

FALL 2014 RELIGION COURSES

HBR1102/RLG5204 Beginning Biblical Hebrew Dr. Levenson

In HBR 1102 and 1103 you will study virtually the entire grammar and gain a good working vocabulary of Biblical Hebrew. After the completion of HBR 1103, you will be prepared to read any portion of the Hebrew Bible with the aid of a dictionary and commentary. During the course of the year, approximately six chapters from the Bible will be read and students will be introduced to the standard reference tools used in the analysis of the Hebrew text (lexica, concordances, grammars, critical texts, commentaries, etc.). Since the basic grammar and vocabulary of Modern Hebrew are substantially the same as Biblical Hebrew, the course can also serve as a basis for the study of the contemporary language. To facilitate the transition to Modern Hebrew, the pronunciation current in Israel will be adopted, there will be oral/aural drills (though no significant conversation) and the cursive form of writing will be introduced gradually.

The sequence of HBR 1102, 1103 (Spring 2014) and 2222 (Fall 2014) fulfills the College of Arts & Sciences language requirement. A three-course sequence in Modern Hebrew (HBR 1120, 1121, 2220), which also fulfills the language requirement, is offered by the Department of Modern Languages. (It is possible to take both Modern and Biblical Hebrew). There is now a Hebrew Minor for which some Biblical and some Modern Hebrew are required. For details about the minor and other information about Hebrew at FSU, see <http://www.fsu.edu/~modlang/divisions/hebrew/courses.html>

HBR2222/RLG5204 Intermediate Biblical Hebrew Dr. Levenson

A close reading of the Joseph narrative (Genesis 37, and 39-45) and brief selections from poetic and legal texts. The primary emphasis will be on vocabulary, grammar, and style, but some attention will be given to issues of textual and source criticism. There will also be exercises that will provide a review and solidify the grammar and vocabulary from Biblical Hebrew I and II. **Prerequisite:** Two semesters of Modern or Biblical Hebrew.

IFS2007 Need & Greed Dr. Kalbian

This **e-series honors seminar for incoming freshmen** addresses the ethics of money from the perspective of religious communities. We will evaluate the topics of need (as exemplified by poverty) and greed (as exemplified by excessive accumulation of wealth), by looking at historical and contemporary religious writings, ethnographic studies, economic theories, literary narratives, and films. Students will engage in broad, critical and creative thinking about the connections between money, human nature, the good life, material well-being, the common good, and social justice. They will gain knowledge and critical thinking skills that will assist them as they navigate a range of personal and professional issues related to money. ***This course meets the new Liberal Studies-Ethics requirement and the E-Series requirement.***

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

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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. *This course is now also offered online! Fulfills writing, Liberal Arts & multicultural Y.*

REL2121 **Religion in the U.S.** **Staff**

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. *Fulfills writing, Liberal Arts & multicultural Y.*

REL2210 **Introduction to the Old Testament** **Staff**

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 Arts Area IV & writing requirements.*

REL2240 **Introduction to the New Testament** **Staff**

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. *Meets Liberal Arts Area IV & writing requirements.*

REL2315 **Religions of South Asia** **Staff**

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.*

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REL3112 Religion and Fantasy

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. *Fulfills writing and Liberal Arts IV requirements.*

REL3142 Religion: Self and Society Dr. Day

This course is structured around the principle that we should abandon the habit of treating some discourses or practices as being irreducibly distinct from mundane political and economic life. Rather, we must learn to recognize how the behaviors commonly identified as tokens of “religion” represent a form of politics that has been strategically represented as non-political in nature. Figures discussed will include John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, J.S. Mill and Carl Schmidt.

REL3145 Religion & Gender 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 the Liberal Studies IV requirement and the multicultural Y requirement.*

REL3170 Religious Ethics Dr. Kelsay/staff

Religious Ethics: In this class, you will get the chance to examine the moral problems raised by issues such as war, capital punishment, lying, the environment, and sex in the context of religious views about love, duty, good, and evil (yes, this is the big stuff). *This introduction to the study of religious ethics meets the writing, liberal studies area IV and the multicultural X requirement.*

REL3337 Goddesses, Women and Power in Hinduism Dr. Erndl

Female power in Hindu cosmology, mythology, and society. A study of Hindu goddesses, women and female symbolism and the multifaceted relationship among them.

REL3340 The Buddhist Tradition Dr. Cuevas

This course is a historical and thematic survey of Buddhism from its beginnings through the modern period. Topics covered 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 in America. Part I of this course begins with some foundational concepts in Buddhism. Part II explores the Buddhist schools, theories, and practices in different regions of the world and over a span of 2,500 years.

REL3345 Chan/Zen Buddhism Dr. Yu

This course focuses on Chan Buddhism, popularly known in Japanese as “Zen”. The course surveys Zen both historically and thematically, from its beginnings through the modern period. Topics include Chan’s origins, history, doctrine, practice and culture.

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REL3363 Islamic Traditions

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.

REL3431 Critics of Religion Dr. Kavka

This course is an introduction to the major thinkers and texts in the critique of religion as it developed in the 19th and 20th centuries in the west. Beginning with Schleiermacher, the course moves on to consider the so-called "masters of suspicion"--Feuerbach, Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud. By means of a close examination of central texts, students explore the meaning of a critique of religion, the structure of religious consciousness, the place of religion with respect to other forms of culture, the problem of religion and alienation, and the possibility of a critical faith. **Meets LS Humanities, Writing requirement**

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.

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 Special Topics in Religion: Japanese Religions Dr. Buhrman

The influence of Japanese religions can be seen in a variety of areas—in contemporary life and customs, in popular culture (including movies and video games), and even in international affairs, as the persistent international friction generated by politicians' visits to the Yasukuni war shrine. This course introduces students to the religious traditions of Japan, and shows how these traditions can be found in traditional Japanese arts, popular media, and everyday life in modern Japan; as well as how religion has shaped and been shaped by politics and Japanese history. We will also examine how Japanese religious traditions undermine many common assumptions about the definition of religion. Questions? Contact Dr. Buhrman at kristina.buhrman@gmail.com

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REL4044 **What is Religion?** **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. *This is a required course for all Religion majors.*

REL4190/RLG5195 **Seminar: Religion & Culture (Bioethics)** **Dr. Kalbian**
This seminar examines religious and secular views about the relationship of medicine and ethics. We will study the history of bioethics in the North American context (with attention to the Tuskegee syphilis experiments); the dominant moral approaches to bioethics in the U.S.; some less dominant approaches (human rights, narrative ethics and feminist ethics); and Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Bioethics (with attention to end-of-life decisions and organ transplantation). *Instructor permission or previous coursework in bioethics required. Contact Dr. Kalbian at akalbian@fsu.edu.*

REL4359/RLG5354 **Body, Healing, and Asceticism in Chinese Religions** **Dr. Yu**
This seminar is a historical and interdisciplinary examination of relationships among premodern Chinese bodily practices, healing arts, and the asceticism. The seminar pays special attention to underlying religious and philosophical worldviews and to the ways in which they influence self-inflicted violent bodily practices.

REL4359/RLG5354 **Seminar: Buddhist Tantra** **Dr. Cuevas**
This seminar examines the historical development of Tantra and Tantric Buddhism in early medieval India (c. 500-1200 C.E.) with some attention to the spread and practice of these traditions in Nepal, Tibet, China, and Japan. Topics covered include origins and history of the Tantric movement, esoteric literature, sacred biography, magic and ritual, yoga and meditation, and Tantra and politics. The course will also assess the varied scholarly interpretations and

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popular representations of Buddhist Tantra over the last century in Europe, the United States, and Asia. *Instructor permission or previous coursework in Asian Religions, REL 3340, REL 3358. Contact Dr. Cuevas at bcuevas@fsu.edu.*

**REL4359/RLG5354 Special Topics in Asian Religion: Japanese Ghosts and Monsters
Dr. Buhrman**

Japanese folklore and culture is famous for an abundance of monsters and ghosts (sometimes known as *youkai*), some of which have become known to American audiences through video games and children's tv shows. This seminar will look at the history of the study of ghosts and monsters in Japan, and introduce students to some of the deeper history of and influence of Buddhist doctrine on the received image of these creatures. We will also look at depictions of traditional *youkai* in modern film, and how these might relate to changes in human-animal relations and environmental consciousness in Japan.

REL4491/RLG5497 Sem Religious Thought: Torture & Human Rights Dr. Twiss

What are the purported goals, justifications, and limits—legal, moral, and political—of torture practices, both historical and contemporary? How have the recent and on-going debates about the legitimacy of torture in America been shaped by moral and religious perspectives? In this course, students will learn to think critically about a range of topics that include: history of torture; torture, pain, and “unmaking” the world; social psychological accounts of conditions making torture possible; genealogy of modern torture; democracy and recent proposals to legalize torture; comparative moral and religious perspectives on torture and its critique; and prospects for the abolition of torture. Course materials are interdisciplinary, drawing from history, social psychology, law (especially international human rights law), philosophy and religion, and the arts.

REL4914 Latin Religious Texts Dr. Levenson

RLG5035 Introduction to the Study of Religion Dr. Kelsay

This seminar will review the theoretical and methodological foundations of the academic study of religion. It will focus on authors viewed as the founders and subsequent exponents and critics of the discipline. We will interrogate the arguments and evidence on which they ground the operating assumption that religion exists as an object of study and that, as a result, religious studies exists as an academic discipline. Our approach will be a critical one. We will examine religion as a heuristic category and religious studies as a form of interdisciplinary research in which authors have made arguments as relevant to ritual and symbolic concerns as to those one could also label economic, political, or sociological. We will read and discuss germinal writings by Feuerbach, Marx, Durkheim, Freud, James, and Weber as well as works by their successors, such as Eliade and his students, major anthropologists of the British and French schools, as well as Bourdieu, Foucault, Asad, McCutcheon, Mahmood, Evans, and Vásquez. The course aims to provide students a context in which to hone their own formative questions about and develop their own theories of religion and religious studies.

RLG5915 Sanskrit Texts Dr. Erndl

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RLG5916	Latin Religious Texts	Dr. Levenson
RLG5937	Special Topics	Dr. Erndl
RLG5937	REP Colloquium	Dr. Twiss
RLG5937	ARH Colloquium	Dr. Corrigan
RLG6298	Scriptures	Dr. Goff
RLG6498	Religious Thought	Dr. Corrigan

RLG6596 Religious Movement and Institutions: New Religious Movements 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*. 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.

SRK5236 Intermediate Sanskrit I

Sanskrit, known as the "language of the gods", is a classical language of India and scriptural language for Hinduism and Buddhism. As a member of the Indo-European linguistic family, it is related to Greek, Latin, and English, as well as to languages of modern India such as Hindi, Marathi, and Bengali. This is the third semester of Sanskrit. Building on skills learned in the first year, students will increase their speed and confidence in reading Sanskrit texts of increasing difficulty. Writing, grammar, oral recitation, and pronunciation are also emphasized. For continuing students only; permission of Prof. Erndl is required.