

**RELIGION DEPARTMENT  
2015-2016 SPRING  
COURSE OFFERINGS**

**Undergraduate Program**

REL 222 / HUM 222 (EC) *Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit*  
Theories and Methods in the Study of Religion

**Liane F. Carlson**

12:30 pm - 1:20 pm T Th

**Department Area Requirement: Required Course, Departmental**

This course explores major theories and methods in the study of religion, starting with Enlightenment thinkers (Spinoza, Hume), before turning to the rise of social sciences in the study of religion (Durkheim, Weber), and ending with contemporary topics in the study of religion. Topics to be explored include rationality and religion; secularism; the effects of colonialism on the study of religion; gender and sexuality; religion and psychology; the conflict between freedom of religion and the state.

REL 226 / EAS 226 (EM) *Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit*  
The Religions of China

**Stephen F. Teiser**

10:00 am - 10:50 am M W

**Department Area Requirement: Religions of Asia**

A thematic introduction to the history of Chinese religion. Topics include cosmology, ancestors, gods, mythology, ethics, shamanism, divination, gender, and mortuary ritual. Readings drawn from a wide range of sources, including sacred scriptures, philosophical texts, popular literature, and modern ethnography.

REL 243 (LA) *na, npdf*  
Beyond Comparison

**Naphtali S. Meshel**

1:30 pm - 4:20 pm M

**Department Area Requirement: Does NOT satisfy sub-field requirement; Departmental Only**

What does it mean to compare two or more religious phenomena? What are the goals of such studies, and what makes a comparison compelling and useful? We will learn about some of the most important comparative approaches within the study of religion, with a particular focus on the analysis of the categories 'ritual' and 'myth.' We will then carry out our own comparative experiments in which we will observe the slaying of dragons in India and in Europe, and follow the trail of a murderous act from the ancient Near East to the Americas.

REL 251 (HA) *Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit*  
The New Testament and Christian Origins

**John G. Gager**

11:00 am - 11:50 am M W

**Department Area Requirement: Ancient Mediterranean**

To trace the origins of Christianity from its beginnings as a movement within ancient Judaism to its gradual transformation and emergence as an independent religious movement in the Roman Empire and beyond. To read the New Testament with a critical eye, i.e., as a collection of documents illustrating differing emphases and stages in the growth of early Christianity.

REL 275 / LAS 275 (HA) *Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit*  
Religion and Social Change in Early Latin America

**Jessica Delgado**

1:30 pm - 2:20 pm M W

**Department Area Requirement: Religions in America**

A history of religion and social change, the role of the Catholic Church in society, and the dynamic between Christianity and Native American religious traditions from Spanish colonization to the early nineteenth century. We will grapple with the many paradoxes that characterized the role of religion in people's lives through the lenses of "conquest" and religious change in indigenous communities, women and men's daily encounters with church institutions and devotional culture, changes in religious expression over time, changes in ideas of race, gender, and spiritual status, and the changing relationship between the church and state.

**REL 281 / SAS 281 (EM)** *Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit*

**Buddhist Philosophy**

**Jonathan C. Gold**

11:00 am - 11:50 am **T Th**

**Department Area Requirement: Religions of Asia**

An introduction to the Indian Buddhist philosophical tradition from the time of the Buddha until its decline (c. 400 B.C.E - 1200 C.E.). Topics include Buddhism's view of the world, the person, and the path to nirvana; equanimity, compassion and meditation as core elements in Buddhist ethics; early Buddhist metaphysics; the doctrine of "emptiness" and its various interpretations in the Great Vehicle schools; Buddhist epistemology and philosophy of language; and modern attempts to apply Buddhist philosophy to contemporary philosophical issues.

**REL 301** *Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit*

**Introduction to Coptic Language and Literature**

**Alexander G. Kocar**

12:30 pm - 1:20 pm **M W F**

**Department Area Requirement: Does NOT satisfy sub-field requirement; does NOT count as departmental.**

Emerging in the first and second centuries of the Common Era, Coptic is a syncretistic language of ancient Egypt, transliterated with Greek and Demotic letterforms. Although it is no longer spoken today outside of its role in Coptic Christian liturgies, it was once the language of Roman and Late Antique Egypt. This course will introduce students to the fundamentals of Coptic grammar and prepare them by course's end to read ancient Coptic literature. In addition, this course will introduce students to some of the basic skills required in Coptic studies today.

**REL 305 / JDS 310 (HA)** *na, npdf*

**The Invention of the Gentile: A Case-Study in Ethnic Distinctions**

**Ishay Rosen Zvi**

1:30 pm - 4:20 pm **W**

**Department Area Requirement: Ancient Mediterranean**

The distinction between "gentiles" and "Jews" is significant not only due to the great impact it had on the history of Jewish and Christian communities, but also because it has become a paradigmatic case of the distinction between outsiders and insiders, us and others. This class, based on new research, will probe the origins and construction of this category, beginning with the Bible and proceeding through other classical Jewish and Christian texts.

**REL 315 / ART 359 / HUM 315 (EM)** *No Audit*

**Buddhist Art and Material Culture: The Virtues of Objects**

**Eric R. Huntington**

1:30 pm - 4:20 pm **Th**

**Department Area Requirement: Religions of Asia**

When one understands the central role that art objects play in Buddhist ritual life, conceptions of 'art' and 'object' are fundamentally transformed. Such items are not passive collections of material, but active mechanisms in the complex world of lived religion. The course is organized around several major themes, including relics as quintessential objects, rituals for the consecration and deconsecration of constructed artworks, and interactions with images during daily rituals. Buddhist traditions from all across Asia are addressed, including those of India, Nepal, Tibet, China, Japan, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

**REL 322 / EAS 322 (HA)** *Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit*

**Buddhism in Japan**

**Jacqueline I. Stone**

1:30 pm - 2:50 pm **M W**

**Department Area Requirement: Religions of Asia**

This course will examine representative aspects of Buddhist thought and practice in Japan from the sixth century to the present. We will focus on the major Buddhist traditions--including Lotus, Pure Land, esoteric Buddhism, and Zen--as well as Buddhism and the literary arts, modern challenges to traditional Buddhism, and contemporary Buddhist movements. Readings will include scriptures, sermons, tales, and philosophical essays, as well as selected secondary sources. Some background in either Japan or Buddhism is strongly recommended.

**REL 335 / NES 356 (HA)** *Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit*  
**Moses and Jesus in the Islamic Tradition**

**Shaun E. Marmon**

1:30 pm - 4:20 pm T

**Department Area Requirement: Islam**

The course will focus on the changing representations of the prophets Musa (Moses) and `Isa (Jesus) within the Islamic tradition. Course materials include readings in translation from the Qur'an, hadith, Sufi poetry, the popular "Tales of the Prophets" as well as modern Islamic texts on social justice, and novels. We will examine the ways in which these prophets, while recognized by Muslims as foundational figures in Christianity and Judaism, played and continue to play a prominent role, as monotheistic prophets and as religious exemplars, in many diverse aspects of Islamic thought and practice.

**REL 337 / NES 357 (HA)** *No Audit*

**Slavery, Gender & Religious Difference in Islamic Societies**

**Shaun E. Marmon**

1:30 pm - 4:20 pm Th

**Department Area Requirement: Islam**

In 2014, ISIS distributed a pamphlet of authoritative responses (fatwas), based in Classical Islamic law, to questions about the enslavement and sexual exploitation of non-Muslim women and girls. This revival of slavery shocked the Muslim world and led to questions about the history of slavery and "concubinage" in Islam. We will address some of those questions through close reading of texts in translation and modern scholarship. What is the history of slavery in Islamic law and practice? What role do sex and gender play in slavery, specifically in Islamic societies? How "Islamic" is slavery? We will also include a comparative perspective.

**REL 347 / JDS 347 (EM)** *Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit*

**Religion and Law**

**Leora F. Batnitzky**

1:30 pm - 4:20 pm T

**Department Area Requirement: Critical Thought**

A critical examination of the relation between concepts of "religion" and "law," as they figure in modern Christian and Jewish thought, as well as in contemporary legal theory. If religion gives law its spirit, and law gives religion its structure, then what is their practical relation in both religious and secular life? This course explores the relation between Jewish and Christian conceptions of law, both in their ancient and modern contexts, and the relation between traditional religious and modern secular views of law.

**REL 352 (HA)** *na, npdf*

**Who Was or Is Jesus?**

**Elaine H. Pagels**

1:30 pm - 4:20 pm T

**Department Area Requirement: Ancient Mediterranean**

**ENROLLMENT BY APPLICATION OR INTERVIEW. DEPARTMENTAL PERMISSION REQUIRED.**

What do we actually know about Jesus of Nazareth? We'll look at the earliest sources--both positive & negative, since none are neutral!--the various accounts in the New Testament, as well as what ancient Jewish & Roman sources say: was he an actual person, & if so, what kind of person--prophet, rabbi, healer, revolutionary? We'll also investigate ancient gospels nearly unknown, since they were censored by church leaders, including the Gospel of Thomas & Gospel of Mary Magdalene. Then we'll explore an enormous range of ways that various people, Christian or not, have interrupted Jesus in art, poetry, theology, fiction, films, & video.

**REL 357 / HIS 310 (HA)** *Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit*

**Religion in Colonial America and the New Nation**

**Seth A. Perry**

10:00 am - 10:50 am T Th

**Department Area Requirement: Religions in America**

This class covers the history of religion in America from European contact through the 1840s or so. Emphasis will be on primary readings, organized chronologically around a few recurrent themes: contact and exchange; authority and dissent; the relationship between theological reasoning and everyday life. We'll pay particular attention to changing conceptions of religion's role in social organization and competing religious views of human nature over time.

REL 363 (EM) *Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit*

Religion and Ethical Theory

Jeffrey L. Stout

7:30 pm - 10:20 pm M

**Department Area Requirement: Critical Thought**

**ENROLLMENT BY APPLICATION OR INTERVIEW. DEPARTMENTAL PERMISSION REQUIRED.**

This seminar will examine philosophical accounts of what it means to live well, focusing mainly on works written in the last half century that are relevant to issues in religious ethics: whether morality requires a religious foundation, the ethical significance of divine commandments, and the concepts of virtue, goodness, evil, horror, holiness, sainthood, faith, and the sacred. Among the philosophers to be discussed are Richard Rorty, Elizabeth Anscombe, Alasdair MacIntyre, Iris Murdoch, Stanley Cavell, and Robert Merrihew Adams.

REL 377 / AAS 376 / AMS 378 (SA) *No Audit*

Race and Religion in America

Judith Weisenfeld

1:30 pm - 4:20 pm W

**Department Area Requirement: Religions in America**

In this seminar we examine the tangled and shifting relationship between religion and race in American history. In doing so, we explore a broad landscape of racial construction, identity, and experience and consider such topics as American interpretations of race in the Bible, religion and racial slavery, race and missions, religion, race, and science, popular culture representations of racialized religion, and religiously-grounded resistance to racial hierarchy.

### **Cross-Listed Courses**

AAS 325 / ENG 393 / REL 366 (LA) *na, npdf*

African American Autobiography

Albert J. Raboteau

1:30 pm - 4:20 pm Th

**Department Area Requirement: Religions in America**

Autobiography has long played a pivotal role in the development of African American literary, cultural and intellectual history. This course will survey major fictional and non-fictional texts in the evolution of African American autobiography. We will read these texts both as representative of literary and cultural trends in the history of the genre, and for their individual significance.

ANT 389 / AMS 339 / AAS 333 / REL 333 (SA) *na, npdf*

Religion and Culture: Muslims in America

Aly Kassam-Remtulla

1:30 pm - 4:20 pm T

**Department Area Requirement: Does NOT satisfy sub-field requirement; does NOT count as departmental.**

**Majors may petition to count this as a cognate course (in addition to the 8 required courses for the major).**

This course is an introduction to Muslim cultures in the United States. Each week we will draw upon texts from anthropology, sociology, history, and other fields to develop an understanding of the historical and present diversity of Muslim communities in America. The first third of the course provides a survey of Muslim communities in this country from the 17th to the 21st centuries. The second two-thirds features a thematic approach to a variety of topics: 9/11, women and gender, religious conversion, interfaith relations, youth, mosques as institutions, and Islamophobia.

**ART 322 / REL 396 (LA)** *Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit*  
**Renaissance Altarpieces and Religious Crisis**

**Carolina Mangone**

1:30 pm - 2:50 pm **M W**

**Department Area Requirement:** Does NOT satisfy sub-field requirement; does NOT count as departmental.

**Majors may petition to count this as a cognate course (in addition to the 8 required courses for the major).**

As objects that threatened to stimulate idolatry as readily as they promised to arouse devotion, altarpieces were sites of polemics and anxiety. This course examines the multifaceted visual strategies Italian artists like Raphael, Michelangelo and Titian, alongside reform-minded patrons, adopted in response to critiques of Christian imagery in the decades before and after the Council of Trent (1545-63). We will also reconsider the traditional view that the experimental and unsystematic reforms typical of pre-Trent altarpieces ceded to more regulated, conservative art following the Church's formal plea to chasten religious art and its makers.

**CLA 326 / HIS 326 / REL 329 (HA)** *No Pass/D/Fail*

**Topics in Ancient History - Athenian Democracy and Its Critics**

**Marc Domingo Gyax**

1:30 pm - 2:50 pm **T Th**

**Department Area Requirement:** Does NOT satisfy sub-field requirement; does NOT count as departmental.

**Majors may petition to count this as a cognate course (in addition to the 8 required courses for the major).**

This course will examine the origins, evolution and organization of the democratic system in Athens, and address some of the most controversial questions about the topic: To what extent was Athens democratic? What were the links between Athenian democracy and its aggressive imperialism? What are the similarities and differences between ancient and modern ideas of democracy?

**JDS 248 / REL 241 (HA)** *Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit*

**Kabbalah: Concepts and History**

**David Sclar**

11:00 am - 12:20 pm **T Th**

**Department Area Requirement:** Does NOT satisfy sub-field requirement; does NOT count as departmental.

**Majors may petition to count this as a cognate course (in addition to the 8 required courses for the major).**

This course surveys the major concepts and historical developments of Jewish mystical traditions in the last thousand years. We will explore both theosophical (contemplative) and ecstatic (experiential) Kabbalah, including the ideas and practices of major figures, groups, and movements.

**For more detailed information on each course, please visit:**

**<http://registrar.princeton.edu/course-offerings/>**