

11/04/13

## SPRING 2014 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.

### **HUM2937     Humanities Honors Seminar: Religion & Capitalism**

**Dr. Day**

*Meets LS Humanities and Writing requirements as well as Multicultural X.*

### **REL1300     Introduction to World Religions**

**Staff**

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. *Meets LS Humanities and Writing requirements as well as Multicultural X. This course is also offered online.*

### **REL2121     Religion in the United States**

**Staff**

An examination of the scope and nature of religious movements and institutions in the United States. *Meets LS Humanities and Writing requirements as well as Multicultural Y.*

### **REL2210     Introduction to the Old Testament**

**Staff**

The history, religious thought, and social institutions of ancient Israel as reflected primarily in its literature. *Meets LS Humanities and Writing requirements.*

### **REL2240     Introduction to the New Testament**

**Staff**

An introduction to the writings of the New Testament in the context of the historical development of early Christianity. *Meets LS Humanities and Writing requirements.*

### **REL2315     Religions of South Asia (Online)**

**Ian Reed**

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. (Online)*

**REL2350 Religions of East Asia**

**Dr. Buhrman**

An introduction to the history, thought, and practice of religion in China, Korea, and Japan. Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and popular religious traditions from ancient through modern times are covered.

**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.

*Meets Liberal Studies literature requirement and writing requirement.*

**REL3128-1 Topics in Religions in the Americas: New Religions: From Mormonism to Scientology John Crow**

Religion remains a powerful and perennial force in human cultures. Whether we embrace or distance ourselves from various traditions, we cannot ignore their presence and impact on culture. This course looks specifically at the way America has been a world leader in religious innovation, continually creating new religious traditions; how American society has responded, both positively and negatively; and how scholars of religion have approached the study new religious movements. Towards the end of the course, we will have a longer examination of Scientology, looking at its emergence, practices, and the various responses to it over the last sixty years.

**REL3128-2 Topics in Religions in the Americas**

**Dr. Corrigan**

Begins with the roots of intolerant religious rhetoric in early modern England and tracks that rhetoric to America where it has provided biblically-grounded arguments to perpetrators of acts of intolerance since the early colonial period. We will examine a wide range of cases of intolerance, from genocidal campaigns against Native Americans, armed Catholic-Protestant conflicts in urban settings, the Mormon Wars, antisemitism, anti-Muslim acts, Waco, and numerous other incidences. We will consider how and why that history has been screened from American memory (why have we forgotten it?) and how contemporary American domestic and foreign policy has suffered from that forgetting.

**REL3128-03 Topics in Religions in the Americas: American Catholicism**

**Jeffrey Wheatley**

This class will explore how Catholics and Catholicism can be situated within America history from the colonial period to today. This course is especially interested in the changing relationships between Catholic identities, American identities, and the state. How has American Catholic history been interwoven with American history generally? A few issues will feature prominently: anti-Catholicism; debates over the Americanization of Catholics; strategies for religious, social, and political inclusion; and the Catholic influence on America.

**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. *Meets Liberal studies humanities, writing requirement, and Multicultural Y.*

**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. *Liberal Studies Humanities and writing requirements as well as Multicultural X.*

**REL3171-01 Topics in Ethics: Environmental Ethics and Religion**

**Dr. Carla Reid**

This is a class exploring some of the philosophical and religious views on nature and the environment. We will examine ideas about nature prevalent in the environmental ethics movement, both historically and in the present day. We will focus on the convergence (and sometimes divergence) of religious thought and an ethic of environmental care, and in so doing we will explore ideas of stewardship as well as a more biocentric approach, as well as feminist environmental ethics and deep ecology. The class will be grounded in the texts of some of the mainstays of Western environmental thinking and will help students explore different expressions of environmental values.

**REL 3171-02 Topics in Ethics: Courage in Ethics and Film  
(Tamara Marks, co-instructor)**

**Dr. Kelsay**

This course introduces students to a variety of conceptions of courage. In particular, we will be interested in the relationship between an Aristotelian account of courage as a virtue and a biblical conception by which courage involves heroism in the performance of one's duty. Readings from philosophers, theologians, and historians are joined with viewing of several films, the point being to analyze characters in the films and to see how they exemplify one or the other of these notions of courage. Through lectures, discussions, and several short papers students will develop an understanding of diverse accounts of courage as these relate to characters involved in war, resistance to injustice, politics, the possibility of martyrdom, and existential despair.

**REL3180 Religion and Bioethics****Dr. Kalbian**

An introduction to theoretical and practical issues in bioethics from the perspective of several religious traditions. You will learn about the influence of religious views on the development of bioethics, the difficulties of cultural diversity in the context of medicine, and the major theories and approaches used in resolving bioethical dilemmas. In addition to readings, in-class case discussions, papers, and tests, students will work on group presentations.

**REL3293 Topics in Biblical Studies: The Scripture and the People (4<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> c)****Dr. Dupuigrenet**

This history of the Scripture in the West presents conceptions and uses of the Scripture developed through time by groups of individuals such as the monks, knights and missionaries of early medieval Europe, the modern scientists, printers and reformers of the Renaissance, or the Christian communities of North America in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Retrospective sociology will allow us to focus on the ways in which the universal message of the Bible acted, and continues to act, as a creator of strong and often conflicting identities in western societies. **Prerequisites:** REL2210, REL2240

**REL3340 Buddhist Tradition****Staff**

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. **Meets Multicultural X requirement.**

**REL3367 Islam in the Modern World****James Riggan**

Islam up to 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, and 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, and American/Western responses to Islam and Muslims.

**REL 3430 Issues and Thinkers in Western Religious Thought: Religion and War****Dr. Kelsay**

Exodus 15: 3 proclaims "The Lord is a warrior." In this class, we will focus on the ways various communities of Jews, Christians, and Muslims have understood this notion in relation to changing social and political conditions.

**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 writing requirements.**

**REL3541 American Protestant Thought in Historical Context Dr. Porterfield**

This course will examine works by five influential American protestant thinkers, each of whom represents a different time in American protestant history. In class discussions and writing assignments, the course will focus on three questions: where did their ideas come from? what events conditioned their reformulation of ideas? how did their writings influence the course of events?

**REL3607 The Jewish Tradition Dr. Levenson**

A survey of the varieties of institutional structures and beliefs of Judaism from the biblical period to the present. Traditional Jewish life and practice will be discussed in the context of the historical development of the literature and institutions of Rabbinic Judaism. Other themes treated will include: the interaction between Judaism and Hellenism, Jewish-Christian relations, the position of the Jews in medieval society, mysticism, the impact of the enlightenment, and the emergence of Hasidism, Zionism, Reform, Modern Orthodox, Conservative and Reconstructionist movements in the modern period. *Meets Humanities Area IV and writing requirements.*

**REL3936-01/RLG5937 Ecstatic Religion Dr. Hellweg**

A range of mystical practices around the world takes people out of themselves by making possible fundamental transformations of the human person, from mortals to spirits, from contemporaries to ancestors, from the powerless to the powerful, from one gender to another. Such ecstatic practices offer powerful, embodied idioms for accomplishing political transformations, social and psychological healing, renewed identity, and cures for physical ailments. This course examines case studies of spirit possession and shamanism from Africa, Central America, Indonesia, and Siberia. We will also compare humanistic, medical, and psychiatric approaches to these phenomena, opting for the ethnographic and historical approaches definitive of religious studies.

**REL3936/RLG6596 Islamic Law and Society Dr. Gaiser**

Islamic Law and Society, examines the development of Islamic law and legal cultures as they impacted and were shaped by the various contexts in which they operated. Focusing especially on the intersections between Islam law and Islamic societies, the course presents students with some of the most recent scholarship on the origins and evolution of Islamic law, its manifestations in the medieval period, and its interpretations in the modern era. The course uses primary sources in conjunction with source critical secondary literature to explore contemporary scholarly debates surrounding Islamic law, its interpreters, and its social contexts. The course presumes solid prior knowledge of Islam or Middle Eastern history, as well as an ability to independently work on a research paper of substance.

**REL4044 What is Religion? What is Religious Studies? Dr. McVicar**

What is “religion”? How and why do we study “religion”? Is “religion” a manifestation of some sacred, sui generis reality that human beings can only dimly apprehend? Or is “religion” a rickety ideological superstructure built on the foundation of colonial, economic, and gendered oppression? Perhaps it’s a psychological projection, a delusion from which humanity must free itself. Or maybe “religion” is simply the creation of the scholar who studies it. This course provides a survey of classical and contemporary theories and methods that have tried to answer these questions along with many others. Through close readings of a sampling of theoretical and critical works, this course will provide students with a basic introduction to the various

disciplinary frameworks that underlie the academic study of religion. We will cover a wide array of approaches for studying “religion” ranging from anthropology to psychology, from feminist theory to cognitive science. Along the way we will ask, “what is ‘religion’?” and “and how should it be studied?” We will end the course with two recent books that build on the various methods covered in the first ten weeks of the course. These works--on Scientology, a new religious movement, and popular spirituality in contemporary American culture--offer challenging reassessments of the scholarly and popular category of “religion.” Students should expect a reading- and writing-intensive course that surveys a complex and evolving field of study. Students will be asked to read carefully, offer written reflections on the material covered in class, and present material to their peers. Finally, students will write a final reflective paper assessing the status of “religious studies” in the university.

**REL4190-01/RLG5195 UG Religion & Culture Sem: Religion in Africa Dr. Hellweg**

This course will introduce you to divination, ritual, shamanism, sorcery, spirit possession, Christianity, and Islam as practiced in sub-Saharan Africa. African religious practices challenge our most fundamental assumptions about the nature of gender, personhood, politics, society, and the meaning of life. Yet, no matter how different African cosmologies may seem, they have the feel of the familiar when examined in their own contexts and in the light of ethnographic and historical approaches. Drawing on case studies from across the continent, from both urban and rural areas, this course will examine African religious practices as thoroughly modern, contemporary, and sophisticated approaches to the daily question of how best to live in a changing world.

**REL4190-02 UG Religion & Culture Seminar – Holocaust in Comparative Dr. Twiss**

Examination of the origins, dynamics, and sequelae of the Holocaust, involving comparison with selected precursors (e.g., colonial imperialism; the Armenian genocide) as well as later 20th century ethnic cleansing and genocide (e.g., the Balkans). Special attention throughout to the roles of religious ideologies, ideas, institutions, and figures. Course materials from various disciplines: history, religious studies, philosophy, social psychology, political theory, and the arts. Seminar format.

**REL4203/RLG5204 History of Religions Sem: Post-Biblical Hebrew Dr. Levenson**

Reading and discussion of selections from Rabbinic Literature and from Modern Hebrew literary and academic texts. There will be a basic introduction to the grammatical structures of Rabbinic and Modern Hebrew with a focus on how they differ from Biblical Hebrew. Prerequisite: Third semester Biblical or Modern Hebrew or permission of instructor.

**REL4290/RLG5297 Biblical Studies Sem: The Bible as Book (8<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> c.) Dr. Dupuigrenet**

“Textualization” of the Bible (Walter J. Ong) during the medieval and early modern period will be studied using the specialized tools of the historian, 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 early printed Bibles, mostly English, from the Carrothers collection. Although indispensable notions about the textual history of the biblical texts during the period will be addressed during the two first weeks, it will concentrate from week 3 on the Bible as an artifact.

**REL4335/RLG5332 Modern Hinduism****Dr. Erndl**

Is there such a thing as Hinduism? If so, what is it? How has it changed, and where is it going in the future? This course explores selected topics in 19th, 20th, and 21st century Hinduism, including popular religion, thinkers, reform movements, gurus, nationalism, gender issues, secularism, and pluralism. Emphasis is on Hinduism in the social, political, and religious context of India, with some attention to transnational Hinduism and Hindu-inspired religious movements in North America. Also considered will be notions of “modernity” and “post-modernity” as ideologies or “states of mind” and how these have interfaced with Hinduism. Course objectives are: 1) to explore issues in modern Hinduism in more depth than is possible in an introductory course through extensive reading and discussion, 2) to analyze these issues in class discussions and weekly response papers, and 3) to research topics of interest related to the course themes and to present this research to the class, both orally and in writing. Prerequisite: REL 2315 (Religions of South Asia) or a course on Hinduism (such as REL 3333 or 3337) or on the history or anthropology of India. Graduate students in Religion are exempt from this prerequisite. *Meets Multicultural X requirement.*

**REL4359/RLG5354 Special Topics in Asian Religions: Religion & the Samurai****Dr. Buhrman**

What was the Way of the Samurai? This course is an examination of images of idealized samurai behavior and criticisms of samurai immorality as they changed over the period from early medieval to modern Japan. The role of Confucianism, Buddhism, native traditions, and Christianity in this history will be covered. Student reading will focus on primary sources, including medieval epics and modern business manuals.

**REL4491 UG Religious Thought Seminar – Sex, Marriage & Religion Dr. Kalbian**

A seminar that examines the historical construction of ideas about sexual behaviors and identities as they relate to the social institutions of marriage and religion. We will focus primarily on Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. We will devote attention to historical sources as well as to contemporary problems.

**REL4511 Christianity in Late Antiquity****Dr. Kelley**

Christian thought, institutions, lifestyles, and literature in their social, cultural, and historical contexts from the time of Jesus to the early Middle Ages.

**RLG5195 Religion & Culture Sem: Religion in Africa****Dr. Hellweg**

This course will introduce you to divination, ritual, shamanism, sorcery, spirit possession, Christianity, and Islam as practiced in sub-Saharan Africa. African religious practices challenge our most fundamental assumptions about the nature of gender, personhood, politics, society, and the meaning of life. Yet, no matter how different African cosmologies may seem, they have the feel of the familiar when examined in their own contexts and in the light of ethnographic and historical approaches. Drawing on case studies from across the continent, from both urban and rural areas, this course will examine African religious practices as thoroughly modern, contemporary, and sophisticated approaches to the daily question of how best to live in a changing world.

**RLG5204 History of Religions Sem: Post-Biblical Hebrew****Dr. Levenson**

Reading and discussion of selections from Rabbinic Literature and from Modern Hebrew literary and academic texts. There will be a basic introduction to the grammatical structures of Rabbinic and Modern Hebrew with a focus on how they differ from Biblical Hebrew. Prerequisite: Third semester Biblical or Modern Hebrew or permission of instructor.

**RLG5297 Biblical Studies Sem: The Bible as Book (8<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> c.) Dr. Dupuigrenet**  
“Textualization” of the Bible (Walter J. Ong) during the medieval and early modern period will be studied using the specialized tools of the historian, 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 early printed Bibles, mostly English, from the Carrothers collection. Although indispensable notions about the textual history of the biblical texts during the period will be addressed during the two first weeks, it will concentrate from week 3 on the Bible as an artifact.

**RLG5332 Modern Hindiusm Dr. Erndl**  
Is there such a thing as Hinduism? If so, what is it? How has it changed, and where is it going in the future? This course explores selected topics in 19th, 20th, and 21st century Hinduism, including popular religion, thinkers, reform movements, gurus, nationalism, gender issues, secularism, and pluralism. Emphasis is on Hinduism in the social, political, and religious context of India, with some attention to transnational Hinduism and Hindu-inspired religious movements in North America. Also considered will be notions of “modernity” and “post-modernity” as ideologies or “states of mind” and how these have interfaced with Hinduism. Course objectives are: 1) to explore issues in modern Hinduism in more depth than is possible in an introductory course through extensive reading and discussion, 2) to analyze these issues in class discussions and weekly response papers, and 3) to research topics of interest related to the course themes and to present this research to the class, both orally and in writing. Prerequisite: REL 2315 (Religions of South Asia) or a course on Hinduism (such as REL 3333 or 3337) or on the history or anthropology of India. Graduate students in Religion are exempt from this prerequisite.

**RLG5354 Special Topics in Asian Religions: Religion & the Samurai Dr. Buhrman**  
What was the Way of the Samurai? This course is an examination of images of idealized samurai behavior and criticisms of samurai immorality as they changed over the period from early medieval to modern Japan. The role of Confucianism, Buddhism, native traditions, and Christianity in this history will be covered. Student reading will focus on primary sources, including medieval epics and modern business manuals.

**RLG5486 Religious Thought in America: New Religious Movements/20<sup>th</sup> c. U.S. Dr. McVicar**  
This class will explore the role of new religious movement (NRMs) in American culture and history. We will begin the course by critically assessing the category of *new religious movement* and consider its relationship to other conceptual categories such as *cult*, *emergent religion*, or *alternative religious movement*. Building on this theoretical material, we will then sample scholarly studies that examine specific traditions within the NRM paradigm. Traditions covered in this section of the course will include pagan revivals, revolutionary millenarian movements, UFO cults, racialist movements, plus many, many more. Finally, the

course will then look to the sociological and political implications of the academic study of NRMs and how scholarly knowledge has (or has not) played a significant role in shaping public discourses related to the representation of new "marginal," "fringe," "new," or "extreme" religious movements in U.S. culture.

### **RLG5497 The Soul & the Self in Christian Anthropology (Augustine to Rousseau)**

**Dr. Dupuigrenet**

The aim of this course is to introduce students to major texts about the human person in relation to God in Christian thought between Late Antiquity and the Enlightenment period, when motifs stemming from Greco-Roman philosophers, especially Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Seneca, were reinterpreted through the lens of the Bible and the Revelation to create a religious conscience of the self. From Augustine's *Soliloquies*, written around 386 in the language of Platonism, to the « deviant Calvinist » Rousseau's *Reveries of a solitary walker*, posthumously published in 1782, the texts selected for this course will be analyzed as representatives of precise doctrinal views but also of shifting historical mentalities and sensitivities.

### **RLG5937-01 Special Topics in Religion: Ecstatic Religion**

**Dr. Hellweg**

A range of mystical practices around the world takes people out of themselves by making possible fundamental transformations of the human person, from mortals to spirits, from contemporaries to ancestors, from the powerless to the powerful, from one gender to another. Such ecstatic practices offer powerful, embodied idioms for accomplishing political transformations, social and psychological healing, renewed identity, and cures for physical ailments. This course examines case studies of spirit possession and shamanism from Africa, Central America, Indonesia, and Siberia. We will also compare humanistic, medical, and psychiatric approaches to these phenomena, opting for the ethnographic and historical approaches definitive of religious studies.

### **RLG 5937-02 Special Topics in Religion: Studies in Judaism**

**Dr. Levenson**

A graduate introduction to teaching and research in Jewish studies. Students will attend REL 3607 ("Jewish Tradition") and also meet weekly to discuss supplementary readings, issues related to teaching Jewish Studies in a university, and individual research projects designed to allow students in various fields to deepen their knowledge of Jewish history, religion, and culture relating to their own areas of interest.

### **RLG 5937-03 Special Topics in Religion: Religion and War**

**Dr. Kelsay**

Exodus 15: 3 proclaims "The Lord is a warrior." In this class, we will focus on the ways various communities of Jews, Christians, and Muslims have understood this notion in relation to changing social and political conditions.

### **RLG6176 Seminar: Ethics & Politics: Comparative Religious Ethics**

**Dr. Kelsay**

The focus of this seminar will be on describing and evaluating a variety of approaches to the comparative study of ethics proposed by scholars past and present.

### **RLG6498-1 Seminar: Religious Thought: Intolerance in America**

**Dr. Corrigan**

Study of primary and secondary sources about religious intolerance in America, including its European roots; violent manifestations in colonial and nineteenth-century America; American forgetting of the history of domestic intolerance and violence; and the ways in which that forgetting has affected recent domestic and foreign policy.

**RLG6498-2 Sem: Religious Thought: REL/Politics Early US Republic Dr. Porterfield**

This graduate seminar will examine major changes in both religion and politics after the American Revolution. It will also consider important shifts in the meaning of "religion" and "politics" during this time, along with the new symbiotic relationship between religion and politics that formed in the early American republic.

**RLG6596-01 Sem: Religious Movements & Institutions: Islamic Law & Society Dr. Gaiser**

Islamic Law and Society, examines the development of Islamic law and legal cultures as they impacted and were shaped by the various contexts in which they operated. Focusing especially on the intersections between Islam law and Islamic societies, the course presents students with some of the most recent scholarship on the origins and evolution of Islamic law, its manifestations in the medieval period, and its interpretations in the modern era. The course uses primary sources in conjunction with source critical secondary literature to explore contemporary scholarly debates surrounding Islamic law, its interpreters, and its social contexts. The course presumes solid prior knowledge of Islam or Middle Eastern history, as well as an ability to independently work on a research paper of substance.