



FALL 2020

Religion Studies Course Offerings

- REL 007** **WHAT IS RELIGION? (4)**
44664 **PROF. MICHAEL RAPOSA** **T/R 7:55-9:10**
The word "religion" is fairly recent in origin, its linguistic roots unclear, and the phenomena that it has been used to designate both vast and amorphous. This course explores some of the most prominent attempts to define "religion," definitions produced both by religious thinkers and by critics of religion. We will examine some of the methods used by scholars to study religion. Finally, we will ask how the meaning of the word may be shifting in a modern, secular age. (HU)
- REL 090-011** **RELIGION AND CONTEMPORARY FICTION (4)**
44707 **PROF. BENJAMIN WRIGHT** **T/R 1:35-2:50**
Religion has consistently been a fascination of fiction writers. One can look at the history of modern literature and find that religion has been something of a preoccupation. In this course, students look at religion through the lens of several contemporary novels. How do these authors picture religion? What kinds of religious issues do they take up? We will encounter visionary experiences, gender construction, the need to fill in the blanks, together with a bit of insanity and inscrutability. (HU, WRIT, First-Year Seminar)
- REL 090-012** **RELIGION AND HIP HOP (4)**
44714 **PROF. MONICA MILLER** **M/W 12:10-1:25**
"You in the presence of a King, scratch that, you in the presence of a God," raps Jay Z in the song "Crown." From humble beginnings to global ascendancy, hip hop culture relies on wide-ranging religious themes. Examining talk of devils, monsters, resurrection, gods, and even illuminati-styled suspicions of world domination, this course considers the "religious" dimensions of hip hop culture, and the decidedly "hip hop" expressions of religion, finding unlikely overlap between two of the world's most powerful forces. (HU, BUD, First-Year Seminar)
- REL 090-014** **BUDDHISM, PSYCHOLOGY, AND MEDICINE (4)**
43955 **PROF. ANNABELLA PITKIN** **T/R 12:10-1:25**
ASIA 090 (44064)–ETH 090 (44066)–HMS 090 (44065) **(XLIST YB)**
How have neuroscientists, Buddhists, and medical practitioners described what meditation does to the brain, mind and emotions? How have Buddhists described what enlightenment does to the mind and body? What are the historical

relationships between Buddhism, medical practice, and psychology, in the US and in Asia? Students in this course explore these questions, by examining Buddhist philosophy, psychology, memoir, and art, together with recent research on how meditation and other practices affect brain function, emotional response, and other mental and physical processes. (HU, First-Year Seminar)

REL 090-016 RACE AND THE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS IMAGINATION (4)
44706 PROF. CHRISTOPHER DRISCOLL M/W 3:00-4:15

From family dinners to first dates, race and religion continue to be among America's most "impolite" topics. How and why did these prohibitions come about? Where did the interest in these topics begin? Who wins or loses from such conversations? And, just what are "race" and "religion?" Covering key thinkers and writings from the American Revolution to civil rights and scientific revolutions, this course explores the profound role race has played in the American religious imagination (HU, First-Year Seminar)

REL 095 IS GOD DEAD? PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE. (4)
43957 PROF. CHRISTOPHER DRISCOLL M/W 9:20-10:35
PHIL 095 (44660) (XLIST YC)

Is God Dead? Some people think so. Do you? Come decide for yourself. This course looks at the idea of god in Western philosophy and theology, with particular attention to death of god movement(s), and the changing shape of these movements in light of culture wars and identity politics. The course surveys key thinkers to ask questions about the origins, functions, and future of god and gods in the contemporary world. Posed as an ongoing question-Is god dead?-the course is for anyone interested in the idea of god past, present, future. (HU)

REL 096 RELIGION AND VIOLENCE (4)
44715 PROF. LLOYD STEFFEN T/R 10:45-12:00

In this course we will explore the relationship between religious ideology with acts of violence. By examining a wide range of different instances of religious violence among Christians, Jews and Muslims, along with their accompanying ideologies, we will consider the relationship between religious affiliation, communally shared modes of discourse, and violent conflict. (HU, BUD)

REL 097 RACE AND RELIGION – THE BASICS (4)
44705 PROF. MONICA MILLER M/W 1:35-2:50

Are race and religion two distinct aspects of social life? What is religious about race, and racialized about religion? This course brings together two seemingly "distinct topics" that have more in common than oft-assumed. By examining leading discourses on the topic through numerous "case studies" - this course considers the shared social and historical roots of both "religion" and "race" in a manner that is both accessible, diverse, and intersectional. We will consider the shared social, cultural, political, and historical roots of two of the world's most controversial topics. (HU, BUD)

- REL 112** **THE BEGINNINGS OF JUDAISM AND JEWISH ORIGINS:**
44672 **JEWISH DIVERSITY IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD (4)**
PROF. BENJAMIN WRIGHT **T/R 9:20-10:35**
JST 112 (44676) **(XLIST YF)**
The variety of approaches to Judaism in the period following the Babylonian exile through the second century C.E. The literature studied will include Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. (HU)
- REL 116** **BIOETHICS (4)**
42826 **PROF. NATHAN SCHMIDT** **M/W 3:00-4:15**
PHIL 116 (44631)–ETH 116 (44633)–HMS 116 (44635) **(XLIST BY)**
Moral issues that arise in the context of health care and related biomedical fields in the United States today, examined in the light of the nature and foundation of moral rights and obligations. Topics include: confidentiality, informed consent, euthanasia, medical research and experimentation, genetics, and the distribution of health care. (HU)
- REL 129** **JEWISH PHILOSOPHY (4)**
44516 **PROF. ROSLYN WEISS** **T/R 10:45-12:00**
PHIL 129 (44510) – JST 129 (44515) **(XLIST FQ)**
Consideration of how major Jewish thinkers from the first to 21st centuries confronted questions at the intersection of religion and philosophy: the existence and nature of God, free will, evil, divine providence, miracles, creation, revelation, and religious obligation. (HU)
- REL 138** **SEX, GENDER, JEWS (4)**
44684 **PROF. JODI EICHLER-LEVINE** **M/W 1:35-2:50**
JST 138 (44685) – WGSS 138 (44688) **(XLIST YH)**
How do Jews of all genders tell their stories? What are the varied Jewish approaches to sexuality? How have feminist movements affected Jewish rituals? In this course, we will consider how religion, gender, sexuality, race, and class intersect in the lives of Jews, with a particular focus on North America. Topics will include: Jewish women’s memoirs; the voices of LGBTQ Jews; recent innovations in Jewish ritual and leadership; Jewish masculinities; and the gendering of Jewish children’s literature, among others. (HU, BUD)
- REL 140** **GLOBALIZATION AND RELIGION (4)**
44679 **PROF. ROBERT ROZEHNAL** **T/R 3:00-4:15**
GS 140 (44680) **(XLIST YG)**
This course examines the complexity of globalization and its multi-layered impact on religious identity and piety. Though comparative in methodology and historical framework, the class will give special attention to Islam and Hinduism in South Asia. Topics include: European colonialism; Orientalism and its legacy; religious nationalism; Islamophobia; and the Internet and mass media. (HU, BUG, WRIT).

- REL 145** **ISLAM AND THE MODERN WORLD (4)**
44699 **PROF. KHURRAM HUSSAIN** **M/W 1:35-2:50**
ASIA 145 (44702) – GS 145 (44704) **(XLIST YI)**
Examines how numerous Muslim thinkers-religious scholars, modernists, and Islamists-have responded to the changes and challenges of the colonial and post-colonial eras. Special emphasis is placed on the public debates over Islamic authority and authenticity in contemporary South Asia. (HU)
- REL 154** **HOLOCAUST: HISTORY AND MEANING (4)**
44776 **PROF. NITZAN LEBOVIC** **T/R 9:20-10:35**
JST 154 (42753) – HIST 154 (44774) **(XLIST CR)**
The Nazi Holocaust in its historical, political and religious setting. Emphasis upon the moral, cultural and theological issues raised by the Holocaust. (HU, BUG)
- REL 174** **MODERN THEOLOGY (4)**
44668 **PROF. MICHAEL RAPOSA** **T/R 1:35-2:50**
JST 174 (44670) **(XLIST YE)**
Major 20th century movements within Christian and Jewish theology understood as responses to the problems of modern times. May be repeated for credit as the subject matter varies. (HU)
- REL 254** **BUDDHISM AND ECOLOGY (4)**
43104 **PROF. ANNABELLA PITKIN** **T/R 3:00-4:15**
ASIA 254 (43105)–ES 254 (43106)–ETH 254 (44179) **(XLIST YD)**
Buddhism’s intellectual, ethical, and spiritual resources are reexamined in light of contemporary environmental problems. Is Buddhism the most green of the major world religions? What are the moral implications of actions that affect the environment? (HU, WRIT)
- REL 335** **RELIGION, WITCHCRAFT AND SHAMA (4)**
44905 **PROF. DAVID CASAGRANDE** **T/R 3:00-4:15**
ANTH 335 (44904) **(XLIST DB)**
Addresses broad questions about supernatural beliefs as systems of meaning and as practical and moral guides, with a focus on theoretical explanations for supernatural beliefs and the function of religious specialists in the social organization of cultures. (SS, BUD)
- REL 375** **THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT IN AMERICA (4)**
44700 **PROF. ZIAD MUNSON** **M/W 1:35-2:50**
SOC 375 (44698) **(XLIST DG)**
What do we know about the Christian Right? Who are they? What do they believe? Where do they come from? Seminar explores answers to such questions through a focus on the history of the Christian Right as well as its ideologies and beliefs, the people who are a part of it, and its evolving relationship to the American political system. (SS, BUD)