Religious Studies

Department Website: https://divinity.uchicago.edu/academics/undergraduate-program-religious-studies

PROGRAM OF STUDY

The program in Religious Studies introduces students to the academic study of religion. Students in Religious Studies learn how to think, talk, and write about religion in a way that is well-informed, rigorously critical, and responsibly engaged. The study of religion investigates the ways human societies construct practices, seek meanings, and pose questions about their world. These investigations may be constructive, cultural, and/or historical. Since it touches all facets of human experience, the study of religion is a crucial conversation partner with other fields of study and draws on the entire range of humanistic and social scientific disciplines. Students in the program can explore numerous religious traditions, including Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism, and are exposed to the sources, problems, methods, and methodologies of our diverse areas of study, including Biblical and Historical Studies; Ethics, Theology, and the Philosophy of Religions; as well as History of Religions, Anthropology, Sociology, and Religion and Literature. The interests of our students may be descriptive, explanatory, and/or normative.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Religious Studies majors have the option of pursuing one of two tracks: the Regular Track or the Research Track. Students in the Regular Track must take eleven courses for the major, including RLST 10100 Introduction to Religious Studies and at least one introductory-level ("Gateway") course. There is no order in which these courses need to be taken. Students in the Research Track will also complete these requirements; in addition, they will complete a BA thesis during two BA seminars: RLST 29800 BA Paper Seminar I and RLST 29900 BA Paper Seminar II. Students who wish to pursue the Research Track must officially declare their intention to do so with the Director of Undergraduate Studies by the end of Spring Quarter during their third year. Only students in the Research Track are eligible for departmental honors. Students double majoring may submit one research paper for both majors by submitting the proper form to the Director of Undergraduates Studies.

Students with permission to enroll in graduate Divinity courses may count these toward the major. Students who wish to receive credit in the major for non-departmental courses must submit a petition to the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Such requests are decided on a case-by-case basis. NOTE: The Office of the Dean of Students in the College must also approve the transfer of all courses taken at institutions other than those in which students are enrolled as part of a study abroad program that is sponsored by the University of Chicago. For more information, visit Transfer Credit (http://collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/thecollege/transfercredit/).

Introductory Course Requirement

Students in Religious Studies are required to take an introductory-level ("Gateway") course. It need not precede other course work in the major, but students are advised to have completed it by the end of their second year. Gateway courses include (but are not limited to) RLST 11004 Introduction to the Hebrew Bible, RLST 12000 Introduction to the New Testament: Texts and Contexts of Interpretation, and RLST 11030 Introduction to the Qur'an. An updated list of the Gateway courses offered each year may be found on the program’s website.

Course Distribution

Religion is expressed in many forms throughout the world's cultures, and the academic study of religion therefore requires multiple perspectives on its subject. Students of religion should have some knowledge of the historical development of specific religious traditions, understand and critically engage the ethical and intellectual teachings of various religions, and begin to make some comparative appraisals of the roles that religions play in different cultures and historical periods. To introduce students to these multiple perspectives on religion and to provide a sense of the field as a whole, students are required to take at least one course in two of the following areas. To identify the areas, refer to the RLST number range (see below).

A. Historical Studies in Religious Traditions: courses that explore the development of particular religious traditions, including their social practices, rituals, scriptures, and beliefs in historical context (RLST 11000 through 15000, 20000 through 22900).

B. Constructive Studies in Religion: courses that investigate constructive or normative questions about the nature and conduct of human life that are raised by religious traditions, including work in philosophy of religion, ethics, and theology (RLST 23000 through 25900).

C. Cultural Studies in Religion: courses that introduce issues in the social and cultural contingencies of religious thought and practice by emphasizing sociological, anthropological, and literary-critical perspectives on religion, and by raising comparative questions about differing religious and cultural traditions (RLST 26000 through 29900).

Senior Seminar and BA Paper

The two-quarter senior sequence (RLST 29800 BA Paper Seminar I and RLST 29900 BA Paper Seminar II) will assist students in the Research Track with the preparation of the required BA paper. During May of their
third year, students will work with the Director of Undergraduate Studies to choose a faculty adviser and a topic for research, and to plan a course of study for the following year. These must be approved by the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Students will take part in the BA Paper Seminar convened by a preceptor during Autumn and Winter Quarters. This seminar will allow students to prepare their bibliographies, hone their writing, and present their research. Students will register for RLST 29800 BA Paper Seminar I in the Autumn Quarter and for RLST 29900 BA Paper Seminar II in the Winter Quarter. The BA paper will be due the second week of Spring Quarter. The length is typically between thirty and forty pages, with the upward limit being firm.

This program may accept a BA paper or project used to satisfy the same requirement in another major if certain conditions are met and with the consent of the other program. The student will only have to take the BA Paper Seminars for one of the two majors. Approval from both departments is required. Students should consult with the departments by the earliest BA proposal deadline (or by the end of their third year, if neither program publishes a deadline). A consent form, to be signed by both departments, is available from the College adviser. It must be completed and returned to the College adviser by the end of Autumn Quarter of the student’s year of graduation.

**GRADING**

Religious Studies majors must receive quality grades in all courses in the major. With consent of instructor, nonmajors may take Religious Studies courses for P/F grading. Faculty will determine the criteria that constitute a Pass.

**HONORS**

Honors are awarded by the Divinity School’s Committee on Undergraduate Studies. Students who write senior papers deemed exceptional by their faculty advisers will be eligible for consideration for graduation with honors. Only students in the Research Track are eligible for honors. To be considered for honors, students in the Research Track must also have a 3.5 GPA or higher in the major and a 3.25 GPA or higher overall. Please see the program’s website for a full list of honors and awards.

**SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS**

**Regular Track**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RLST 10100</td>
<td>Introduction to Religious Studies</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One Introductory-level (“Gateway”) course</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At least two courses in three major areas (Historical, Constructive, Cultural Studies)</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seven additional courses in Religious Studies</td>
<td>700</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total Units</strong></td>
<td><strong>1100</strong></td>
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**Research Track**

<table>
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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seven additional courses in Religious Studies</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLST 29800</td>
<td>BA Paper Seminar I</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLST 29900</td>
<td>BA Paper Seminar II</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total Units</strong></td>
<td><strong>1300</strong></td>
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**MINOR PROGRAM IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

The minor in Religious Studies requires a total of six courses. RLST 10100 Introduction to Religious Studies is required of all minors.

The remaining five courses should be chosen to reflect a broad understanding of the academic study of religion. Of these six, students must take at least one course in two of our three areas of study [Historical Studies (A), Constructive Studies (B), and Cultural Studies (C)]. Courses in the minor may not be double-counted with the student’s major(s) or with other minors, and may not be counted toward general education requirements. Courses in the minor must be taken for quality grades, and more than half of the requirements for the minor must be met by registering for courses bearing University of Chicago course numbers.

The student must complete a substantial (at least 10–15 pages) paper or project. This work should engage critically with primary source materials and exemplify methodological sophistication in the study of religion, and should earn a grade no lower than B-. It is expected that this paper will normally be written as part of the student’s course work for the minor. The Director of Undergraduate Studies will approve the paper for fulfillment of this requirement.

Students who elect the minor program in Religious Studies must meet with the Director of Undergraduate Studies to declare their intention to complete the minor. Consent to Complete a Minor Program forms are

Sample Program
The following group of courses would satisfy a minor in Religious Studies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
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<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RLST 10100</td>
<td>Introduction to Religious Studies</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLST 11004</td>
<td>Introduction to the Hebrew Bible</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLST 22701</td>
<td>Religion and Society in Medieval Spain</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLST 26311</td>
<td>Islam and Biomedicine</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLST 27602</td>
<td>Religion, Gender and the State</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLST 28705</td>
<td>Christian Iconography</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Units</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>600</strong></td>
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**RELIGIOUS STUDIES COURSES**  

**RLST 10100. Introduction to Religious Studies. 100 Units.**

This course introduces students to the field of Religious Studies through addressing a foundational question: "What is religion?" We will approach this question from multiple angles. We will study the cults, codes, and creeds of a range of religions with reference both to their self-understandings and to modes of analysis (chiefly from the humanities and the social sciences) that concern themselves explicitly with religion. The scope of the course is in principle limitless: as old as the Vedas and the Epic of Gilgamesh and as recent as the front page of your preferred news source. The selections for the first five weeks will provide an overview of religions that have a global presence, and of theoretical perspectives that aspire to give a comprehensive account of religion. Each of the last four weeks will be a "case study" of a specific religion and its theorization that will be determined by the class from a list provided by the instructor. Three short (1-3 pp.) analytic essays (submitted on Fridays and returned the following Mondays) during the first five weeks will be followed by a final assignment synthesizing the material of the course. No prior knowledge of the religious traditions or the theoretical perspectives covered is expected.

*Instructor(s): Richard Rosengarten  
Terms Offered: Autumn  
Note(s): This is the required introductory course for RLST majors/minors.*  
*Equivalent Course(s): SOCI 20541*

**RLST 11004. Introduction to the Hebrew Bible. 100 Units.**

The course surveys the contents of the Hebrew Bible, through the concepts of book culture, literature, history, and religion. It introduces critical questions regarding the HB's figures and ideas, its literary qualities and anomalies, the history of its composition and transmission, its relation to other artifacts from the period, its place in the history and society of ancient Israel and Judea, and its relation to the larger culture of the ancient Near East in the Iron Age and Persian period (12th-4th cents. BCE).

*Instructor(s): Simeon Chavel  
Terms Offered: Autumn  
Note(s): This course meets the HS or LMCS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students. This course counts as a Gateway course for RLST majors/minors.  
Equivalent Course(s): BIBL 31000, JWSC 20120, NEHC 20504, NEHC 30504, HIJD 31004*

**RLST 11030. Introduction to the Qur'an. 100 Units.**

The Qur'an's historical setting, thematic and literary features, major biblical figures, and foundational narratives of the Quran. Explorations of medieval exegetical literature on the Quran and its reception in the early (8th-10th century CE) and medieval periods (11th - 15th century CE) will feature heavily in this course. Readings consist primarily of English translations of the Quran alongside a running commentary, as well as secondary articles.

*Instructor(s): Yousef Casewit  
Terms Offered: Winter  
Note(s): This course meets the HS or CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students. This course counts as a Gateway course for RLST majors/minors.  
Equivalent Course(s): MDVL 10030, NEHC 30030, ISLM 30030*

**RLST 12000. Introduction to the New Testament: Texts and Contexts of Interpretation. 100 Units.**

An immersion in the texts of the New Testament with the following goals: 1. through careful reading to come to know well some representative pieces of this literature; 2. to gain useful knowledge of the historical, geographical, social, religious, cultural and political contexts of these texts and the events they relate; 3. to learn the major literary genres represented in the canon (“gospels,” “acts,” “letters,” and “apocalypses”) and strategies for reading them; 4. to comprehend the various theological visions and cultural worldviews to which these texts give expression; 5. to situate oneself and one’s prevailing questions about this material in the history of research, and to reflect on the goals, contexts and methods of interpretation; 6. to become intelligent and critical “consumers” of biblical scholarship as it appears in academic and popular media; 7. to raise questions for further study.

*Instructor(s): Margaret Mitchell  
Terms Offered: Winter  
Prerequisite(s): Interest in this literature, and willingness to enter into conversation with like-minded and non-like-minded others on the texts and the issues involved in their interpretation.*
Religious Studies

Note(s): This course meets the HS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students. This course counts as a Gateway course for RLST majors/minors.
Equivalent Course(s): FNDL 28202, BIBL 32500, MDVL 12500

RLST 15100-15200-15300. Introductory Qur’anic Arabic I-II-III.
Introductory Qur’anic Arabic I-II-III

RLST 15100. Introductory Qur’anic Arabic I. 100 Units.
This course is the first in a 3-quarter sequence “Introduction to Qur’anic Arabic” (IQA), which aims to provide students with foundational philological and reading skills by covering the essentials of Qur’anic/Classical Arabic grammar. The 3 quarters of IQA are sequential, and students are strongly encouraged to join in the first quarter. Exceptions can be made on a case by case basis.
Instructor(s): graduate student instructor TBD Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Graduate and undergraduate students from any department are welcome to register. The absolute minimum prerequisite for IQA I is knowledge of the Arabic script. Training equivalent to at least a quarter of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is highly desirable. The IQA sequence is also open to students who may have had more exposure to Arabic (modern or classical) but wish to acquire a solid foundation in Arabic grammar, and/or students who feel they are not yet ready for third-year Arabic courses.
Equivalent Course(s): NELC 30100, ISLM 30100

RLST 15200. Introductory Qur’anic Arabic II. 100 Units.
This course is the second in a 3-quarter sequence “Introduction to Qur’anic Arabic” (IQA), which aims to provide students with foundational philological and reading skills by covering the essentials of Qur’anic/Classical Arabic grammar. This course also features readings of select passages from the Qur’an, Hadith and Tafsir. The 3 quarters of IQA are sequential, and students are strongly encouraged to join in the first quarter. Exceptions can be made on a case by case basis.
Instructor(s): graduate student instructor TBD Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Successful completion of Introductory Qur’anic Arabic I.
Equivalent Course(s): ISLM 30200, NELC 30200

RLST 15300. Introductory Qur’anic Arabic III. 100 Units.
This course is the third in a 3-quarter sequence “Introduction to Qur’anic Arabic” (IQA), which aims to provide students with foundational philological and reading skills by covering the essentials of Qur’anic/Classical Arabic grammar. This course also features readings of select passages from the Qur’an, Hadith and Tafsir. The 3 quarters of IQA are sequential, and students are strongly encouraged to join in the first quarter. Exceptions can be made on a case by case basis.
Instructor(s): graduate student instructor TBD Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Graduate and undergraduate students from any department are welcome to register. The minimum prerequisite for IQA III is the successful completion of IQA II or equivalent training. The IQA sequence is also open to students who may have had more exposure to Arabic (modern or classical) but wish to acquire a solid foundation in Arabic grammar, and/or students who feel they are not yet ready for third-year Arabic courses.
Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 30300, ISLM 30300

RLST 17700. Advanced Readings in Classical Ethiopic (Ge’ez) 100 Units.
In this course we will read excerpts from literature written in Classical Ethiopic (Ge’ez), such as Enoch, Jubilees, Kebra Nagast, Beauty of Creation, and others, and review some basic grammatical structures of the language. Students will need a good grasp of the basic grammar of Ge’ez in order to take the class.
Instructor(s): Rebecca Hasselbach-Andee Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Elementary Geez 1-3 or equivalent
Equivalent Course(s): GEEZ 30700, LING 32700, LING 22700, BIBL 30700, GEEZ 20700

RLST 20113. Heaven, Hell, and Life After Death. 100 Units.
What happens after people die? Nothing at all? Does the same thing happen to everyone after death, or is there some form of postmortem reward and punishment? If heaven exists, what is heaven like? How do beliefs about life after death influence behavior in this life? This course engages with these questions as we explore the development and diversity of afterlife beliefs in Judaism and Christianity, from antiquity to the present day. We will pay special attention to the various functions of afterlife beliefs at different points in history, including in our contemporary society. Is Marx correct that belief in heaven and eternal life legitimizes the social order and contributes to oppression on earth? Conversely, does the idea of postmortem rewards and punishments actually contribute to a more just society by motivating individuals to strive to live virtuously? By the end of the course, students will not only be familiar with Jewish and Christian conceptions of the afterlife, but also conversant in perspectives on postmortem existence found in classical philosophy that continue to inform how we think about death in the contemporary world. There are no prerequisites.
Instructor(s): Christine R. Trotter Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): JWSC 20113, CLCV 20122

RLST 20201-20202-20203. Islamicate Civilization I-II-III.
Islamic Civilzation I-II-III
RLST 20201. Islamicate Civilization I: 600-950. 100 Units.
This course covers the rise and spread of Islam, the Islamic empire under the Umayyad and early Abbasid caliphs, and the emergence of regional Islamic states from Afghanistan and eastern Iran to North Africa and Spain. The main focus will be on political, economic and social history.
Instructor(s): Ahmed El Shamsy Terms Offered: Autumn. This course will not be offered for the 2021-2022 academic year.
Note(s): The Islamicate Civilization sequence does not fulfill the General Ed requirements
Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 20201, HIST 15611, HIST 35621, NEHC 30201, ISLM 30201, MDVL 20201

RLST 20202. Islamicate Civilization II: 950-1750. 100 Units.
This course, a continuation of Islamicate Civilization I, surveys intellectual, cultural, religious and political developments in the Islamic world from Andalusia to the South Asian sub-continent during the periods from ca. 950 to 1750. We trace the arrival and incorporation of the Steppe Peoples (Turks and Mongols) into the central Islamic lands; the splintering of the Abbasid Caliphate and the impact on political theory; the flowering of literature of Arabic, Turkic and Persian expression; the evolution of religious and legal scholarship and devotional life; transformations in the intellectual and philosophical traditions; the emergence of Shi‘a states (Buyids and Fatimids); the Crusades and Mongol conquests; the Mamluks and Timurids, and the "gunpowder empires" of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Moghuls; the dynamics of gender and class relations; etc. This class partially fulfills the requirement for MA students in CMES, as well as for NELC majors and PhD students.
Instructor(s): Franklin Lewis Terms Offered: Winter. This course will not be offered for the 2021-2022 academic year.
Prerequisite(s): Islamicate Civilization I (NEHC 20201) or Islamic Thought & Literature-1 (NEHC 20601), or the equivalent
Note(s): The Islamicate Civilization sequence does not fulfill the General Ed requirements
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 35622, ISLM 30202, HIST 15612, MDVL 20202, NEHC 20202, NEHC 30202

RLST 20203. Islamicate Civilization III: 1750-Present. 100 Units.
This course covers the period from ca. 1750 to the present, focusing on Western military, economic, and ideological encroachment; the impact of such ideas as nationalism and liberalism; efforts at reform in the Islamic states; the emergence of the "modern" Middle East after World War I; the struggle for liberation from Western colonial and imperial control; the Middle Eastern states in the cold war era; and local and regional conflicts.
Instructor(s): Carl Shook Terms Offered: Spring. This course will not be offered for the 2021-2022 academic year.
Prerequisite(s): Islamicate Civilization II (NEHC 20202) or Islamic Thought & Literature-2 (NEHC 20602), or the equivalent
Note(s): The Islamicate Civilization sequence does not fulfill the General Ed requirements
Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 30203, HIST 15613, ISLM 30203, HIST 35623, NEHC 20203

RLST 20210. Greek and Near Eastern Creation Stories. 100 Units.
This course will offer a comparative view of Greek traditions about the origin of the world (cosmogony) and the origin of the gods (theogony), and the multiple layers on which they were entangled with Near Eastern narratives. On the Greek side, we will focus on Hesiod, Homer, and the Orphic poems. Near Eastern sources will include Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Hittite, Phoenician, and Hebrew texts. The reading of primary sources will be done in translation (though students are always encouraged to check the texts in the original language for closer reading and discussion, if training allows). We will engage with secondary bibliography, especially works that take a comparative approach or discuss the comparative method. We will discuss the methodological challenges and advantages of comparative mythology and the phenomenon of cultural exchange, as revealed in these mythical and literary connection.
Instructor(s): Carolina López-Ruiz Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 20210, CLCV 20222

RLST 20401-20402-20403. Islamic Thought and Literature I-II-III.
This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies. Taking these courses in sequence is recommended but not required.

RLST 20401. Islamic Thought and Literature I. 100 Units.
This sequence explores the thought and literature of the Islamic world from the coming of Islam in the seventh century C.E. through the development and spread of its civilization in the medieval period and into the modern world. Including historical framework to establish chronology and geography, the course focuses on key aspects of Islamic intellectual history: scripture, law, theology, philosophy, literature, mysticism, political thought, historical writing, and archaeology. In addition to lectures and secondary background readings, students read and discuss samples of key primary texts, with a view to exploring Islamic civilization in the direct voices of the people who participated in creating it. All readings are in English translation. No prior background in the subject is required. This course sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies.
Instructor(s): Flowers, Adam Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): MDVL 20601, SOSC 22000, HIST 25610, NEHC 20601
RLST 20402. Islamic Thought and Literature II. 100 Units.
This course covers the period from ca. 950 to 1700, surveying works of literature, theology, philosophy, sufism, politics, history, etc., written in Arabic, Persian and Turkish, as well as the art, architecture and music of the Islamicate traditions. Through primary texts, secondary sources and lectures, we will trace the cultural, social, religious, political and institutional evolution through the period of the Fatimids, the Crusades, the Mongol invasions, and the “gunpowder empires” (Ottomans, Safavids, Mughals).
Instructor(s): Ahmed El Shamsy Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): Taking these courses in sequence is recommended but not required. This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies.
Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 20602, HIST 25615, MDVL 20602, SOSC 22100

RLST 20403. Islamic Thought and Literature III. 100 Units.
This course covers the period from ca. 1700 to the present. It explores Muslim intellectuals’ engagement with tradition and modernity in the realms of religion, politics, literature, and law. We discuss debates concerning the role of religion in a modern society; perceptions of Europe and European influence, the challenges of maintaining religious and cultural authenticity, and Muslim views of nation-states and nationalism in the Middle East. We also give consideration to the modern developments of transnational jihadism and the Arab Spring. This course sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies.
Instructor(s): Orit Bashkin Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 20603, SOSC 22200, HIST 25616

RLST 20410. Introduction to Islamic Studies. 100 Units.
This course is designed for graduate students who wish to learn the tools, primary and secondary sources, references, journals, distinct subfields, and electronic resources available to researchers in Arabic and Islamic Studies. We will acquire first-hand knowledge and practice of basic skills that will help professionalize students in the field, and will discuss methodological and historiographical issues related to the study of Islamicate civilization in various historical, cultural, political, and religious frameworks.
Instructor(s): Yousef Casewit Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Basic ability to work with Classical Arabic.
Note(s): This course meets the HS or CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): ARAB 40010, ISLM 40010

RLST 20444. God, Self, Nation, and Revolution in East European Jewish Life and Thought, 1850-1939. 100 Units.
The course covers the history of the Jewish encounter with modernity on the fractured political, cultural, & social terrain of Eastern Europe. Modern Eastern European Jews collectively generated many of the modern forms of Jewish identity, politics, culture, & religion-Hasidism & ultra-Orthodoxy, Zionism & Jewish nationalism, & Jewish socialism-while individually forging an array of syntheses, hybrids, & even negations of Jewishness in relation to the unprecedented political, cultural, & social dilemmas of Eastern European life. Key foci include religious & cultural transformations within Jewish life from the late 18th c, which gave birth to Hasidism, Orthodoxy, & a Jewish Enlightenment movement; the 19th-c encounter with the invasive reformism of the Russian & Austro-Hungarian empires & later 20th-c ethnonationalisms; the recasting of everyday life & identity in relation to imperial interventions, changing cultural norms vis-à-vis authority, tradition, & gender, & dramatic social & economic transformations in late 19th-c Eastern Europe; the formation of modern Jewish nationalism; encounters between Jews & East European socialism & social radicalism; the development of a secular Jewish cultural sphere & an opposing Orthodox counterculture locked in conflict with each other, with rampant assimilation, & with new kinds of popular culture; relations between Jews & the other peoples & cultures of Eastern Europe; Jewish prospects & predicaments in the postimperial nation-state.
Instructor(s): K. Moss Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): REES 24000, REES 34000, HIJD 34000, HIST 24000, HIST 34000, JWSC 24000

RLST 20502. Rebels of the Ottoman Empire. 100 Units.
This course introduces students to the role of faith and ritual in the history of rebellion and resistance in the Ottoman Empire throughout the early modern and modern periods. From peasant rebellions to urban uprisings, from heretical movements to nationalist struggles, the course examines how the various communities of the empire used their faith to resist structures of power, be they bureaucratic, religious, social, or political. In doing so, we will learn about the context in which these events occurred and encounter the people who led and made up these movements- women and men, mystics and soldiers, farmers and artisans, teachers and journalists. We will trace the changes that occurred to the nature of resistance across time and space. Whether it was through swords and muskets on the street of Istanbul and Cairo, or through print journalism and secret meetings in Beirut and Damascus, the course will also examine the effect that technological advancements had on these movements.
Instructor(s): Staff Terms Offered: Spring

RLST 20505. Pagans and Christians: Greek Background to Early Christianity. 100 Units.
This course will examine some of the ancient Greek roots of early Christianity. We will focus on affinities between Christianity and the classical tradition as well as ways in which the Christian faith may be considered radically different from it. Some of the more important issues that we will analyze are: “The spell of Homer.” How the Homeric poems exerted immeasurable influence on the religious attitudes and practices of the Greeks. The theme
of creation in Greek and Roman authors such as Hesiod and Ovid. The Orphic account of human origins. The early Christian theme of Christ as Creator/Savior. Greek, specifically Homeric conceptions of the afterlife. The response to the Homeric orientation in the form of the great mystery cults of Demeter, Dionysus, and Orpheus. The views of the philosophers (esp. Plato) of the immortality of the soul compared with the New Testament conception of resurrection of the body. Ancient Greek conceptions of sacrifice and the crucifixion of Christ as archetypal sacrifice. The attempted synthesis of Jewish and Greek philosophic thought by Philo of Alexandria and its importance for early Christianity.

Instructor(s): David Martinez
Equivalent Course(s): CLCV 26216, MDVL 20505

RLST 20668. Introduction to Aggadic Literature of the Rabbinic Period. 100 Units.
We will make acquaintance with midrash, the idiosyncratic rabbinic method of textual interpretation of the Bible, concentrating on midrash aggadah, which deals with non-legal material (biblical narrative and ethical teachings). We will deal with questions of interpretation (how did the rabbis interpret the biblical text?), relevancy (in what ways did they view the ancient text as relevant to their lives?), and literature (an appreciation of the literary aspects and genres of midrash aggadah). Rabbinic readings will be compared with biblical interpretations of the Second Temple period (in Philo, Josephus, Apocrypha, and the Dead Sea Scrolls). Texts will be read in the original Hebrew and Aramaic with English translation.

Instructor(s): Paul Mandel (visiting professor) Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Basic reading skills in biblical Hebrew desirable.
Note(s): This course meets the HS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): BIBL 30668, HIJD 30668, JWSC 20668

RLST 20904. Introduction to Jainism. 100 Units.
Jainism has long been on the margins of Religious Studies, little known beyond its otherworldly emphasis on extreme forms of asceticism, nonviolence, and vegetarianism. This course seeks to expand this popular understanding of Jainism by posing a question: What does it mean to be a Jain in the world when the Jain religion is fundamentally otherworldly in its orientation? By reading ethnographies and historical studies alongside primary sources, this course will introduce students to Jainism as an enduring lived religion whose meaning and practice has changed over time, across regions, between sectarian communities, and in conversation with Buddhism and Hinduism. By the end of the quarter, students can expect to understand Jainism as a minor religion with a major impact.

Instructor(s): Sarah Pierce Taylor Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): This course counts as a Gateway course for RLST majors/minors.
Equivalent Course(s): SALC 20910, GLST 20994

RLST 21303. Christianity and Slavery in America, 1619-1865. 100 Units.
This seminar will examine the relationship between Christian thought and the practice of slavery as they evolved historically, especially in the context of European enslavement of peoples of African descent in the colonies of British North America and in the antebellum South. Emphasis will be placed on the ways in which Christianity functioned as an ideological justification of the institution of slavery and an amelioration of practices deemed abusive within slave societies. The following questions will be addressed in some form: Why did some Christians oppose slavery at a specific time and in a particular historical context? In other words, why did slavery become a moral problem for an influential though minority segment of the United States by the early 19th century? What was the process by which and why did white evangelical Christians, especially in the South, become the most prominent defenders of slavery as it was increasingly confined to the South? What were some of the consequences of debates about slavery in regard to efforts to engage broader social reform? What role did race play in the historical development of slavery? How did people of African descent shape and practice Christianity in British North America and the Southern States of the United States? Although our focus is on what became the United States of America, we also linger on discussions about the broader international dimensions of slavery and slavery's importance in the development of the Americas.

Instructor(s): Curtis Evans Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): This course meets the HS or SCSR Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): KNOW 42901, RAME 42901, CRES 21303, HCHR 42901, HIST 47102

RLST 21440. Fundamentalism. 100 Units.
Is fundamentalism a useful term that allows us to compare anti-modern movements across a range of religious traditions? Or is it a hopelessly problematic term that lumps together vastly different phenomena? This course will use the troubled career of “fundamentalism” as a window onto the modern history of religion—and the people who study it. We will begin by focusing on the origins of fundamentalism: as a description of the political mobilization of conservative Protestants in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century. From there, we will broaden our perspective, considering how the term “fundamentalist” has been applied to Islamic, Jewish, and Hindu movements, as well as to secular phenomena like Marxism and nationalism. At each step of the way we will consider not only “fundamentalism” itself but also the people who study it and those who mobilize against it. Ultimately, we will ask: is fundamentalism an idea whose time has come again, or one whose time has come and gone?

Instructor(s): William Schultz Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): This course meets the HS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 28006, HIST 38006, AASR 41440, RAME 41440, HCHR 41440

RLST 21450. Coptic Bible. 100 Units.  
The Coptic versions of the Bible present one of the earliest translations of Christian scripture as the new religion spread. Understanding how the Bible (canonical and non-canonical) was read and used in Egypt at this early stage implies studying the development of Christian communities in those agitated times, as well as paying attention to questions of literacy and linguistic environment, book production, Bible (both Greek and Coptic) on papyrus, and translation and interpretation in Antiquity. The course will draw on materials assembled from my work on the critical edition of the Gospel of Mark, but will also look into other materials like the Coptic Old Testament, and non-canonical scriptures such as Nag Hammadi and the Gnostic scriptures. No previous knowledge of Coptic is required. A brief introduction to the Coptic language will be part of the class, and parallel sessions of additional language instruction will be planned for those who are interested in learning more.  
Instructor(s): S. Torallas  
Terms Offered: Autumn. This course meets the HS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.  
Equivalent Course(s): BIBL 31418, CLCV 24118, MDVL 24118, CLAS 34118, NEHC 24118, NEHC 34118

RLST 21780. Poetry of the Hebrew Bible. 100 Units.  
The course will survey poetic genres of the Hebrew Bible, their elements and tropes, scholarship on biblical poetry specifically, and approaches to poetry in general.  
Prerequisite(s): PQ: Introductory Biblical Hebrew I–III (BIBL 33900–34000 + Text course) or equivalent.  
Instructor(s): Simeon Chavel  
Terms Offered: Winter

Note(s): This course meets the HS or LMCS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.

Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 21780, NEHC 41780, BIBL 41780, HIJD 41780

RLST 21865. Zion and Zaphon: Biblical Texts from Seventh Century BCE Judah. 100 Units.  
A reading course of biblical Hebrew covering multiple genres. Texts are selected around the theme of responses to the dramatic events of the 8th cent. BCE, when the Assyrian empire dissolved the Israelian kingdom and attacked the Judean. The course explores the concepts of history and historiography, memory, intertextuality, and political allegory as modes of literary composition and methods of historical interpretation.  
Prerequisite(s): Introductory Biblical Hebrew sequence (BIBL 33900–34000 + Text course) or equivalent.  
Instructor(s): Simeon Chavel  
Terms Offered: Autumn

Note(s): This course meets the HS or LMCS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.

Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 21865, HIJD 44600, NEHC 44600, KNOW 44600, BIBL 44600

RLST 21909. Stoics and Epicureans. 100 Units.  
Stoicism and Epicureanism became two major strands of philosophy after Aristotle and attracted many followers. They were fundamentally opposed. The Stoics believed in an immanent deity who issued moral laws to humans. They were also the first to develop a robust theory of cosmopolitanism and natural law. The Epicureans rejected divine governance, leaving it up to humans to achieve their own happiness by following the goal of pleasure. Much derided as hedonists, they sought to purify the quest for pleasure by understanding the height of pleasure as the absence of pain. Surprisingly, both groups discovered in time that had something in common. This course will examine their differences and interactions in Greek and Roman antiquity, as well as trace the impact of both philosophies in modern times.  
Prerequisite(s): Introductory Biblical Hebrew sequence (BIBL 33900–34000 + Text course) or equivalent.  
Instructor(s): E. Asmis  
Terms Offered: Spring

Note(s): This course meets the HS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.

Equivalent Course(s): CLAS 33909, FNDL 25332, BIBL 33909, CLCV 23909

RLST 22010-22011-22012. Jewish Civilization I-II-III.  
Jewish Civilization is a three-quarter sequence that explores the development of Jewish culture and tradition from its ancient beginnings through its rabbinic and medieval transformations to its modern manifestations. Through investigation of primary texts—biblical, Talmudic, philosophical, mystical, historical, documentary, and literary—students will acquire a broad overview of Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness while reflecting in greater depth on major themes, ideas, and events in Jewish history. The Autumn course will deal with antiquity to the medieval period; the Winter course will begin with the early modern period and continue to the present. The Spring course will vary as to special topic; for the Spring course to count towards the general education requirement in civilization studies, the student must also take the Autumn and Winter courses. Note: Jewish Studies revised its civilization studies courses in academic year 2018–19. Students who began the requirement prior to Autumn Quarter 2018 under the previous course options, may complete it with those courses that remain available, or (with prior approval from the JWSC director of undergraduate studies) they may combine them with the new course options, provided that they fulfill the requirement to take one JWSC course in the ancient or medieval period and one in the modern period. Only students who have taken JWSC courses prior to academic year 2018–19 are eligible to complete the program under the prior system.

Instructor(s): S. Torallas  
Terms Offered: Autumn. This course meets the HS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.

Equivalent Course(s): CLAS 33909, FNDL 25332, BIBL 33909, CLCV 23909

RLST 22100. Comp 100 Units.

Note(s): This course meets the HS or LMCS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.

Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 21865, HIJD 44600, NEHC 44600, KNOW 44600, BIBL 44600

Instructor(s): E. Asmis  
Terms Offered: Spring

Note(s): This course meets the HS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.

Equivalent Course(s): CLAS 33909, FNDL 25332, BIBL 33909, CLCV 23909

RLST 22010. Jewish Civilization I: Ancient Beginnings to Medieval Period. 100 Units.  
Jewish Civilization is a three-quarter sequence that explores the development of Jewish culture and tradition from its ancient beginnings through its rabbinic and medieval transformations to its modern manifestations. Through investigation of primary texts—biblical, Talmudic, philosophical, mystical, historical, documentary, and literary—students will acquire a broad overview of Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness while reflecting in greater depth on major themes, ideas, and events in Jewish history. The autumn course will deal with antiquity through the Middle Ages. Its readings will include material from the Bible and writings from the second temple, Hellenistic, rabbinic, and medieval periods. All sections of this course will share a common
core of readings; individual instructors will supplement with other materials. It is recommended, though not required, that students take the three Jewish Civilization courses in sequence. Students who register for the Autumn Quarter course will automatically be pre-registered for the winter segment. In the Spring Quarter students have the option of taking a third unit of Jewish Civilization, a course whose topics will vary (JWSC 1200X).

Instructor(s): James Robinson David Barak-Gorodetsky Bevin Blaber Terms Offered: Autumn Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 22010, JWSC 12000, MDVL 12000

RLST 22011. Jewish Civilization II: Early Modern Period to 21st Century. 100 Units.
Jewish Civilization is a three-quarter sequence that explores the development of Jewish culture and tradition from its ancient beginnings through its rabbinic and seminal transformations to its modern manifestations. Through investigation of primary texts-biblical, Talmudic, philosophical, mystical, historical, documentary, and literary-students will acquire a broad overview of Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness while reflecting in greater depth on major themes, ideas, and events in Jewish history. The Winter course will begin with the early modern period and continue to the present. It will include discussions of mysticism, the works of Spinoza and Mendelssohn, the nineteenth-century reform, the Holocaust and its reflection in writers such as Primo Levi and Paul Celan, and literary pieces from postwar American Jewish and Israeli authors. All sections of this course will share a common core of readings; individual instructors will supplement with other materials. It is recommended, though not required, that students take the three Jewish Civilization courses in sequence. Students who register for the Autumn Quarter course will automatically be pre-registered for the winter segment. In the Spring Quarter students have the option of taking a third unit of Jewish Civilization, a course whose topics will vary (JWSC 1200X).

Instructor(s): Kenneth Moss Jessica Kirzane Yiftach Ofek Terms Offered: Winter Equivalent Course(s): JWSC 12001, NEHC 22011, HIST 11702

RLST 22012. Jewish Civilization III: Language, Creation, and Translation in Jewish Thought and Literature. 100 Units.
Jewish Civilization is a three-quarter sequence that explores the development of Jewish culture and tradition from its ancient beginnings through its rabbincic and medieval transformations to its modern manifestations. Through investigation of primary texts-biblical, Talmudic, philosophical, mystical, historical, documentary, and literary-students will acquire a broad overview of Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness while reflecting in greater depth on major themes, ideas, and events in Jewish history. The Spring course in 2021 will start with two stories from Genesis-the creation story and the story of the Tower of Babel in chapter 11-and consider the intertwined dynamics of language, creation, and translation in Jewish thought and literature. In addition to commentaries on both of these key texts, we will read philosophical and literary texts that illuminate the workings of language as a creative force and the dynamics of multilingualism and translation in the creation of Jewish culture. Through this lens, we will consider topics such as gender and sexuality, Jewish national identity, Zionism, the revival of the Hebrew language, Jewish responses to the Holocaust, and contemporary American Jewish culture.

Instructor(s): Na’ama Rokem Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): Students who wish to take this course for Civilization Studies credit, must also take Jewish Civilization I and II. The course may also be taken as an independent elective.
Equivalent Course(s): JWSC 12003, CMLT 12003, NEHC 12003

RLST 22013. Jewish Civilization III - Mothers and Motherhood in Modern Jewish Culture. 100 Units.
Jewish Civilization is a three-quarter sequence that explores the development of Jewish culture and tradition from its ancient beginnings through its rabbincic and medieval transformations to its modern manifestations. Through investigation of primary texts-biblical, Talmudic, philosophical, mystical, historical, documentary, and literary-students will acquire a broad overview of Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness while reflecting in greater depth on major themes, ideas, and events in Jewish history. The Spring course in 2022 will focus on mothers and motherhood in modern Jewish culture. From sentimentalized keepers of Jewish tradition to objects of ridicule burdened by stereotypes of overbearing, guilt-inducing behavior, Jewish mothers hold a prominent role in Jewish self-representations. Writing alongside or against these stereotypes, Jewish mothers themselves have struggled with the obligations and expectations of Jewish motherhood. Engaging with a variety of literary, theological, historical, and pop culture texts, this class explores Jewish feminisms in relation to motherhood, Jewish fictions of motherhood, and the role of motherhood in Jewish religious life and thought. This course includes material from a variety of different contexts for modern Jewish life, but places particular emphasis on American Jewish history and culture.

Instructor(s): Jessica Kirzane Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): Students who wish to take this course for Civilization Studies credit, must also take Jewish Civilization I and II. The course may also be taken as an independent elective.
Equivalent Course(s): GNSE 16004, JWSC 12004

RLST 22014. Jewish Civilization III - Narratives of Assimilation. 100 Units.
This course offers a survey into the manifold strategies of representing the Jewish community in East Central Europe beginning from the nineteenth century to the Holocaust. Engaging the concept of liminality—of a society at the threshold of radical transformation—it will analyze Jewry facing uncertainties and challenges of the modern era and its radical changes. Students will be acquainted with problems of cultural and linguistic isolation, hybrid identity, assimilation, and cultural transmission through a wide array of genres-novel, short story, epic poem,
Religious Studies

memorandum, painting, illustration, film. The course draws on both Jewish and Polish-Jewish sources; all texts are read in English translation.

Instructor(s): Bozena Shallcross Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): REES 27005, JWSC 12005, NEHC 12005

RLST 22015. Jewish Spaces and Places, Imagined and Real. 100 Units.
What makes a ghetto, a ghetto? What determines a Jewish neighborhood? What determined the architectural form of synagogues? Making extensive use of Jewish law and customary practice, cookbooks, etiquette guides, prints, films, novels, maps, memoirs, architectural drawings and photographs, and tourist guides, this course will analyze how Jews (in all their diversity) and non-Jews defined Jewish spaces and places. The focus will be on Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries, but we will also venture back into the early modern period and across the Mediterranean to Palestine/Israel and North Africa and the Atlantic to the Caribbean and the Americas. We will study both actually existing structures-synagogues, ritual baths, schools, kosher (and kosher-style) butcher shops, bakeries and restaurants, social and political clubs, hospitals, orphanages, old age homes, museums and memorials—but also texts and visual culture in which Jewish places and spaces are imagined or vilified. Parallel to our work with primary sources we will read in the recent, very rich, scholarly literature on this topic. This is not a survey course; we will undertake a series of intensive case-studies through which we will address the larger issues. This is a limited-enrollment, discussion-based course in which both undergraduates and graduate students are welcome. No previous knowledge of Jewish history is expected.

Instructor(s): Leora Auslander Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): In order for a Spring course to qualify as a civilization course for the general education requirement, the student must also take Jewish Civilization I and II. A Spring course, however, may also be taken as an independent elective.
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 11703, JWSC 12006

RLST 22110. Enlightenments: England & America. 100 Units.
Study in the historiographies of the Enlightenment in England and in America, with special attention to the “trans-Atlantic” communication of ideas regarding the nature of the person, religion, and the role of the political order.

Instructor(s): Richard Rosengarten Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): This course meets the HS or LMCS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): RLVC 42100, HCHR 42200, RAME 42100

RLST 22308. Phoenician Religion (In Their Own Words And Those of Their Neighbors) 100 Units.
The Phoenicians were a Canaanite people who maintained their language, religion, and culture until Roman times. One of the main challenges facing the study of the Phoenician religion (and culture in general) is that most of their literature is lost. This course gathers together a variety of emic sources in the Phoenicians’ own language or stemming from the Phoenician realm but written in Greek or Latin, as well as sources written by others about the Phoenicians, with a special focus on cult and religious identity. The texts we will read and discuss range from royal, votive, and funerary inscriptions, to the views about the Phoenicians in the Hebrew Bible, and Greek and Roman writers. This course is partly a text-based, reading course, and partly a thematic, culture course.

Instructor(s): Carolina López-Ruiz Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Intermediate knowledge (2 years) of a Semitic language (e.g., Hebrew, Phoenician, Aramaic, Ugaritic, Arabic) OR of ancient Greek and/or Latin.
Note(s): This course meets the HS or LMCS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 42308, CLCV 22322, CLAS 32322, NEHC 22308, HREL 42308

RLST 22801. African American Religions. 100 Units.
This course will explore major themes and movements in the history of African American religions from the era of slavery to the late twentieth century. The course will introduce students to key topics, traditions, and figures in African American religious history, and it will also open out to consider topics in this history that pique student interest. The scope of the course will be national, but there will also be opportunities throughout the quarter to focus on local histories of African American religious groups in Chicago, allowing students to engage with archives of African American religion throughout the city. No prior experience with religious studies is necessary; however, prior knowledge of critical race and ethnic studies is recommended.

Instructor(s): Joel Brown
Equivalent Course(s): CRES 27553

RLST 22810. Hinduism of the Living and the Dead. 100 Units.
An introduction to Hinduism through the lens of everyday life, including popular shrines, roadside religion, ghost stories, digital representation, and traditions of the South Asian diaspora.

Instructor(s): Anand Venkatkrishnan Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): SALC 22810

RLST 23001. Confucian Philosophy and Spirituality. 100 Units.
The goal of this course is to introduce you to the central themes and texts of classical Confucian and Neo-Confucian traditions, both as philosophical works to be evaluated and digested for their doctrinal content and as literary artifacts from a perhaps unfamiliar cultural sphere. This will call for the development of two distinct but related sets of skills, namely, the ability to think through and comprehend philosophical arguments and ideas, and the equally crucial ability to reflect on one’s own assumptions as they come into play in one’s reaction to
and evaluation of those ideas. Readings will include, from the classical period, the Four Books (Great Learning, Doctrine of the Mean, Analects of Confucius, Mencius), Xunzi, the Book of Changes, and from Sung-Ming Neo-Confucian writings of Zhou Dunyi, Zhang Zai, the Cheng Brothers, Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming.

Instructor(s): Brook Ziporyn Terms Offered: Autumn

Note(s): This course meets the HS or CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): RLST 23201, DVPR 33001, HREL 33001, EALC 33201

RLST 23150. Capitalism and Doing Good? 100 Units.
This class asks the question: is it possible to believe in capitalism (i.e., the private ownership of wealth) and do good for society? Restated, are there values that can accompany capital accumulation for positive social impact on people and the environment?
Instructor(s): Dwight Hopkins Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): GLST 23150

RLST 23201. Confucian Philosophy and Spirituality. 100 Units.
The goal of this course is to introduce you to the central themes and texts of classical Confucian and Neo-Confucian traditions, both as philosophical works to be evaluated and digested for their doctrinal content and as literary artifacts from a perhaps unfamiliar cultural sphere. This will call for the development of two distinct but related sets of skills, namely, the ability to think through and comprehend philosophical arguments and ideas, and the equally crucial ability to reflect on one’s own assumptions as they come into play in one’s reaction to and evaluation of those ideas. Readings will include, from the classical period, the Four Books (Great Learning, Doctrine of the Mean, Analects of Confucius, Mencius), Xunzi, the Book of Changes, and from Sung-Ming Neo-Confucian writings of Zhou Dunyi, Zhang Zai, the Cheng Brothers, Zhu Xi and Wang Yangmeng.
Instructor(s): Brook Ziporyn Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): This course meets the HS or CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): DVPR 33001, RLST 23001, HREL 33001, EALC 33201

RLST 23250. Introduction to Islamic Theology. 100 Units.
Survey of ideas and arguments formulated by renowned Muslim theologians and responses that their doctrines triggered. Major doctrines will be covered, starting with early debates over the nature of belonging to the Muslim community, the nature of God, revelation, prophecy, freewill and predestination. The course roughly follows the historical development of Islamic theology in conversation with other Islamic sciences (philosophy, sufism, law), with a close examination of the confrontation between a group of rationalist theologians (Muḥtazilites), the traditionalist hadith-scholars, and the emergence of Sunni Ashʿarite theology between the 9th and 11th centuries.
Instructor(s): Yousef Casewit Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): No knowledge of Arabic is required. Reading materials will be in English. Open to graduate students. This course meets the CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 36250, ISLM 36250, NEHC 23250

RLST 23311. Feminist Ethics. 100 Units.
Many injustices in the world are related to gender oppression and inequality. In this introductory course, we will examine the ways that feminist ethics aims to identify, assess, and correct gender biases that cause this harm. We will begin by situating feminist ethics within its historical context to understand how and why it developed. We will then consider different methods that feminists use to identify and critique oppressive social structures. With these tools in hand, we will assess several acute sources of gender oppression and inequality, including the global labor market, reproductive mores, and climate change. In doing so we will also consider proposals to remedy these harms. Throughout the course, we will ponder the intersection of gender with religion, race, class, and global location. We will be attentive to the role that Western feminism has had in shaping global views on oppression and inequality. We will also evaluate the influence of religion on feminist ethics. As we read, we will explore the normative commitments that are expressed in the texts, as well as the bases for these commitments and the sources of authority to which the authors appeal as they claim to advance gender justice. This course is an undergraduate course that assumes no prior knowledge in ethics, feminist studies, or religious studies. It will include some lectures but will be primarily seminar based.
Instructor(s): Kat Myers Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): This course counts as a Foundations course for GNSE majors.
Equivalent Course(s): GLST 23311, GNSE 12114

RLST 23314. Philo of Alexandria. 100 Units.
In this course we will read the Greek text of Philo’s de opificio mundi, with other brief excerpts here and there in the Philonic corpus. Our aim will be to use this treatise to elucidate the thought and character of one of the most prolific theological writers of the first century. We will seek to understand Philo as a Greek author and the nature and origins of his style, Philo as a proponent of middle Platonism, and Philo as a Jew in the context of Alexandrian Judaism. We will also examine his use of the allegorical method as an exegetical tool, and its implications for pagan, Jewish and early Christian approaches to sacred texts.
Instructor(s): David Martinez Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): At least 2 years of Greek.
Equivalent Course(s): BIBL 44500, FNDL 22314, GREK 34600, GREK 24600
RLST 23510. Ethics of Ethnographic Encounter. 100 Units.
How can anthropological perspectives help us rethink issues of current global concern? We will be attending to critiques of ethnographic method: calls to decolonize the discipline, demands to make it more collaborative. At that level, we will be exploring anthropological perspectives as a distinctive way of engaging the world, and how the ethos of ethnography sits with the difference between scholarship and activism. At the same time, we will be considering what kind of light anthropology can shed on present-day problems such as the politics of indigeneity, scientific authority, environmental crisis, and interspecies relations.
Instructor(s): William Mazzarella Terms Offered: Spring, Spring 2023
Equivalent Course(s): ANTH 23510

RLST 23607. Nietzsche, European Culture, and the Death of God. 100 Units.
This course introduces students to the period of cultural turmoil culminating in what Nietzsche called the "death of God." On Nietzsche's view, European culture in the 19th century was characterized by a profound rupture with its own history that could be seen in the domains of art, religion, and philosophy. Our task is to understand why Nietzsche believed that such a radical break had occurred, whether he was right, and what this tells us about our relation to our own traditions and values. The course will be divided into two parts. The first will explore theories of cultural collapse. Can a society lose touch with its past? What would it mean to live in such a society? How could we go on if we ceased to recognize ourselves in our cultural way of life? In addition to Nietzsche, readings will include such pivotal thinkers for the modern era as Ludwig Feuerbach, Karl Marx, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jonathan Lear, and Cora Diamond. In the second part of the course, we will test these theories by looking for examples of rupture in literary texts of the period. Our questions: does a comparison of these works suggest a rupture in culture as Nietzsche claimed? And is it plausible to understand the social, political, and religious developments of this period in terms of the death of God? How does the "death of God" still shape our modern world? No prior study of the literature or philosophy discussed is expected.
Instructor(s): Joseph Haydt Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): GRMN 23607, HIST 29305

RLST 23620. The Problem of Evil. 100 Units.
Epicurus's old questions are yet unanswered. Is he [God] willing to prevent evil, but not able? then is he impotent. Is he able, but not willing? then is he malevolent. Is he both able and willing? whence then is evil? (Hume, Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion) This course will consider the challenge posed by the existence of evil to the rationality of traditional theistic belief. Drawing on both classic and contemporary readings, we will analyze atheistic arguments from evil, and attempts by theistic philosophers to construct "theodicies" and "defenses" in response to these arguments, including the "free-will defense," "soul-making theodicies," and "suffering God theodicies." We will also consider critiques of such theodicies as philosophically confused, morally depraved, or both; and we will discuss the problem of divinely commanded or enacted evil (for example the doctrine of hell). (A)
Instructor(s): M. Kremer Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 21620

RLST 23808. Suffering, Grief, and Consolation. 100 Units.
Why do people suffer and die? How can we find comfort? Should we hope for a better future, focus our energies on making peace with the present, or attempt to do both? How do we cultivate joy in the midst of adversity? Can pain be productive? The literature of ancient consolation engages these questions as it bears witness to the myriad ways in which ancient Greeks, Romans, Jews, and Christians attempted to comfort suffering people. The goal was not simply to defeat grief, but to replace grief with its opposite, joy. This course introduces students to ancient consolation literature, a genre composed of various literary forms (e.g., funeral orations, consolatory letters, apocalypses, prophecies) but united by a common store of vocabulary, expressions of sympathy, arguments against grief, and exhortations to admirable behavior amid hardship. We will read selections from Cicero, Seneca, Plutarch, the Bible, and various texts of early Judaism and Christianity. At the end of the course, we will bridge the horizons between ancient approaches to consolation and current debates about how to treat grief and facilitate human flourishing during hardship. While there are no prerequisites for the course, if there is sufficient student interest, the course may feature Languages Across the Curriculum (LxC) sessions in which students who have knowledge of Latin will be able to read select course texts (e.g., from Cicero and Seneca) in Latin. Participation in the LxC sessions is elective and s
Instructor(s): Christine R. Trotter Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): CLCV 23823, JWSC 23808

RLST 23809. Pain, Truth, and Justice. 100 Units.
Why should the truth hurt? Does pain guarantee the truth told? Is pain the price of exposure to the truth? Does that make punishment just? In this course, we will take a historical and philosophical approach to examine the relations between pain, truth, and justice. In the premodern period, we will draw from Genesis, Sophocles' Oedipus, Augustine, Tertullian, martyrdom accounts, and public penance in medieval Christianity. To study the theme in the early modern nation-state spectacles of punishment, colonial contexts, and contemporary scenes of justice, we will turn to the writings of Foucault, Fanon, and others. Over the course of the historical and philosophical examinations, we will trace the themes of body, affect, and performance; truth, law, and ritual; power, religion, and the nation-state. In the end, we will turn a critical eye to contemporary cultural discourses and representations of pain, truth, and justice in the arts, law, literature, philosophy, and politics. No prerequisites.
RLST 24223. Parrhesia: Fearless Speech from Socrates to Greta von Thunberg. 100 Units.

The course will examine the long history of parrhesia, the Greek term for free and fearless speech, from ancient Athens to its current renaissance through the rediscovery by Michel Foucault. Focusing on the relation of truth and discourse, the course will consider not only the extraction of truth as a form of subjection to disciplinary found in the ancient texts. For those unfamiliar with the intellectual history of early Christianity, this class will offer an opportunity to read consequential texts (in translation) from Latin, Greek, and Syriac authors that represent the diversity inherent within Christian literature. By the end of the course, students will have the skills to discern how these formative voices continue to shape Christian ethics and theology. For those interested in reading these authors in their original languages, I will offer optional weekly translation sessions in Latin, Greek, and Syriac.

Instructor(s): Erin Walsh Terms Offered: Spring

Note(s): This course meets the HS or CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): THEO 33829, BIBL 33829, HCHR 33829

RLST 23907. Gandhi and His Critics. 100 Units.

This is a lecture and discussion class that will explore how a variety of philosophic and religious thinkers approach the issues and problems of modern dilemmas in medicine and science in a field called bioethics. We will consider a general argument for your consideration: that the arguments and the practices from faith traditions and from philosophy offer significant contributions that underlie policies and practices in bioethics. We will use a case-based method to study how different traditions describe and defend differences in moral choices in contemporary bioethics. This class is based on the understanding that case narratives serve as another core text for the discipline of bioethics and that complex ethical issues are best considered by a careful examination of the competing theories as work themselves out in specific cases. We will examine both classic cases that have shaped our understanding of the field of bioethics and cases that are newly emerging, including the case of research done at our University. Through these cases, we will ask how religious traditions both collide and cohere over such topics as embryo research, health care reform, terminal illness, issues in epidemics and public health, and our central research question, synthetic biology research. This class will also explore how the discipline of bioethics has emerged to reflect upon such dilemmas, with particular attention to the role that theology and philosophy have played in such reflection.

Instructor(s): Anand Venkatkrishnan Terms Offered: Winter

Note(s): This course meets the HS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): FNDL 23907, RETH 33907, CRES 23907, HREL 33907

RLST 24103. Bioethics. 100 Units.

This course explores several themes in Gandhi's ethical thought and the responses they have generated. Gandhi's thought encompasses concepts of sovereignty, the state, self and society, religion, civilization, and force. His insistence on cultivating technologies of the self as a response to both colonial and intimate violence was inspired by an eclectc range of source material. Generations of critical thinkers from around the world, including Black, feminist, Communist, and Dalit political activists, engaged with his ideas. This course explores several themes in Gandhi's ethical thought and the responses they have generated.

Instructor(s): Laurie Zoloth Terms Offered: Spring

Note(s): Graduate students will meet in a separate section. This course meets the CS or LMCS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): SIGN 26069, BIOS 29216, RETH 24103, HLTH 24103, HIPS 24103

RLST 24114. Justice in the Struggle of History. 100 Units.

This course explores several themes in Gandhi's ethical thought and the responses they have generated. Gandhi's thought encompasses concepts of sovereignty, the state, self and society, religion, civilization, and force. His insistence on cultivating technologies of the self as a response to both colonial and intimate violence was inspired by an eclectic range of source material. Generations of critical thinkers from around the world, including Black, feminist, Communist, and Dalit political activists, engaged with his ideas. This course explores several themes in Gandhi's ethical thought and the responses they have generated.

Instructor(s): William Schweiker Terms Offered: Winter

Note(s): Graduates students may petition to enroll.
power but also acts of telling truth to power as a practice of self-formation and exercise of freedom. Parrhesia implies a relation between the human self and the act of truth-telling that is suffused with interesting political, philosophical, and ethical possibilities, which students will be encouraged to explore. The course will begin by reviewing Foucault's final lectures on parrhesia and "the courage of truth." It will then examine some of the ancient Greek and Christian texts that Foucault analyzed. It will go on to consider early modern instances of parrhesia (e.g. Galileo and Descartes) and will conclude by surveying relatively recent versions (e.g. Greta von Thunberg and James Comey, JD'85), including contemporary feminist and queer practices of parrhesia. Lectures and discussions in English. No prerequisites.

Instructor(s): Christopher Wild Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): CMLT 24223, PARR 24223, GRMN 24223

RLST 24240. Buddhism and Science: A Critical Introduction. 100 Units.

Buddhism is the only religion able to cope with modern scientific needs." This quotation, often erroneously attributed to Albert Einstein, prompts the question: Why are such statements about Buddhism so easily taken nowadays as credible and plausible? Currently, it seems no other religion is held as compatible with science as Buddhism: From the recent 'mindfulness' craze in psychology and medicine, to the 'emptiness' of quantum physics, Buddhism is uniquely hailed as a 'rational religion' whose insights anticipated modern science by millennia. Some even suggest it is not a 'religion' at all, but rather a sort of 'mind-science.' This course functions as both an introduction to Buddhism and a critical survey of its modern scientific reception. As we explore Buddhism's relationship to contemporary scientific theories in psychology and physics, we will be guided by questions such as: What methodological principles distinguish the practices of religion and science? What are the different ways they can be brought into relation? Why is Buddhism, in particular, singled out as uniquely scientific? What modern historical factors, like colonialism and secularization, contribute to this contemporary meme? Why does it matter whether Buddhism is compatible with science or not? What, exactly, is at stake in this relationship? And for whom? No prior study of Buddhism or the philosophy of science is expected.

Instructor(s): Yousef Casewit Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): This course counts as a Cognitive Science extra-disciplinary course.
Equivalent Course(s): HIPS 24240, KNOW 24240, CCTS 21018

RLST 24275. Chinese Buddhist Omnicentrum: Tiantai and Huayan. 100 Units.

This course will read and analyze the key texts (in English translation) of the two great classical “sinifying” Chinese Buddhist theoretical schools of the Sui, Tang, and Song dynasties: Tiantai and Huayan, with special attention to what is arguably their biggest shared innovation: the development of the classical Mahāyāna Buddhist idea of Emptiness (śūnyata) into the “omnicentric” idea that each entity, precisely through its emptiness, is in some sense present in all times and places, is eternal and omnipresent--and the controversies arising from the different justifications and implications advanced by the two schools for this shared doctrine. Readings will include the works of Zhiyi, Zhanran, and Zhili from the Tiantai school, and Dushun, Zhiyan, Chengguan, and Zongmi. Some basic background in Buddhist thought is recommended. Readings will be in English, but an optional reading group working with the original classical texts will likely also be convened.

Instructor(s): Brook Ziporyn Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): This course meets the HS or CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): EALC 44275, DVPR 44275, MDVL 24275, EALC 24275

RLST 24550. Major Trends in Islamic Mysticism. 100 Units.

This course examines Islamic mysticism, commonly known as Sufism, through an exploration of English translations of some of the greatest masterpieces of Sufi literature in Arabic and Persian. The goal is to gain first-hand knowledge of a broad spectrum of literary expressions of Islamic spirituality in their historical context, and to understand exactly what Sufis say, and how they say it. Each of the units will comprise lectures and close readings of excerpts from the text in Arabic/Persian and English translation. The average reading load per unit is 100 pages.

Instructor(s): Yousef Casewit Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): No Arabic required. This course meets the HS or CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): ISLM 32419, SIGN 26068, GLST 24550, MDVL 24550

RLST 24715. On Dialogue: Introduction to a Genre. 100 Units.

The figure of Socrates is famous for engaging Athenians in dialogue, but what was so important and effective about this mode of exchange? How did Socrates’ dialogue work as a philosophical exercise? Why was the dialogue suited to mediate between gods, Socrates, and citizens? In this class, we will take a philosophical and historical approach to the genre of dialogue, analyzing key moments in the genre and related texts to trace the relationships between the mode of dialogue, the role of the divinity, the obligations of the citizen, and the formation of the subject. Starting from the dialogue of Socrates, we will read from classical antiquity into the Christian context, with attention to the creative transformations of the genre and the changing notions of subject, god, and citizen. In the final turn, we will return to two canonical texts of modern philosophy, the Dialogues by David Hume and Dialogues by Jean-Jacques Rousseau to examine how modern philosophical texts deploy the mode of dialogue, invoke the classical and Christian modes, and transform the genre again.

Instructor(s): Maureen Kelly Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): This course counts as a general literature course or pre-20th century literature course for CRWR students.
Equivalent Course(s): CLCV 24722, CMLT 24715

RLST 24801. Heidegger’s Being and Time. 100 Units.
This course will provide a close reading of Martin Heidegger’s Being and Time (1927) in translation. Our reading will be supplemented by portions of Heidegger’s early lectures and seminars, as well as readings drawn from figures such as Aristotle, Augustine, Kant, Nietzsche, Husserl. Themes to be discussed include: time, history, finitude, hermeneutics, and phenomenology.
Instructor(s): Ryan Coyne Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): This course meets the CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): DVPR 31801, FNDL 24805, THEO 31801

RLST 25005. Elective Affinities: Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure on the Return to God. 100 Units.
The return to God (or reditus) is one of the central themes in medieval mysticism and in mysticism more generally. But return signals much more than a state of mystical contemplation. It involves finding a path back to God, not as an escape for human beings who find themselves in turmoil in the world but as a way for them to articulate where they find their true, spiritual home. Return is in many ways more about carving out one’s intellectual trajectory than about the ecstasy of achieving actual union with God. Deferral and suspense are as important as consummation. Finally, return is the mirror image of procession, the path that creation follows once it is set in the world. To understand return then, one has to begin at creation. This course will interrogate Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure, contemporary scholastic thinkers with respectively a more Aristotelian and a more Platonic profile, on the theme of return, seeing it both as a theoretical construct or object and as the lens through which they approach theology.
Instructor(s): Willemien Otten Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): Knowledge of Latin will be helpful. This course meets the HS or CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): THEO 45005, HCHR 45005, HIST 32109, HIST 22109

RLST 25006. Theology and Polycrisis. 100 Units.
The existential challenge of our contemporary time is how to think and live in a world in polycrisis. The convergence of many extreme crises-climate change, war, racism, the ongoing violence of the patriarchy, the inordinate wealth discrepancy between rich and poor-has led many to see these days as the beginning of the end of the world. This course asks what theology might contribute to understanding world’s intersecting crises and what resources it offers for contending with them. How might theology address a world seemingly facing apocalypse? On what grounds do theologians speak responsibly of God today? Thematising the topic of apocalypse in the history of theology, we examine how theology takes up the challenge of navigating the incommensurability between the world’s vast problems and the perceived smallness of human action. We investigate how the systematic aspect of theological thinking becomes relevant in discussions of evil and how theology’s speculative dimension introduces ways to think about God in relation to the world’s end. We also apply exegetical, interpretive, and imaginative skills to make diagnostic sense of the self-world relation. The course concludes by orienting theology to the current discussion of “world-building” and by considering spiritual disciplines that are attuned to this theme. Texts by, among others: Boethius, Schleiermacher, Meister Eckhart, Barth, Baldwin, McCord Adams, Haraway, McGinn, Iman Jackson, and Keller.
Instructor(s): Christine Helmer Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): This course meets the CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): THEO 35006

RLST 25102. Reading Augustine’s Confessions. 100 Units.
This course will carry out a close reading of Augustine’s Confessions. We will study the work not only as a spiritual autobiography—a common approach—but also as a philosophical argument against various alternatives to Christian faith and practice in the late fourth century. With this bifocal approach in place, we’ll examine how Confessions interrogates the quality of human love, fear, hatred, and regret; moral responsibilities to ourselves and others; the (anxious) awareness that we are limited in body and time; and how to craft a honest narrative of self-understanding. We will ask, Is religion a source of psychic health, or an obstacle to it? What sorts of problems is religion meant to cure? What problems do religious beliefs create? How does religion bear on the self’s loves, its past, its mortality, its doubts? Along the way we’ll ask whether it is possible to want to do evil, whether it is possible to love or grieve too much, what it means to be a friend—and how Augustine’s answers to these questions presuppose a wider account of the order of the cosmos.
Instructor(s): Richard B. Miller Terms Offered: Spring. FNDL agreed to let RLST be parent of this new course
Equivalent Course(s): MDVL 25102, FNDL 27002

RLST 25130. Introduction to the Philosophy of Religions. 100 Units.
Open to graduate and undergraduate students, this course introduces major works and topics in Philosophy of Religions, with particular emphasis on works from doctoral qualifying exam bibliographies in the area.
Instructor(s): Daniel Arnold Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): This course meets the CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): DVPR 31400

RLST 25377. #Blessed: The Prosperity Gospel, The Bible, and Economic Ethics. 100 Units.
Is wealth a sign of divine favor? What would Jesus do when it comes to money? How does the Bible inform contemporary views of charity, economic ethics, and material possessions? This class examines the multiple
messages about material wealth contained within biblical literature and the diverse ways these passages have been interpreted. After a survey of shifting approaches to economic ethics among Christians over the centuries, students will turn to the phenomenon of the "Prosperity Gospel" within the modern period. The class will query the ways the Bible has been harnessed to an economic vision tied to capitalism and ostentatious displays of personal wealth. Previous knowledge of the Bible and the historical periods covered is not expected.

Instructor(s): Erin Walsh and William Schultz Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): CLCV 25322

RLST 25560. A Latinx Philosophy of Religion? Exploring the Religious Foundations of Latino Identity. 100 Units.
In this class, we will explore Latinx identity from an unusual perspective: philosophy of religion. We will focus on the conditions of possibility, development, and problems of the Latinx religious experience and its theoretical articulation in Latinx theology and religious thought. To pursue this task, we will examine three key features of the Latinx experience: mestizaje (miscegenation), lo cotidiano (everyday life), and religiosidad popular (popular religiosity). In the first part of the class, we will turn to mestizaje: Is this concept useful to describe the Latinx experience despite its ties to the violence of colonialism? Can this term account for Afro-Latinos and indigenous peoples? In the second part, we will focus on the primacy given to lo cotidiano by Latinx theologians. Is this primacy warranted? Is everyday experience self-evident or inherently better than abstract thought? Lastly, we will study religiosidad popular. Is the focus on popular religion a reflection of a Catholic bias? Can the focus on popular religion and its role in identity-formation overshadow questions of political and economic justice? The course concludes sketching alternative paths for Latinx theology/religious thought, stressing the importance of a greater plurality of perspectives and a more robust engagement with non-Christian and non-religious expressions of the Latinx experience. No prerequisites.

Instructor(s): Raul Zegarra Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): LACS 25560

RLST 25704. Environmental Justice in Chicago. 100 Units.
This course will examine the development of environmental justice theory and practice through social scientific and ethical literature about the subject as well as primary source accounts of environmental injustices. We will focus on environmental justice issues in Chicago including, but not limited to waste disposal, toxic air and water, the Chicago heat wave, and climate change. Particular attention will be paid to environmental racism and the often understudied role of religion in environmental justice theory and practice. Throughout the course we will explore how normative commitments are expressed in different types of literature as well as the basis for normative judgments and the types of authorities authors utilize and claim as they consider environmental justice.

Instructor(s): Sarah Fredericks Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): Graduate students need permission to enroll and will have additional requirements.
Equivalent Course(s): AMER 25704, PBPL 25704, ENST 25724, CRES 25704, CHST 25704, KNOW 25704

RLST 25706. Climate Justice. 100 Units.
Climate injustice includes the disproportionate effects of climate change on people who benefit little from the activities that cause it, generally the poor, people of color, and people marginalized in other ways. Given the complex economic, physical, social, and political realities of climate change, what might climate justice entail? This course explores this complex question through an examination of classical and contemporary theories of justice; the gendered, colonial, and racial dimensions of climate change; and climate justice movements.

Instructor(s): Sarah Fredericks
Prerequisite(s): Graduate students need permission to enroll and will have additional requirements.
Note(s): This course meets the CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): GNSE 25702, ENST 25706, PBPL 25706, CRES 25706, RETH 35706, GLST 25766, HMRT 25706

RLST 25806. The Political Theologies of Zionism. 100 Units.
The relationship between nationalism and religion has throughout history been a stormy one, often characterized by antagonisms and antipathy. In this course we will examine from various aspects the complex nexus of these two sources of repeated ideological and political dispute within Judaism, and more specifically within Zionism as its political manifestation. Zionism has mostly been considered a secular project, yet recently, Zionist theory is scrutinized to identify and unearth its supposedly hidden theological origins. In nowadays Israel, a rise in religious identification alongside an increasing religionization of the political discourse calls for the consideration of new theopolitical models of Zionism applicable in a post-secular environment. The aim of this course is to explore this complex intertwining of politics and religion in Israel from both historical and contemporary perspectives. The first part of the course will outline the theoretical foundation of post-secular and political-theological discourses. The second part will address the explicit and implicit political theologies of Zionism. The third part will outline contemporary aspects of political-theological thought in Israel, and their actual appearance in the political sphere.

Instructor(s): David Barak-Gorodetsky Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): This course meets the HS or CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): JWSC 27940, THEO 35806, HIST 39403, HIJD 35806, NEHC 25806
RLST 25809. Islamic and Jewish Political Philosophy. 100 Units.

What can we learn about political philosophy from reading Muslim and Jewish thinkers? The flowering of political philosophy in the medieval Islamic world provides a mirror for examining our own assumptions about religion, politics, and philosophy. In this course, students read major works by Muslim and Jewish thinkers who debated whether and how to apply philosophical ideas to the political life of a community governed by divine laws. We will begin by discussing the transmission of Greek philosophy into Arabic-Islamic culture, the debates that ensued over the status of "foreign wisdom," and the issue of esoteric writing. These preliminary topics provide necessary background for studying the tradition of political philosophy that developed under Islam and Judaism in the Middle Ages. Major themes include approaches to divine law, the figure of the philosopher-prophet, logic and language, scriptural interpretation, the place of the philosopher in society, and the nature of human perfection.

Instructor(s): Yonatan Shemesh Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): No prerequisites
Equivalent Course(s): JWSC 28809, MDVL 25809

RLST 25910. bell hooks and Cornel West: Education for Resistance. 100 Units.

Cornel West and bell hooks are two of the most influential philosophers and cultural critics of the past half-century. Their writings—including their co-authored book-address pressing questions about politics, religion, race, education, film, and gender. In different ways, they each find resources for hope, love, and liberation in an unjust social order. In this course, we will read selections from their writings over the last forty years alongside the authors who influenced their thinking (including Du Bois, Freire, Morrison, King, and Baldwin). We will pay special attention to how hooks and West communicate to popular audiences, how they engage religious traditions (their own and others’), and the role of dialogue in their thought and practice. The goal of the course is not just to think about hooks and West, but to think with them about ethics, writing, American culture, and the aims of education. No prior familiarity with either author is required.

Instructor(s): Russell Johnson Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): CRES 22910, GNSE 25910, FNDL 25911

RLST 26062. Jewish Graphic Narrative: Between Memory and Caricature. 100 Units.

Over the past decade, there has been an explosion of "graphic novels" aimed at adult readers concerning Jewish society, history, and religion. This course explores the history of comics through the lens of its Jewish creators and Jewish themes, and the history of Jewish culture and society through the lens of graphic storytelling. We learn to interpret this complex art form that combines words and hand-drawn images, translating temporal progression into a spatial form. Reading American, European, and Israeli narratives, our discussions will focus on autobiographical and journalistic accounts of uprooting, immigration, conflict, and loss. We will ask: how do Jewish graphic novelists grapple with the history of racist caricature? What is the relationship between graphic narrative and memory culture? Authors whose work we will study include: Art Spiegelman, Rutu Modan, Lianna Finck, Joann Sfar, Joe Sacco, R. Crumb

Instructor(s): Na’ama Rokem Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 26062, CMLT 20711, SIGN 26062, JWSC 20701

RLST 26301. Religion and AIDS. 100 Units.

The AIDS crisis was not an epoch that we survived. It is a battle that we are still fighting…when Americans talk about AIDS they are rarely just talking about a scientific problem or a pharmaceutical solution. They are instead offering a sociology of suffering and a plan for spiritual warfare.” - Kathryn Lofton Is it possible to understand current debates over public health or the role of religion in the public sphere without first examining religious responses to the AIDS crisis? This course focuses on the emergence of the AIDS epidemic during the peak of the American culture wars. As such, students will analyze the fraught intersection of political power structures, medical epistemologies, and religious views on bodies, sex, and public morality. Through a varied catalog of disciplinary frameworks, e.g., history, theology, medical ethics, sociology of religion, and history of medicine, students will weigh the accuracy of Lofton’s claim that for Americans, AIDS is more than just a disease. Thus, we will scrutinize moral rhetoric surrounding contraception and its public availability. We will discuss the extent to which religious philanthropy, especially on the international stage, reshaped approaches to global health. Finally, we will revisit the role of religious communities in providing both care for the sick and theological responses to suffering. Prior knowledge of religious studies and/or medical history is not required for the course.

Instructor(s): Mark M. Lambert Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): CCTS 21014, CHST 26301, GNSE 23142, HLTH 26301, HIST 28007, HIPS 26301, HMRT 26301, SOCI 20563, PBPL 25301

RLST 26304. Religion and Abortion in the United States. 100 Units.

In American public discourse, it is common to hear abortion referred to as a "religious issue." But is abortion a religious issue? If so, in what ways, to whom, and since when? In this course we will answer these questions by tracing the relationship between religion and abortion in American history. We will examine the kinds of claims religious groups have made about abortion; how religion has shaped the development of medical, legal, economic, and cultural perspectives on the topic; how debates over abortion have led to the rise of a certain kind of religious politics in the United States; and how issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, and the body are implicated in this conversation. Although the course will cover a range of time periods, religious traditions, and types of data (abortion records from Puritan New England, enslaved people’s use of root medicine to induce miscarriage, and Jewish considerations of the personhood of the fetus, among others), we will give particular
attention to the significance of Christianity in legal and political debates about abortion in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. There are no prerequisites for this course and no background in Religious Studies is required. However, this course may be particularly well-suited to students interested in thinking about how their areas of study (medicine and medical sciences, gender and sexuality, race and ethnicity, political science) converge with religion and Religious Studies.

Instructor(s): tbd
Equivalent Course(s): HIPS 26304, CCTS 21015, HLTH 26304, GNSE 12115, HIST 28008, PBPL 25304, SOCI 20564, HMRT 26304

RLST 26305. Moral Reasoning Between Church and State: The Case of Abortion. 100 Units.

What is the moral reasoning of those inspired by Christianity to overturn Roe v. Wade? Given constitutional blocks on the state’s establishment of religion, how do Christians justify legislating religiously-grounded moral beliefs? How do these Christians imagine the role of the church in secular democratic space? What is the nature of their religious lives? Under what mandates do they operate? What scriptures do they read? What worship do they participate in? This course takes a close look at those vocationally-even, “spiritually”-called to severely limit women’s reproductive rights. Specific attention will be given to how these communities understand God, scripture, gender, family, government, democracy, law, freedom, etc. While much of the course’s attention will be given to arguments and rationales (including legal and judicial arguments and rationales), equal attention will be given to ethnographically understanding the lived experience of ardent pro-life advocacy. The course will conclude by examining religiously-inspired pro-choice alternatives to pro-life positions, with specific attention to how carefully pro-choice advocates attend to the arguments and worldviews of their pro-life counterparts. A wide range of texts and types of texts will be considered.

Instructor(s): Jonathan Tran Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): This course meets the CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): GNSE 26305, THEO 36305, GNSE 36305

RLST 26316. Medical Innovation and Religious Reform in Early Modernity. 100 Units.

Through a survey of innovative medical authorities and religious reformers, students will investigate the co-constitution of two bodies of knowledge at a historical moment (the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) when questions of authority and epistemology are in considerable flux. This period has long been implicated in the “conflict thesis”-a hugely influential argument that portrays the centuries-long relationship between religion and science/medicine as an inherently adversarial one. This course shall scrutinize that argument through a discussion of seemingly contradictory examples where reformers that touted the all-encompassing reach of divine providence also promoted intricate public health infrastructures; where the Vatican increasingly relied on university-trained physicians to validate saints and their miracles; where theologians were viewed as authorities on Galen and responsible for medical breakthroughs; and where medicine and metaphysics were considered complementary pursuits. Ultimately, students will unveil a portrait not of conflict, but of a symbiotic relationship between religion and medicine. The goal of our course will then be to query why religious reformers were not only unthreatened by but also actively esteemed the medical arts as a valuable ally.

Instructor(s): Mark M. Lambert Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): HIPS 26316, HLTH 26316, CCTS 21013, HIST 24924

RLST 26320. Deviance and Medicalization. 100 Units.

Is a school shooter an evil sinner, an ordinary criminal, or mentally ill? Is homosexuality a natural mode of loving and living, an expression of moral weakness, a punishable criminal offense, or a sign of biological or psychological inversion? Is hearing voices a sign of madness to be shunned and locked away from society, or proof of being chosen by the gods? The way in which a society or individual answers these kinds of questions can help us to understand the ways in which that society medicalizes (or demedicalizes) different forms of deviance from hegemonic norms. In this course we will explore various arenas in which forms of deviance have shifted on the spectrum from sin to crime to sickness (and back again) through processes of medicalization and demedicalization. We will explore medicalization in connection with sexual, mental, and moral forms of deviance as well as the medicalization of identity in terms of race, gender, class, disability, and age in order to ask questions such as: How is medical knowledge and authority constituted? How and why do certain behaviors come to be framed as medical problems rather than moral or legal ones? What people, forces, or systems shape the way we view deviant behavior? What is at stake in such processes of (de)medicalization. How do such processes impact the lives of those involved? How has life been increasingly medicalized in the Covid era? No prior study of religion, critical theory, or the history of medicine is expected.

Instructor(s): Blaize Gervais
Equivalent Course(s): CCTS 21019, GNSE 26320

RLST 26321. Good Vibes Only: Spiritual Energy Healing and Alternative Medicine in America. 100 Units.

Can I manifest health and happiness by aligning my energy with “good vibes”? Which crystal can I use to cure a headache? Is spiritual energy healing just a capitalist scam? Practices of harnessing positive vibrations and energies for health and human flourishing are increasingly prevalent in the United States, flooding our Instagram and TikTok feeds with conversations centered around questions like the above. But these ideas are not new. This course introduces students to a modern tradition of alternative medicine, spanning from the nineteenth century to the present, that hinges on a spiritual interpretation of scientific discoveries about energy. This tradition of spiritual energy healing will serve as our window into examining a larger theoretical framework that articulates a medical paradigm of “holistic healing” in opposition to mainstream biomedicine. We will examine spiritual
energy healing and its holistic framework through a social scientific lens. In other words, rather than evaluating its validity or efficacy, we will work to understand this tradition’s social and historical presence in American culture. Central questions include: How does spiritual energy healing interact with biomedicine, in both complementary and oppositional ways? How has it appropriated Eastern and Indigenous medical traditions? What exactly is its relationship to physics, and to scientific understandings of energy and vibration?

Instructor(s): Rachel Carbonara Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): KNOW 41017, CCTS 41017, KNOW 21017, CCTS 21017, HLTH 21017

RLST 26604. The Holocaust: History and Meaning. 100 Units.

How unique was the Holocaust? What enabled it and what is its legacy? In this course we will consider key texts written about and during the Holocaust. We will consider the rise of racism, Fascism, colonialism, and Nazism. We will reflect about the place of the Holocaust in genocide studies and in recent political and philosophical debates. We will talk about paintings, movies, and music, but most importantly: We'll learn some history. Grad students will be asked to read key methodological texts that will enrich their historiographical and historiosophical understanding of the topic.

Instructor(s): N. Lebovic Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): This course will be taught by Nitzan Lebovic, the 22–23 Joyce Z. Greenberg Visiting Professorship in Jewish Studies.
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 33418, HIJD 36604, JWSC 23418, HIST 23418

RLST 26802. Epic Religion: From the Ramayana to Game of Thrones. 100 Units.

What can epic literature and media teach us about religion? In this introductory seminar, students explore answers to this question, focusing on the ways epics dramatize the human relationship to divinity. We read the epics through the relationships of its central characters-humans, heroes, and gods. By following the winding quests and gory battles of these narratives, students examine how epics present various forms of human-divine relationships-transactional, intimate, inspirational, and manipulative. We employ a comparative approach to the genre; our readings originate in different world regions and historical periods-from ancient India and Greece to West Africa, England, and the contemporary US. We will read these texts closely and examine how they reflect particular views of the human condition within religious worldviews. Considering the contexts of post-colonization, nationalism, and globalization, we analyze how mass media-comic books, TV series, films, and social media-shape and spread those views to new popular audiences.

Instructor(s): Andrew Kunze Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): CMLT 26802, GLST 26802

RLST 26910. Religion, Sex, and Law in American History. 100 Units.

Religion and law both offer frameworks for how we ought to live and behave, and often these frameworks become entangled in ways that affect who we are, what we can do, and with whom we can do it. To make things even more complicated, religion is also an object of the law-the law tries to adjudicate the rights of religious Americans under a system of religious freedom, with varying degrees of success. Often, the tension between law and religion comes to a head on issues of sex. The collision of religion, sex, and law presents a whole host of problems and questions: How have religion and law historically related to each other when it comes to sex? How has religion shaped the law on issues of sex, and vice versa? What is, or should be, the role of the law in adjudicating issues of sexual morality and religion? In this class, we will begin with the question: how do religion and law shape our lives? Through attention to issues of sex and gender, we will explore what it means to live within the institutions of law and religion and how those institutions interrelate. The class will focus on topics such as: marriage, anti-miscegenation laws, reproductive justice, sexual education, and religious freedom. This class is intended to be interdisciplinary and assumes no prior knowledge. This class is especially suitable for students interested in religious studies, law and letters/pre-law, gender studies, and history.

Instructor(s): Erin Simmonds Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): GNSE 23146, HIST 28009

RLST 27075. The Latinx Religious Experience: Race and the Politics of Faith in the US. 100 Units.

Latinos? Hispanics? Latinx? How much do we know about one of the largest minorities (18.5%) in the USA? How does their culture shape their religious experience? What is the role of religion in their politics and activism? In this class we will explore these and other questions drawing from biographical narratives, history, sociology, and theology. In the first part of this course, students will be introduced to foundational biographical narratives and historical sources for studying the Latinx religious experience. In the second part of the course, students will examine the diversity of Latinx religion and the multiple functions of faith and devotion in the Latinx community. The course culminates with a close examination of three authors (Roberto Goizueta, Michelle González, and Nancy Pineda-Madrid) whose work allows us to understand the complex and diverse links between theological reflection, religious practice, and political action in the Latinx community. No prerequisites.

Instructor(s): Raül Zegarra Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): CRES 27075, AMER 27075, ANTH 23326, LACS 27075, SOCI 20539

RLST 27180. Constitutional Law and the Palestinian-Arab Minority in Israel. 100 Units.

This course will provide an introduction to Israeli constitutional law with an emphasis on the case of the Arab and Palestinian citizens in Israel’s ethnic democracy. It explores the scope of the individual and group rights they enjoy, as well as their various limitations. The course will discuss constitutional issues arising inside Israel and issues arising with respect to the Occupied Territories. Students will be offered the opportunity to examine
and critically evaluate key features of constitutional jurisprudence in Israel such as the concept "defensive democracy" plays in Israeli constitutional law, judicial decision concerning voting rights, freedom of expression, housing, equality and anti-discrimination, social rights, and cultural rights. The course assumes no previous knowledge of law or Israeli legal system. It is available for both undergraduate and graduate students.

Terms Offered: Spring  
Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 20180, GLST 20180, JWSC 20444, CRES 20180, NEHC 30180

RLST 27501. Indigenous Religions, Health, and Healing. 100 Units.
This course introduces students to the dynamic, often-contested understandings of health, healing, and religion among the Indigenous peoples of the Americas. Our task will be threefold: first, to examine the drastic effects of settler colonialism upon the social determinants of health for Indigenous peoples throughout the Americas, including the Caribbean, Mexico, United States, and Hawaii. Second, we shall attempt to understand healing practices as they are steeped in and curated by Indigenous traditions and religious beliefs. Our goal is to counteract centuries-old stereotypical images of Native peoples and challenge our preconceived notions of wellness, selfhood, and the boundaries of medicine. Third, we will reflect upon contemporary Indigenous approaches to health and healing with particular attention to the postcolonial hybridity of these practices. Throughout the course we will attend to a generative diversity of epistemologies, anthropologies, and religious worldviews with the ultimate goal that a renewed understanding of Indigenous healing traditions will augment our own approaches to global/public health and the study of religion.
Instructor(s): Mark M. Lambert  
Terms Offered: Winter  
Equivalent Course(s): HIPS 27520, CRES 21501, CHST 27501, CCTS 21016, HLTH 27501

RLST 27518. Praising the Gods: Greek Hymnic Poetry and Its Context. 100 Units.
In this course we will read a broad range of Greek hymnic poetry, starting with Hesiod's invocation to the Muses in the Theogony, followed by a selection from the Homeric Hymns, the Orphic hymns, and later literary or philosophical hymns by Callimachus and Proclus. Close readings will explore matters of language, genre, and literary tropes, as well as the evolving religious and cultural context of the hymns through the long chronological span in which the genre was productive in Greek antiquity.
Instructor(s): Carolina López-Ruiz  
Terms Offered: Winter  
Prerequisite(s): Two years of Greek.  
Equivalent Course(s): HREL 47518, CLAS 37522, CLCV 27522

RLST 27552. Race, Religion, and Emancipation. 100 Units.
In this course we will interrogate the complex relationship between race, religion, and emancipation in the modern period. Drawing on both historical and philosophical approaches, we will ask: What is emancipation, and who is it for? How has emancipation been articulated in relation to religion, and how has this relationship revealed complications in modern ideas of freedom? How has religion functioned as a vehicle for racialization, and how has it been racialized itself? Is religion an impediment to freedom or a means for its actualization? Beginning in the European Enlightenment, we will consider these questions in relation to two distinct, though (crucially) related sites: Jewish emancipation in 18th and 19th century Europe, and Black emancipation in the United States. In doing so, we will treat the relationship between religion, race, and emancipation as a central tension of the modern period, the continuing importance of which has significant consequences for liberatory intellectual and political movements in the present. Readings will include philosophical, historical, and theological approaches by authors including Immanuel Kant, Karl Marx, W.E.B. DuBois, Saidiya Hartman, and James Cone. No prior knowledge is required, though students with background knowledge in race and ethnic studies, religious studies, and philosophy may find it helpful.
Instructor(s): William Underwood  
Terms Offered: Spring  
Equivalent Course(s): GLST 27552, CRES 27552

RLST 27601. Women and Islam. 100 Units.
This course is an introduction to the field of women and Islam. We will examine the literature on Islamic legal, historical, Quranic and sacred textual constructs of women as well as critically explore the lived realities and experiences of Muslim women living in Muslim-majority societies and in the west. In centering the work of Muslim feminist scholars, students will gain an understanding of the multiple and competing narratives and portrayals of women in the Qur'an and hadith literature, and will explore contemporary debates around women's rights, violence against women, veiling, representational politics and gendered orientalism in the post-9/11 era. The discursive constructions and social realities of Muslim women are critically examined through historic and literary representations, ethnographic accounts, human rights discourses and secular and Islamic feminism(s). This course explores this topic from an interdisciplinary perspective and primarily situates a decolonial feminist framework to understand Muslim women as complex, and multidimensional actors engaged in knowledge production and political and feminist studies.
Instructor(s): Carolina López-Ruiz  
Terms Offered: Autumn  
Prerequisite(s): Two years of Greek.  
Equivalent Course(s): HIPS 27520, CRES 21501, CHST 27501, CCTS 21016, HLTH 27501

RLST 27652. Broken Mirrors: Writing the Other from Herodotus to the Jewish/Christian. 100 Units.
How are Others represented in Greco-Roman, Jewish, and Christian canons? Is the Other purely a mirror of the self who represents it? Or do self and Other interact? Can we trace and compare patterns of representation and taxonomies for human difference across cultures, genres, regions, periods, and sciences? How can we
RLST 27589. Parties and Feasting in/as Religion. 100 Units.

This graduate seminar will examine the complex ways, overtly and in more subtle, implicit ways, that Protestant evangelical Christianity has shaped race, the lived experience of race, and conversations about race in the US in the 20th and 21st centuries. Roughly half of the course will engage historical, sociological, and anthropological works on evangelicalism and race as a way of understanding how evangelicals have constructed, supported, and (in rarer instances) challenged racial categories and racism in the US. The course will also spend some time looking at primary sources where key evangelical figures write about and self-consciously reflect on race matters as theological and social phenomena. Some attention will be given to African American Protestants who identify as evangelical or who are regarded as such in scholarly studies. While a host of topics will be addressed, some of the more prominent will include evangelical individualism and resistance to structural understandings of racism, color-blindness as a response to the decline of legal segregation and a way of avoiding or critiquing attention to race in contemporary American life, and the continuing and enduring salience of race in evangelical political practices and voting preferences.

Instructor(s): Curtis Evans Terms Offered: Spring

Note(s): This course meets the HS or SCSR Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.

Equivalent Course(s): CRES 27722, HCHR 47722, RAME 47722

RLST 27722. Evangelicals and Race. 100 Units.

This graduate course will focus primarily on the complex evolution of religion and politics from the early 20th century to the present. The class will involve a mix of historical/chronological approaches to grasp broad changes over time, case studies that give attention to close analysis of practice and meaning on the ground, and theoretical works that interrogate the meanings, overlaps, and constraints of the political and the religious. The aim of the course is to raise a number of questions that we will try to answer and explore together: why have certain theological and religious traditions tended to support positions labeled "conservative" or liberal? How have engagements with and understandings of race, gender, and sexuality changed over time and altered the intersections of religion and politics? In what ways do religious commitments, local practices, and theological visions shape views of the common good and national identity?

Instructor(s): Curtis Evans Terms Offered: Spring

Note(s): This course meets the HS or SCSR Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.

Equivalent Course(s): RAME 38016, HCHR 38016

RLST 28016. Religion and Politics in the United States. 100 Units.

This graduate course will explore works of art and architecture as primary sources on the civilization of Byzantium. Through the close investigation of artifacts of different media and techniques, students will gain insight into the artistic production of the Byzantine Empire from its beginnings in the fourth century C.E. to the Ottoman conquest in 1453. We will employ different methodological approaches and scholarly resources that are relevant for the fruitful investigation of artifacts in their respective cultural setting. In order to fully assess the pivotal importance of the visual arts in Byzantine culture, we will address a wide array of topics, including art and ritual, patronage, the interrelation of art and text, the classical heritage, art and theology, Iconoclasm, etc.

Instructor(s): K. Krause Terms Offered: Winter

Note(s): For nonmajors, this course meets the arts, music, drama general education requirements.
RLST 28330. Art and Religion from the Roman to the Christian Worlds. 100 Units.
This course will be an introduction to Roman and early Christian art from the early empire to late antiquity. It will explore the significance of the changes in visual production in relation to different attitudes to religion and society; its specific and conflictive historiography; the particular issues involved in the move to Christianity and a Christian visual culture. We shall veer between an empirical inductive approach, looking at lots of stuff and a more general account of theoretical overviews that have been offered for Roman and late art - overviews that have been influential in the broader historiography of art history as a discipline.
Instructor(s): Jaš Elsner Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): The course will be taught over 5 weeks in the Spring Quarter on an intensive schedule. This course meets the HS or LMCS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): CLAS 38322, CLCV 28322, ARTH 38330, ARTH 28330, RLVC 38330

RLST 28448. American Apocalypse: Visions of the End(s) of the World. 100 Units.
Apocalyptic thought and millenarian movements have had a powerful and enduring influence in the US.
This course starts with the Millerite movement of the mid-19th century and moves through a number of case studies in the 20th century. We will explore theories of the widespread appeal of apocalyptic thought in the US and interpretations of key sacred texts and recurring ideas that inform and shape the contours of debates about the end of the world. Given the significant role that Christianity has played in discussions about the nature of an imminent apocalypse in the US context, most of the examples will be from the Christian tradition. Theoretical approaches to millenarian movements, practices, and rhetoric, however, are drawn from multiple religious traditions. A number of themes will be examined including the language of violent endings alongside visions of peace and harmony in conceptions of the end, the tensions between human agency and divine action in hastening the apocalypse, and understandings of and interactions with "the world" in view of fervent hopes for and prophecies of its imminent demise, among other things.
Instructor(s): Curtis Evans Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): This course meets the HS or SCSR Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): HCHR 48448, RAME 48448, AASR 48448

RLST 28499. How Did The Ancients Interpret Their Myths? 100 Units.
How did the ancient Greeks interpret their own narratives about the gods? How did their encounter with Near Eastern mythologies shape their own story-telling, and how did their understanding and use of myths evolve with time? In this course, we will explore the ancient interpretation of myth from the archaic Greek to the Roman periods. First, we will focus on the cross-cultural adaptations of Near Eastern traditions in Greek epic (Homer and Hesiod), as a form of interpretation itself. Then we will discuss how ancient poets and thinkers interpreted and reinterpreted divine narratives, paying attention to their philosophical, literary, and cultural strategies, from Orphism and Plato to the Stoics and later philosophical schools, including Euhemerism and its engagement with Phoenician mythology.
Instructor(s): Carolina López-Ruiz Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): CLCV 28422, HREL 38499, NEHC 38499, NEHC 28499, CLAS 38422

RLST 28511. Star Wars and Religion. 100 Units.
This course puts religious texts into conversation with George Lucas's popular Star Wars film franchise with an eye toward understanding the power of myth in human life. In interviews, Lucas said he took bits and pieces from a variety of religious traditions to create the mythology of Star Wars. Through close readings of the films and primary texts, students will analyze these influences and evaluate how well the films hold these religious elements together. This course is not an in-depth study of any one religious tradition, but draws elements from different traditions to shed light on the portrayal of religion within Star Wars (i.e., the Force) and the metaphysical and moral themes found in the Star Wars films.
Instructor(s): Russell Johnson Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): CMLT 39045, REES 29045, CMLT 29045, REES 39045

RLST 28207. Dostoevsky and Critical Theory. 100 Units.
The tormented, obsessed, and sadistic characters of Dostoevsky's novels posed a challenge to positivism and reason too scandalous and compelling to be ignored. The novels inspired some of the most brilliant and influential thinkers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the fields of religion, philosophy, psychology and literary theory. We will read two of Dostoevsky's philosophically challenging novels alongside works by these critics and philosophers, including Nietzsche, Sartre, Freud, Bakhtin, Kristeva, and Levinas. While exploring their ideas about faith and unbelief, madness and reason, violence and torture, society and history, we will also inquire into the relationships among literature, philosophy and biography and examine the processes of influence and adaptation.
Instructor(s): Staff Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): CMLT 39045, REES 29045, CMLT 29045, REES 39045

RLST 28506. Jesus: From Scripture to the Silver Screen. 100 Units.
Jesus holds particular significance for believers all around the world. But how is he portrayed in modern films? How faithful are these depictions to the Bible? Do these portrayals push a certain kind of theological position? In this course, we will examine film adaptations of Jesus, including biopics, dramas, comedies, and musicals. As we watch everything from Martin Scorsese's The Last Temptation of Christ (1988) to Monty Python's Life of Brian (1979), we will compare these modern depictions to ancient texts and theology. During the course, students will
become familiar with significant aspects of Jesus’s life both in canonical and noncanonical Gospels, as well as to
how those texts have been understood in the antiquity and today. After the class, students will be able to analyze
critically portrayals of Jesus in order to understand why certain decisions are made and address pivotal questions
about biblical interpretation, cinema and adaptation, and the ethical challenges of representing religious figures
in media. No prior familiarity with biblical studies or film criticism is required.
Instructor(s): Richard Zaleski
Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): CMLT 28506

RLST 28612. The Global Revolt Against Liberalism. 100 Units.
Is liberalism in crisis? Only ten years ago, the ideology that won the Cold War seemed to reign supreme. Values
such as individualism, free enterprise, representative government, and religious tolerance, were seen as more
than hallmarks of order, but the very goals to which every nation should aspire. Since then, however, in the
United States and across the globe, the liberal consensus has been challenged by populists, socialists, religious
traditionalists, and others. Some have protested the close relationship between liberalism and capitalism. Some
objected to liberalism’s breakup of “organic” ethno-religious communities. And some maintained that liberalism
is no more than Western imperialism with a human face. What happened? Were these revolts mere setbacks on
the long ‘arc of history’? Or were they, rather, a reflection of a deep philosophic unease with the very premises
of modernity? Is this the end of the liberal world order? What will replace it? And what is the role of religion
in the contemporary political imagination? This class will combine readings in political theory, the philosophy
of history, and current events, to understand better these criticisms and gain some perspective on our present
discontents. No prior knowledge is required.
Instructor(s): Yiflach Ofek
Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): This course counts as an elective course for the Democracy Studies program.
Equivalent Course(s): GLST 28612

RLST 28710. Theological Genealogies of Modernity. 100 Units.
Narratives about the origins of modernity typically attribute a key role to religious and theological
considerations, although their significance is understood in various ways. The different roles ascribed to religious
factors most often relate to whether the emergence of Western modernity is imagined to be a story of progress
or decline. This seminar will explore the general form of genealogical approaches to modernity and how they
serve to vindicate or critique aspects of the present. Indicative sources are works by Löwith, Blumenberg,
MacIntyre, Merchant, Taylor, Milbank, and Gregory. We will consider such questions as the extent to which
secular conceptions of history continue to draw upon covert theological principles; whether secular modernity
lacks normative foundations; the nature of secularization and secularism; the historical relations between science
and religion and their respective roles in the trajectory of the modern West.
Instructor(s): Peter Harrison (visiting fellow)
Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Undergraduates may enroll themselves after obtaining instructor permission.
Note(s): This course meets the SCSR Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): AASR 39700, RETH 39700, THEO 39700

RLST 28755. Making ‘I’ll Take You There: The Life of Mavis Staples’ at Court Theatre. 100 Units.
Court Theatre has acquired the rights to Greg Kot’s 2014 biography of Chicago-born music legend Mavis Staples,
‘I’ll Take You There: Mavis Staples, the Staple Singers, and the Music that Shaped the Civil Rights Era.’ Kot joins
Court as consultant as the theater starts the work of adapting Mavis Staples’s life for the stage. He is the former
music critic for the Chicago Tribune, editorial director of the multimedia music platform the Coda Collection,
and co-host of Sound Opinions. This course invites students to take a lead role in Court’s creative development
process for the Mavis Staples story. Using the methods of history, dramaturgy, biography and musicology,
students will work with Kot and Court’s artistic team to map the story’s rich historical landscape, excavate the
essential characters and identify the key events-social, political and musical-that a playwright might explore.
Students will pursue individual research projects grounded in the epic journey of the Staples family and its
powerful mobilizing role in the Civil Rights movement. Mavis Staples continues to blend gospel, blues, folk, rock
and protest music in her work; her collaborators have included Bob Dylan, Prince, David Byrne, and Chuck D.
Students will trace the Staples family’s story via multiple archives to build a portfolio of sound recordings, oral
history interviews, photographs, newspapers, film and video recordings that will help the bring the production
to life. Kot will be a regular guest in class.
Instructor(s): N. Titone
Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): TAPS 20755, MUSI 20755, CRES 20755, CHST 20755, HIST 20300

RLST 28774. Racial Capitalism. 100 Units.
This course examines the history of race and racism in America from the perspective of “racial capitalism”
as a political economy. The course will trace the development of racial capitalism as a concept within Black
Marxist thought, from C.L.R. James and Oliver Cromwell Cox to Cedric J. Robinson to parallel developments
and formulations among contemporary theorists Adolph Reed Jr., Barbara and Karen Fields, Keanga-Yamhitta
Taylor, Iyko Day, etc. Special attention will be given to the moral psychology of racial capitalist ideology in the
context of American chattel slavery and its resultant “aftermarkets” in American society. The course will compare
racial capitalism as a political economic approach to race and racism to rival “identitarian” approaches including
critical whiteness studies and Afropessimism. The course will conclude by exploring responses by religious
communities to racial capitalism, visiting several ethnographic studies of how religion can facilitate radical forms
of resistance to racial capitalism.
Religious Studies

Instructor(s): Jonathan Tran Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): This course meets the CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.
Equivalent Course(s): THEO 38774

RLST 28902. Second City, Sacred City: Exploring Religion in Chicago. 100 Units.
The city of Chicago is famous for many things—from hot dogs, jazz, and The Great Fire to comedy, Al Capone, and deep-dish pizza. What often goes unrecognized about the so-called "Second City" is its rich and complex religious history. In this course, we will explore that history through in-person and online visits to some of Chicago’s most celebrated, overlooked, and contested religious sites (like Quinn Chapel, Moody Church, and Haymarket Square), as well as cultural institutions like DuSable Museum of African American History and the Art Institute. We will put these spaces into conversation with theories and ideas from the field of Religious Studies in order to map the topography of Chicago's religious landscape and to discover why, how, and in what ways Chicago might be considered one of the country’s most sacred cities. This course will be taught in cooperation with Chicago Studies and will involve off-campus travel funded by the university. There are no prerequisites for this course and no background in Religious Studies is required.
Instructor(s): Emily D. Crews Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Must be able to travel off campus.

RLST 28980. There’s an App for That: Religion in the Digital Age. 100 Units.
Can you sit shiva (a Jewish mourning ritual) via Facetime? Is Christian communion really communion if the wafer is made of pixels? Can religious communities experience a feeling of sacred togetherness if its members only get together online? How does online worship change the kinds of religious people we are or may become?
This course explores such questions and others that arise out of the relationship between religion and digital media. We will read theories about religious ritual; religion, space, and place; and religion and embodiment to think through what happens when religion leaves the material sphere and "goes online." We will partner these theories with scholarly reflections on how one is able to study religion on the internet, attending to some of the many conceptual, logistical, and ethical issues that arise when we do. Once we have a grasp of scholarly reflections on digital religion, we will put them into conversation with data from apps, blogs, websites, digital games, streaming events, and online message boards to test their ideas and to ask and answer our own questions. In keeping with the themes of the course, our final assignment will be the creation of a collaborative digital project. There are no prerequisites for this course and no background in Religious Studies or digital technology is required.
Instructor(s): Emily D. Crews Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): GLST 28980, DIGS 28980

RLST 29035. Religion, Secularism, and Democracy. 100 Units.
This course will introduce the student to some seminal texts and more recent interventions in the ongoing debate over how to conceptualize, negotiate, and structure relations between the modern state and the plurality of religious and other philosophical commitments that obtain in modern liberal democracies. Readings will be drawn from political theory, anthropology, sociology, comparative religion, and theology; and authors will include John Rawls, Richard Rorty, Saba Mahmood, Talal Asad, Craig Calhoun, Tomoko Masuzawa, Jose Casanova, Jurgen Habermas, Joseph Ratzinger, Steven D. Smith, William Cavanaugh, and Isaiah Berlin.
Instructor(s): David Lyons Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): LLSo 29035

RLST 29100. History of Religions* and Japan. 100 Units.
Edmund Buckley was one of the first recipients of the Ph.D. degree from the University of Chicago. His dissertation was published in 1895 with the title Phallicism in Japan. As a practitioner of the new “science of religions,” Buckley carried out his field work in Japan and collected hundreds of objects to supplement his historical and comparative research with copious examples of contemporary material culture. These talismans, ritual objects, amulets, and guides to Buddhist and Shinto pilgrimage sites, portable statues, shrines for traveling and the home, as well as numerous folk curios (such as phallic and kteis related to his research), were kept by the University of Chicago and, over the decades, were moved many times. They now, or much of them at any rate, reside within the Smart Museum of Art. They are uncatalogued, merely stored there, and are largely unknown. This course will be an examination of the discipline of religionswissenschaft as it was applied to Japan and the religious worlds therein. Buckley’s work, as well as the remnants of his collection, will serve as a major resource. Moreover, close readings of the works of Anesaki Masaharu, Hori Ichiro, Joseph Kitagawa, Helen Hardacre, and others, will enhance our understanding of the history of this discipline as applied to the religious world of Japan.
Instructor(s): James Ketelaar Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): HREL 49100

RLST 29700. Reading and Research Course. 100 Units.
This is the Reading and Research independent study that RLST majors/minors can petition to take, in conjunction with a faculty supervisor and the Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Divinity School.
Terms Offered: Autumn Spring Winter
Prerequisite(s): Consent of faculty supervisor and Director of Undergraduate Studies.
Note(s): Students are required to submit the College Reading and Research Course Form.
RLST 29800. BA Paper Seminar I. 100 Units.
This class meets weekly to provide guidance for planning, researching, and writing the BA paper.
Instructor(s): BA Preceptor TBD Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Consent of faculty supervisor and Director of Undergraduate Studies.
Note(s): RLST 29800 and 29900 form a two-quarter sequence that is required of fourth-year students who are majoring in Religious Studies. Students are required to submit the College Reading and Research Course Form.

RLST 29900. BA Paper Seminar II. 100 Units.
This class meets weekly to assist students in the preparation of drafts of their BA paper, which are formally presented and critiqued.
Instructor(s): BA Preceptor TBD Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): RLST 29800 and 29900 form a two-quarter sequence that is required of fourth-year students who are majoring in Religious Studies. Students are required to submit the College Reading and Research Course Form.