures such as René Char and Paul Celan, among others. Course Note: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *Ryan Coyne and Eric Santner*

Equivalent Div Course(s): THEO 46150

DVPR 51415 – Readings in Later Daoist Thought

The goal of this course is to read and explore primary sources (in classical Chinese) in Daoist philosophical thought written after the founding documents of the classical period (i.e., the Daodejing and Zhuangzi). Texts to be read will most likely be selected from such sources as the Liezi 列子，the Yinfujing 陰符經，and the Guanyinzi 關尹子 （文始真經). PQ: Classical Chinese proficiency required. *Brook Ziporyn*

Equivalent Div Course(s): HREL 51415, RLST 25845

DVPR 53991 – Religion and Psychoanalysis

Freud postulated that many cultural activities with no apparent connection to sexuality, including religious practice and belief, have their origin in the sexual instincts. Sublimation, which describes the process by which the sexual instincts are diverted to nonsexual aims or objects, plays a crucial role in Freudian metapsychology. And yet Freud never managed to articulate a coherent account of this process, and thus he failed to provide a concept of sublimation as such. In this class we will study the role of sublimation in Freudian metapsychology with specific reference to the theme of religiosity. In examining how sublimation is taken up by others (e.g. Klein, Lacan) we will also consider whether this concept affords a novel understanding of religion. Course Note: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *Ryan Coyne*

Equivalent Div Course(s): THEO 53991

History of Christianity

HCHR 30500 – History of Christian Thought V: Modern Religious Thought

This course traces the history of modern Christian thought from Kant, Schleiermacher, and Hegel through contextual and liberation theologies. Course Note: Undergraduates may petition to enroll. *Kevin Hector*

Equivalent Div Course(s): THEO 30500

HCHR 39200 – Latin American Religions, New and Old

This course will consider select pre-twentieth-century issues, such as the transformations of Christianity in colonial society and the Catholic Church as a state institution. It will emphasize twentieth-century developments: religious rebellions; conversion to evangelical Protestant churches; Afro-diasporan religions; reformist and revolutionary Catholicism; new and New Age religions. Assignments: class participation, weekly short memos (250 words) responding to questions about the required reading, and a short (8–10 pages) problem paper. There will be two short midterm exams, but no final exam. *Dain Borges*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 21401

History of Judaism

(none)

History of Religions

HREL 30926 – Wonder, Wonders, and Knowing

“In wonder is the beginning of philosophy,” wrote Aristotle; Descartes also thought that those deficient in wonder were also deficient in knowledge. But the relationship between wonder and inquiry has always been an ambivalent one: too much wonder stupefies rather than stimulates investigation, according to Descartes; Aristotle explicitly excluded wonders as objects of inquiry from natural philosophy. Francis Bacon called wonders "broken knowledge." Since the sixteenth century, scientists and scholars have both cultivated and repudiated the passion of wonder; On the one hand, marvels (or even just anomalies) threaten to subvert the human and natural orders; on the other, the wonder they ignite inquiry into their causes. Wonder is also a passion tinged with the numinous, and miracles have long stood for the inexplicable in religious contexts. Above all, wonders demand attention and interpretation. This seminar will explore the long, vexed relationship between wonder, knowledge, and belief in the history of philosophy, science, and religion. PQ: Consent is required for both grads and undergrads. This course will be taught in the first five weeks of the quarter. Reading knowledge of at least one language besides English would be helpful but not requried. Course Notes: The seminar will take place on Tuesdays & Thursdays, 09:30 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.\*, during the first five weeks of the term (March 19 – April 18, 2024). *Lorraine Daston*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 28926

HREL 34600 – Buddhist Meditation: Tradition, Transformation, Modernization

From the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta* of the Pāli canon to the “mindfulness” boom of recent years, Buddhism and meditation often appear inseparable. The aim of this seminar is to historicize and critically question this seemingly natural intimacy, for while it certainly cannot be denied that the various Buddhist traditions have always had on offer a plethora of techniques for mental (and physical) cultivation, it is far from clear how or even if all these could be subsumed under the in its current usage relatively recent category of “meditation”. Drawing on Buddhist meditation literature from various traditions, historical periods, and literary genre, in this seminar we will take up a twofold question: First, how has the encounter with Buddhist techniques of cultivation shaped the modern understanding of “meditation”, and second, up to which extend, and at what cost, has this very modern understanding conversely conditioned us to see Buddhism as a “meditative religion” par excellence? *Stephan Licha*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 24600

HREL 34519 – Dreams in the Ancient World

Dreams belong to the universals of human existence as human beings have always dreamt and will continue to dream across time and cultures. The questions of where do dreams come from and how to unravel a dream have always preoccupied the human mind. In this course we will focus on dreams in the Greco-Roman and Greco-Egyptian cultural environments. We will cover dreams from three complementary perspectives: dreams as experience, dream interpretation, and dream theory. The reading materials will include: (a) a selection of dream narratives from different sources, literary texts as well as documentary accounts of dreams; (b) texts that document the forms and contexts of dream interpretation in the Greco-Roman and Greco-Egyptian cultures; and (c) texts that represent attempts to approach dreams from a more general perspective by, among others, explaining their genesis and defining dream-types. *Sofia Torallas-Tovar*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 24503

HREL 40130 – Textual Amulets in the Ancient Mediterranean

Amulets with inscribed texts were used broadly by individuals and households and across ancient Mediterranean cultures for protection against evils, for curing disease, and for obtaining advantage over adversaries in all walks of life. In this course, we will survey a broad range of such amulets coming from the Levant, Mesopotamia, the Phoenician-Punic world, Greece and southern Italy, and inscribed on such varied materials as sheets of gold and silver, papyri, ostraca and gems, while scrutinizing their material aspects, their cultural context, and their shared and distinctive features. PQ: Classical or Near Eastern languages recommended but not required. *Carolina Lopez-Ruiz, Sofia Torallas-Tovar, and Christopher Faraone*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 20130

Islamic Studies

ISLM 30113 – Revolution and Piety in Islam

This course examines religious responses to major political upheavals in Islamic history, from the Abbasid revolution to the age of European expansion. Topics include the Mongol destruction of the caliphate in 1258 and the opening and closing of confessional boundaries; the formation of regional Muslim empires in the 16th century; Ibn Arabi, Ibn Taymiyya, and Ibn Khaldun; the development of alternative spiritualities, mysticism, and messianism in the fifteenth century; trans-confessionalism, antinomianism, and the articulation of sacral sovereignties in the sixteenth century; the pious responses to European colonialism. All work in English. PQ: Some knowledge of Arabic, Persian, Turkish, French, German is helpful. *Mustafa Kaya*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 21113

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 30606 – Introduction to Qur’an Manuscripts

The study of the Qur’an in the academy is primarily a literary endeavor. While a rich scripture and standard of world literature the Qur’an also exhibits a long and complex manuscript tradition. Despite beginning as an oral text, from the earliest periods of Islamic history, the Qur’an was revered, studied, and written. This course will chart the historical development of the Qur’an’s manuscript traditions, analyze the efficacy of manuscripts as a source for early Islamic history, and consider scripture as objects of religious devotion. *Adam Flowers*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 20606

ISLM 30630 – Introduction to Islamic Philosophy

This course offers an introduction to the terms and concepts current in Arabic philosophical writings in the classical period of Islamic thought (roughly 9th to 17th century). It begins with the movement to translate Greek texts into Arabic and the debate among Muslims about the validity of philosophy versus revelation. From a close reading of key works (in English) by important philosophers such as al-Kindī, al-Rāzī, al-Sijistānī, al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna), al-Ghazzālī, Ibn Bājja, Ibn Tufayl, Ibn Rushd (Averroes), Suhrawardī, and Mullā Ṣadrā, a series of lectures will follow the career of philosophy in the Islamic world, first as a 'foreign' science and then, later, as selectively rejected but also substantially accepted as a natural component of sophisticated discourse. *Paul Walker*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 23630

ISLM 33271 – Islamic Education in West Africa

This course will critically explore the history of Islamic scholarship and the transmission of religious knowledge and scholarly authority in West African Muslim societies from the late medieval period to the present day. We will examine a variety of knowledge traditions, textual and pedagogical approaches, epistemologies, and embodied practices of Muslim scholars and students of the region in order to understand what it means to seek, transmit, and create knowledge in the context of West African Muslim societies. In addition to relevant secondary literature, we will read passages from some of the texts taught in these places. Intermediate Arabic is recommended, but not required for this course. *Abubakar Abdulkadir, Islamic Studies Post-Doc*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 20271

ISLM 35218 – Suhrawardi and His Interpreters

Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī (d. 1191), the founder of the ishrāqī philosophical tradition, is undoubtedly one of the most innovative and influential philosophers in the history of Islamic thought. In this seminar, we will examine major themes in the writings of Suhrawardī along with excerpts from Arabic commentaries by Muslim and Jewish authors such as Ibn Kammūnah (d. 1284), Shahrazūrī (d. 1288), Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī (d. 1311), Dawānī (d.1502), Dashtakī (d. 1542), Qarabāghī (d. 1625) and Harawī (d. 1689). Topics include, Suhrawardī’s understanding of the history of philosophy, light and the order of existence, virtues and human happiness, self-knowledge and self-awareness, conceptual and non-conceptual knowledge, and theory of ritual actions. PQ: 2 years of Arabic. *Nariman Aavani, Islamic Studies Post-Doc*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 25218

Religions in the Americas

RAME 33000 – Black Gods of the Black Metropolis

This course examines the history and significance of the shifting and emergent forms of African American religious culture in the wake of the Great Migration (c.1915-1970). Focusing, initially, on how this process unfolded in Chicago, the course will both introduce select figures, movements, institutions, and popular cultures that emerged in the period, and consider to what ends they have been represented. Together, we will read both indispensable classics and innovative new works on the subject and consider how they have approached and addressed themes of, among others, race, space, class, gender, and sexuality. In addition, this course aims to emphasize how the so-called era of the “sects and cults” has and continues to raise important questions about the archives, representation, and narration of African American religion. *Matthew Harris*

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 50405 – Advanced Seminar in Spiritual Care: Is Multireligous Caregiving Possible?

This course will explore approaches to the practice of “care” from a variety of spiritual and religious traditions, with attention to the cultures of various caring contexts. Students will examine the theories and narratives of caring implicit in their own practices and communities and will consider the possibilities and limits of “multireligious” practices of care. This course satisfies a requirement for the chaplaincy concentration. Prerequisite: RELP 35202 or permission of instructor. *Sunil Yadav*

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. *Richard B. Miller*

RETH 33029 – Justice for Animals in Ethics and Law

Animals are in trouble all over the world.  Intelligent sentient beings suffer countless injustices at human hands: the cruelties of the factory farming industry, poaching and trophy hunting, assaults on the habitats of many creatures, and innumerable other instances of cruelty and neglect.  Human domination is everywhere: in the seas, where marine mammals die from ingesting plastic, from entanglement with fishing lines, and from lethal harpooning; in the skies, where migratory birds die in large numbers from air pollution and collisions with buildings; and, obviously, on the land, where the habitats of many large mammals have been destroyed almost beyond repair.  Addressing these large problems requires dedicated work and effort. But it also requires a good normative theory to direct our efforts.  This class is theoretical and philosophical.  Because all good theorizing requires scientific knowledge, we will be reading a good deal of current science about animal abilities and animal lives.  But the focus will be on normative theory.  We will study four theories currently directing practical efforts in animal welfare: the anthropocentric theory of the Non-Human Rights Project; the Utilitarian theory of Jeremy Bentham, J. S. Mill, and Peter Singer; the Kantian theory of Christine Korsgaard; and an approach using the Capabilities Approach, recently developed by Martha Nussbaum.  We will then study legal implications and current legal problems, in both domestic and international law. PQ: This is a new 1L elective, in connection with the Law School’s new program in Animal Law.  It is open to all law students and all graduate students.  Undergraduates may register only with the instructor’s permission, and to receive permission they must be third or fourth-year Philosophy concentrators with a letter of recommendation from a faculty member in the Philosophy Department.  Because all assessment is by an eight-hour take-home exam at the end of the class, the letter should describe, among other things, the student’s ability in self-monitored disciplined preparation. Martha Nussbaum

RETH 47750 – Virtue Ethics

Virtue ethics, one of the major types of normative ethics, involves a study of virtues, character, and the formation of such character. This course will examine some of the major contributions to the tradition of virtue ethics (e.g. Aristotle, Aquinas), the late twentieth-century revival of virtue ethics (e.g. MacIntyre, comparative studies of virtue across religious and philosophical traditions), and its flourishing in environmental ethics. Course Note: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *Sarah Fredericks*

RETH 51802 – Climate Ethics

Anthropogenic climate change is the largest challenge facing human civilization. Its physical and temporal scale and unprecedented complexity at minimum require extensions of existing ethical systems, if not new ethical tools. This course will begin by examining natural and social-scientific studies of climate change and its current and predicted effects (e.g. the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Stern Review). Most of the course will examine how religious and philosophical ethical systems respond to the vast temporal and spatial scales of climate change and its inherent uncertainties. For instance, common principles of environmental ethics such as justice and responsibility are often reimagined in climate ethics. We will also explore the degree to which the assumptions of many modern Western ethical systems including linear causality, an emphasis on individuals, and purely rational decision-making foster or inhibit climate ethics. In the course, we will take a comparative approach to environmental ethics and may examine perspectives from secular Western philosophy, Christianity (Catholic and Protestant), Buddhist, and Islamic thought. Course Note: Undergraduates must petition to enroll. *Sarah Fredericks*

Religion, Literature, and Visual Culture

RLVC 35424 – Spiritual Exercises: Giving Form to Thought and Life from Plato to Descartes

This course will examine the tradition of spiritual exercises from antiquity to the early modern period. Spiritual exercises were at the core of classical *paideia*, the regimen of self-formation designed and promoted by ancient philosophers, orators, and other pedagogues. As Pierre Hadot and Michel Foucault have demonstrated, ancient philosophy first and foremost has to be understood as a “way of life,” as a set of techniques and practices for shaping the self according to wisdom. It was not until philosophy’s critical turn with Kant that it shed its practical dimension and became a “theoretical” discipline. Early Christianity, stylizing itself as the “true philosophy,” eagerly adopted the ancient spiritual exercises and retooled them for its salvational ends. Throughout the middle ages and early modern period spiritual exercises and meditative techniques informed a host of religious, cultural, and artistic practices and media such as prayer and devotional reading, religious art and poetry, but also theatrical performances and musical works. We will focus on individual exercises like the meditation, the examination of conscience, the discernment of spirits, the application of senses, *prosoche*(attention), consolation, contemplation, etc., and discuss authors such as Epictetus, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, John Cassian, Augustine, Bonaventure, Ignatius, Descartes, and others. *Christopher Wild*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 25424

RLVC 36855 – Queer Theory

This course aims to offer a foundation in queer theoretical texts. In order to understand the contested definitions of the term “queer” and explore the contours of the field’s major debates, we will work to historicize queer theory’s emergence in the 1980s and 1990s amidst the AIDS crisis. Reading texts by key figures like Foucault, Sedgwick, Butler, Lorde, Bersani, Crimp, Warner, Halperin, Dinshaw, Edelman, Anzaldúa, Ferguson, and Muñoz in addition to prominent issues of journals like GLQ, differences, and Signs, we will approach these pieces as historical artifacts and place these theorists within the communities of intellectuals, activists, and artists out of which their work emerged. We will, thus, imagine queer theory as a literary practice of mournful and militant devotion, trace queer theory’s relationship to feminism and critical race theory, critique the hagiographic tendency of the academic star system, and interrogate the assumptions of queer theory’s secularity. *Kris Trujillo*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 26885

RLVC 38311 – Image, Iconoclasm, Animation

This course will explore the fantasies of the animation of images both ancient and early Christian, both secular and sacred, as the backdrop to examining the phenomenon of iconoclasm as an assault on the image from pre-Christian antiquity via Byzantium to the Protestant Reformation. It will tackle both texts and images, the archaeological context of image-assault and the conceptual (indeed theological) contexts within which such assault was both justified and condemned. These historical issues cannot be separated, in our scholarly approaches and responses, from a vibrant contemporary culture around question of virtuality, animation, image-worship and image-destruction in the current world. The course will provide space to reflect on the problems raised by this. The course will be taught over the first four and a half weeks in the Spring Quarter on an intensive schedule. It will be examined on the basis of a paper, due on a subject to be agreed and on a date to be agreed at the end of the Spring quarter. PQ: The course will be taught over the first 4 and a half weeks in the Spring Quarter on an intensive schedule. *Jaś Elsner*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 28311

RLVC 38325 – Art and Description in Antiquity and Byzantium

This course explores the rich tradition of ekphrasis in Greco-Roman antiquity and Byzantium – as it ranges from vivid description in general to a specific engagement with works of art. While the prime focus will remain on texts from Greece, Rome and Byzantium – in order to establish what might be called the ancestry of a genre in the European tradition and especially its fascinating place between pagan polytheistic and Christian writing -- there will be opportunity in the final paper to range beyond this into questions of comparative literature, art (history) writing and ekphrasis in other periods or contexts, depending on students’ interests and needs. A reading knowledge of Greek in particular could not be described as a disadvantage, but the course can be taken without knowing the ancient languages. The course will be taught over the first 4 and a half weeks in the Spring Quarter on an intensive schedule. It will be examined on the basis of a paper, due on a subject to be agreed and on a date to be agreed at the end of the Spring quarter. PQ: The course will be taught over the first 4 and a half weeks in the Spring Quarter on an intensive schedule. *Jaś Elsner and Karin Krause*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 28325

RLVC 42023 – Borderlands of Sonic Encounter

Drawing from the complex disciplinary perspectives from the fields of contemporary music studies, this seminar challenges us to remap the landscapes of musical inquiry from center to periphery, from the familiar landscapes of musical canon to the borderlands formed by sonic encounter. “Borderlands of Sonic Encounter” offers students the opportunity to bring diverse backgrounds and disciplinary methods to bear on the interconnectedness afforded by the emergence of global musicology. Listening to and acting with music at the border is more critical in the twenty-first century than ever before. Migrants and refugees move ceaselessly across borders at the sites of conflict. The sonic landscape of borders resounds with violence and threats to sovereignty. The metaphors of the border reflect the most profound of human concerns, above all the borders between life and death. The different projects students will undertake in the seminar will allow them to approach the ontological and aesthetic questions of music in new ways. The symposia and research projects of Phil Bohlman’s Balzan Project, “Borderlands of Sonic Encounter,” will provide additional resources for the seminar. Students from all subdisciplines of music are welcome in the seminar. So, too, are students from the humanistic social sciences, area studies, and Divinity. *Philip Bohlman*

RLVC 46106 – From *Satyr* to Satirist: Moral Outrage in Literature, Visual Culture, and Religion

The figure of the satyr is arguably the joker in literature’s deck of cards: neither merely tragic nor merely comic, at once threatening and amusing, puncturer of pretension with no apparent balloon on which any of its objects of disdain might the favor. Uncivil, unfair, unrelenting: the satyr is pious about its impiety, and at various moments in its long and vexing career, has brought this disposition to bear on religion. This course is about a select few of such moments: Aristophanes, Lucian, Petronius, Rabelais, Swift, Hogarth, Goya. Selections from the plethora of contemporary examples to be determined by the class. *Richard Rosengarten*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 26106

RLVC 50201 – Premodern Critical Theory: Historicity, Worldmaking, Filiation

This course introduces students to ancient, medieval, and early modern literary theory and to modern engagements with these theoretical interventions. We will explore how communities in the past imagined their practices of reading, writing, and interpretation—with especial emphasis on scriptural exegesis—but also what constituted a text, in the first place. How, indeed, were these practices foundational to the formation of communities and, in turn, to alterity? And what role do these literary theories and practices play in longer histories of "theory" and "critique." Staging dialogues between the past and the present, this course will ask what the political implications of designating an archive as "ancient," "archaic," "medieval," or "premodern" are in order to understand how and why the past is continually made and remade. Course Note: This course fulfills the winter core requirement for first-year Ph.D. students in Comparative Literature. *Kris Trujillo*

Theology

THEO 35100 – Theologies of Education

This class will consider a handful of classic and contemporary theologies of education, including those of John Henry Newman, Simone Weil, Willie James Jennings, Keri Day, and Mark Jordan, with an eye to helping students develop their own philosophy of education. *Kevin Hector*

Equivalent Div Course(s): DVPR 35100

THEO 43501 – Contemporary Models of Theology

This course compares various systems and methods in contemporary theologies. By contemporary, we mean theological developments in the USA from the late 1960s to the present. Specifically, we reflect critically on the following models: progressive liberal, post liberal, black theology, feminist theology, womanist theology, and postcolonial theology. In the process, we lay out the political, economic, and cultural factors that gave rise to these models. *Dwight Hopkins*

THEO 44806 – Creation and Human Creatures: Theological Explorations

This course will explore the intersection between theological symbols (doctrines) of creation and human creatures. How are macrocosm and microcosm drawn into theological reflection and construction? How have human and other living creatures and nature served as reference points, exemplars, even counter examples for interpreting divine creation and the enhancement (or diminishment) of life? Explorations will include traditional theological themes of human creatures as the imago Dei and of nature as a mirror of God’s providence and majesty, as well as philosophical and literary texts on human and animal nature, the moral sense of nature, and cultivation and devastation. *Kristine Culp*

Equivalent Div Course(s): RLST 24806

Religious Studies (Undergraduate Designation)

RLST 20223 – Magic, Miracles, and Medicine: Healthcare in the Bible and the Ancient World

This course examines the complex issues surrounding the body, disability, and medical care in antiquity. It will be guided by a variety of questions, such as what was the root cause of bodily infirmity and disease in antiquity? How did cultural views of sex, gender, and race influence perceptions of the body and what it meant to be able bodied? Such questions are significant when considering what kind of access to healthcare marginalized groups had. In order to explore these questions, we will examine ancient Mediterranean views of medical care through material remains (e.g., magical amulets and healing shrines) and textual evidence (e.g., Galen and Hippocrates). After considering this wider cultural context, we will examine treatments in the Hebrew Bible, New Testament, and early Christianity. We will also explore how Christian concepts of medical care evolved in light of accounts of Jesus as a divine healer. In addition to this ancient evidence, we will engage with modern disability studies and sociological analyses to better orient our readings. At the end of the course, students will be better acquainted with the complex relationship between religion and medicine and how that affects modern healthcare decisions. *Richard Zaleski*

RLST 20350 – The Beginnings of Islam

This course will cover the first 150 years of Islamic history, beginning with the Prophet Muhammad’s (d. 632) prophetic mission until the demise of the Umayyad dynasty in 749. Initially the focus will be on the Prophet’s life as portrayed in the work of the 8th century compiler Ibn Ishaq (d. 767) as well as in modern biographies. In the second part, the focus will move to the Islamic conquests and the age of the Rashidun caliphs, who ruled for three decades (632-661) after the Prophet’s death. The third and final part of the course will introduce the first Muslim dynasty, the Umayyads, under whose rule (661-750) the early Islamic community was transformed into a fully-fledged state. We will discuss several different topics, such as state formation in early Islam, ideas about religious vs. political leadership, the development of new religious identities, the emergence of a new ruling elite, formation of Muslim scholarly circles, the first examples of Islamic art and architecture, as well as inner-Muslim conflicts and rebellions. PQ: No background in Islamic studies or in Arabic language is required. *Mehmetcan Akpinar*

Equivalent Div Course(s): ISLM 30350

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. *Staff*

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

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

RLST 21702 – Buddhist Thought in Japan

In this seminar we will explore the intellectual history and social contexts of fundamental motifs of Buddhist thought in, especially but not exclusively, premodern Japan. Eschewing narrow sectarian boundaries, we will focus on the four traditions of the *Lotus sūtra*, the Pure Land, the tantric teachings and Zen construed inclusively as trans-sectarian sources of religious meaning and models of cultivation. Building on an initial exploration of the wider East Asian context of Japanese Buddhism, we will deepen our understanding of these four traditions through a careful examination of primary sources in translation. The course will also incorporate field trips to Japanese Buddhist groups in the Chicago area. *Stephan Licha*

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

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

RLST 22203 – Italian Renaissance: Petrarch, Machiavelli, and the Wars of Popes and Kings

Florence, Rome, and the Italian city-states in the age of plagues and cathedrals, Petrarch and Machiavelli, Medici and Borgia (1250–1600), with a focus on literature, philosophy, primary sources, the revival of antiquity, and the papacy's entanglement with pan-European politics. We will examine humanism, patronage, politics, corruption, assassination, feuds, art, music, magic, censorship, education, science, heresy, and the roots of the Reformation. Writing assignments focus on higher level writing skills, with a creative writing component linked to our in-class role-played reenactment of a Renaissance papal election (LARP). First-year students and non-History majors welcome. PQ: Graduate students by consent only; register for the course as HIST 90000 Reading and Research: History. Course Notes: Assignments: short papers, alternative projects. *Ada Palmer*

RLST 22812 – Introduction to Hinduism

What is Hinduism? And what does it mean to be Hindu? This class offers an introduction to the classical texts and contemporary practices from a diverse set of traditions collectively called “Hinduism.” Beginning with a brief overview of its ancient Indian textual sources and philosophical debates, our course readings take us through the mythic and epic narratives that have been central to many Hindus for centuries. Later, we follow the devotional poetry and sacred imagery that enliven contemporary Hinduism and adapt to various socio-political contexts: colonization, nationalism, and globalization. Throughout the course, we focus on different types of media (oral, textual, visual, digital) that reshape the way Hindu texts and deities are perceived and understood. In the final weeks, our class focuses on Hinduism beyond India and considers what it means when Hindu gods and traditions thrive in the United States. No prior knowledge expected. Course Note: This course counts as a Gateway course for RLST majors/minors. *Andrew Kunze*

RLST 24000 – Is It Ethical to Have Children in the Climate Crisis?

Climate change is not just an urgent environmental crisis for scientists, engineers, and policy makers: it is a moral problem that also informs individual and intimate aspects of human life, including choices about reproduction and parenting. For example, a 2018 survey published in the New York Times found that young adults in the U.S. are having fewer children than they would otherwise prefer, in part due to concerns about climate change and overpopulation. In this course, we examine the moral dimensions of having and raising children in an era shaped by climate change, looking closely at two main questions: 1) Is it ethical to have children in light of the world that the next generation will inherit, which may include more extreme weather events, unvoluntary human migrations, diminished access to resources, and heightened insecurity? 2) Is it ethical to have children in the context of the affluent West, where consumptive human populations disproportionately contribute to the effects of climate change that impact the world’s most vulnerable? We will examine various points of view on these questions, engaging material from the disciplines of environmental studies and ethics, science and technology studies, and religious and philosophical ethics. Responses from feminist, queer, Indigenous, Black, and religiously diverse authors (and intersections therein) will shape our course readings and discussions. *Kristi Del Vecchio*

RLST 24102 – Justice in an Unjust World: Theory and Practices of Justice

Justice as a possibility, an ideal, and as a telos is fundamental to theological and philosophical systems of ethics. Yet, each theory was formulated within and against a deeply unjust world. Every theory of justice implies an anthropology and an ontology, and each asks the question: Why isn’t life fair? How can we can we create a just society against a world that is so obviously unjust? Each theory then proposes a just solution and every theory implies a set of practices that can be interrogated. As our contemporary society becomes more sharply divided, the issues of distribution, obligation, entitlement, fair exchanges of social goods and labor, and the fair sharing of social burdens becomes more important and demanding of more inquiry. This seminar will interrogate several theories of justice, beginning in classic Hellenistic texts and moving forward to the animating theories of the classic liberal tradition: libertarianism, utilitarianism, social contract theory, and Marxism. We will then turn to other sources of justice theory such as Catholic liberation theology, capacity theory, and Jewish justice theory. We will also use our seminar to explore contemporary cases in law, medicine, science and policy that raise issues of justice and injustice. While the seminar will focus on distributive practices, we will also explore how these practices structure our systems of retributive and restorative justice. Course Note: This course counts as an elective course for the "Inequality, Social Problems, and Change" minor. *Laurie Zoloth*

RLST 24601 – Martin and Malcolm: Life and Belief

This course examines the religious, social, cultural, political, and personal factors that went into the making of the two most prominent public leaders and public intellectuals emerging from the African American community in the 1950s and 1960s: Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. We will review their autobiographies, the domestic trends within the USA, and the larger international forces operating during their times. Their life stories provide the contexts for the sharp differences and surprising commonalities in their political thought and religious beliefs. At the end of their lives, were they still radical contrasts, sharing the same views, or had their beliefs shifted – did Malcolm become Martin and Martin become Malcolm? *Dwight Hopkins*

RLST 25400 – The Bible in U.S. Politics: The Use and Abuse of Sacred Texts in the Public Sphere

People across the political spectrum continue to cite the Bible to justify their viewpoints. Black Lives Matter protestors carried signs citing scriptural support for the rights of African Americans to life and justice, while some of those who stormed the U.S. Capitol on January 6th first marched around their state capitols in recreation of biblical Israel’s circling of the doomed city Jericho. How can the same book serve the political ends of such ideologically distinct movements? In this course, we will explore the variety of ways in which the Bible, especially the Christian New Testament, informs contemporary political discourse. We will discuss what the Bible is and where it comes from, and how an interpreter’s social location and culturally and historical-bound assumptions shape their interpretation. We will build upon this foundation by examining several contentious political issues in which the Bible is commonly invoked, including abortion, sexuality, immigration, and gun rights. We will analyze the key passages used by supporters of various policy positions to support their claims, situating these texts in their original contexts and highlighting the historical distance that problematizes their use today. Prior familiarity with biblical literature is not required. *Doug Hoffer*

RLST 26501 – Renaissance Demonology

In this course we analyze the complex concept of demonology according to early modern European culture from a theological, historical, philosophical, and literary point of view. The term 'demon' in the Renaissance encompasses a vast variety of meanings. Demons are hybrids. They are both the Christian devils, but also synonyms for classical deities, and Neo-platonic spiritual beings. As far as Christian theology is concerned, we read selections from Augustine's and Thomas Aquinas's treatises, some complex exorcisms written in Italy, and a recent translation of the infamous "Malleus maleficarum," the most important treatise on witch-hunt. We pay close attention to the historical evolution of the so-called witch-craze in Europe through a selection of the best secondary literature on this subject, with special emphasis on Michel de Certeau's "The Possession at Loudun." We also study how major Italian and Spanish women mystics, such as Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi and Teresa of Avila, approach the issue of demonic temptation and possession. As far as Renaissance Neoplatonic philosophy is concerned, we read selections from Marsilio Ficino's "Platonic Theology" and Girolamo Cardano's mesmerizing autobiography. We also investigate the connection between demonology and melancholy through a close reading of the initial section of Robert Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy" and Cervantes's short story "The Glass Graduate" ("El licenciado Vidriera"). Course Note: Course taught in English. *Armando Maggi*

RLST 26600 – Violence and Religion

Why do disputes about religion so often break out into violent conflict? How does violence in literature relate to real world violence? Would a more secular world be more peaceful? This course will examine the role of violence in ancient and modern societies. We will focus on the recurring connection between violence and the divine. The first part of the course will explore how human communities depict violence in sacred texts, works of literature, and political rhetoric. Why do myths frequently portray the relationship between gods and humans as a violent one? What role does violence play in religious rituals? What is it that makes violence destructive under certain conditions and unifying under others? The second part of the course will examine classic theories of sacred violence to examine how theorists have explained the centrality of violence within religious narratives and the ways religion both facilitates and opposes violence No previous coursework is required to enroll. *Joseph Haydt*

RLST 26674 – The Global Black Panther Party

In America, the Black Panther Party and its leaders, like Fred Hampton in Chicago, are famous for their revolutionary fight against white supremacy and their violent suppression by US government forces. But what does a Global Studies approach teach us about the Black Panthers? This seminar explores how the Black Panther Party’s worldwide networks impacted global understandings of politics, race, and religion. Our readings examine a series of comparative case studies, including the Dalit Panther Party in India, the Mizrahi Black Panther Party in Israel, and the Polynesian Panthers in New Zealand. We analyze primary sources, such as the various Panther Parties’ publications, their mainstream press coverage, and their pop cultural representations, like Ta-Nehisi Coates’ *Black Panther* graphic novel and the film *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*. In this course, students learn the global Black Panther Parties’ roles in reshaping worldwide conceptions of race, caste, and religion through their encounters with the Nation of Islam, Hindu Nationalism, Zionism, and Indigenous rights. No prior knowledge or coursework is required. *Andrew Kunze*

RLST 27700 – Music of South Asia

The course explores some of the music traditions that hail from South Asia—a region defined by the countries of India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan, Maldives, and their diasporas. The course will study music and some of its inextricably linked forms of dance and theatre through the lens of ethnomusicology, where music is considered in its social and cultural contexts. Students will develop tools to listen, analyze, watch, and participate in South Asian forms of music-making, using case-study based inquiries as guides along the way. *Anna Schultz*

RLST 28280 – *The Good Place* and the Bad Place: Judgement, Punishment, and Living a Good Life

Do you believe that you are a good person and, if so, *why* are you good? This course will investigate the connections between personal intentions to be a "good person" and the fear of punishment. What do we owe each other as ethical actors? Do the intentions of our actions matter or only the results of our actions? How can one be good in an increasingly complicated web of intersecting needs, social developments, and understandings of morality? This course will examine conceptions of hell, eternal punishment, and justice in a variety of religious traditions.

In addition to reading authors such as Dante and John Milton, students will critically engage *The Good Place*, a sitcom which tackles deep questions of faith, morality, and the complexity of the human person. We will think through competing understandings of justice (retributive, distributive, and restorative) alongside our individual beliefs surrounding fairness and deservingness. No prior knowledge of religious studies or ethics is expected. *Foster Pinkney*

RLST 28509 – Reinterpretations of Time and Death

This class will explore philosophical, religious and literary reimaginings and reconceptualizations of the nature of time and of death.   Of special concern will be both conceptual and imaginative speculations that contravene commonsensical notions such as 1) time as a sequence of nonconsecutive and nonoverlapping “moments,” 2) time as unidirectional, 3) time as uninterrupted, 4) time as synordinate, 5) time as nonrepeating, 6) death as *either* the end of individual consciousness *or* the continuation of individual consciousness, 7) death as *either*leading to consequences of the life lived *or*having no such consequences, and so on.   Readings may include the following: Borges, “A New Refutation of Time,” Amis, *Time’s Arrow*;Baker *The Fermata*; Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five*;Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra;*Eagleman, *Sum: Forty Tales from the Afterlives*;William James, *Principles of Psychology;* Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will; and* Ziporyn, *Death Time Perception*(in progress), among others. *Brook Ziporyn*

Equivalent Div Course(s): DVPR 38509, HREL 38509

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. Students will be examined on the basis of an essay and one oral presentation of a work of art. Active participation in the classroom discussion is also a requirement.Course Note: This course is intended primarily for students who have little or no familiarity with the methods of visual analysis. *Karin Krause*

RLST 28711 – Law and Religion in the Modern United States

This course explores the persistent tension between law and religious faith in the United States. It will proceed loosely chronologically, beginning with the Supreme Court’s first rulings on religious liberty following the Civil War and continuing into the twenty-first century. The course will also introduce students to a range of thematic issues, such as the use of state power by religious actors to regulate behavior, the place of believers (and nonbelievers) within a liberal democracy, the religious rights of corporations, and the emergence of forms of legal pluralism as religious law and civil law increasingly intersect. Readings will include case law, legal and political theorists, as well as religious voices. Students will complete a significant literature review on a topic of their choosing. This course counts as an LLSO junior colloquium. *Jacob Betz*

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*. *Daniel A. Arnold*