FALL 2015 RELIGION COURSES

UNDERGRADUATE COURSES:

HBR2222 Intermediate Biblical Hebrew

Dr. Goff

A close reading of the Joseph narrative (Genesis 1-11) 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 course** 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 and the E-Series requirements*.

IFS2039 Noah's Flood Through the Ages

Dr. Goff

Noah's Flood has been a topic of enduring interest for over 2,000 years. It sparks the imagination with issues such as the rise of evil in the world and God's re-creation of the earth. In this class we will examine the biblical flood story in a broad context. We will examine other flood stories from the ancient Near East that influenced how the biblical story of the flood was written. We will look at how the flood story in the Bible was interpreted, from antiquity up until today. We will also examine how the flood story had been a focal point for debates involving religion and science since the 1600s. *This course meets the new Liberal Studies-Cultural Practice and the E-Series requirements.*

IFS3050 India Through Bollywood (Bryan Hall students only) Dr. Erndl

How is India "imagined" through popular cinema? India is the world's largest democracy, one of the world's oldest continuous civilizations, and also has the world's largest film industry. In this course, we examine Indian identity, cultural, and religious values as expressed in film. The popular cinema produced in Bombay (now Mumbai), dubbed "Bollywood," will predominate, spanning the period from Indian and Pakistani Independence (1947) to the 21st century. Topics for discussion will include love and separation, gender roles, relationships between divine and human, sensuality and renunciation, caste and class identity, the state, diaspora, the quest for ultimate truth....and, of course, music, dance, and stardom! Films will be screened weekly in Hindi with English subtitles. No previous knowledge of Indian culture or cinema is assumed. Attendance is required at the weekly film screening as well as the lecture/discussion class. *Meets the new Liberal Studies-Cultural Practice, E-Series, and cross-cultural (X) requirements.*

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. This course is now also offered online! Fulfills Liberal Studies- Cultural Practice and the Cross-Cultural X requirements

REL2121 Religion in the U.S. Dr. Corrigan

This course focuses on religions in America with attention to economic change, politics, immigration, gender, regionalism, reform, feeling, intolerance, and racial and ethnic diversity. We will examine the religious ideas, rituals, and forms of association of religious groups ranging from those that first took shape in America (e.g. Native American religions, Mormons, Christian Scientists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-Day Adventists, Nation of Islam) to Roman Catholic and mainline Protestant denominations, various Jewish congregations, Asian religions in America, and religious aspects of popular culture (e. g. New Age religions, urban ethnic religions). Fulfills Liberal Studies - History & the Diversity in Western Culture (Y) requirements.

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. *Fulfills Liberal Studies – Cultural Practice and the Diversity in Western Culture (Y) requirements.*

REL2240 Introduction to the New Testament Dr. Kelley/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. *Fulfills Liberal Studies- Cultural Practice and Diversity in Western Culture (Y) 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. Fulfills Liberal Studies- Cultural Practice and Cross-cultural (x) requirements. Section two is an online section of this course.

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 Liberal Studies- Cultural Practice requirement.*

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, religion should not be viewed as a substantive term of analysis but as a piece of political rhetoric—a way of strategically representing some all-too-political aspects of collective life as non-political. After exploring the history of political theorizing about the proper role of religion in collective life, we turn to examine two case studies which probe the socio-taxonomic problems that the American Constitution creates by enshrining the "free exercise of religion" in the First Amendment. *Fulfills Liberal Studies- Cultural Practice requirement.*

REL3145 Religion & Gender Staff/Dr. McVicar

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 a fully as possible. *Meets the Liberal Studies- Cultural Practice and Cross-cultural (x) requirements.*

REL3170 Religious Ethics 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). *Meets the Liberal Studies- Cultural Practice and Cross-cultural (x) requirements.*

REL3171 From Kierkegaard to Thoreau Staff

REL3340 The Buddhist Tradition Dr. Cuevas/Dr. Yu

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. *Meets the Liberal Studies- Cultural Practice and Cross-cultural (x) requirements.*

REL3351 Japanese Religions Dr. Buhrman

This course investigates the influence of Japanese religious traditions on Japanese life, culture, and history; as well as the influence of history on modern Japanese religiosity and perceptions of religion. Many aspects of Japanese culture or national character are credited to (or blamed on) Japanese religions. Despite this, on national surveys the majority of the Japanese regularly claim to have no religion. This course introduces major aspects of Japanese religious traditions and examines this paradox in light of the history of religion in Japan, and Japanese definitions of religion, practice, and belief. *Meets the Liberal Studies- Cultural Practice and Cross-cultural (x) requirements.*

REL3363 Islamic Traditions Dr. Gaiser

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. *Fulfills Liberal Studies- Cultural Practice and Diversity in Western Culture (Y) requirements*.

REL3370 Religion in Africa Dr. Hellweg

Understanding contemporary Africa means understanding African religions. Religion is a preoccupation across the continent—economically, politically, and socially. Through divination, spirit possession, sacrifice, and other practices, Africans engage what we call "religion" in ways that challenge our understanding of the term. We have no choice, then, but to recognize the sophistication and complexity of African religions. They encompass and determine aspects of childbirth, gender, healing, sexuality, personhood, and death; their impact is far-reaching. Yet, writers like Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens have portrayed religions as the root of all ignorance. On the contrary, religions organize vast arrays of practical knowledge and work in Africa. The study of African religions therefore offers a unique way of understanding how religion sustains the worlds we inhabit—that is, how we might best define "religion" as a working knowledge of the cosmos we inhabit. African religions do not find the measure of their truth in some distanced "natural" world but in the social dynamics and conflicts that give rise to them. *Meets the Liberal Studies-Cultural Practice and Cross-cultural (x) requirements*.

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 the Liberal Studies- Cultural Practice requirement.*

REL3541 American Protestant Thought Dr. Porterfield

This course traces the historical development of American protestant thought by examining the writings of influential thinkers from different time periods. The course considers the social and

intellectual forces that influenced their differing conceptions of Christian life, as well as continuities persisting through time. *Meets the Liberal Studies- Cultural Practice and Scholarship-In-Practice requirements.*

REL3607 The Jewish Tradition

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. *Fulfills Liberal Studies- Cultural Practice and Diversity in Western Culture (Y) requirements*.

REL3936 Special Topics in Religion: The Way of the Samurai Dr. Buhrman The samurai has become the symbol of Japanese masculinity, and the "way of the samurai" (bushid?) singled out as a primary ethical guide for Japanese business, sports, politics, and (before the war) military culture. But what was the historical "way of the samurai"? How did this ethos change over time? Who were the samurai, and where did they come from? This course looks at the historical factors and religious (chiefly Buddhist and Confucian) influences that went into defining the samurai and models that served for their behavior using historical studies and primary texts.

REL4044 What is Religion? Dr. Hellweg

More than ever, Religious Studies has important contributions to make to public life. Whereas many Americans—and people in similar democracies—think of religion as distinct from everyday life, scholars have unveiled its political ends, documenting how social order and religion are often one and the same. Alternatively, scholars have conceived of religion as a projection of social or psychological conflicts into the realm of ideology or as an invention resulting from the comparison of Christianity with the worldviews that Western colonizers encountered around the globe. If scholars are right, and there is more—or less—to religion than meets the eye, then the foreign policies, trade decisions, and social hierarchies we derive more often than not from religious stereotypes are in urgent need of critique. We therefore read classic theories of religion by philosophers, psychologists, and sociologists while exploring more contemporary concerns focusing on race, gender, and sexuality. Our aim is to understand how definitions of religion, and the methods and theories for studying it, determine one another, making every scholar's—and politician's—definition of religion anything but neutral. *This is a required course for all Religion majors. It also meets the Upper Division Scholarship-in-Practice and Oral Communication Competency Requirements.*

REL4190 Seminar: Religion & Culture: Against Postmodernism Dr. Day

REL4359/RLG5354 Buddhist Biography Dr. Cuevas

Biography is one of the most central and enduring literary genres of the Buddhist tradition. Religious biography (hagiography) is a form of didactic literature that speaks about the ideal Buddhist life, with the Buddha's own life serving as the paradigm for all Buddhists, monks, nuns,

and laity alike. But Buddhist biography is more than a popular vehicle for religious instruction; it is also a particular type of historical writing, one that emphasizes individual agency and views the subject as a point at which diverse historical forces converge. This is apparent also in religious autobiography, which promises a more intimate portrait of the "self" in history in relation to the world. In this seminar we examine the nature of Buddhist sacred life writing with a focus on traditional Buddhist hagiography and autobiography in India, Tibet, China, and Japan. Issues addressed will include biography as history, sociocultural constructions of experience, aspects of the self-consciousness of personality, and the availability of particular identity roles transmitted through texts. The course will run on a seminar format with active and in-depth discussion of readings and intensive individual writing projects.

REL4359 Chinese Buddhist Studies Dr. Yu

This seminar covers the history and historigraphical issues in the study of Chinese Buddhism. It examines scholarly constructions of Buddhist Studies as a field in general and the historiography of Chinese Buddhist Studies specifically, with a focus on the shifts that took place in scholarly representations and paradigms. The seminar reveals this methodological shifts in the field from philology to philosophy; from missionary concerns to sectarian orientations; from doctrinal studies to anthropological approaches.

REL4359 Readings in Classical Japanese Dr. Buhrman An introduction to the grammar of Classical Japanese and instruction in how to do research in primary historical sources. Proficiency in modern Japanese language is required.

REL4366 Shi'ite Islam Dr. Gaiser

REL4491 Humanitarian Intervention Dr. Twiss

An exploration into the history, ethics, politics, and critique of humanitarian intervention from its origins in the 19th century to its recent reformulation in the emerging doctrine of the responsibility to protect (R2P). Materials drawn from history, international law, moral and political theory, and the social sciences. Case studies from around the world. Seminar format, including oral presentations and a final research paper.

REL4510 Christianity after the New Testament Dr. Kelley

REL4905 DIS: Conservatism & Religious Right Dr. McVicar

REL4932 Honors Work in Religion

GRADUATE COURSES:

RLG5035 Introduction to the Study of Religion Dr. Erndl

This seminar explores the theoretical and methodological foundations of the academic study of religion. We will examine arguments and evidence on which scholars ground the assumption that religion exists (or not) as an object of study and that, as a result, religious *studies* exists (or not)

as a viable academic discipline. Our approach will be critical. We will examine religion as a heuristic category and religious studies as a form of interdisciplinary research in which authors have explored ritual and symbolic concerns as much as themes just as easily labeled economic, historical, political, or social.

RLG5195

Against Postmodernism

Dr. Day

RLG5204 Intermediate Hebrew Dr. Goff

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.

RLG5318 Classical Chinese Texts Dr. Yu

This is a seminar in the reading of selected primary sources in classical Chinese for the study of Chinese religions. Part one of the course will be a concise review of Chinese grammar. Part two of the course will focus on reading a small sampling of texts from different historical periods and genres, including canonical literature, ritual manuals, poetry, and hagiographies and local gazetteers. The course will also introduce students to a variety of tools and methods for the study of Chinese literature, including standard lexical and bibliographic references, digital resources, and secondary scholarship in modern languages. There will be weekly assignments for Part One of the course and weekly translation assignments and other exercises for Part Two of the course. Prerequisite: One year Chinese language or familiarity with written Chinese and with permission from Dr. Yu.

RLG5354

Buddhist Biography

Dr. Cuevas

RLG5354 Chinese Buddhist Studies

Dr. Yu

This seminar covers the history and historigraphical issues in the study of Chinese Buddhism. It examines scholarly constructions of Buddhist Studies as a field in general and the historiography of Chinese Buddhist Studies specifically, with a focus on the shifts that took place in scholarly representations and paradigms. The seminar reveals this methodological shifts in the field from philology to philosophy; from missionary concerns to sectarian orientations; from doctrinal studies to anthropological approaches.

RLG5354

Readings in Classical Japanese

Dr. Buhrman

RLG5356

Readings in Tibetan

Dr. Cuevas

RLG5367

Sem: Shi'ite Islam

Dr. Gaiser

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 12th Imam). The

course will also study the establishment and elaboration of Zaydi and Isma'ili Shi'ism. The latter part of the course will be devoted to contemporary issues among the Shi'ites, including the martyrdom of Husayn and the role of Hizbullah in the politics of the Middle East. **Prerequisites:** REL 3363 Islamic Traditions, or the equivalent basic working knowledge of Islam and Islamic history is a prerequisite for this course.

RLG5497 Humanitarian Intervention Dr. Twiss

An exploration into the history, ethics, politics, and critique of humanitarian intervention from its origins in the 19th century to its recent reformulation in the emerging doctrine of the responsibility to protect (R2P). Materials drawn from history, international law, moral and political theory, and the social sciences. Case studies from around the world. Seminar format, including oral presentations and a final research paper.

RLG5516 Christianity after the New Testament Dr. Kelley

RLG5915 Sanskrit Texts Dr. Erndl

For continuing students by instructor permission only.

RLG5937 Religion, Space, and America Dr. Corrigan

RLG5937 REP Colloquium Dr. Twiss

RLG5937 ARH Colloquium Dr. Porterfield

RLG 5937 Religion in Africa Dr. Hellweg

Understanding contemporary Africa means understanding African religions. Religion is a preoccupation across the continent—economically, politically, and socially. Through divination, spirit possession, sacrifice, and other practices, Africans engage what we call "religion" in ways that challenge our understanding of the term. We have no choice, then, but to recognize the sophistication and complexity of African religions. They encompass and determine aspects of childbirth, gender, healing, sexuality, personhood, and death; their impact is far-reaching. Yet, writers like Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens have portrayed religions as the root of all ignorance. On the contrary, religions organize vast arrays of practical knowledge and work in Africa. The study of African religions therefore offers a unique way of understanding how religion sustains the worlds we inhabit—that is, how we might best define "religion" as a working knowledge of the cosmos we inhabit. African religions do not find the measure of their truth in some distanced "natural" world but in the social dynamics and conflicts that give rise to them.

RLG6498 Puritanism & American Reception Dr. Porterfield

RLG6498 Conservatism & Religious Right Dr. McVicar