

SPRING 2010 RELIGION COURSES

HBR1103—Beginning Hebrew II (Dr. Levenson)

HBR 1103 continues HBR 1102 and completes coverage of the essentials of Biblical Hebrew grammar. During the course of the semester selections from Genesis and the entire book of Jonah will be read. In addition, there will be some reading from poetic texts (including songs). After the completion of HBR 1103, the student will be prepared to read any portion of the Hebrew Bible with the aid of a dictionary and commentary.

HPS 3230—Screening the Scientific Life: Cinema and the Cultural Image of Science (Dr. Day and Dr. Ruse)

Modern cinema represents more than mere entertainment. At crucial points in the twentieth century, the silver screen provided the preeminent cultural space for working through the implications of profound political and social change. As a case in point, it is nearly impossible to think about the American civil rights movement without also thinking about films such as *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962), *In the Heat of the Night* (1967), and *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?* (1967). Rather than focusing on political and social change, however, this course examines how cinema has provided a unique framework for wrestling with the implications of the modern scientific enterprise. Sometimes, the chief worry is about how easily scientific rationality can be harnessed to both moral and immoral ends. Other times, the main anxiety is over the kind of world that science has produced. By probing a variety of genres including biography, documentary, historical drama, science fiction, political satire, and horror this class sets out to make sense of the cinematic and cultural desire to make sense of science.

HUM 2937—Human Rights and Crimes Against Humanity (Honors Section) (Dr. Twiss)

This seminar examines the history and dynamics of crimes against humanity (including genocide) as an introduction to the international human rights movement. It focuses on two historical cases—the Belgian Congo in the early 20th century and the Holocaust at mid-century—both of which spawned a considerable literature of testimony, analysis, resistance, and reform both at the time and subsequently. Materials for study will include works of literature, drama,

history, philosophy as well as essays, addresses, letters, and other works by prominent figures in the humanities, arts, social sciences, learned professions (e.g., law) and public life. A major thesis of the course—to be cooperatively tested by us all—is that by focusing on such works we will not only become familiar with human rights thinking and practice but also be encouraged to acquire a critical and imaginative human rights sensibility important for being responsible citizens in the contemporary world.

HUM2937—Christianity and the Birth of the Modern State (Dr. Dupuigrenet)

How did Christian thought conceive the conflicting ideals of the Christian Commonwealth – or *Respublica Christiana* – inherited from Gregory the Great, and the Christian states as they developed during the late medieval and early modern period – among them the pontifical state? Starting with Dante’s idea of the empire the course will focus on the ideological make-up of the European state from the crisis of the fourteenth century (Avignon Papacy, Great Schism of the West, Hundred Year’s War) to the early eighteenth century (foundation of the modern concept of toleration with Pierre Bayle or Voltaire), emphasizing such defining moments as the councils of Constance and Basel that put an end to the Great Schism, the birth of Protestant states in the sixteenth century, the English Revolution, the treaties of Westphalia, in 1648 that sanctioned the principle of *cujus regio ejus religio* (the religion of the prince is the religion of the people) after almost a hundred years of religious wars in Europe, or the repudiation of the Edict of tolerance of Nantes by Louis XIV, in 1685, that provoked an exodus of French Huguenots to a number of European states, from the Low Countries to England and Germany.

PHI 3700—Philosophy of Religion (Dr. Day)

Why is there something rather than nothing? The conventional solution to this philosophical riddle is to appeal to some causally self-sufficient source (e.g., Plato’s *demiurge*, Aristotle’s *unmoved mover*). That is to say, metaphysical and ontological questions have brought forth theological answers. In this way, the history of philosophy can be conceived as the history of onto-theology. However, at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, two philosophers Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger proclaimed the *death of God*, the *demise of metaphysics* and, as a consequence, *the end of philosophy*. This course sets out to make sense of these grand historical claims. Figures discussed will include: Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Hume, Kant, Nietzsche, Heidegger.

REL 1300—Introduction to World Religions (Mark Canter)

“Introduction to World Religions” surveys the major religious traditions of the world, with attention to their origins, principle beliefs and practices. The course will have achieved its

purpose if you complete the semester with a working knowledge of the world's main religions and an appreciation for the pluralistic spiritual views of humanity.

REL 1300—Introduction to World Religions (Rosemary Kellison)

This course revolves around two central questions: what is religion, and why is it relevant in the 21st century? To answer these questions, we will begin by discussing scholarly approaches to defining and understanding religion. We then will turn to a survey of some of the world's major religious traditions, including: indigenous religious traditions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and selected new religious movements. In the process of comparing the religions of the world, it will be the responsibility of each student to think critically about the historical evolution, systems of belief, ritual practices, institutional developments and cultural expressions of each religious tradition. There will be a special focus on contemporary issues facing these traditions as well as a broader consideration of the relationship between religion and modernity. A range of reading materials and writing assignments have been chosen to provide a framework within which to engage a variety of religious issues and to understand the significance and relevance of religion in world history.

REL 1300—Introduction to World Religions (Barton Price)

This course looks at the survey of the world's religions in various areas of the globe, including the United States. This class will discuss the indigenous religions of Africa and the Americas, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. We will discuss the basics of the religions (e.g. beliefs and sacred texts); their points of origins; their historic development; and their expansion across the globe. This course focuses on history and geography in order to understand world religions. Per Gordon Rule expectations, students will demonstrate skills in writing and must maintain a C- or better for their essay grades.

REL 2121—Religion in the U.S. (Daniel Dillard)

What role has religion played in American culture and history? How have the many religions in the United States managed to get along? Is American a secular or a religious country? What is the relationship between religion, society, and the individual? These topics are explored in "Religion(s) in the U.S." This course does not pretend to offer a definitive answer to such questions. Instead, it offers you the tools to investigate them for yourself.

This course is designed to introduce you to the major themes, figures, and directions of religion in American history, with an eye toward ways that social and cultural contexts have shaped the religious experience of Americans in different places and times. Since it is impossible to cover

all religious traditions in one semester, this course will consist of both a general survey of religion in the U.S. and a series of case studies designed to provide a closer look into some of the religious groups and ideas that have shaped this country. As a history class, we will focus on the development and expressions of religion in America. As a Gordon Rule course, this class will also focus on writing about religion in America.

REL 2210—Introduction to the Old Testament (LaBron Chance)

The Bible is the bestselling book of all time and it continues to be a bestselling book year after year. It has been translated into more languages and offered in more “versions” than any other book in history. The Hebrew Bible is considered Scripture by two of the world’s major religions, Judaism and Christianity (Christians began to call it the Old Testament by 180 C.E.). It is also held in esteem by Islam as a sacred writing. Whether one participates in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, or none of these religions, modern western culture is informed by references to the Hebrew Bible through art, music, and movies; as well as its calendar, legal system, and so much more. While revered as a single book, the Bible is actually a collection of many texts that were composed by different authors at different times for different reasons. This course is an introduction to the historical-critical study of this assorted literature and the world in which it was produced. We will examine individual texts of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament within their historical contexts while taking into consideration other methodological approaches such as literary criticism and theology.

This course meets the Liberal Studies literature and the “Gordon Rule” requirements.

REL 2350—Religions of East Asia (Dr. Yu)

This is an introductory course that aims to familiarize students with the variety of ways in which religion has been a central force in the lives of East Asian people. Specifically, it examines the interactions on a popular level among religious traditions such as Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, and *kami* (Japanese for local deities) worship as developed and practiced in China and Japan. Students will approach the histories of East Asian religions as processes of change, border-crossing, acculturation, and mutual-alteration. Readings have been drawn from secondary scholarship as well as a variety of primary sources in translation, including myths, canonical scriptures, polemical tracts, hagiography, and narrative tales. Assigned readings will be augmented by occasional in-class films.

REL 3054—Critics of Religion (Honors Section) (Dr. Kavka)

This course is a survey of modern critiques of religion. They take as their aim traditional narratives of the cause of religious expression, traditional accounts of the moral benefits of religious belief, and traditional philosophical accounts that sought to justify the validity of belief. Over the course of the term, we will slowly map out the promises and limits of these arguments, and end the course with a brief examination of whether there might be reasons to maintain religious belief even if all the critics are correct.

Requirements: weekly one-page response papers, take-home midterm and final exams.

REL 3145—Gender and Religion (Shannon Dunn)

This course looks at concepts of sex and gender in textual and cultural traditions within Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. At the beginning of the course we will examine briefly different approaches to the study of religion and gender, looking in particular at what is at stake for persons who might undertake such a study: feminists, scholars of religious studies, human rights advocates, and so on.

Then we move to a more detailed examination of each tradition. Using a range of theological and non-theological material, we will look at the interplay between religious law, and/or ethics and politics as they affect men's and women's identity and socio-religious status (in particular the focus will be on women). We will also examine how some women engage in the reform of their traditions and/or cultures through feminist critique, and on the other hand, how traditional norms of gender and strictly defined gender roles are coming back en vogue.

REL 3170--Religious Ethics and Moral Problems (Dr. Kalbian)

An introduction to the study of religious ethics. We will examine the moral issues raised by capital punishment, war, the environment, and human sexuality in the context of religious views about love, duty, good, and evil. We will read material describing views of different religious traditions including Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, and Islam.

REL 3171--Religion and Bioethics (Dr. Kalbian)

This undergraduate honors course is an introduction to theoretical and practical issues in bioethics from the perspective of a variety of religious positions. By the end of the course students will know and understand how religious views have influenced the development of bioethics, as well as how to interpret moral and religious arguments as they relate to specific case studies. We will also examine the difficulties of cultural diversity in the context of medicine.

REL 3194—The Holocaust (Dr. Kavka)

This course is a survey of responses to the attempted extermination of European Jews between 1933-45, often called the Holocaust or the Shoah, a Hebrew word meaning "disaster."² It is not a survey of the means by which this extermination was attempted; students interested in a historical approach to the material should take one of the classes in the Department of History that speak to this topic. Instead, this course is a survey of literary, theological, and cinematic responses to the Holocaust. (If time, the syllabus will also include a brief unit on the architecture of Holocaust memorials.) The course's primary aim is to study the ways in which one represents this traumatic event, the techniques by which one bears witness to it, and the extent to which this event challenges the foundational narratives of the Jewish and Christian traditions.

There will be required film screenings, outside of class, on four evenings during the course of the semester. These will be scheduled during the first week of class. Requirements: three papers of at least 1500 words.

REL 3293/5297—Aramaic (Dr. Levenson)

An introduction to Biblical Aramaic, focusing primarily on the book of Daniel, but also including some discussion of other dialects of Jewish Aramaic. All the Aramaic sections of Daniel (2:4b through chapter 7) will be read as well as some material from various targumim (Aramaic translations of the Bible). The grammar will be studied inductively as we read the texts. Prerequisite: One semester of Hebrew.

REL 3337—Goddesses, Women, and Power in Hinduism (Dr. Erndl)

This course explores ways in which the "sacred" and "female" are interrelated in the Hindu tradition, using sources such as sacred texts, ethnography, history, art, and film. Students become familiar with the myths, rituals, and iconography of the major Hindu goddesses, images

and roles of women, and the concept *Śakti* (creative female power) which is integral to the Hindu world view. The course also serves as an introduction to the Hindu tradition. Students will develop their own writing, analytical, and interpretive skills in relation to Hinduism, goddesses, and gender issues through individual and group learning activities. No previous background is required.

REL 3340—The Buddhist Tradition (Dr. Cuevas)

A historical and thematic survey of the Buddhist tradition in Asia from its beginnings through the modern period. Topics covered will include origins and history, doctrine, ethical beliefs, meditation, ritual, and monastic and popular traditions. Some attention will also be given to contemporary forms of Buddhism outside of Asia, in Europe and America.

REL 3363 – Islamic Traditions (Honor’s Section) (Dr. Gaiser)

REL 3363 Islamic Traditions is a historical and topical survey of Islam as a religion and civilization that focuses on the formative and classical periods of Islamic history. The course is primarily concerned with: the life and career of Muhammad the Prophet of Islam, the scriptural sources of Islam (i.e. the Qur’an and the *Sunna*), the development of the Muslim community and its principle institutions (schools of thought, law, theology, cultural life and mystical traditions). The course will acquaint you with significant aspects of Islam as a religion, and to help you think through some of the basic questions of human religious experience in light of the responses given to those questions by the great sages and saints of the Islamic tradition.

REL 3505—The Christian Tradition (Matthew Hagele)

This course is an introduction to Christianity. We will examine the historical narrative of the tradition from its beginnings in the first century through twentieth-century developments. We will also focus on the doctrinal side of the tradition by reading primary texts of key Christian thinkers.

REL 3936—Religion and the Origins of Modern Science (Dr. Irving)

Between about 1450 and 1700 Europe witnessed a fundamental transformation in the pursuit of natural knowledge which gave birth to what we now call science. The aim of this course is to introduce students to the issues surrounding the study of the Scientific Revolution, particularly those concerning the influence of religion. How was the study of nature pursued before this historical moment? What was the influence of the Protestant Reformation upon the emergence of modern science? By the end of this course students will be able to critically assess the validity and usefulness of the term 'Scientific Revolution' and the extent to which the 17th century gave birth to modern science.

REL 3936—Religion in Africa (Dr. Hellweg)

This course surveys a wide range of African beliefs and practices, including autochthonous rituals, Christianity, and Islam. Contrary to the usual stereotypes about what we call "religion," Africans display great fluidity in their spiritual lives. One may in fact be a Muslim or Christian, partake in the rites of the other faith, and simultaneously make sacrifices to one's ancestors or local spirits without any sense of contradiction. This course approaches such realities anthropologically. It examines how divination, prayer, rites of passage, sacrifice, sorcery, and spirit possession reflect but also reform and resist the economic, gendered, and political aspects of everyday life on the continent. If one can generalize at all about Africa religious practices, one may say that they are lived, negotiated relationships--rather than sets of doctrine or belief per se--that Africans constantly re-articulate between unseen powers and the visible circumstances of daily life. Herein lies their universal appeal. African religious diversity, in whatever form, reminds us that spirituality is as immediate and immanent as it is intangible and transcendent. For that reason, the study of religion in Africa will challenge and enhance whatever experience or understanding of religion one brings to it.

REL 3936—David and Solomon (Dr. Cook)

This course involves a close reading of the narratives of David and Solomon in the Hebrew Bible. We will focus on interpretation of 1 Samuel 16 – 1 Kings 11 with particular attention to the composition of the text, its historical background, and its theological relevance.

REL 4290—Gospel of John (Dr. Levenson)

A seminar focusing on the Gospel of John, using the wide variety of methods - literary, historical and sociological - currently employed in Johannine studies. As a seminar students will be responsible for class presentations, leading discussions, and writing a research paper.

Prerequisite: REL 2240.

REL 4290/5297—The Bible as a Book from the Thirteenth to Eighteenth Century (Dr. Dupuigrenet)

This course is an introduction to the history of the Bible as an artifact in the Western world during the late medieval and modern period: its textual history, means of production and visual presentation. It deliberately focuses on the material aspect of the Scripture studied with all the historian's tools, from codicology and bibliography to iconography. Traditional chronological borders between the "medieval" and the "modern" period are systematically crossed, as well as the manuscript/printed book divide, to stress elements of continuity and imitation. Most examples and case studies will be taken from the history of the Bible in England and in English. Some of the classes will be given in the Special Collections room of the Strozier library to take advantage of its fine collection of early printed Bibles in the Carrothers collection.

REL 4304/5305 – Seminar on Islam in North America (Dr. Gaiser)

REL 5305, Islam in North America, surveys in seminar format the manifestations of Islam in the United States, as well as American perceptions of Islam and Muslims. Beginning with the early 18th century, the course examines early American attitudes toward Muslims, and then moves to the experience of Islam among African-Americans. The latter third of the course is devoted to the assimilation of Muslim immigrants in the US, and how the issues of race, gender, "trans-nationalism" and stereotypes impact the American Muslim community.

REL 4304/5305—Death & Afterlife in Buddhist Cultures (Dr. Cuevas)

Death is central to both Buddhist philosophical thought and Buddhism's traditional social roles. Buddhist teachings stress that all is impermanent; awareness of one's mortality is traditionally said to be a necessary impetus to the religious life. At the same time, performing rites for the well-being of the deceased in their postmortem state has been a chief task of Buddhist ritualists throughout Asia. Rituals and beliefs surrounding death also reflect specific cultural values. In this seminar we will study Buddhist approaches to death, dying, and the afterlife with a focus on South Asia, Tibet, China, and Japan. Topics include Buddhist cosmology and the doctrine of karmic causality; tales of exemplary deaths; accounts of journeys to the hells and other postmortem realms; Buddhism, the family, and rites for ancestors; Buddhist funerary and mortuary practices; the placation of ghosts, demons, and the walking dead; and changes in contemporary Buddhist funerals. We will consider both Buddhist doctrinal teachings and social roles with respect to death and the afterlife, as well as interactions of Buddhism with local religious cultures. The course will run on a seminar format with active and in-depth discussion of readings and intensive individual writing projects.

Prerequisite: REL 3340 or instructor's permission.

REL 4359/5354—Special Topics in Chinese Religions (Dr. Yu)

This graduate seminar analyzes influential and recent publications on the histories, doctrines, and rituals of medieval Daoism and Chinese Buddhism. The period of focus will be a span of roughly 1000 years from the beginning of the Common Era. We will examine the three traditional "teachings" (Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism), as well as "popular religion," and the contributions of all four to Chinese culture. Specific themes will include ancestor worship, sacrifice and divination, religious ethics, meditation, longevity techniques, and the close connection between Chinese religion and politics. Prerequisite: Familiarity with Chinese religions and any one of the undergrad classes on East Asian religions.

REL 4491—Catholic Sexual Ethics (Dr. Kalbian)

This advanced undergraduate seminar examines the development of Catholic thought on various issues related to human sexuality. Through careful reading of primary and secondary texts, we will explore the way that theological ideas such as sin, creation, sacrament, and natural law have influenced Catholic evaluations of sexuality, with particular attention to the contemporary period.

REL 4511/5515—Christianity in Late Antiquity (Dr. Kelley)

This reading intensive course is an advanced survey of important events, movements, ideas, and people in the development of Christianity during the fourth and fifth centuries CE. The course is organized around a series of topics of particular significance in ancient Christianity, including Christological controversies, the formation of the canon, early creeds and councils, asceticism and monasticism, and the lives of the saints. By the end of the course students will have a working knowledge of the historical, social and theological developments in the history of late antique Christianity, as well as an appreciation of the diversity of ancient Christian beliefs and practices. Particular emphasis is placed on careful reading of relevant primary texts in English translation.

REL 4564—U.S. Catholic Writers (Dr. Koehlinger)

How does religion shape the creative imagination of writers? Roman Catholics have made important contributors to 20th century U.S. literature and poetry. In this seminar we will read literary works by American Catholics in the last century and explore how the Catholic upbringing, beliefs, and practices of American Catholic writers shaped their literary creations.

In other words, we will engage in a semester-long conversation about whether there is an American Catholic literary aesthetic, what religious and regional factors influenced it, and what central works illustrate its various incarnations. Our reading list includes both writers who openly-identified themselves with the Catholic Church (Flannery O’Conner, Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton) as well as writers whose relationship with and references to Catholicism are often overlooked in their literary work (F. Scott Fitzgerald, Jack Kerouac, George Santayana). We will read poems, novels and autobiographies, including works of comedy, fantasy, and reportage. We also will read select scholarly essays about the history of Catholic writing and the question of Catholic aesthetics. This course is a seminar designed primarily for advanced Religion majors and assumes that students will have a basic familiarity with the methodologies and perspectives of Religious Studies. Students enrolled in the course do **not** need any specific familiarity with Roman Catholicism.

REL 4912/5915—Readings in Sanskrit Texts (Dr. Erndl)

For continuing Sanskrit students only. Permission of Prof. Erndl is required.

REL 5937—Gender and Religion (Dr. Koehlinger)

This course is a general introduction gendered analysis of religious phenomena, religious individuals, religious communities and religious traditions. We will begin the course by reading a range of theories about the source and nature of categories of gendered difference, exploring essentialist, constructionist, deconstructionist, and neuro-scientific approaches to gender. We will consider how the fields of Religious Studies and History respectively have utilized gender analysis. And we will read central monographs employing gender theory and gender analysis across various fields within Religious Studies (and our department) with a concentration of works from the sub-field of North American Religious History. This course would be appropriate for students in any area of graduate study in the Religion Department.

REL 6176—Kant and Barth (Dr. Kelsay)

This course focuses on a close reading of Kant's Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals, and his Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone. We will also read parts of The Doctrine of Justice and the The Doctrine of Virtue. In the latter portion of the course, the focus will be on Karl Barth's discussion of the Command of God in Church Dogmatics, vol. II, part 2. We will ask the question: In what ways does Barth's explicitly theological account of ethics respond to the arguments developed by Kant? In this sense, the overarching purpose of the course is to develop an understanding of the place of Kant in the development of modern religious thought.

REL 6298—Graduate Seminar on Luke-Acts (Dr. Kelley)

This graduate-level seminar will focus on careful reading of the New Testament Gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles in the original Greek, combined with discussion of major interpretative issues in these texts. We will look closely at the historical, religious, and social contexts in which Luke and Acts were written, as well as their major literary and theological tendencies. This reading- and writing-intensive course will consist mainly of translation exercises, group discussion, and student presentations.

REL 6298—The Bible and Power in Early Modern Europe: England and France XVIth-XVIIth Centuries (Dr. Dupuigrenet)

A large woodcut that represents Henry VIII distributing Bibles to his grateful subjects on the frontispiece of the 1540 “Great Bible” is evidence both of royal intervention in Bible publishing and of the biblical image that the English sovereign wanted to convey. Because printing of this book started in Paris but was halted by Francis I the episode has been routinely mentioned as an example of deeply opposite and almost timeless attitudes toward the Scripture between Reformed England and Catholic France. Recent research has shown on the contrary that during two centuries of almost incessant religious and political conflicts, from the Hundred Year’s War to the War of Spanish Succession, French and English people alike used the Scripture as a guide for religious belief, a set of cultural norms, and a political model, although biblical texts molded very different national identities on both sides of the Channel. The course is thus an exercise in comparative history. Because monarchs played a leading role in that dual history, from Henry VIII and Francis I to Louis XIV and the first Hanoverian sovereigns, it focuses on royal patronage of Bible publishing and Biblical scholarship as well as the multiple ways in which the ideological model of biblical kingship was interpreted in political and religious thinking, in literature and in the arts.

REL 6498--Religion and Emotion (Dr. Corrigan)

We will study a range of recent theories about emotion, drawing on research in the behavioral and social sciences, neuroscience, history, and other areas, with an eye especially to constructedness, context, locality, universality, cognition, the body, and performance in emotional life. We will consider such issues with respect to a number of different religious settings, including major faith traditions, highly localized religion, and new religious movements.

REL 6596/HUM 6939 -- Indian Cinema and Religion (Dr. Erndl)

A critical study of the Indian cinema, dubbed “Bollywood”, produced in Mumbai (Bombay), India in the Hindi language. Focus is on Indian religions, cultures, and aesthetics as reflected in popular Hindi cinema from Independence (1947) to the present day, with some attention to the regional cinemas (such as Bengali and Tamil) and to transnational contexts. Special attention will be given to the pervasive role of music, dance, and song. Attendance at a weekly film screening (Tues. nights), as well as a weekly seminar (Thurs. mornings) is required. Students will take turns leading discussions of common readings and will also complete individual research projects. Films will be shown with English subtitles; no previous knowledge of Indian languages, culture, or cinema is assumed.