

RELIGION DEPARTMENT
2022 – 2023 Spring
COURSE OFFERINGS

UNDERGRADUATE COURSES:

REL 227: Tibetan Buddhism

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

Total Course Enrollment: 30

Professor(s): Jonathan C. Gold

1:30pm - 2:50pm MW

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Religions of Asia

This course is a survey of the Buddhist traditions of Tibet, focusing on the doctrines and practices of the main schools of tantric ritual and meditation. Topics covered include: the formation and maintenance of institutionalized lineages; lives of Buddhist saints, scholars and reincarnate lamas; politics and religion; and Tibet through the lenses of the Chinese, and the West.

REL 239/NES 239: Sufism: The Mystical Tradition of Islam

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

Total Course Enrollment: 15

Professor(s): Tehseen Thaver

1:30pm - 4:20pm Th

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Islam

In Western media and popular discourse, Sufism, or the mystical tradition in Islam, is often portrayed as the 'soft-side' of Islam and contrasted with the harsh 'legalism' of the Shari`a or Islamic law. In this class, we will try to interrupt this portrayal through a rigorous exercise of textual and conceptual interrogation. We will explore the institutional and intellectual history, meditation and disciplinary practices, poetry and literature, as well as orientalist and neo-imperialist representations of Sufism. A major emphasis of this course will be on closely reading and analyzing Sufi texts from a range of genres in translation.

REL 252/CLA 252/HLS 252: Jesus: How Christianity Began

(EC) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit

Total Course Enrollment: 150

Professor(s): Lydia C. Bremer-McCollum

12:30pm - 1:20pm MW

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Ancient Judaism, Christianity, and Greek and Roman Religions

Who was Jesus of Nazareth? What do we know and how do we know it? This course takes up these questions and surveys the diverse history of interpretation of the life and teachings of Jesus and how this history shaped and continues to shape contemporary views of and debates about politics, race and ethnicity, sexuality and gender, and civil rights. Throughout the course, we will consider both historical material such as early gospels, letters, and Jewish and Roman sources as well as modern contexts of interpretation in theology, film, art, and music. This course is designed and open to all regardless of (or no) religious background.

REL 264/CHV 264/PHI 264: Religion and Reason

(EC) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit

Total Course Enrollment: No Limit

Professor(s): Denys Turner

10:00am - 10:50am MW

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Philosophical and Ethical Approaches to Religion

An examination of the most influential theoretical, pragmatic, and moral arguments regarding the existence and nature of God (or gods). Along the way, we consider debates about whether and how we can talk or think about such a being, and about whether mystical experience, miracles, and the afterlife are intelligible notions. Finally, we consider whether religious commitment might be rationally acceptable without any proof or evidence, and whether the real-world fact of religious diversity has philosophical implications. Course readings will be taken from both historical and contemporary sources.

REL 311: Religious Existentialism

(EC) Graded na, npdf

Total Course Enrollment: 15

Professor(s): Leora F. Batnitzky

1:30pm - 4:20pm T

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Philosophical and Ethical Approaches to Religion

An in-depth study of the existentialist philosophies of, among others, Søren Kierkegaard, Simone Weil, Martin Heidegger, Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas. The course begins with a reading of Ecclesiastes and then focuses on the category of "existence" in its relation to time, revelation and eternity. The course also focuses on the existential meanings of different affective and cognitive states such as anxiety, boredom, and enjoyment as well as historical and individual suffering and trauma.

REL 320: Sympathy for the Devil: Satan in American Religious Thought from Contact to Q

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

Total Course Enrollment: 15

Professor(s): Seth A. Perry

1:30pm - 4:20pm Th

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Religion in America

Every story needs a villain. This seminar explores the figure of Satan and the concept of the demonic in American theology, history, and art over five centuries. Satan has always been about much more than theological notions of sin and transgression, serving as a tool for invoking perceived threats and for marginalizing political, racial, and cultural others. Some, on the other hand, have embraced the character of Satan to liberatory or comedic effect. Looking at sources both scholarly and artistic, we will attempt to assess the stakes of "demonic" rhetoric and take the measure of the most despised major player in American religious history.

REL 323 /EAS 358: Japanese Mythology

(CD or HA) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit

Total Course Enrollment: 15

Professor(s): Bryan D. Lowe

1:30pm - 4:20pm Th

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Religions of Asia**Satisfies Critical Approaches (CA) Requirement for Majors**

Myths are powerful. The stories we will read were first recorded around 1,300 years ago and continue to be told in the present day. We will ask why people -- both in Japan and humans more generally -- tell these types of tales. To answer this question, we will explore comparative approaches that search for universal patterns, myths as "ideology in narrative form" used as tools of legitimization, and appropriation of myths for new purposes in original contexts including feminist critiques.

REL 337 /NES 357 /GSS 448: Slavery, Sex and Empire in Muslim Societies

(HA) Graded no audit

Total Course Enrollment: 30

Professor(s): Shaun E. Marmon

11:00 m - 12:20pm TTh

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Islam

This course explores the theory and practice of slavery in Muslim societies from the 8th century up through the 20th. We use case studies; read primary sources in translation; explore the intersection of sex, gender and slavery; and try to recover the experiences of the enslaved. Who were the Islamic abolitionists? Why did many European colonial authorities actively perpetuate slavery? Why did legal slavery last until 1962 in Saudi Arabia? What is the legacy of slavery in Muslim societies? How are the formerly "invisible" descendants of African slaves in the Middle East advocating for recognition?

REL 356 /HIS 348: Black Religions in Slavery and Freedom

(SA) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit

Total Course Enrollment: 15

Professor(s): Nicole M. Turner

1:30pm - 4:20pm T

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Religion in America

This course explores how enslaved and free Black people created and sustained religious communities in the United States during the eras of slavery and freedom. It explores the resonances of African traditions and the roles of conjure, Islam and Christianity in sustaining Black people through slavery and postemancipation transformations. The course challenges the paradigm of Black religion as always pointing toward freedom and explores how the transition in status from enslaved to free was reflected in and influenced by Black religious practices and communities.

REL 395 /SAS 395: Tantric Religion in South Asia

(EM or HA) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit

Total Course Enrollment: 30

Professor(s): Guy T. St. Amant

11:00am - 12:20pm MW

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Religions of Asia

This course introduces students to the Tantric traditions of premodern India through a close study of the idealized religious careers of Tantric initiates. It uses primary sources (in translation) to reconstruct the milestones, practices, and experiences that defined what it meant to be a member of a Hindu or Buddhist Tantric community. We will consider especially the broader religious context, Tantric initiation, and post-initiatory rituals involving yogic exercises, sexual practices, and violent sorcery. Students will also gain an understanding of the relationship between Hindu and Buddhist forms of Tantric scripture and practice.

REL 397: How to Change the World: A Seminar on US Christianity and Social Movements

(SA) Graded na, npdf

Total Course Enrollment: 30

Professor(s): Lauren R. Kerby

11:00am - 12:20pm MW

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Religion in America

Have you ever wanted to change the world? So have lots of other people. In this course, we'll explore how American Christians have participated in social movements since the early 20th century, and we'll see how religion fits into their mobilization strategies. We'll focus on four case studies: the Catholic Worker movement; Black church women during the Civil Rights movement; the early Christian Right; and advocacy around HIV/AIDS and LGBTQ+ rights. This course centers ethnographic research methods in the study of religion, and students will learn skills such as data coding, participant observation, and qualitative interviewing.

REL 403: Philology and History of Jewish Sources

(HA) Graded na, npdf

Total Course Enrollment: 15

Professor(s): Moulie Vidas and Yaacob Dweck

1:30pm - 4:20pm Th

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Ancient Judaism, Christianity, and Greek and Roman Religions

This course offers to students with significant background in Jewish Studies orientation to the critical tools for studying the Jewish tradition and its development in multiple geographical and historical contexts. We begin with the Hebrew Bible, go through Rabbinic Literature, continue through Kabbalah and the Early Modern period. Knowledge of Hebrew and Aramaic and background in Bible and Talmud is necessary.

REL 415 /NES 415: Islamic Political Thought

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

Total Course Enrollment: 15

Professor(s): Muhammad Q. Zaman

1:30pm - 4:20pm M

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Islam

This seminar provides a survey of Islamic political thought from its beginnings in the 7th century to the present. What are the key debates in the history of Islamic political thought - on conceptions of government, on religion and politics, on power, on non-Muslims? How did political thought develop in various Arab, Iranian, and Indian contexts? What transformations has it undergone since the late 19th century? How does the legacy of political thought inform political and religious contestations among Muslims today? These are among the questions we will address in this seminar.

CROSS-LISTED:

AAS 314/COM 398/REL 303/AFS 321: Healing & Justice: The Virgin Mary in African Literature & Art

(CD or LA) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit

Total Course Enrollment: 15

Professor(s): Wendy Laura Belcher

1:30pm – 4:20pm F

The Virgin Mary is the world's most storied person. Countless tales have been told about the miracles she has performed for the faithful who call upon her. Although many assume that African literature was only oral, not written, until the arrival of Europeans, Africans began writing stories about her by 1200 CE in the languages of Ethiopic, Coptic, & Arabic. This course explores this body of medieval African literature and paintings, preserved in African Christian monasteries, studying their themes of healing, reparative justice, & personal ethics in a violent world. It develops skills in the digital humanities & comparative literary studies.

CHV 395/PHI 399/REL 396: Ethics of Eating

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

Total Course Enrollment: 19

Professor(s): Andrew Chignell

1:30pm – 4:20pm M

We are what we eat--morally as well as molecularly. So how should concerns about animals, workers, the environment, and the local inform our food choices? Can we develop viable foodways for growing populations while respecting ethnic, religious, class, and access differences? The goal of this course is not to prescribe answers to these questions, but to give students the tools required to reflect on them effectively. These tools include a knowledge of the main ethical theories in philosophy, and a grasp of key empirical issues regarding food production, distribution, and disposal. Includes guest lectures, instructor-led small-group sessions.

EGR 219/ENT 219/REL 219: Professional Responsibility & Ethics: Succeeding Without Selling Your Soul

(EM) Graded No Audit

Total Course Enrollment: 50

Professor(s): David Miller

11:00am – 11:50am TTH

The course objective is to equip future leaders to successfully identify and navigate ethical dilemmas in their careers. The course integrates theory and practice. Students will learn basic ethical theories and develop practical tools for personal and applied ethics in business, entrepreneurial, and broader marketplace contexts. The course focuses on and explores the role of religion and spirituality as a resource for ethical formation, frameworks, and decision-making. The class will explore weekly contemporary case studies, wider trends on faith and work, and include guest CEO visitors from different industry sectors and traditions.

HUM 339/REL 398/URB 339: Religion and the City

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

Total Course Enrollment: 12

Professor(s): Babak Manouchehrifar

1:30pm – 4:20pm M

This course introduces students to the socio-historical and political processes through which religion is represented, contested, and managed in the built environment. The course pays particular attention to the way that claims of religion implicate questions of diversity, difference, and justice in contemporary cities. Students will study the conceptual and historical debates on the role and place of religion in the public sphere and analyze empirical cases of how spatial decisions regulate or enable expressions of religious difference in urban settings.

HUM 470/CLA 470/REL 470: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities: Justice Then and Now

(EM) Graded na, npdf

Total Course Enrollment: 12

Professor(s): Joshua Billings and Moulie Vidas

1:30pm – 4:20pm T

This course examines ancient texts that have been central to modern conceptions of justice. We will analyze these texts in their own context, understanding both their own arguments and those that they criticize; look at how they have functioned to support different positions in the more recent past; and interrogate whether they should continue to have a role in shaping our notions of justice, and if so, what role that should be. The seminar will include discussions with justice-impacted individuals, as well as the potential for interested students to carry out a community-based project.

JDS 202/REL 202: Great Books of the Jewish Tradition

(HA) Graded No Audit

Total Course Enrollment: 20

Professor(s): Eve Krakowski

11:00am – 12:20pm MW

An introduction to some of the major works of Jewish thought and literature that survive from antiquity until the early modern era. We'll closely read a wide array of primary texts in translation, from the Hebrew Bible to Spinoza, discuss the worlds in which the people who produced them lived, and consider some of the ways in which they add up to an ongoing tradition across time and space - and some of the ways in which they don't. Students with reading knowledge of Hebrew and Aramaic are warmly encouraged to use them, but this is optional; nor prior knowledge of Judaism is required.

JDS 224/REL 217: The Power of Images in Late Antiquity: Jewish Art in Its Historical Contexts

(LA) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit

Total Course Enrollment: 15

Professor(s): Ra'anana Boustan

11:00am – 12:20pm TTH

This course explores the long and rich tradition of Jewish image making and the history of Jewish thought on the power of images in religious life, from the Hebrew Bible through the end of antiquity. We concentrate particularly on Jewish engagement with the visual cultures of the surrounding Greek, Roman, and Christian societies. In spring 2023, we will focus on the new archaeological discoveries in the Roman village of Huqoq in the Galilee, which have transformed our understanding of the place of art in Judaism. Students who take the course will have the opportunity to participate in the Huqoq Excavation Project in summer 2023.

POL 309/REL 309: Politics and Religion

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

Total Course Enrollment: No limit

Professor(s): Jan-Werner Müller

11:00am – 11:50am MW

We revisit some of the basic normative questions to do with religion and democratic politics: how can democratic polities be protected from religion, and how can religion be protected from politics? Might certain forms of democratic politics depend on religious sources? In particular, might liberal democracy actually "live off" religious sentiments in ways that many liberal theorists fail to acknowledge? Does even the religiously neutral state need a "civil religion" of some sort or other to preserve its moral foundations?

SAS 365/COM 399/REL 389: South Asian Utopias

(CD or EM) Graded na, npdf

Total Course Enrollment: 15

Professor(s): Staff

1:30pm – 4:20pm M

We live in uncertain times, marked by ever-escalating crises. It's no surprise that the moment has seen a revival of utopian thought: a casting about for radical solutions, a quest for dramatic reinvention. Historically, utopia has largely been seen as a Western construct. But what models -and by extension potential solutions- does the non-Western world offer? This course examines utopia from a South Asian perspective. Considering a range of examples (the nation state, Maoist revolution, environmental movements, intentional communities), it asks how change occurs, and what cautionary lessons history offers those seeking a more perfect world.

GRADUATE COURSES:

REL 505: Studies in Religion in America: African American Religious History

Graded */aud Total

Course Enrollment: 15

Professor(s): Nicole M. Turner

10:00am - 1:00pm Th

This course explores how histories of African American religions have produced enduring interpretive frames. Questions that animate this course include: What role have African American religions played in African American life? How have scholars studied the history of African American religions and shaped the discourse about African American religious life? The course considers African American religions and class, gender, racial identity formation, political engagement, cultural exchange and more. Through reading of foundational and newer texts, we will explore the sources and methodologies scholars use to study African American religion.

REL 507: Studies in Religion and Philosophy: Politics, History, and Providence

Graded */aud

Total Course Enrollment: 15

Professor(s): Eric S. Gregory

1:30pm - 4:20pm W

Developments in political philosophy, literature, and critical theory have led to revived interest in political theology, both as intellectual history and as transgressive resistance to "secular" ethics, historiography, and politics. This seminar examines these developments in relation to diverse streams of Jewish and Christian thought. This semester, the primary focus is the philosophy and theology of history. Topics include temporality, periodization, prophecy, covenant, apocalypticism, universal history, international order, political economy, race, climate change, redemption, teleology, hope, and the end of the world.

REL 509 /NES 510 /GSS 509: Studies in the History of Islam: Law and Society

Graded */aud

Total Course Enrollment: 10

Professor(s): Shaun E. Marmon

10:00am - 12:50pm W

How did Islamic law shape social interactions and social categories in Medieval Muslim societies? The 'ulama' were part of their own social/economic contexts. They engaged in commerce, owned property, bought, sold, and manumitted slaves, married and divorced and had children by wives and female slaves. How much influence did the elite 'ulama', the jurists who shaped Islamic law, have on the social and economic practices of both elites and of ordinary Muslims and non-Muslims? We make use of documents, legal texts, and some narrative sources. Students also work in Rare Books and Special Collections.

REL 517: Culture, Society and Religion Workshop

Graded */aud

Total Course Enrollment: 20

Professor(s): Jonathan C. Gold and Jenny Wiley Legath

12:00pm - 1:20pm M

Presentation and critical discussion of research in progress by participants, dealing with the study of religion in any field within the humanities and social sciences. Note: REL 517 (fall) and REL 517 (spring) constitute this year-long workshop. In order to receive credit, students must take the course both semesters.

REL 519: Religion and Critical Thought Workshop

Graded */aud

Total Course Enrollment: 15

Professor(s): Eric S. Gregory

10:00am - 11:30am Th

A weekly, year-long workshop focused on current student and faculty research in religion and critical thought, designed primarily for graduate students working on dissertations and general examination essays on the philosophy of religion, religious ethics, and the role of religion in politics. Note: REL 518 (fall) and REL 519 (spring) constitute this year-long workshop. In order to receive credit and/or a grade, students must take the course both semesters.

REL 524: Religion in the Americas Workshop

Graded */aud

Total Course Enrollment: 15

Professor(s): Seth A. Perry

3:00pm - 4:20pm Th

A weekly, year-long workshop focused on the current research of visiting presenters, current students, and faculty in American religious history. Designed primarily for Ph.D. students in the field, but is open as well to undergraduate concentrators with a strong background in the study of American religion and culture. Note: REL 523 (fall) and REL 524 (spring) constitute this year-long workshop. In order to receive credit and/or a grade, students must take the course both semesters.

REL 526: Religions of Late Antiquity Workshop

Graded */aud

Total Course Enrollment: 15

Professor(s): Lydia C. Bremer-McCollum

12:00pm - 1:30pm T

A weekly, year-long workshop providing students in the Religions of Late Antiquity with the opportunity to present their current research for discussion. Note: REL 525 (fall) and REL 526 (spring) constitute this year-long workshop. In order to receive credit and/or a grade, students must take the course both semesters.

REL 530: Workshop in Islamic Studies

Graded */aud

Total Course Enrollment: 10

Professor(s): Tehseen Thaver

11:00am - 12:30pm F

A weekly year-long Religion workshop focusing on the research and writing of graduate students, faculty, and visitors in Islamic Studies. This workshop provides a forum for presentation of works in progress: drafts of dissertation chapters, dissertation proposals, seminar papers, conference papers, articles and book chapters. All Islamic Studies graduate students are encouraged to participate as presenters and as commentators. The workshop fosters collegiality and professional development. Note: REL 529 (fall) and REL 530 (spring) constitute this year-long workshop. Students must take the course both semesters to receive credit/grade.

REL 557: Reading Coptic Texts

Graded */aud

Total Course Enrollment: 15

Professor(s): Lydia C. Bremer-McCollum

1:30pm - 2:50pm TTh

This course will serve as a continuation of REL 555: Intro to Coptic Language and Literature. The focus of this term will be on building Coptic reading competency. The class will focus on reading Coptic Nag Hammadi literature and will serve as a basic introduction to the generic and literary forms of this corpus. We will read texts both in English translation and prepare shorter selections of the Coptic for each session. Students will walk away from the course with stronger reading comprehension as well as a knowledge about the theologies, philosophies, and historical contexts of the ancient codices.

REL 583 /NES 551: Late Medieval-Early Modern Islam

Graded */aud

Total Course Enrollment: 10

Professor(s): Muhammad Q. Zaman

1:30pm - 4:20pm T

This seminar focuses on Islamic thought and society during the 17th and the 18th centuries. Our key concerns are two: to understand what Islam, and Islamic thought, looked like in the late medieval and the early modern world; and to think about how we should try to approach the study of Islam in that world. A good deal of our focus is on South Asia, though we also read about other regions, including Iran and the Arab Middle East. The required readings are in English. For those interested, some weeks might have supplementary readings in Arabic as well.

CROSS-LISTED:

NES 545/MED 545/REL 548/JDS 545: Problems in Near Eastern Jewish History: Jewish and Islamic Law

Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit

Course Enrollment: 10

Professor(s) Eve Krakowski

1:30pm – 4:20pm W

An introduction to medieval Near Eastern legal cultures that focuses on the intertwined development of Jewish and Islamic law from late antiquity until the twelfth century. We consider both legal writings such as codes and responsa and evidence for practices in state and communal courts. Geared both to students interested in legal history and to students interested in using legal texts and documents for general historical research.

For more detailed information on each course, please visit:

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