



# SPRING 2021

## Religion Studies Course Offerings

**REL 012  
14088**

**MOUNTAINS, BUDDHAS, ANCESTORS:  
INTRODUCTION TO EAST ASIAN RELIGIONS (4)  
PROF. ANNABELLA PITKIN**

**ASIA 012 (14089)**

**(XLIST EG)**

This course explores the principal religions of East Asia, including Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, Shinto, and Shamanic Traditions. What is each tradition's view of human potential? How is ultimate reality depicted and experienced? What do home altars, boisterous festivals, and silent meditation halls have in common? Several primary texts are read in translation. (HU)

➤ **REMOTE SYNCHRONOUS – TR 12:10-1:25**

Two 75 minute class sessions per week via synchronous Zoom during the scheduled class time, attendance required. Office Hours also via Zoom by appointment only. Course readings and audio/video assignments available asynchronously on CourseSite.

**REL 077  
14096**

**THE ISLAMIC TRADITION (4)  
PROF. KHURRAM HUSSAIN**

**ASIA 077 (14097) – GS 077 (14098)**

**(XLIST EJ)**

A thematic introduction to Islamic history, doctrine and practice. Topics include: Qur'an; prophecy and sacred history; ritual practices; community life; legal interpretation; art and aesthetics; mysticism; politics and polemics. (HU)

➤ **REMOTE SYNCHRONOUS – MW 10:45-12:00**

Two 75 minute class sessions per week via synchronous Zoom during the scheduled class time, attendance required. Office Hours also via Zoom by appointment only.

**REL 079  
14726**

**RELIGION AND FANTASY LITERATURE (4)  
PROF. JODI EICHLER-LEVINE**

A survey of the religious themes that entered fantasy literature in the 1950s in the works of C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien, and the humanist resistance to those themes in works by J. K. Rowling, Philip Pullman, or others. (HU)

➤ **REMOTE SYNCHRONOUS – MW 12:10-1:25**

Two interactive, synchronous class sessions per week via Zoom, 60-75 minutes each. Occasional asynchronous mini-lectures (10-15 min) via Panopto. Office hours face to face on campus, as conditions permit, and via Zoom.

**REL 090  
14738**

**MEDITATION AND THE MARTIAL ARTS - FIRST YEAR SEMINAR (4)  
PROF. MICHAEL RAPOSA**

This course will treat some of the meditative practices in which martial artists engage as preparation for or in order to supplement their martial exercises. But an even greater emphasis will be placed on the task of determining the extent to which these exercises can themselves be conceived as meditative practices, forms of "moving meditation" so to speak (this is especially the case with aikido, and with the Chinese arts identified as "internal"). Moreover, there are a variety of spiritual disciplines that are not classified as "martial arts", yet employ the heavy use of martial images and categories as part of their self-description. (St. Ignatius of Loyola's Spiritual Exercises and Christian theology of the "spiritual combat," for example, or Muslim talk about the "greater Jihad.") In what sense is the practice of prayer, meditation, or ritual devotion itself to be considered as a martial activity? What is the nature of the conflict here and who is the enemy? Is the use of these martial categories literal or metaphorical? Is the conflict a real one or are we speaking (as William James did) of something like the spiritual or "moral equivalent of war"? (HU)

➤ **REMOTE SYNCHRONOUS – TR 1:35-2:50**

Two 75 minute class sessions per week via synchronous Zoom during the scheduled class time. Occasionally, written or audio lectures will be posted on Course Site either in addition to or as a substitute for class sessions. Office hours via Zoom by appointment.

**REL 095  
14099**

**KENDRICK LAMAR AND THE MAKING OF BLACK MEANING (4)  
PROF. CHRISTOPHER DRISCOLL & PROF. MONICA MILLER**

Rap artist Kendrick Lamar has quickly been crowned one of hip-hop's G.O.A.Ts. Artistically adventurous, and socially conscious, Lamar is both unapologetic and intentional in using his art form to address fundamental aspects of human life-- pain, humility, guilt, spirituality, self-confidence, mental health, and much more. Many liken K-Dot's albums to religious poetry that tells as much a journey about where Lamar has been, and is headed. From rap albums to interviews, this course interdisciplinarily explores the impact and "spirit" of Lamar's corpus, while also highlighting *how* to study popular culture with the interdisciplinary tools of religion studies. Lamar's work provides an entry point into the intersectional study of race, religion, politics, and social life. (HU)

➤ **REMOTE SYNCHRONOUS – MW 12:10-1:25**

Two class sessions per week via synchronous Zoom during the scheduled class time, attendance required. Zoom Office Hours offered weekly (scheduled via Bookable Calendar on Course Site page).

**REL 096-011 NEW BLACK GODZ (4)**  
**14736 PROF. MONICA MILLER**

**WGSS 096-010 (14737)**

**(XLIST EK)**

From celebrity self-defining agents of material abundance (Jay Z) to those posthumously made gods after tragically succumbing to socially-sanctioned sacrifice (Breonna Taylor), “New Black Godz” explores black icons at the center and margins of promise and peril. Following hip hop and black expressive cultures’ signifying on gods, we explore means/modes of black godz’ creative manipulation of identity and social difference, and ingenuity of transmuting “problem” status into creative ingenuity at the crossroads of social mobility and the limits of escape. (HU)

➤ **REMOTE SYNCHRONOUS – MW 1:35-2:50**

Two class sessions per week via synchronous Zoom during the scheduled class time, attendance required. Zoom Office Hours offered weekly (scheduled via Bookable Calendar on Course Site page).

**REL 096-012 BIOETHICS AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC (4)**  
**14980 PROF. DENA DAVIS**

**(XLIST EM)**

**ETH 096-012 (14984) – HMS 096-012 (14981) – PHIL 096-012 (14982)**

This unprecedented epidemic raises many serious ethical problems. What can we expect of healthcare workers? How can we make difficult decisions when more people need ventilators than we have ventilators to go around? How can we balance the pain of a wounded economy with the pain of a health crisis? What are the responsibilities of ordinary citizens to attempt to stay healthy? This class will look at these and other questions while also investigating the underlying ethical theories of justice and fairness. Class evaluation will depend on papers and class participation. (HU)

➤ **REMOTE SYNCHRONOUS – MW 10:45-12:00**

Two class sessions per week via synchronous Zoom during the scheduled class time, attendance required. Grades rely heavily on class participation.

**REL 097 RELIGION AND THE PARANORMAL (4)**  
**12602 PROF. CHRISTOPHER DRISCOLL**

Government Conspiracies. UFOs. Bigfoot. Ghosts. Cattle Mutilations. Free Energy. Life after Death. Angels and Demonic Possession. Psychics, Seances, Telepathy, and other Stuff They Don't Want You to Know. Is any of this stuff real? What does real mean, anyway? Ask an "experimenter" and the answer is surely yes, but ask a skeptic and it is all make believe. Following weekly case-studies, students will leave the class with the ability to critically compare various beliefs, and with awareness of the relationship between experience, belief, and what we know about the world. Are you a believer?, and if so, in what? (HU)

➤ **REMOTE SYNCHRONOUS – MW 3:00-4:15**

Two class sessions per week via synchronous Zoom during the scheduled class time, attendance required. Zoom Office Hours offered weekly (scheduled via Bookable Calendar on Course Site page).

**REL 098-011 ANTI-SEMITISM PAST AND PRESENT (4)**

**14723**

**PROF. HARTLEY LACHTER**

**JST 098-011 (14724)**

**(XLIST ED)**

As a ubiquitously present minority in western Christian societies over time, Jews have served as a foil for western identities in ways that continue to resonate in the modern and contemporary contexts. This course will consider the role that anti-Judaism and antisemitism have played in western culture from the ancient period to the present day. (HU)

➤ **ON CAMPUS – MW 1:35-2:50**

Two 75 minute class sessions per week on campus, attendance required. Office hours twice per week via Zoom, and/or other individual meetings by appointment. Course readings and other assignments available through Course Site.

**REL 110**

**14799**

**DRINKING AND IMMORTALITY (4)**

**PROF. CONSTANCE COOK**

**ASIA 110 (14798) – MLL 110 (14797)**

**(XLIST KB)**

This class explores modes of transcendence and their expression in literature and art, but most especially poetry. The primary focus is the role of drinking alcoholic beverages in traditional Chinese society and religion, but also on other modes and what is meant by the search for immortality - and the use of inner versus outer alchemy - will be examined. (HU)

➤ **REMOTE SYNCHRONOUS – TR 1:35-2:50**

Asynchronous materials and assignments on Course Site; synchronous discussions via Zoom of varying length

**REL 114**

**14720**

**CHRISTIAN ORIGINS (4)**

**PROF. BENJAMIN WRIGHT**

**CLSS 114 (14722) -- JST 114 (14721)**

**(XLIST EC)**

Early Christianity from its beginnings until the end of the second century.

Coverage includes the Jewish and Hellenistic matrices of Christianity, traditions about the life of Jesus and his significance, and the variety of belief and practice of early Christians. Emphasis on encountering primary texts. (HU)

➤ **REMOTE SYNCHRONOUS – TR 1:35-2:50**

Two 75-minute classes per week live/synchronous via Zoom with attendance required. Individual meetings with the professor can be arranged as needed.

**REL 122  
14716**

**ARCHEOLOGY AND THE BIBLE (4)  
PROF. BENJAMIN WRIGHT  
JST 122 (14717)**

**(XLIST EB)**

In this course we will examine the way that archaeological work can inform the study of the Bible. One important consideration is how archaeological data have been used either to confirm or falsify the biblical texts. We will look at how archaeologists work and how archaeological data and the Bible intersect. We will examine in detail several archaeological sites in order to understand better the difficulties in interpreting the material remains that archaeologists dig up. (HU)

➤ **REMOTE SYNCHRONOUS – TR 10:45-12:00**

Two 75-minute classes per week live/synchronous via Zoom with attendance required. Individual meetings with the professor can be arranged as needed.

**REL 141  
14508**

**ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY (4)  
PROF. ALADDIN YAQUB  
PHIL 141 (14506)**

**(XLIST AE)**

The medieval era was the golden age of Islamic civilization. Science, mathematics, theology, philosophy, logic, jurisprudence, and many other disciplines flourished during that time. The course is an introduction to medieval Islamic philosophy. There is no indigenous Islamic philosophy other than medieval Islamic philosophy and theology, and commentaries on and interpretations of medieval Islamic philosophical and theological texts. The readings cover selections from the writings of al-Kindī, al-Rāzī, al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna), al-Ghazālī, Ibn Ṭufayl, and Ibn Rushd (Averroes). (HU)

➤ **ON CAMPUS – TR 7:15pm - 8:30pm**

Two 75-minute, on-campus class meetings per week. Attendance is required. There will be regular, on-campus weekly office hours. Also, every student will have to attend three, on-campus individual tutorials.

**REL 143  
14733**

**RELIGIOUS NATIONALISM IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES (4)  
PROF. KHURRAM HUSSAIN  
GS 143 (14734)**

**(XLIST EI)**

Religion has become a renewed political force on the world stage in recent years. This course will focus on how religion has often provided both the Ideological language and the organizing principles for many modern nationalisms. Our exploration of this topic will take the form of case studies from various parts of the world, including but not limited to Pakistan, Israel, No. Ireland, India, Iran and USA. (HU)

➤ **REMOTE SYNCHRONOUS – MW 1:35-2:50**

Two 75 minute class sessions per week via synchronous Zoom during the scheduled class time, attendance required. Office Hours also via Zoom by appointment only.

**REL 173  
14730**

**SEX, CELIBACY & SAINTHOOD: GENDER & RELIGION IN EAST ASIA (4)  
PROF. ANNABELLA PITKIN  
ASIA 173 (14731) – WGSS 173 (14732) (XLIST EH)**

This course explores themes of sexuality, celibacy, gender, and sainthood in East Asian religions. We will pay special attention to the experiences of religious women from many walks of life and time periods, from traditions including Buddhism, Daoism, and shamanism. Through film, poetry, autobiography, philosophical writing, visual art, and descriptions of visionary experience, students will encounter Buddhist and Daoist nuns, lay women, mothers, shamanic healers, oracles, activists, and royalty, from Tibet, Korea, Japan, China, and the United States. (HU)

➤ **REMOTE SYNCHRONOUS – TR 3:00-4:15**

Two 75 minute class sessions per week via synchronous Zoom during the scheduled class time, attendance required. Office Hours also via Zoom by appointment only. Course readings and audio/video assignments available asynchronously on CourseSite.

**REL 177  
14727**

**JEWS AND THE BROADWAY MUSICAL (4)  
PROF. JODI EICHLER-LEVINE  
JST 177 (14728) – THTR 177 (14729) (XLIST EF)**

The history of American musical theater is deeply interwoven with the history of American Jews. This course examines how Jews have taken part in musical theater on multiple levels-as composers, lyricists, producers, and performers, among other roles. It also examines how Jews are depicted in Broadway musicals, with particular attention to gender and ethnicity. (HU) (BUD)

➤ **REMOTE SYNCHRONOUS – MW 3:00-4:15**

Two interactive, synchronous class sessions per week via Zoom, 60-75 minutes each. Occasional asynchronous mini-lectures (10-15 min) via Panopto. Office hours face to face on campus, as conditions permit, and via Zoom.

**REL 187  
14735**

**SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND RELIGIOUS IMAGINATION (4)  
PROF. MICHAEL RAPOSA**

Impact of the scientific and technological culture on the Western religious imagination. Roots of science and technology in religious ideas and images. Ways of knowing and concepts of experience in religion and science. (HU)

➤ **REMOTE SYNCHRONOUS – TR 3:00-4:15**

Two 75 minute class sessions per week via synchronous Zoom during the scheduled class time. Occasionally, written or audio lectures will be posted on Course Site either in addition to or as a substitute for class sessions. Office hours via Zoom by appointment.

**REL 226  
14756**

**BLACK DEATH TO COVID-19 (4)  
PROF. LLOYD STEFFEN**

**ETH 226 (14758) – HMS 226 (14757)**

**(XLIST EL)**

Investigation into the ways religion and morality shape interpretations of plague and pandemics. Three specific pandemics are examined: bubonic plague of 4th century, the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic, and the current global Covid-19 crisis. Moral issues provoked by institutional, political and social responses to pandemic are also considered. (HU)

➤ **REMOTE SYNCHRONOUS – TR 10:45-12:00**

Two 75 minute classes each week during scheduled class time. Office hours weekly and by appointment. Occasional shorter lecture posted in Course Site possible.

**REL 398  
15131**

**MODERN JEWISH CULTURE  
PROF. NITZAN LEBOVIC**

**HIST 398-010 (15048) & 011 (15135) - JST 398 (15148)**

**(XLIST EX)**

This course examines the emergence of distinct forms of Jewish culture in the modern age. Our subject, then, is the rise of a secular Jewish culture, assimilation and integration over the past three centuries. We follow the rise of biblical criticism, folk culture, psychoanalysis, film, philosophy, and poetry.

Geographically, we move from early modern Europe to modern America, and Israel. (HU)

➤ **REMOTE SYNCHRONOUS – TR 1:35-2:50**

Most lectures will be via Zoom and students are expected to attend lectures synchronously.