

# SPRING 2013 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.

**PHI3700**                                  **Philosophy of Religion**                                  **Staff**  
Philosophical analysis of major problems in religion: religious language, faith, revelation, existence and nature of God, immortality.

**REL1300**                                  **Introduction to World Religions**                                  **Dr. Lindsey**  
This course is an introduction to the academic study of the major religions of the world. The course will cover the religious traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. 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. 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.

**REL2121**                                  **Religion in the U.S.**                                  **Dr. Lindsey**  
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.

**REL2210 Introduction to the Old Testament Dr. Levenson & Dr. Miller**

The word “Bible” is derived from the Greek word “biblia” which means “books.” While revered as a single book, the Bible is a collection of many texts that were composed by different authors at different times for different reasons. This course is an introduction to the 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. *Meets Liberal Studies Area IV and Gordon Rule requirements.*

**REL2240 Introduction to the New Testament Dr. Levenson**

An introduction to the literature of the New Testament and to the academic approaches to it. The distinctive concerns and literary features of individual texts will be studied in the contexts of the historical development of the early Christian church, ancient Judaism, and the wider Greco-Roman world. Emphasis throughout will fall on the variety of interpretations of the Christian message as Christians encountered new social circumstances and theological challenges. *This course meets the Liberal Studies literature requirement and the “Gordon Rule” writing requirement.*

**REL2315 Religions of South Asia (Honors) Dr. Erndl**

Overview of religions in the South Asian cultural region, emphasizing Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, and Islam. The history and cultural contexts of these traditions will be explored with particular attention to sacred stories, holy people, religious leadership, and gender issues. This course also serves as an introduction to the academic study of religion. No previous background is required. Students will gain familiarity with the basic concepts of the religious traditions of South Asia, will develop interpretive skills in the academic study of religion, and will have the opportunity to develop research and writing skills by exploring a topic of special interest. *Meets Liberal Studies Humanities and Multicultural (x) requirements.*

**REL2350 Religions of East Asia Dr. Yu**

This course combines thematic and historical approaches to religions of East Asia, focusing primarily on China and Japan. Specifically, it examines interactions among Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, Shinto, and popular new religious movements. 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.

**REL3054**                                 **Critics of Religion**                                 **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: bi-weekly one-page response papers, take-home midterm and final exams.

**REL3112**                                 **Religion and Fantasy**                                 **Dr. Cronin**

This course offers an overview of theological and anti-theological elements in twentieth and twenty-first century fantasy literature from authors Lewis, Tolkien, Rowling, and Pullman.

**REL3142**                                 **Religion, Self, and Society**                                 **Dr. Day**

This course is structured around the methodological principle that we should abandon the habit of treating some discourses or practices as being irreducibly distinct from mundane political and economic life. That is to say, the very idea of *religion* should be viewed as a piece of political rhetoric instead of a substantive term of analysis. Thus, we must learn to recognize how the modern discourse on *religion* allows otherwise unexceptional behaviors, beliefs, and communities to be strategically represented as fundamentally “set-apart” in order to protect or condemn them.

**REL3145**                                 **Gender and Religion**                                 **Staff**

This course examines the impact of gender on religious beliefs and practices and the impact of religious beliefs and practices on gender, cross-culturally. We will be looking at the intersections of religion and culture, in general. In doing so, we will look at a history of feminist thought in religious studies and the current gender issues that have arisen through women’s examinations of religious thought and the study of religion. We will use a variety of texts, some film, class discussion, and writing to explore these topics as fully as possible.

**REL3170**                                 **Religious Ethics**                                 **Staff**

This introduction to the study of religious ethics meets the Gordon Rule requirement, the liberal studies area IV requirement and the multicultural x requirement. Students will examine the moral problems raised by issues such as deception, capital punishment, war, the environment, and human sexuality in the context of religious views about love, duty, good, and evil. They will undertake this examination through close readings of texts describing views of different religious traditions including Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, and Islam. They will also develop and fine-tune their writing skills by completing two 1500 word papers.

**REL3171****Religion and Bioethics****Dr. Kalbian**

This undergraduate course is an introduction to theoretical and practical issues in medical ethics from the perspective of a variety of religious and secular positions.

By the end of the course students will know and understand:

- 1) How religious views have influenced the development of bioethics.
- 2) The difficulties of cultural diversity in the context of medicine.
- 3) Theories and approaches used in resolving issues in bioethics.
- 4) The history of bioethics.
- 5) The vocabulary specific to bioethics.
- 6) How to interpret moral and religious arguments as they relate to specific case studies

**REL3180****Human Rights and Crimes Against Humanity****Dr. Twiss**

This course will examine the history and dynamics of crimes against humanity (including genocide) as an introduction to the modern human rights movement. Its premise is so doing is that the nature and significance of human rights are best appreciated in studying cases of their severest violation. The course will pivot around texts concerned with the interpretation of twentieth century atrocities, the legal responses to them, and the politics of being inactive bystanders to their perpetration. The complicity of religious figures, ideas, and institutions will also be addressed. The primary texts will be supplemented by other readings and materials drawn from various disciplines and genres, including literature and the arts.

**REL3180****Honors: Ethics of Food****Dr. Reid**

Religious Ethics of Food is a course exploring and examining our religious and cultural attitudes about food as well as ethical aspects of food production, dissemination, and use. In this course, we will be looking at the role of food in defining ourselves and our own cultures. We will also study the ways in which both agriculture and livestock, the substance of our food, interrelate with our political and economic systems, as well as the environment. It is the intention of this course to make you aware of the importance of food to our emotional, religious, and cultural lives, as well as the ethical dilemmas presented by our current system of food production. As such, we will be looking at the religious significance of food choices, often a primary factor in religious life, and the reasoning behind the mores that have arisen regarding food. We will also be examining religious systems of ethical thought and how food and its production fit into these, sometimes as a moral good and sometimes as a moral problem. We will also explore the paradigm shifts of thought and ethics regarding food over the course of the past century, how it has moved from —"sustenance" on many levels to —"nutrition" on one.

**REL3293                      Abortion and Contraception in Ancient Christianity                      Dr. Kelley**

This course is designed to explore what early Christians had to say about abortion, contraception, and the exposure of children. Students will read about ancient theories of conception, ancient attitudes toward infants and children, paying attention to how Christians' ideas may have differed from those of their contemporaries. We will examine how issues such as virginity, celibacy, and marriage became important in ancient debates about orthodoxy and heresy. Class meetings will consist of student presentations and discussions involving close readings of ancient texts in English translation.

**REL3340                      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.

**REL3367                      Islamic Traditions II: Islam in the Modern World                      Dr. Gaiser**

REL 3367, Islam in the Modern World examines Islam and its adherents from 1300 CE to the present, concentrating on the last two centuries of Islamic history: the period of reform, renewal and revolution in the wake of Western political and cultural domination. The course will investigate a basic question: What happened to different Muslim communities and intellectuals (specifically those in the Arab world, Iran, Turkey, West Africa) as they responded to the challenges posed by "Westernization" and "modernization?" Moreover, it will explore the relatively new phenomenon of Islam in America. The class concludes with an investigation of various contemporary debates in the Islamic world, including Sufism, Democracy and American/Western responses to Islam and Muslims.

**REL3430                      Anthropology and Religion                      Staff**

This course is an introduction to the anthropological study of religion. You will learn how anthropologists study religion, write ethnography, and the diversity and similarities of religions throughout the world. We will look cross-culturally at belief systems and the common features of religions rather than study specific religions in depth. We will focus more on small, local religions rather than world religions and study topics such as shamanism, witchcraft, sorcery, myth, and rites of passage.

**REL3505                      The Christian Tradition                      Staff**

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. *Meets Liberal Studies Area IV and Gordon Rule requirements.*

**REL3936****Religion in Africa****Staff**

This course explores religious practices across the African continent as pragmatic strategies for daily life, political struggle, and social action. From birth to death and beyond, African rituals shape persons in relation to their world. Sorcery, divination, initiation rites, spirit possession, funeral celebrations, and sacrifices for communing with the dead have practical consequences that are as real, reliable, and useful to their practitioners as the cars that we drive. In Africa, ritual is a technology, a form of expertise that gives one access to the unseen double of the world in which real power is achieved and manipulated. This is as true for Christians and Muslims in Africa as it is for those who practice autochthonous rites. Religion is a confrontation with reality, not a flight from it. African ritual life is deeply embedded in the dynamics of gender, sexuality, nation building, globalization, and public health. The history and ethnography of religion in Africa is therefore an ideal lens through which to view the dynamics of colonialism and nationalism that have shaped today's nation-states and the challenges they face, such as ethnically charged tensions that emerge over funeral arrangements and controversies stemming from female genital cutting. Africans are using such ritual contexts to forge new identities in innovative ways.

**REL3936****Courage****Dr. Kelsay**

The focus of this course is on different conceptions of courage as reflected in philosophical, religious, and historical writing. Some films are used as case studies in order to draw out the various conceptions.

**REL3936/5297****Syriac****Dr. Levenson**

An introduction to Syriac (*leshono suryoyo*), the Aramaic language of many Near Eastern Christian communities from late antiquity to the present. This course on the basic grammar of the language will prepare students to read the ancient Syriac translations of the Bible, Jewish and Christian texts written in other languages, but now only preserved in Syriac, and the vast corpus of theological, liturgical, and historical texts originally composed in the language beginning in the third century CE. Syriac is also an excellent way to begin the study of Aramaic because its grammar is the most fully developed and well understood of all the Aramaic dialects.

**REL4044****What is Religion?****Dr. Erndl**

This seminar investigates these questions: What is religion? What is the study of religion? We begin by exploring classical theories of religion and follow up by looking at modern approaches to the study of religion, with a special focus on religion and visual culture/film. Film screenings will be on Mon. nights, and discussion of readings and films will be on Wed. afternoons, with students taking a major role in presenting and leading discussion. This course is required for Religion majors with at least 12 hours.

**REL4190/5195****Catholic Social Thought****Dr. Kalbian**

This graduate/undergraduate seminar will examine the development of the Catholic Church's teaching on social matters from the late 19th century to the present. We will read official documents on matters related to the economy, property, labor, human rights globalization, and conflict. We will also focus on several individual Catholic thinkers/activists (possibly Dorothy Day, John Ryan, John Courtney Murray, Jacques Maritain and others). Students should have taken a religious ethics course and/or Christian Traditions and need permission from instructor to enroll.

**REL4190/6596****Performance in Africa****Dr. Hellweg**

This graduate/undergraduate seminar will examine a range of performance practices in Africa—musical, ritual, theatrical, literate, and non-literate. We will try to identify the ways in which performances of all kinds reveal patterns of cosmology, gender, kinship, sexuality, social change, and social organization reflective of their broader African contexts. Our multidisciplinary project will also raise issues related to the methods by which scholars of African Studies, anthropology, performance studies, and religious studies have undertaken their research and analyses of performances. Above all, we will try to understand how Africans achieve the immediacy of their performance effects.

**REL4214****The Book of Genesis****Dr. Goff**

This seminar consists of a close and critical reading of the book of Genesis. We will address issues such as the composition of the book, the history of its interpretation, its ancient Near Eastern context, the book's narrative artistry and its relevance for ethics and theology.

**REL4359/5346****Chinese Buddhism****Dr. Yu**

This seminar covers the history and historiographical issues in the study of Chinese Buddhism. It examines scholarly constructions of Buddhist Studies as a field in general and the historiography of Chinese Buddhism specifically, with a focus on the methodological shift from philology to philosophy; from sectarian concerns to missionary biases; from doctrinal orientations to interdisciplinary approaches. The course will survey both major scholarly studies and recent publications.

**REL4366/5365****Seminar on Shi'ite Islam****Dr. Gaiser**

REL 4366/ 5365 Seminar on Shi'ite Islam focuses on the manifold expressions of Shi'ism from its origins to the present day. The course will examine the political divisions within the early Islamic community that led to the development of the *shi'a*. After examining the earliest Shi'a sects, the course will shift to the major juridical and theological developments within Ithna-'Ashari ("12er") Shi'ism (such as the doctrine of the Imamate and the occultation and return of the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam). The course will also study the establishment and elaboration of Fatimid Isma'ilism. The latter part of the course will be devoted to contemporary issues among the Shi'ites, including the martyrdom of Hussayn and the role of Hizbullah in the politics of the Middle East.

**REL4613/5616**

**Modern Judaism**

**Dr. Kavka**

This course is a survey of how Jews have articulated their identities in the modern world -- in Europe, America, and Israel -- from the eighteenth century onward. It explores how various Jewish thinkers have weighed the claims of the Jewish tradition against the claims of the Christian and secularized society around them. In other words, we will be inquiring after the difference between "Judaism" and "the West": to what extent are they parallel, or opposed? And how do various discourses -- <speculative philosophy, history, ethics, politics, mysticism or pietism -- <serve to help articulate this commonality or difference?

**REL5292**

**Enochic Literature**

**Dr. Goff**

In this course we will analyze Enochic texts, including *1 Enoch*, *2 Enoch*, *3 Enoch*, the *Book of Giants* and the *Book of Jubilees*. Critical issues such as their dates of composition, provenance, reception in ancient Judaism and early Christianity, and their appropriate of biblical texts will be covered. A working knowledge of Aramaic and Greek is encouraged.

**REL5297**

**Ge'ez**

**Dr. Goff**

In this class we will study the grammar, syntax and vocabulary of Ge'ez.

**REL5319**

**Reading in Classical Chinese Religious Texts**

**Dr. Yu**

This course is a close reading and translation of a sampling of eighth- through seventeenth-century religious texts. Students are exposed to several genres of religious literature and special terminologies associated with these texts. There will be weekly translation exercises. **Special permission is required to register for this course.**

**REL5915**

**Readings in Sanskrit Texts**

**Dr. Erndl**

For continuing students only.

**REL5937**

**Textual Analysis**

**Dr. Hellweg**

This seminar will draw primarily from anthropology and philosophy to understand the nature and meaning of texts. We begin with a line of continental thought running from Heidegger through Gadamer, Ricoeur, Habermas, and Derrida—from phenomenology, hermeneutics, narrative and critical theory, to deconstruction. We then question the differences between oral and literate texts through the work of Ruth Finnegan and the ethnopoetics of Dell Hymes and Dennis Tedlock. Finally we debate the uses of text as metaphor—such as the idea that society is a “text” and that phenomena like gender and sexuality are texts, drawing on the work of Geertz and Butler. We end by asking if the textual trope has outgrown its use in religious studies.



**REL6176****Seminar: Calvin's Institutes****Dr. Kelsay**

This seminar focuses on the contributions of John Calvin to Christian discourse. Much of the course will be devoted to a close reading of sections of the Institutes of the Christian Religion, with additional reports on and discussion of scholarly works focused on Calvin in the sixteenth century, Calvinism in subsequent centuries, and the ways Calvin is invoked in contemporary Christian debates.

**REL6298****New Testament Proseminar****Dr. Kelley**

This advanced graduate-level course is an intensive survey of the chief methods and results of New Testament scholarship since the rise of historical-critical scholarship in the nineteenth century. Significant work in New Testament as well as some knowledge of Greek is presupposed. Students will be responsible for several presentations as well as midterm and final exams. By the end of the course, students will be able to describe and employ the methods of contemporary New Testament scholarship; identify the distinctive contributions of the most important figures who have developed these methods; describe and analyze critically the chief results of the modern historical-critical approach to the New Testament; and identify and use the tools (critical texts, commentaries, reference works, journals, etc.) of modern New Testament scholarship.

**SRK4103/REL5937****Elem. Sanskrit II****Dr. Erndl**

For continuing students only.