**RELIGIOUS STUDIES COURSES 2021-2022**

**AUTUMN 2021**

RLST 11004 – Introduction to the Hebrew Bible

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

RLST 15100 – Introductory Qur’anic Arabic I

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

RLST 20111 – History of Death

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

RLST 20201– 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*

RLST 20400 – The History of Sunnism

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

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. *Ahmed El Shamsy*

RLST 20441 – Theravada Buddhism: History and Philosophy

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

RLST 20506 – Martin Buber’s Philosophy of Religion and Judaism

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

RLST 21410 – American Religion Since 1865

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

RLST 21505 – The Apostolic Fathers

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

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

RLST 22010 - Jewish Civilization I: Ancient Beginnings to Medieval Period

Jewish Civilization is a three-quarter sequence that explores the development of Jewish culture and tradition from its ancient beginnings through its rabbinic and medieval transformations to its modern manifestations. Through investigation of primary texts-biblical, Talmudic, philosophical, mystical, historical, documentary, and literary-students will acquire a broad overview of Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness while reflecting in greater depth on major themes, ideas, and events in Jewish history. The autumn course will deal with antiquity through the Middle Ages. Its readings will include material from the Bible and writings from the second temple, Hellenistic, rabbinic, and medieval periods. All sections of this course will share a common core of readings; individual instructors will supplement with other materials. It is recommended, though not required, that students take the three Jewish Civilization courses in sequence. Students who register for the Autumn Quarter course will automatically be pre-registered for the winter segment. In the Spring Quarter students have the option of taking a third unit of Jewish Civilization, a course whose topics will vary (JWSC 1200X). *Yonatan Shemesh (01); David Barak-Gorodetsky (02); Bevin Blaber (03)*

RLST 22100 – Introduction to Zen Buddhism

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

RLST 22302 – The Book of Judges

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

RLST 23112 – Deconstruction and Religion

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

RLST 24114 – Justice in History

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

RLST 24592 – Jewish and Islamic Ethics in al-Andalus

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Willemien Otten* and *Michael I. Allen*

RLST 25501 – Saints and Other Exemplars

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

RLST 25678 – Narratives of the End of Faith

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

RLST 26013 – Drinking with God: An Introduction to Sufism

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

RLST 26101 – Buddhism

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

RLST 26102 – Ecstasy

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

RLST 26250 – Buddhist Poetry in India

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

RLST 26265 – Comparative Study of Humanistic Buddhism and Engaged Buddhism

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

RLST 26630 – Religious Violence

Are there "proper" or "improper" practices of religion? Is it at best a matter of private belief, to be kept separate from or protected by the state? Or is it something that at times requires the state's intervention? Does religion represent the last vestiges of the premodern world, or is it something that is integral to modern life? To answer these questions, we will call on anthropologists and other social scientists and theorists to understand, first, what is "religion," and then what is, can be, or should be its relationship to gender, the nation, and the modern state in various historical and geographical locations, with particular attention to the Middle East and South Asia. *Callie Maidhof*

RLST 27001 – History of Criticism: Plato to Dante

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

RLST 27517 – Writing Christian Poetry

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

RLST 28991 – The Prophet Q

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

RLST 29000 – The American Culture Wars

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

**WINTER 2022**

RLST 10100 – Introduction to Religious Studies

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

RLST 11030 – Introduction to the Qur’an

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

RLST 12000 – Intro to the New Testament: Texts and Contexts

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

RLST 15200 - Introductory Qur’anic Arabic II

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

RLST 20202– 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 refquirement for MA students in CMES, as well as for NELC majors and PhD students. *Franklin Lewis*

RLST 20402 - Islamic Thought and Literature II
What are the major developments in thinking and in literature in the Islamic world of the “middle periods” (c. 950-1800 C.E.). How did noteworthy Muslims at various points and places think through questions of life and death, man and God, faith and belief, the sacred and the profane, law and ethics, tradition vs. innovation, power and politics, class and gender, self and other? How did they wage war; make love; shape the built environment; eat and drink; tell stories; educate their youth; preserve the past; imagine the future; perform piety, devotion, and spirituality; construe the virtuous life and righteous community, etc.? How did these ideas change over time? What are some of the famous, funny, naughty, and nice books read in the pre-modern Muslim world? We will survey a broad geographic area stretching from Morocco and Iberia to the Maldives and India--even into the New World--through lectures, secondary readings, and discussion. We will engage with a variety of primary texts in English translation, as well as various visual, aural, and material artifacts. Notes: Taking these courses in sequence is recommended but not required. This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies. *Franklin Lewis*

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

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

RLST 20811 – Ritual, Cult, and Magic in the Hebrew Bible

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

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

Jewish Civilization is a three-quarter sequence that explores the development of Jewish culture and tradition from its ancient beginnings through its rabbinic and medieval transformations to its modern manifestations. Through investigation of primary texts-biblical, Talmudic, philosophical, mystical, historical, documentary, and literary-students will acquire a broad overview of Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness while reflecting in greater depth on major themes, ideas, and events in Jewish history. The Winter course will begin with the early modern period and continue to the present. It will include discussions of mysticism, the works of Spinoza and Mendelssohn, the nineteenth-century reform, the Holocaust and its reflection in writers such as Primo Levi and Paul Celan, and literary pieces from postwar American Jewish and Israeli authors. All sections of this course will share a common core of readings; individual instructors will supplement with other materials. It is recommended, though not required, that students take the three Jewish Civilization courses in sequence. Students who register for the Autumn Quarter course will automatically be pre-registered for the winter segment. In the Spring Quarter students have the option of taking a third unit of Jewish Civilization, a course whose topics will vary (JWSC 1200X). *Kenneth Moss (01); Jessica Kirzane (02); Bevin Blaber (03)*

RLST 21430 – Religion and American Capitalism

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

RLST 22304 – Words of the Wise: Proverbs and Qohelet

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

RLST 22418 – The Scopes Trial in Historical Context

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

RLST 22667 – The Christian Right

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

RLST 22780 – Readings: Sufism in Morocco

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

RLST 22812 – Introduction to Classical Hinduism

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

RLST 23823 – Melancholy: Readings in Medieval Christian Literature

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

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

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

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

RLST 23905 – Is Buddhism a Religion?

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

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

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

RLST 24402 – Religion, Writing, Revolution

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

RLST 25806 – The Political Theologies of Zionism

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

RLST 25821 – Psychology of Conflict: Lessons from Jerusalem

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

RLST 25915 – The Jewish Question in the 21st Century

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

RLST 26160 – Art and Religion in South Asia

This course is an introduction to religion and art in South Asia (comprised of the modern nation states of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka). The course material covers Buddhist, Jain, Hindu, and Islamic architecture, sculpture, painting, and performing arts. The course examines the ways in which art is related to myth and symbol, religious values and goals, ritual, religious experience, and social and political realities. *Sarah Pierce Taylor*

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

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

RLST 26521 - Three Greek Philosophical Texts

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

RLST 26670 – Religious Autobiographies

The decision of a person to present in written form the story of her or his life - and through that, what they take to be their selfhood - has spawned a literary tradition with an abiding and distinctive presence in religion. This course explores the phenomena of specifically religious autobiography as variations on the form of "confession," tracing its roots in early Christianity (Paul and Augustine), and juxtaposing these expressions with readings in a range of authors who adapt the classic articulations of "confession" to their specific selves and contexts: examples will include Teresa of Avila’s "mystical" confession, the "confession" of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Frederick Douglass' "(anti) slave religion," Mahatma Gandhi's "non-violent resistance," and Maggie Nelson's "transition". The course will conclude by studying the adoption of the confessional mode in the graphic novel, which introduces explicitly visual representations of selfhood and carries forward the genre’s general spirit of exceptionalism and overt non-conformity. *Richard Rosengarten*

RLST 27075 – The Latinx Religious Experience in the US

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

RLST 27213 – Between Polemics and Encounter: “Jews” and “Christians” in Rome and Sasanian Persia

In recent decades, scholars of biblical and early Christian literature have examined the various ways literary sources constructed the relationship between “Jews” and “Christians” in Late Antiquity. These resources prove challenging for reconstructing the situation on the ground. This course will introduce students to the various models scholars have advanced for making sense of the evidence and debated categories such as “Jewish-Christianity.” Against this backdrop, students will undertake a close reading of a select, representative examples to examine the development of adversus Iudaeos (“against the Jews”) literature. The readings will focus our attention on evidence from Greek- and Syriac-speaking Christians living within the multilingual and religiously diverse regions at the boundary of the Roman and Sassanian Persian Empires. Familiar sources such as the Pauline epistles, Apostolic Fathers, and John Chysostom will be accompanied by readings from the pseudo-Clementine literature, the Didascalia Apostolorum, poetry, and Persian Martyr Acts. We will explore how new discoveries within Syriac studies are currently reshaping our approaches to traditional questions. PQ: None; those with skills in Greek and Syriac will have the opportunity to apply them. *Erin Galgay Walsh*

RLST 27290 – Blake’s Theopoetics

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

RLST 27391 – Pirates, Saints, and Rebels: Religions of the Indian Ocean

In this course we will set sail with pirates, saints, slaves, merchants, rebels, missionaries, and deities of the wind and water to explore the transnational religious networks of the Indian Ocean. Orienting ourselves around moments of encounter, translation, circulation, and exchange between Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, and indigenous traditions will allow us to reassess how traveling religious texts, objects, ideas, and the people who carried them interact between geographical areas typically considered in isolation. Beginning with late antiquity and the medieval period, we will investigate how religious networks were formed and mobilized between the coastal regions of South and Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Eastern and Southern Africa, continuing through the age of exploration and imperial expansion to the present day. We will analyze the relationship between religion and colonial power, and examine how colonial technologies of travel and communication both enabled the expansion of empire and provided the tools for grassroots resistance. *Francesca Chubb-Confer*

RLST 27721 – Relating Race and Religion: Critical Concepts of Blackness and Jewishness

This course examines Blackness and Jewishness in order to untangle the intersections of race and religion as they are represented in political polemic, fiction, memoir and philosophy in France and the United States from the 1960s to the present. Founded on ideals of universalism, pluralism and secularism, France and the United States are fraught with contradictions when it comes to race and religion. You will critique these founding ideals in order to expose their contradictions, and in the process seek new ways to articulate how religion and race, along with intersecting categories such as gender and sexuality, can become tools of political resistance. Readings include works by thinkers such as Césaire, Fanon, Memmi, Levinas and Foucault, along with literary classics by Nella Larsen and Sarah Kofman, and contemporary critical essays by Judith Butler, Christina Sharpe and Talal Asad. Throughout this course, you will examine how the concepts of race and religion are key components of the political, philosophical and ethical projects of these authors, and develop historical and conceptual perspective on the origins and current forms of debates that trouble the boundaries between personal and political. *Kirsten Collins*

RLST 28219 – Understanding Buddhism through Meditation

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

RLST 28308 – Introduction to Byzantine Art

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

RLST 28447 – It’s the End of the World as We Know It: Apocalyptic Literature and Millenarian Movements

This course takes a cross-cultural approach to the study of texts and movements traditionally deemed “apocalyptic” or “Millenarian.” We will focus in particular on the historical and cultural circumstances in which these texts and movements were produced. We will cover a wide range of cultural and political contexts, including Roman-occupied Judea during the first century CE, the Xhosaland of southern Africa in the mid 19th century, and the rise of QAnon in the 21st century United States. Our goals will be to think through various theories on why and how these texts and movements arose, to examine their internal logic and organization (especially focusing on their theology), and analyze the aftermath of failed expectations. *Marshall Cunningham*

RLST 28992 – Arguing on the Internet

Course description coming. *Russell Johnson*

RLST 29109 – Race and the Bible

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

**SPRING 2022**

RLST 15300 – Introductory Qur’anic Arabic III

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

RLST 20203 – 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*

RLST 20230 – Jerusalem: The “Holy” City

What makes a city “holy”? How is religious space created and contested? How can one city be claimed by three faiths? This course will attempt to answer these questions and many others by tracing the religious history of Jerusalem — a religious center for Jews, Christians, and Muslims – from its founding under King David to the modern Israeli/Palestinian conflict. For roughly three thousand years, Jerusalem has served as a site of creation, interaction, and conflict for these traditions and millions of their adherents. Using primary and secondary materials, along with theoretical works, we will analyze Jerusalem as an object of study in relation to common themes of Religious Studies like sacred space, pilgrimage, and myth. *Marshall Cunningham*

RLST 20403 – Islamic Thought and Literature III

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

RLST 20840 – Radical Islamic Pieties, 1200 to 1600

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

RLST 23111 – Black Theology: Hopkins Versus Cone

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

RLST 23750 – New Cartesian Questions

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

RLST 24103 – Bioethics

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

RLST 25004 – Theological, Phenomenological, and Ethical Aspects of Prayer

Through the centuries, human beings have addressed divine powers and entrusted themselves to a ‘beyond’ – in the hope that joy and sorrow may find an attentive ‘ear,’ that evil be transformed into good, and that the heavens will help in adversity. Yet, if the ‘voice’ or ‘word’ of God cannot be perceived acoustically, how can we then know whether our prayer has been ‘heard,’ and what it is that God wants to ‘tell’ us? In discussing great thinkers who also were great listeners to the divine ‘voice’ that may ‘resound’ in silence or ‘speak’ to us through biblical texts or fellow human beings, this course will explore theological, ethical, and phenomenological aspects of prayer:

(1) *Prayer and the knowledge of God (theology)*: Our speech *about* God changes and deepens when it is grounded in the speech *to* God. That is why prayer has been regarded as the key to divine knowledge, which can be seen in Augustine’s *Confessions,* Anselm of Canterbury’s *Proslogion* and Karl Barth’s interpretation of the latter in *Fides quarens intellectum.* In particular, the relation between self-knowledge and the knowledge of God is of interest in this context.

(2) *Prayer and experience (phenomenology):* Does prayer require or effect a special state of consciousness, and what is the difference between prayer and meditation? By reading French phenomenologists like Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida, and Jean-Louis Chrétien, we will investigate the intentionality, temporality, and language of prayer. How can experiences like trust in God or doubts regarding divine (non-)intervention be verbalized ; how are they transformed in the process of prayer ; and what is the significance of silent, attentive listening to God ?

(3) *Prayer and life orientation(ethics)*:How can prayer help us (re-)orient ourselves in life crises and undertake responsibility for our reactions and interactions, for each other and the world we have in common? In dialogue with critics of petitionary prayer on the one hand and defenders on the other, among them Søren Kierkegaard, Franz Rosenzweig, Abraham Joshua Heschel, Dewi Z. Phillips and Vincent Brümmer, we will search for criteria defining prayer that is deemed ‘appropriate.’

*Claudia Welz*

RLST 25563 – Does American Democracy Need Religion?

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

RLST 25704 – Environmental Justice in Chicago

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

RLST 25705 – The Bible and Ecology

In 2010, HarperCollins published The Green Bible, which claims to help readers “understand the Bible’s powerful message for the earth.” What precisely is the Bible’s “message for the earth”? Does the Bible even contain one unified message about the relationship between God, human beings, and the natural world? For many, the question of “what the Bible says” about the environment has become urgent in the midst of the intersecting environmental crises of our day, from global warming to the sixth mass extinction. Nevertheless, contemporary discourse yields no easy answer to this question. The Bible has been used both to support ethics of conservation and to justify exploitation of the earth’s resources. In this course, we will analyze key passages employed in contemporary discourse about the Bible and the environment (e.g., Gen 1-3; Ps 148; Rom 8; 2 Pet 3) from a historical-critical perspective, while also investigating how these texts are being invoked today in support of various agendas. Along the way, we will discover and interrogate the profound influence of biblical cosmologies, anthropologies, and eschatologies in shaping attitudes towards to the environment. *Christine Trotter*

RLST 25800 – Black Ownership of Wealth: A Theological Consideration

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

RLST 25809 – Islamic and Jewish Political Philosophy

In this course we will study the history of political philosophy in the medieval Islamic world. We begin by discussing the transmission of Greek philosophy into Arabic-Islamic culture, the debates that ensued over the value of philosophy versus prophecy, and the issue of esoteric writing. These preliminary topics provide necessary background and context for studying the tradition of political philosophy that developed under Islam and Judaism during the Middle Ages. Then, for the rest of the semester, students analyze key works by Muslim and Jewish thinkers who navigated the relationships between religion, politics, and philosophy. Along the way we discuss a number of major themes and topics, including (but not limited to) approaches to divine law, the figure of the philosopher-prophet, logic and language, scriptural interpretation, the place of the philosopher in society, and the nature of human perfection. *Yonatan Shemesh*

RLST 26311 – Islam and Biomedicine

This course deals with the transformations and conundrums that biomedical practice has brought about in Muslim-majority societies, with particular attention to Islamic law, policy, gender, and everyday life. We will read texts from anthropology, history and Islamic bioethics on a variety of biomedical topics. PQ: Applicants should submit one or two paragraphs explaining their interest in the course and any prior preparation. *Elham Mireshghi*

RLST 26333 – Comparative Trinitarianisms

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

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

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

RLST 27490 – Art as Buddhism in Ancient India: Explorations in the Stupa of Amaravati and Other Monuments

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

RLST 27652 – Ethnography Before Modernity

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

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

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

RLST 27714 – Israeli Society Through Media: The Four Tribes of Israel

From the outside, Israeli society might seem homogeneous and cohesive, bound together by the outside challenges and threats that have defined its eight decades of existence. However, in a recent public speech, President Reuben Rivlin warned Israelis of the tribal schisms tearing contemporary Israeli society and defined a ‘new Israeli order’ splitting the state into 4 groups: Arabs, ultra-Orthodox Jews, national religious Jews and secular Jews.
Using the president’s description of the “four tribes of Israel” as our framework, this course focuses on representations of the different groups in Israeli media and popular culture.
We will ask:
• What distinguishes each of these tribes?
• What is the narrative held by each tribe to describe itself and the 'other' tribes?
• How do the different tribes interact?
• Is modern Israel a successful immigration society or a failed experiment at creating a melting pot?
Using Israeli society as a case study, we will also consider prevailing ideas about mediation and reconciliation in fragmented societies.
If there is student interest, the course may include a section for advanced Hebrew learners. *Ehud Har Even*

RLST 27715 – The History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (title tbd)

*David Barak-Gorodetsky*

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

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

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

The “freedom of religion” is one of the United States’ most enduring and celebrated national ideals. And yet, rights of religious belief and practice have been contested consistently throughout the history of the nation, transforming both cultural practice and legal definition of religion. Consequently, scholars of religion and law have described recently “the impossibility of religious freedom” in American culture and under constitutional law. Can American religion be radically free \*and\* fundamentally subject to the legal definitions and executive constraints of the state? In this course, we will examine historical events, legal principles and academic debates over the meaning and execution of religion’s “free exercise” in the United States. Three case studies will ground our investigations: the Pueblo Indian dance controversy of the 1920s, the organization of the Church of Scientology in the 1950s and, finally, conflict over property and political rights at Oregon’s Rajneeshpuram in the 1980s. Historical and cultural study will be augmented with theory and legal analysis by scholars of American religion and law. The term will end with student presentations of controversial developments in the exercise of religion since 1993’s Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), including its enforcement of religious boundaries around drug use, gay marriage and women’s reproductive health. *Greg Chatterley*

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

In this course, we will examine the enduring legacy of Christianity and white supremacy in regions that became the United States nearly three hundred years after Christopher Columbus first imported church-state rule, racial hierarchy and capitalist economic exploitation to the Americas. Over ten weeks, we will survey successive episodes of white supremacist racial formation under American Christianity and its predecessors, from European Catholic and Protestant colonization through more recent cultural and political projects of conservative white evangelicalism. Through this aggressively abridged overview of social and cultural transformation, we will identify historical and religious nuances of disparate racial regimes while, at the same time, aiming to cultivate more general analytical frameworks for the study of religion, racism and white supremacy in American culture over time. *Greg Chatterley*

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

This class examines key texts in Islamic societies that together comprise a set of cultural narratives through which ideas about love, desire, and sexuality circulated. Throughout the course, we will engage with these broad themes by exploring the subjects of erotic and familial love; gender, sexuality, and the body; Orientalism and the politics of reading desire cross-culturally; and the enduring tensions between the particular and the universal in discourses of and about love, the passions and their vicissitudes in the histories of religion. Islam provides the historical framework through which we can assess shared and differentiated ideas about this important human phenomenon, from the Hellenism of late antiquity to contemporary media of South Asia. We will encounter various ways of understanding love in primary sources that range from the Qur’ān and pre-Islamic poetry; to mystics and philosophers such as Ibn al-‘Arabī and Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna); to the narratives of Rūmī’s Masnāvī and Niẓāmī’s Laylī o Majnūn; to the popular tales of the A Thousand and One Nights and the framing of Islamic cultural narratives in Bollywood cinema and American popular culture.
This course draws on the perspectives of Religious Studies, Medieval Studies, Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, and Comparative Literature, and students will have the opportunity over the course of the class to develop a project that relates our content to their own interests. Course Note: This course counts as a Concepts course for GNSE majors. *Allison Kanner-Botan*

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

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

RLST 28704 – The Veneration of Icons in Byzantium

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

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

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