RELIGION COURSES, FALL 2009

(HP) RELI 10: What Is Religion?
Ann Burlein TR 12:45-2:10
Julie Byrne TR 6:30-7:55

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. Students will gain concrete information about the way religious beliefs and practices shape the world, and will learn how scholars study religious traditions in a pluralistic context. Students will also be introduced to some of the methodological tools that scholars use to think critically and constructively about religious traditions.

First Year Seminars: give students the opportunity to work in a seminar format with a member of the faculty in an area of the faculty member’s research interests. Only first-year students are permitted to enroll in the following course. For details, please visit www.hofstra.edu/fyc, or contact the Center for University Advisement.

(CC) RELI 14F, Section 01: Yoga, Psychology and South Asian Religions
Balbinder Bhogal
TR 10:05-12

Are there religious, psychological or “yogic” states of mind that transcend time, place, and language? Within the Indian context, the answer is often “yes!” Various Indic traditions refer to the most complete state of a perfected mind. In the Sikh tradition, this state of mind (chautapad) gains a new, political dimension, which connects this private mental state to a socio-political self that has responsibilities to others. This course will explore this extraordinary state as it relates to the traditions of South Asian Religions, Psychology and Yoga.

(CC) RELI 14F, Section A: Better Living Through Buddhism
Joshua Schapiro
MW 4:30-5:55

What do religious communities suggest that their members do to improve themselves? What does self-improvement lead to? This seminar inquires into some of the practices for self-improvement that religious communities have developed over the past twenty-five hundred years, from Ancient Greeks to Chinese Taoists to Tibetan Buddhists. We will study ideas about how religious practitioners should conduct their sexual lives, what they should eat in order to live super-long lives, how they should meditate, and why they might want to do rituals in burial grounds. After visiting the "self-help" section of a local bookstore, we will also discuss some
contemporary American ideas about self-improvement. In each case, we will think about how these communities understand what a human being is capable of and how their ideas line up with our own unexamined assumptions about human possibility.

(CC, HP) RELI 16: Religions of India
Balbinder Bhogal
TR 12:45-2:10

This course examines the central traditions, ideas and practices of the major religions of India, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Sikhism. Major themes explored in a comparative context include: violence and eroticism, death and immortality, wisdom and ritual.

(HP) RELI 17: Lost Christianities
Stephanie Cobb
MW 2:55-4:20

This course explores the varieties of Christianity that co-existed from Jesus’ death in the middle of the first century through the end of the second century. Included in these are Jewish-Christians, Marcionites, Montanists and Gnostics. Students will read a variety of primary texts in translation to understand better the struggle between forms of early Christianity and the way that one form became dominant, and, thus, “orthodox.”

(HP) RELI 18: Sacraments, Sex and the City: An Introduction to Catholicism
Julie Byrne
TR 4:30-5:55

There are many versions of the branch of Christianity called “Catholicism,” and many ways that people throughout history have practiced it. This class asks what various Catholic communities have meant by the word “Catholic.” We will explore Catholicism’s major global varieties and study its many aspects from theology and ethics to history and popular culture.
(CC) RELI 19: *Introduction to Buddhism*  
Kumiko Endo  
TR 4:30-5:55 and 6:30-7:55  

This course is an introduction to the wide range of Buddhist ideas and practices that have developed over time, with focus on southern Asia. In addition to studying various Buddhist literary and artistic expressions, we will discuss Buddhism’s transfer from Asia to the West.

(HP) RELI 76: *History of Irish Spirituality*  
Phyllis Zagano  
MW 2:55-4:20  

This course will explore the history of Irish mysticism and spirituality and relate them to Irish history and literature. We will read a wide variety of texts from pre-Christian Ireland as well as from more than 1500 years of Christianity and focus on the competing claims of various traditions and practices.
(CC) RELI 80: Life, Death and Immortality
Vivodh Anand
MW 2:55-4:20

Examination of the concepts of life, death and immortality as represented in religious, philosophical, and literary texts from a range of cross-cultural sources 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.

(CC, HP) RELI 105: Islam in North America
Hussein Rashid
TR 2:20-3:45

This course investigates the plurality of Muslim experiences in North America. It is structured around three main topics: (1) the history and heritage of the Muslim slaves brought to the continent, (2) the emergence of an indigenous African-American Islam, and (3) the immigration of Muslims from the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent. We will discuss questions of identity, and quests for authenticity. Reflecting on the dynamic between universality and exclusivist interpretations of Islam, we will raise the question of whether a distinctively “American Islam” is emerging.

Prerequisites & Course Notes:
RELI 12 or RELI 50 or permission of instructor.