

RELIGION COURSES FOR SPRING 2009

(HP) RELI 10: What Is Religion?

Ann Burlein
TR 12:45-2:10

This course is designed to introduce students to the academic study of religion. It provides an opportunity to learn about the historical, scriptural, ritual and theological claims of two distinct religious traditions. In this way students gain concrete information about the way religious beliefs and practices shape the world, and be introduced to how scholars study religious traditions in a pluralistic context. Students will also be introduced to some of the methodological tools scholars use to think critically and constructively about religious traditions.

(HP) RELI 13: From Flesh to Faith: Community and Conflict in the New Testament

Stephanie Cobb
TR 11:10-12:35 and 12:45-2:10

This course is an introduction to early Christian literature and history. Students will read the New Testament as well as non-canonical early Christian writings. Students will come to know the content and themes of each of the books of the New Testament, to identify differing literary portrayals of Jesus, to work with establishing criteria for establishing the historical Jesus, to analyze the similarities and differences between canonical and non-canonical Christian writings, to recognize the diverse forms of early Christianity, and to be familiar with the early development of Christian orthodoxy.

First Year Seminars: *Only first-year students are permitted to enroll.*

(HP) RELI 14S: Prison Break- Religion and Incarceration in America

Jody Cross-Hansen
MF 11:15- 12:40

The United States incarcerates more of its citizens than any other nation in the world. Recently, those same churches which helped create the “penitentiary” are now questioning whether it should be abolished. This course explores the religious and social evolution of the American prison system, and examines proposed solutions, and innovative experiments in rehabilitation. Students also explore the implications of “god pods,” controversial religiously programmed prisons being offered to some offenders.

(CC) RELI 15: Introduction to Eastern Religious Traditions

Kumiko Endo
MW 2:55-4:20 and 4:30-5:55

This is a survey course on South and East Asian belief systems and practices, concentrating on the Hindu, Buddhist, and Confucian traditions. Students will

explore the evolution of each of these religions, considering the ways they have inspired individuals and shaped civilizations through cosmology, ritual, literature and art. There will be emphasis on tracing two basic lines of Eastern religious behavior and thought: sectarian and folk devotionalism, and the elite philosophical and meditational traditions.

(CC) RELI 75: Mysticism and the Spiritual Quest (Sufism)

Markus Dressler

TR 11:10-12:35 and 4:30-5:55

This course will provide students with a general account of the history of the concept of mysticism within the study of religion. Students will focus in detail on ONE mystical tradition - Islam (Sufism), getting acquainted with its practices as well as the intellectual, artistic and material culture that it has produced. We will also use contemporary American Sufism as a starting point for discussing the roles of mysticism and spirituality in the contemporary Western world.

Prerequisites & Course Notes:

Same as PHI 102. Credit given for this course or PHI 102, not both.

(CC) RELI 75: Mysticism and the Spiritual Quest

Instructor to be arranged

TR 4:30-5:55

Mysticism is traditionally defined as the yearning for direct connection to a transcendent reality and is referred to as the esoteric dimension of religious search. Though evident as a global phenomenon, mystical traditions most notably developed in the monotheistic faiths of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, as well as in the many religious traditions of India, China, Japan and ancient Greece. This course will provide a cross-cultural exploration of the meanings, definitions, practices and common themes of mysticism via a study of original texts (in translation) from different parts of the world.

Prerequisites & Course Notes:

Same as PHI 102. Credit given for this course or PHI 102, not both.

(CC) RELI 80: Life, Death and Immortality

John Teehan MF 11:15-12:40

Vivodh Anand MW 4:30-5:55 and 6:30-7:55

Examination of the concepts of life, death and immortality as represented in religious, philosophical and literary texts from a range of cross-cultural sources (western, as well as non-western) and from various historical periods. Attention will also be paid to contemporary cultural treatments of the notion of an afterlife, as well as scientific examinations of such beliefs.

Prerequisites & Course Notes:

Same as PHI 103. Credit given for this course or PHI 103, not both.

RELI 140M: Sex and the Body *This course can be taken for HP credit.***
Please see Joanne Herlihy in 104 Heger Hall**

Ann Burlein
TR 11:10-12:35

This course is designed to introduce the major contemporary theoretical moves which scholars use to help them think well about the force of sexuality and the body in religion. The bulk of the class involves close readings of selected contemporary theorists and issues. In the last two weeks of class, we will practice using these theorists as lenses for bringing into focus the role of the body, sexuality and gender in a sampling of texts that record Daoist meditation practices.

RELI 140N: Darwin and/or God

John Teehan
MW 2:55-4:20

Can you believe in Darwin and God? Or does belief in one rule out belief in the other? If you accept both, what kind of God is implied by an evolutionary worldview? Is a theistic evolution truly Darwinian evolution? Charles Darwin recognized that his 1859 publication, *On the Origin of Species*, would provoke religious and scientific controversy. His prediction proved true, and 150 years later, the relationship between Darwinian evolution and religious beliefs remains a complicated and provocative issue. In this course we will seek to go beyond the heated public debates—although we will consider them—and assess whether evolution and religion actually do conflict (and if so, how?) or if, instead, they can be seen as complementary aspects of one worldview. In our study we will consider the different epistemologies employed by scientific and religious thinkers, and draw out the philosophical implications of Darwin's theory.

RELI 140O: Journeys with Paul

Alexander Burke
TR 9:35-11:00

Paul wrote 13 of the 27 works in the New Testament from about 50CE to 67CE. His *Letters* were the first documents of Christian literature, and they are still a fundamental source of Christian theology. However, throughout history, they have been a challenge to ecumenical understanding among many groups, but especially Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and feminists. This course will examine all 13 of Paul's *Letters*, plus *The Letter to the Hebrews*. This course will assess the social background of the first century, the Jewish heritage and the theological ideas of Paul. The course will trace the impact of Paul on such later Christian figures as Augustine, Luther, Schweitzer and Barth. We will also survey depictions of Paul in Christian art from early Christian sculptures to the paintings by El Greco and Rembrandt. The goal of this course is to give you an in-depth understanding of this critical and fascinating figure—the only person in Church history to be a great theologian, missionary, mystic and martyr.

RELI 140P: Race, Religion and Democracy in America

Ron Neal

MW 2:55-4:20

This course examines the intersections of race and religion and their impact on American democracy. It examines the manner in which race and religion have stood as challenges to, and as champions of, democracy in America. To this end, significant attention will be placed upon the democratic struggles of the 20th century, from the Jim Crow era to the ascendance of the Christian Right. Included in this enterprise are the perspectives of democratic and religious thinkers such as Alexis De Tocqueville, Benjamin Elijah Mays (the mentor of Martin Luther King, Jr.) and Cornel West.

(HP) RELI 152: Women in Early Christianity

Stephanie Cobb

TR 2:20-3:45

This course will examine the representations of women in early Christianity, focusing primarily on the first four centuries of Christian history. Students will be introduced to constructions of sex and gender in ancient Greek and Roman philosophy and medical literature and the role of women in contemporaneous pagan and Jewish cultures. From there, the course will focus on intra-Christian conflicts involving the role of women, in particular, martyrdom, orthodoxy, heresy, and asceticism. Throughout the course, students will wrestle with the problem of using ancient sources to determine social practice.

RELI 153: Political Islam

Markus Dressler

TR 2:20-3:45

This course examines the political dimensions of Islam. We will trace back the roots of Islam-centered political ideologies, situating them within their historical and social contexts. We will investigate social, political, economic, and religious agendas of traditionalist, modernist, as well as fundamentalist Muslim movements. Focusing on a set of chosen Muslim countries, we will explore what motivates individuals to join political movements, drawing on Islam as a main reference system. Students will get acquainted with basic political concepts of the Islamic tradition, and the way these concepts are negotiated vis-à-vis modern institutions and values such as the nation state, secularism, democracy and human rights.

Prerequisites & Course Notes:

Same as PSC 109.