

RELIGION (RELI)

RELI115F Theorizing Religion with Zombies (FYS)

This course introduces students to theories in religious studies in order to investigate the intellectual and cultural histories of two highly influential and essentially religious ideas: the zombie and the apocalypse. We will critically trace their representations in popular culture in order to explore writings in biblical narrative, history, modernity, monster theory, alterity, gender, capitalism, race, epidemiology, film theory, and media studies. We will begin with ancient texts, move to the history of the concept of the zonbi in Haiti, and then trace the trope of this modern monster and its various meanings into the contemporary moment.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Prereq: **None**

RELI151 What is Religion? Vodou, Christian TikTok, and the First Amendment

Were the people who drank the Kool-Aid at Jonestown brainwashed, or did they die for a noble cause? How did Santeria practitioners get the right to perform animal sacrifice? Is Haitian Vodou a religion? What exactly does the First Amendment protect? What happens when Christian women become Tiktok influencers? This class will introduce you to the ways in which we study religion--and race--by reading critical case studies about Jonestown, Santeria, Vodou, freedom of religion court cases, and more. This is not a survey of world religions, and once you've taken What is Religion?, you'll know why we don't teach that at Wes. You will also have a critical set of intellectual tools for understanding the role of religion in the contemporary world.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Prereq: **None**

RELI151F What is Religion? JewBus, Museums, and the First Amendment (FYS)

Why did the FBI assault the Branch Davidians' compound near Waco, Texas, thinking it was a cult, while those inside viewed the government as serving the anti-Christ? Can one be Buddhist and Jewish at the same time? Are museums religious spaces? Does secularism protect religion from the government or the government from religion? This class will introduce you to the ways in which we study religions by reading critical case studies, including those about Muslims debating the hijab, the treatment of sacred objects in museums, and freedom of religion court cases. This is not a survey of world religions, and once you've taken What is Religion?, you'll know why we don't teach that at Wes. You will also have a critical set of intellectual tools for understanding the role of religion in the contemporary world.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **CIST151F**

Prereq: **None**

RELI173F Invoking the Earth Mother: Ecofeminisms and Indigenous Spiritual Ecologies (FYS)

Over the past 50 years, a radical reshaping of our relationship to the organic world has infused national economic strategies, United Nations discourses, indigenous land rights movements, and environmental legal frameworks with language that invokes the Mother Earth. This seminar will explore the social, legal, and metaphysical aspects of eco-feminist and indigenous spiritual ecologies. We will explore these worldviews and ritual practices from animist, pantheist, monist and panentheist perspectives, with a particular focus on

gender constructs, implicit and explicit, within these movements. What is the relationship between the 1970s environmental movement and the rise of Goddess worship in the U.S.? Between the United Nations and Amazonian ayahuasca practitioners? Legally, Should Trees Have Standing (Stone 1972)? Politically, Is the Goddess a Feminist (Hiltebeitel & Erndl 2000)? Is Mother Earth, ultimately, empowering for LGBTQ2S folks? Engaging emerging podcasts, shamanic documentaries, social manifestos, and provocative religious studies texts, students will wrestle with a profound set of humanistic questions that may prove crucial to our survival as a species, namely: under what circumstances do we successfully invoke Mother Earth, the Pachamama, or the Goddess to self-regulate the ecologically destructive practices of our late-stage capitalism?

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Prereq: **None**

RELI174 Jesus Chicken: Business and Religion in America (FYS)

Summary: Although many Americans are aware of the religious identity of the fast-food chain Chick-fil-A (earning it the moniker of "Jesus Chicken" in some communities), there is nothing new about businesses that project a religious ethos. This First Year Seminar explores the blurry boundary between business and religion in America, examining the ways in which businesses use religion and the ways in which religious entities often function as businesses. Although this course primarily focuses on the Christian tradition, it will also examine the ways in which other religious communities (such as Jewish and Buddhist) approach the marketplace. Chronologically, the course spans the 17th to 21st centuries, paying special attention to the emergence of the market economy in the U. S. from 1800-1850 and the growth of consumer culture in the second half of the 20th century. This course will provide students with an introduction to historical methods and the critical study of religion, while focusing on developing collegiate-level reading, writing, and critical thinking skills that will form a foundation for any major at Wesleyan.

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-HIST**

Identical With: **HIST143F**

Prereq: **None**

RELI175F Constructing the Human: Humans and Animals in the Hebrew Bible (FYS)

How do we define "humanness" and what assumptions do we make about our own distinctions between "humans" and "animals" when we define humanness? This course will look at the process of constructing the human category in the ancient world and Hebrew Bible and then compare that process to our own modern conceptions of humanness. In what ways are they similar and in what ways are they different? How can ancient examples of the human category inform our own ethical understandings of what it means to be human?

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **CJST175F**

Prereq: **None**

RELI201 Introduction to the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament)

The Hebrew Bible is one of the most influential texts in the world. From antiquity to the present, it has served as a source of philosophical, literary, and artistic reflection. It is a fascinating document, combining narrative, poetry, law, prophetic proclamations, and puzzling parables. What kind of book is the Hebrew Bible? Who wrote it and why? How do we approach such a text across the distance of time? Through a systematic reading from the very beginning, we will place the Bible in its historical context while giving special attention

to the philosophical and literary questions it raises: Is obedience to authority always justified? Why do good people suffer unjustly? What is God's gender? In answering these and other questions, you will gain an understanding of the ways contesting interpretations make authoritative claims.

Offering: Host

Grading: OPT

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: HA-RELI

Identical With: MDST203, CJST244, COL237, WLIT281

Prereq: None

RELI202 Constructing the Human: Humans and Animals in the Hebrew Bible

How do we define "humanness" and what assumptions do we make about our own distinctions between "humans" and "animals" through this definition? This course will look at the process of constructing the human category in the ancient world and Hebrew Bible and then compare that process to our own modern conceptions of humanness. In what ways are they similar and in what ways are they different? How can ancient examples of the human category inform our own ethical understandings of what it means to be human?

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: CJST202, ENVS202

Prereq: None

RELI203 Jews & Judaism: Race, Religion, Culture

What is a Jew? Are Jews white? Must a Jew believe in God? What is at stake when defining someone as a Jew? Using sources ranging from the Hebrew Bible to contemporary films, this course examines various facets of Jewish life, paying special attention to contesting definitions of Jewishness as race, religion, and culture. Building on a chronological discussion of Jewish history, we will ask theoretical questions such as the relation between gender and biblical interpretation, the relevance of religious law in contemporary society, and the challenges of diasporic thinking to national sovereignty.

Offering: Host

Grading: OPT

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: CJST203

Prereq: None

RELI204 Invoking the Earth Mother: Ecofeminisms and Indigenous Spiritual Ecologies

Over the past 50 years, a radical reshaping of our relationship to the organic world has infused national economic strategies, United Nations discourses, indigenous land rights movements, environmental legal frameworks, and a subtle mainstreaming of neopagan ritual practices and goddess worship in the Americas. This seminar will explore the social, legal and metaphysical aspects of myriad eco-feminist and indigenous spiritual ecologies. We will explore these worldviews and ritual practices from animist, pantheist, monist, and panentheist perspectives, with a particular focus on gender constructs, implicit and explicit, within these movements. What is the relationship between the 1970s environmental movement and the rise of Goddess worship in the U.S.? Between the United Nations and Amazonian ayahuasca practitioners? Legally, Should Trees Have Standing (Stone 1972)? Politically, Is the Goddess a Feminist (Hiltebeitel & Erndl 2000)? Is Mother Earth, ultimately, empowering for LGBTQ2S folks? Engaging emerging podcasts, shamanic documentaries, social manifestos, and provocative religious studies texts, students will wrestle with a profound set of humanistic questions that may prove crucial to our survival as a species, namely: under what circumstances do we successfully invoke the gods to self-regulate the ecologically destructive practices of our late-stage capitalism? Who invokes who, how and when, shared where? To whom do we tend to listen on these matters, and why are they quaked to speak?

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: ENVS213, FGSS204

Prereq: None

RELI205 Dharma, Karma, and Living with the God/dess/es: Hindu Lives

Through fiction, autobiography, biography, art, a comic book, a city, and a village, this course explores some of the myriad understandings of what it is to be Hindu. In an effort to introduce students to Hindu culture and religion, a number of approaches shall engage the questions, What is Hindu dharma? and What is it to be Hindu? The class will also investigate the issue of "Hinduism," a term created in the 19th century to identify a Hindu "religion" rejected by many 21st-century Hindus. This issue expresses just one of many arising from the Indian experience of contact with the West. Overall, the course immerses students in the lives of Hindu individuals and communities so that we, as a class, can draw our conclusions about Hindu practices and meanings in different political, mythic, social, and cultural contexts.

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: GSAS205

Prereq: None

RELI206 Neo-Confucian Philosophy

This course presents critical discussion of issues central to Neo-Confucian (11th--19th centuries CE) philosophers that in many cases are still central in East Asian thought today. Topics will include the relation between knowledge and action, Neo-Confucian conceptions of idealism and materialism, and the connection between Neo-Confucian philosophy and spirituality. While our primary focus is on China, we will also look at distinctive Neo-Confucianism issues in Korea and Japan.

Offering: Crosslisting

Grading: OPT

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: HA-PHL

Identical With: PHIL259, CEAS256

Prereq: None

RELI207F Who is the Dalai Lama? (FYS)

This First Year Seminar introduces the institution of the Dalai Lama of Tibet and the individuals who have filled that role from a wide range of sources and perspectives. Topics include regional histories of Buddhism; the unique Tibetan tradition of recognized reincarnations (tulkus) and the Buddhist philosophical principles that support it; and a survey of prominent Dalai Lamas from the 15th century to the present day. The seminar examines the activities of the current Dalai Lama in his role as traditional Buddhist teacher, political leader, and international superstar, through the lenses of the PRC government media, Indian exile communities, and the modern West. Later classes will also address issues of Western and Chinese forms of Orientalism and myth-making about Tibet. Readings include the writings of past and current Dalai Lamas as well as supporting secondary literature.

Offering: Host

Grading: OPT

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: CEAS217F, GSAS207F

Prereq: None

RELI208 Bodies and Sexualities in Medieval Islam

Islamic societies have long traditions of commentary about the body and sexuality. Medieval Islamic texts are replete with references to homosexual and

erotic love that challenge the assumption, common today, that Islamic society is restrictive by its very nature. In this course, we will explore how the body was conceptualized by medieval Muslims. Instead of essentializing the Islamic "viewpoint" on the body, we will survey the variety of opinions and ideas about the body in the medieval Islamic world. We will draw on the Quran, early Abbasid erotic poetry and literature, Islamic medical manuals, philosophical works, and belles-lettres, in order to trace how different understandings of the body and sexuality unfolded over time. In particular, we will focus on the notion of complementarity between the sexes, the role of marriage and procreation, the effects of medical theories on understandings of bodily health and illness, the ethical and legal frameworks governing sexual conduct, and the references to homoeroticism, pederasty, and female same-sex desire found in medieval Arabic and Persian love poetry and literature.

Offering: Crosslisting

Grading: OPT

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: HA-COL

Identical With: COL202, FGSS203

Prereq: None

RELI208F Bodies and Sexualities in Medieval Islam (FYS)

Islamic societies have long traditions of commentary about the body and sexuality. Medieval Islamic texts are replete with references to homosexual and erotic love that challenge the assumption, common today, that Islamic society is restrictive by its very nature. In this course, we will explore how the body was conceptualized by medieval Muslims. Instead of essentializing the Islamic "viewpoint" on the body, we will survey the variety of opinions and ideas about the body in the medieval Islamic world. We will draw on the Quran, early Abbasid erotic poetry and literature, Islamic medical manuals, philosophical works, and belles-lettres, in order to trace how different understandings of the body and sexuality unfolded over time. In particular, we will focus on the notion of complementarity between the sexes, the role of marriage and procreation, the effects of medical theories on understandings of bodily health and illness, the ethical and legal frameworks governing sexual conduct, and the references to homoeroticism, pederasty, and female same-sex desire found in medieval Arabic and Persian love poetry and literature.

Offering: Crosslisting

Grading: OPT

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: HA-COL

Identical With: COL202F

Prereq: None

RELI209F Religion, Science, and Empire: Crucible of a Globalized World (FYS)

The development of modern science--and of modernity itself--not only coincided with the rise of European imperialism, it was abetted by it. Meanwhile, religion was integral to both the roots of European science and Western encounters with others. This class will explore how the intersections of religion, science, and empire have formed a globalized world with examples of European engagement with the Americas, Middle East, and, particularly, India from the age of Columbus through to the space race. We will examine how the disciplines we know today as biology, anthropology, archaeology, folklore, and the history of religions all crystallized in the crucible of imperial encounter and how non-Westerners have embraced, engaged, and resisted these epistemes.

Offering: Host

Grading: OPT

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Prereq: None

RELI212 Introduction to the New Testament

The purpose of this course is to provide an introduction to writings of the earliest Christians that came to be included in the New Testament. These writings will be examined critically with respect to their social-historical origin, religious

content, and place within the development of early Christianities. Interpreting early Christian texts constitutes the most important task in the study of the New Testament. We will, therefore, focus on a close reading of the New Testament in light of historical situations and social contexts in the Greco-Roman world, one of the chief aims of the course being the acquisition of critical skills in reading and understanding the New Testament. In the process, we will necessarily engage secondary scholarship and wider theoretical interests, thereby providing students with a general introduction to the academic study of religion.

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: HA-RELI

Identical With: MDST214, WLIT282

Prereq: None

RELI213 Refugees & Exiles: Religion in the Diaspora

Recent years have seen the on-going tragic refugee crisis, with millions of people being displaced because of war and ecological disasters. This course deals with the meaning of refuge, exile, and diaspora through three perspectives: philosophical, historical, and literary. What does it mean to be forced to leave one's home? How is it possible to make sense of such a tragedy? What creative power can diaspora muster to the rescue of culture? In our search for answers, we will examine a variety of case studies including the contemporary refugee crises in the Middle East, the border between the United States and Mexico, the black transatlantic, and the destruction of the temple in the Hebrew Bible. This course is a project-based Service Learning in which all assignments are geared toward the final project, in which each student will produce a radio show based on an analysis of a refugee crisis of their choice. These shows will air on WESU 88.1 FM Middletown. To learn more and listen to previous seasons of last year's radio shows visit <https://reli213.site.wesleyan.edu>

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: CJST214

Prereq: None

RELI215 Politics and Piety in Early Christianities

The first four centuries of the Christian era will illustrate the lively twists and turns of social experimentation that set the stage for the emergence of the Christian religion. This course will be concerned with fundamental arenas of intellectual and social conflict, including constructions of Christian myths of apostolic origins and authority; the appropriation of the Jewish epic; the challenge of gnosticism; the domestication of Greek philosophy; interpretations of sexuality and gender; experiences of martyrdom and prosecution; theological reflections on human nature and society; and the ways Christians were seen by Romans. The objective will be to grasp the beginnings of the Christian religion as a human achievement of cultural consequence.

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: MDST215, CLST215

Prereq: None

RELI215F Religion and Politics in Early Christianity (FYS)

The first four centuries of the Christian era illustrate the lively twists and turns of social experimentation that set the stage for the emergence of the Christian religion. This course will be concerned with fundamental arenas of intellectual and social conflict, including constructions of Christian myths of apostolic origins and authority; the appropriation of the Jewish epic; the challenge of gnosticism; the domestication of Greek philosophy; interpretations of sexuality and gender; experiences of martyrdom and prosecution; theological reflections on human nature and society; and the ways Christians were seen by Romans. The objective

will be to grasp the beginnings of the Christian religion as a human achievement of cultural consequence.

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Prereq: None

RELI216 Jesus Through Jewish Eyes

In this course, we explore the visual and textual representations of the vexed relation between Jews and Christians throughout history. Looking at the various ways in which Christianity and Judaism define themselves vis-à-vis the other allows us to understand what mechanisms of cultural appropriation, subversion, and hidden polemics are at work. Special attention will be given to the figure of Jesus as a point of artistic and theological contention. How do artistic representations change our understanding of religious themes? What is at stake for each religion in the encounter with the other? What are the political implications of theological debates? Is this dialogue needed, or even possible, in our post-secular age?

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: CJST216

Prereq: None

RELI217 The Environment, The Bible, and Moral Debate

The environment is a pressing concern for many people and is the center of much modern debate. Within this debate, many people draw on biblical texts for a source of religious or moral superiority. These biblical texts have been used to support many different, and often contradictory, arguments within the environmental debate. So what does the bible actually say about the environment? Is there a singular "biblical" view about what the environment is and how one should treat it? This course aims to look at how the bible has been used in environmental debate and then look at the texts cited, analyzing both in a modern and ancient context.

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: ENVS217, CJST219

Prereq: None

RELI218 The Cosmos of Dante's "Comedy"

In 1321, Dante Alighieri completes the final cantos of the "Comedy" and breathes his last. After 700 years, the "Comedy" has not finished saying what it has to say. This course provides an in-depth introduction to Dante's masterwork as a point of entry to the history of Western literature, philosophy, and science. The core of the course consists of an intensive study of Dante's encyclopedic poem in relation to the culture and history of Medieval Europe. We examine the poem as both a product and an interpretation of the world it describes. We also observe how the "Comedy" casts its long shadow on modern culture: in Primo Levi's description of the horror of Nazi concentration camps, or in Amiri Baraka's fragmentary representation of America's infernal racist system. We investigate the challenges that Dante's text elicits when it migrates to visual and cinematic arts (from medieval illuminations to Robert Rauschenberg to David Fincher), continuously camouflaging and adapting to different media. Major topics of this course include: representations of the otherworld; the soul's relation to the divine; Dante's concepts of governance and universal peace; mythology and theology in Dante's Christian poetics; the role of the classics in the Middle Ages; intertextuality and imitation; genres and genders in medieval literature; notions of authorship and authority during the 13th and 14th centuries; the culture and materiality of manuscripts in the Middle Ages; and the reception of Dante's work from the 14th century to the present. The course combines

a close analysis of Dante's inventiveness and literary strategies with exercises in analytical writing and in multimedia translation and adaptation, aimed at prompting critical reflection on the ways in which present cultural practices are built upon the practices of the past. This course is conducted in English; no previous knowledge of Italian is required.

Offering: Crosslisting

Grading: OPT

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN

Identical With: RL&L226, ITAL226, COL234, MDST226, WLIT250

Prereq: None

RELI219 Online and #IRL: Digital Media, Power, and Religion

From meditation apps and Zoom church to TikTok witches and spiritual influencers, religion and spirituality pervade the Internet. Yet digital media reflects social, economic, and political negotiations of power that often elude our scrolling eyes. This course critically examines digital media and religion by asking how the "power" of digital infrastructures affects religion. Together we will map different platforms and mediators (social media, material technologies, and corporate gatekeepers) that shape "power" and "religion" online. We will survey how religious practitioners navigate digital media through case studies of ex-Evangelical Twitter users, Hindu mega-temple live streams, ritual smartphone apps, and more. We will discuss "spiritual machines" and ask, "Has digital technology become a new god?" This course takes an interdisciplinary approach and engages research from technology studies, media studies, and religious studies. Students will also examine methods, ethics, and theories of studying digital religion and develop their own digital religion case studies.

Offering: Host

Grading: OPT

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Prereq: None

RELI220 Modern Christian Thought

This course will provide an introduction to the field of Christian thought by exploring the relationship between conceptions of God and conceptions of selfhood, from St. Augustine through liberation, feminist, evangelical, process, and eco-theologies. How do the ways people think about God reflect, support, or interrupt the ways they think about the human subject? And what sorts of ethics, communities, and political decisions do these models underwrite?

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: HA-RELI

Identical With: COL220

Prereq: None

RELI221 Islam and Muslim Cultures: Introduction with Case Studies

This course provides an introduction to Islamic traditions and Muslim societies. No background is required. Using a variety of in-depth case studies (Black Muslims in the US, Islamist women of Egypt, and gender dynamics among Hyderabad Shia), the course familiarizes students with many of the beliefs and practices Muslims associate with Islam and examines commonalities and diversity in how Muslims live their religion. While paying particular attention to peoples and places in South Asia, the Middle East, and the U.S., the course will demonstrate how contemporary Muslim communities exist within global networks that shape local and transnational religion, cultures, and politics.

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: GSAS221

Prereq: None

RELI221F Islam & Muslim Cultures (FYS)

This course provides an introduction to Islamic traditions and Muslim societies. No background is required. Using a variety of in-depth case studies, the course familiarizes students with many of the beliefs and practices Muslims associate with Islam, and examines commonalities and diversity in how Muslims live their religion. While paying particular attention to peoples and places in South Asia, the Middle East, and the US, the course will demonstrate how contemporary Muslim communities exist within global networks that shape local and transnational religion, cultures, and politics.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Prereq: **None**

RELI222 Identity and Jewish Literature: Sexuality, Race, and Gender

What, if anything, is Jewish literature? What, if anything, does it tell us about the history of the people called Jews? This course explores those questions through a variety of sources from Jewish writers, including Sholem Aleichem, Cynthia Ozick, Franz Kafka, I.B. Singer, and others (flexible based on student interest). Through these readings, we will explore how Jewish literature relates to broader questions of sexuality, race, gender, colonialism, etc., as well as specific questions of Jewish history, like the Holocaust and the state of Israel. All works will be read in translation and no previous knowledge of Jewish studies or Judaism is required.

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-CJST**

Identical With: **CJST222, FGSS222**

Prereq: **None**

RELI224 Zen Buddhism Across East Asia: Teaching and Practice

In this course, we will examine Zen/Chan Buddhism in history and in its contemporary practice. We will trace how Zen Buddhism sprouted from Chinese religious traditions in the Tang Dynasty (618-907), flourished in the Song Dynasty (906-1279), and then spread to other East Asian countries such as Japan and Korea. Then, we will pay attention to the ways in which Zen Buddhism found its way to modern Western society, through figures such as D. T. Suzuki and Okakura Kakuzo since the 19th century.

Course readings consist of primary sources of Zen Buddhism, which are available in English translation. A wide range of texts will be read closely, from early manuscripts discovered in Dunhuang to contemporary works inspired by Zen Buddhism, supplemented by secondary scholarship. We also investigate how Zen Buddhism has been expressed in garden designing, poetry, tea ceremony, and as a way of life in contemporary Western society. A field trip to a Zen meditation center will be organized during the course.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **CEAS228**

Prereq: **None**

RELI224F Zen Buddhism Across East Asia: Teaching and Practice (FYS)

In this course, we will examine Zen/Chan Buddhism in history and in its contemporary practice. We will trace how Zen Buddhism sprouted from Chinese religious traditions in the Tang Dynasty (618-907), flourished in the Song Dynasty (906-1279), and then spread to other East Asian countries such as Japan and Korea. Then, we will pay attention to the ways in which Zen Buddhism found

its way to modern Western society, through figures such as D. T. Suzuki and Okakura Kakuzo since the 19th century.

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Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Prereq: **None**

RELI225 Socialist Utopias: Transcendence and Religion in Communist States

Socialism is a political system predicated on building a better future by transcending the present. But what kind of utopias were imagined in and by actual socialist states like the Soviet Union? Why was atheism so central to Marx's vision of socialism, and what kinds of futures did communists imagine were possible, once religion was removed from society? What kinds of transcendence did communists imagine would exist once they transcended religion? What kinds of religious practices were enabled despite and sometimes because of the state's repression of organized religion? We will read some Marx and some Soviet science fiction as well as ethnographies, ranging from studies that explore how communism is and isn't like a religion, how former atheists became missionaries, how some religious communities survived communism, how mangoes became Mao's relics, how Vietnamese spirit mediums channel Ho Chi Minh, and what kinds of imaginaries can flourish in post-socialist ruins like Moscow and Silicon Valley.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **REES230**

Prereq: **None**

RELI225F Socialist Utopias: Transcendence and Religion in Communist States (FYS)

Socialism is a political system predicated on building a better future by transcending the present. But what kind of utopias were imagined in and by actual socialist states like the Soviet Union? Why was atheism so central to Marx's vision of socialism, and what kinds of futures did communists imagine were possible, once religion was removed from society? What kinds of transcendence did communists imagine would exist once they transcended religion? What kinds of religious practices were enabled despite and sometimes because of the state's repression of organized religion? We will read some Marx, some Soviet science fiction as well as ethnographies, ranging from studies that explore how communism is and isn't like a religion, how former atheists became missionaries, how some religious communities survived communism, how mangoes became Mao's relics, how Vietnamese spirit mediums channel Ho Chi Minh, and what kinds of imaginaries can flourish in post-socialist ruins like Moscow and Silicon Valley.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **REES225F**

Prereq: **None**

RELI226 American Christianities: What do Christians Want?

The course explores various forms of contemporary Christianity in the United States and focuses on the ambitions that guide Christian--mostly Protestant--practices. One guiding question we will ask is, "What do American Christians want?" More converts? Social justice? Salvation? Money? A Christian nation? We will interrogate how ideals of salvation, justice, nationhood, and the family shape Christian social action. Religion is not only what groups think and believe, but also what they do. We will examine why Christians form separatist movements, fund global humanitarian efforts, travel on international missions, use digital media, support anti-abortion activism, and more. By considering a wide variety of Christian groups, we will critically evaluate the diverse social imaginaries, theological frameworks, and historical foundations that shape contemporary United States Christianities. This course uses methods from sociology, history, and anthropology. We will critically engage media produced by Christian practitioners.

Offering: Host

Grading: OPT

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Prereq: None

RELI228 Classical Chinese Philosophy

Topics in this critical examination of issues debated by the early Confucian, Daoist, and Mohist philosophers will include the nature of normative authority and value, the importance of ritual, and the relation between personal and social goods.

Offering: Crosslisting

Grading: OPT

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: HA-PHIL

Identical With: PHIL205, CEAS261

Prereq: None

RELI229 Tibetan Religion

This course serves as an introduction to major themes of Buddhist thought and practice within the cultural and historical framework of Tibet and the wider Himalayan world. In doing so, it examines various approaches to the study of religion and questions traditional definitions of categories such as "religion" and "Buddhism" themselves. Beginning with a close study of Patrul Rinpoche's classic 19th-century guide to Tibetan Buddhism, the early part of the course focuses on the doctrinal foundations of the tradition. This is followed by a historical and more critical examination of Tibetan religious history, proceeding from Buddhism's Indian antecedents and its initial arrival in Tibet during the seventh century through the present day. The course will explore a wide range of Tibetan religious cultures and practices including Buddhist ethics, systems of monastic and ascetic life, ritual activities, sacred geography and pilgrimage, lay religion, as well as the status of Tibetan Buddhism under Chinese occupation and in the West. It will also examine the lesser-known communities of Tibetan Muslims and Christians inside Tibet and in exile. The majority of readings will consist of primary texts in translation, and will concentrate on Tibet's rich narrative literary tradition. These will be supplemented by secondary literature on the study of religion and Tibetan Buddhism.

Offering: Host

Grading: OPT

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: CEAS343, WLIT273, GSAS229

Prereq: None

RELI230 Cinematic Encounters: Muslims and/in/of the West

Please note: students will be required to view all films prior to the first day of class, and to submit pre-session assignments. Examining contemporary films by and about Britons, Indians, Pakistanis, Afghans, and Black and white Americans offers the opportunity to challenge the simplistic binaries of West versus Islam

upon which popular representations often rely. We will pay attention to the aesthetic choices made by directors and screenwriters as they depict themes of Muslim emigration, European imperialism and colonialism, religion and secularism, terrorism and state violence, representations of gender, and issues of multiple belonging. Particular analytic emphasis will be given to the concept of nationalism. Films that may be included are "The Outpost," "The Kingdom of God," "The Battle of Algiers," "Lagaan," "Zero Dark Thirty," "The Beauty Shop of Kabul," "Restrepo," "Khuda ke Liye," "My Name Is Khan," "Malcolm X," and "AmericanEast."

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Prereq: None

RELI230Z Cinematic Culture Clash?: Muslims and/in the West

London, Los Angeles, Lahore, Algiers, Kabul, Jerusalem, Rajasthan, and Chicago. Examining contemporary films set in these places by Americans, Britons, Indians, and Pakistanis offers the opportunity to challenge the simplistic binaries of West vs. Islam upon which popular representations often rely. Themes that will be explored include Muslim emigration and diaspora, European imperialism and colonialism, religion and secularism in the formation of national identity, terrorism and state violence, representation of gender differences, and the challenges of multiple identities. Films will include The Kingdom of God, The Battle of Algiers, Lagaan, The Beauty Shop of Kabul, Zero Dark Thirty, Khuda ke Liye, My Name is Khan, AmericanEast, and Brick Lane.

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: GSAS230Z

Prereq: None

RELI231 Greeks-Romans-Christians

Western civilization emerged, in part, out of the achievements of ancient Greeks, Romans, and Christians. Art, architecture, philosophy, and literature were all forged in a crucible of clashing cultures. This course will introduce students to the religious worlds of Greek, Roman, and Christian antiquity. Attention will be given to the mythologies of the gods and cultic practices of the people, including religious sanctuaries, festivals, and sacrifices; divination, magic, and the mysteries; philosophy, ethics, and theology. We will conclude with an assessment of the rise and eventual triumph of Christians, their appropriation and critique of Greco-Roman culture, and their obsession with martyrdom and the cult of the dead.

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: CLST235, COL263

Prereq: None

RELI239 Modern Shamanism: Ecstasy and Ancestors in the New Age

The wise and mysterious native shaman has long held a particular fascination for Western scholars of religion, but does this figure even exist? What does it mean to be a practicing shaman today? Beginning with Eliade's definition of "archaic ecstasy," we examine the idea of the shaman, their role in the New Age movement, and the challenges faced by contemporary indigenous shamans, from negotiating international intellectual property rights law to Ayahuasca tourism and environmental activism. Course materials are supplemented by A/V materials from the instructor's fieldwork in Siberia.

Offering: Host

Grading: OPT

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: **REES282**

Prereq: **None**

RELI240 Religion in the Roman Empire

This course is an introduction to the religious practices of ancient Rome, from the Republic to the Empire and its conversion to Christianity. Attention will be given to the gods and their veneration, divination and sacrifice, religion and the family, religion and the state, and official attitudes toward foreign cults.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Prereq: **None**

RELI241 Cults, Crusades, Jihad, and Multiculturalism: On (Non)Religious (In)Tolerance

"More people have died in the name of religion than any other cause on Earth." Is this true? If not, why do so many people believe it? Even if it is not true, a great many people have died for causes propelled by religious ideologies and sentiments. Then again, a great many people have been killed because of their religious identities and associations. How do religious traditions generate emotions of empathy, suspicion, antagonism, and/or indifference? And how do secular traditions promote similar emotions toward specific religions and toward religion in general? This course will investigate what these dynamics tell us about various religions in different cultures--specifically those of South Asia and the United States--and how some social ideologies allow only for specific religions or all religions. We will explore these in the context of the so-called "cult" of the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas; the pogrom against Muslims by Hindu nationalists in India; various jihads in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India; and the role of imagined Muslims in the language of tolerance among the American republic's founders.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **GSAS241**

Prereq: **None**

RELI241F Cults, Crusades, Jihad, and Multiculturalism: On (Non)Religious (In)Tolerance (FYS)

"More people have died in the name of religion than any other cause on earth." Is this true? If not, why do so many people believe it so? Even if it is not true, a great many people have died for causes propelled by religious ideologies and sentiments. Then again, a great many people have been killed because of their religious identities and associations. How do religious traditions generate emotions of empathy, suspicion, antagonism, and/or indifference? And how do secular traditions promote similar emotions toward specific religions and toward religion in general? This course will investigate what these dynamics tell us about various religions in different cultures--specifically those of South Asia and the United States--and how some social ideologies allow only for specific religions or all religions. We will explore these in the context of the so-called "cult" of the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas; the pogrom against Muslims by Hindu nationalists in India; various jihads in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India; and the role of imagined Muslims in the language of tolerance among the American republic's founders.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Prereq: **None**

RELI242 Introduction to Buddhist Thought and Practice

This course will introduce significant aspects of Buddhist thought and practice, primarily as it manifested through the literature of India, South Asia, and

East Asia. It begins with an overview of the historical Buddha's life and the development of early Buddhist ideas and practices. The course then introduces the Mahayana or Great Vehicle tradition that began to emerge around the first century BCE, as well as later forms of esoteric Buddhism known as Tantra. The course concludes with the development of modern Buddhism in Asia and its manifestation in the West. Readings consist mainly of primary Buddhist texts in translation, which are supplemented as necessary by works of secondary scholarship. The course broadly examines the topics of Buddhist philosophy and ethics, monastic and ascetic life, meditation and ritual practices, and the material culture of Buddhist societies, including artistic traditions, architecture, and book culture.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **HA-RELI**

Identical With: **CEAS242, GSAS242**

Prereq: **None**

RELI250 Islamic Movements and Modernities

The so-called Islamic State once grabbed headlines daily with criminal acts primarily committed against other Muslims, but also against non-Muslims. Its violence overshadowed even al-Qaeda and the Taliban in media coverage. This seminar will track the development of these groups as well as the many more Islamic movements that reject violence and seek peaceful social change. Indeed, many Muslims object to the name "Islamic State" because they recognize the group as neither Islamic nor a legitimate state. The seminar examines how specific Muslim communities in the Middle East, Europe, South Asia, and the U.S. have engaged the modern conditions of Western imperialism, nationalism, and globalization and shaped their own forms of modernity. The seminar also investigates the increasingly digital, transnational, and intercultural realms of Muslim experiences.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Prereq: **None**

RELI252 The Five Rachels: Jewish Women in Contemporary American Culture

The course will focus on five iconic contemporary female TV characters, actors, and creators; American, Jewish, and incidentally--or not--sharing the same name: Rachel. Rachel Green ("Friends"), Rachel Berry ("Glee"), Rachel Menken ("Mad Men"), and Rebecca Bunch ("Crazy Ex-Girlfriend"), played by Rachel Bloom, and Midge Maisel ("The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel"), played by Rachel Brosnahan. These five complement each other and offer us a panoramic view of the American Jewish female experience: discrimination, inclusion, the generational gap, and their relationship with Israel. In addition, they allow us to explore the three most common stereotypes associated with the Jewish woman: the Jewish nose, the Jewish mother, and the Jewish American princess. We will discuss the conflicts and the societal shifts these characters embody, and how they define themselves, their Jewishness, their femininity, their unique surroundings, and place in history.

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-CJST**

Identical With: **CJST252**

Prereq: **None**

RELI255 Heretics and Heresy

What is religion all about? Is it fundamentally about belief, truth, or God? About understanding, revelation, or salvation? Is religion about one's origins, identity, or destiny? Is it about what one does or is supposed to do? How would we ever know? And who gets to say so? This class will explore the emergence of "heresy"--notions of error--in the construction of religious belief and practice in

ancient Christianity, and how "heretics" became central to the way Christianity defined itself in relation to Jewish and Greco-Roman religious traditions. We will examine these issues, in part, by reading a number of remarkable, and recently discovered "heretical" texts from antiquity and early Christianity, including the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Mary, the Gospel of Judas, the Gospel of Truth, and the Cologne Mani Codex.

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Prereq: None

RELI263 God & Guns: The History of Faith and Firearms in America

This course examines the history of firearms and religion in the United States, ultimately seeking to understand the significance of gun culture within American Christianity and the powerful "God & Guns" story at the core of many Americans' identity. Beginning with an overview of colonial and revolutionary-era views of firearms and violence, the course examines the influence of slavery, gender, and the wars of the 20th century, paying special attention to the emergence of a masculine, warrior Jesus within evangelical and fundamentalist communities during the Cold War. Students will be challenged to consider the ways in which this story helps explain one facet of popular support for Donald Trump and to reflect on how firearms are central to the identity of many conservative American Christians.

Offering: Crosslisting

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST

Identical With: HIST289, AMST276

Prereq: None

RELI264 Theorizing Religion with Zombies

This course introduces students to theories in religious studies in order to investigate the intellectual and cultural histories of two highly influential and essentially religious ideas: the zombie and the apocalypse. We will critically trace their representations in popular culture in order to explore writings in biblical narrative, history, modernity, monster theory, alterity, gender, capitalism, race, epidemiology, film theory, and media studies. We will begin with ancient texts, move to the history of the concept of the zombi in Haiti, and then trace the trope of this modern monster and its various meanings into the contemporary moment.

Offering: Host

Grading: OPT

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: AMST265

Prereq: None

RELI266 Confucian Ethics

Is human nature fundamentally good or fundamentally bad? How do we live a good life? Is there a universally correct priority in value conflicts? This course focuses on various ethical topics that are explored within the Confucian tradition. The course will combine lecture with discussion of primary and secondary sources, as well as group and individual presentations.

Offering: Crosslisting

Grading: OPT

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL

Identical With: PHIL266, CEAS270

Prereq: None

RELI268 Black Religions in the Americas

This course will focus on the African-based religious systems that cultivated traditional ways to survive slavery, white supremacy, and state violence. We

will focus on Vodou in Haiti, Regla de Ocha (Santeria) and Palo Mayombe in Cuba, Obeah in Jamaica, and aspects of Black religions in the US. We will discuss questions of method and themes of political resistance, orality, secrecy, magic, "authenticity," commodification, and the ethics of representation. We will also look at the Black church and especially the rise of the Pentecostal movement in African and Afro-Caribbean spaces, as well as visionary Black religious thought.

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: AFAM387, LAST268, ANTH267, AMST258

Prereq: None

RELI270 Magical Money and Enchanted Capitalisms

In the early days of the 20th century, Max Weber foresaw that with the rise of capitalism and modernity, the world would become increasingly disenchanted. Now, with the turn of the 21st century, people all over the world experience capitalism as a realm of enchantment. In Malaysia, ghosts possess factory workers; in South Africa, capitalism produces zombies; and in Bolivia, mines eat their miners. Instead of Weber's "iron cage," we live in a world of "voodoo economics" where Korean shamans conduct ceremonies to bless new businesses, Russian psychics curse business competitors, and prosperity theology preaches that God will make you rich. This class explores the enchantment of the financial sphere, combining theory on the disenchantment of modernity (Max Weber) and commodity fetishism (Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, William Pietz) with ethnographic accounts of how capitalism and the economy become mystified and enchanted.

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Prereq: None

RELI271 Secularism: Godlessness from Luther to Lenin

Secularism is more than just the absence of religion. It is a political and ideological project with a long history that seeks to separate political and religious authority and imagines whether human life can be richer without religion. This course traces the idea and ideal of secularism as an ideological project from classic Enlightenment philosophers to contemporary critics. We begin with Martin Luther's arguments for the separation of church and state, examine utopian ideals of secular humanism in Mill, Locke, Hume, and Marx. We then trace how these philosophies were embodied in state-sponsored atheism in the Soviet Union and how secularism came to stand for religious freedom during the Cold War. Finally, we examine critiques of the secular project (such as Asad, Mahmood, and others), focusing on secularism as a realpolitik approach to governing multireligious societies and the idea of religious freedom as a universal human right. This is a seminar focused on close readings of philosophical and critical texts. Assignments include reading responses and reflective essays.

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: REES216

Prereq: None

RELI272 Ethics After the Holocaust

The philosopher Theodor Adorno declared, "To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric." The Holocaust is a challenge to our understanding of modern society, ethics, and what it means to be human after Auschwitz. In this course, we will investigate how the Holocaust orients contemporary discussions on questions of guilt, forgiveness, and evil. What does it mean to remember, to forgive, and to forget? Can one ethically represent the Holocaust in art? We will explore these questions using various sources, including works by Hannah Arendt, Adorno,

and Emmanuel Levinas, as well as museums, memorial sites, and cinematic representations.

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: CJST272, GRST266

Prereq: None

RELI272F Ethics After the Holocaust (FYS)

The philosopher Theodor Adorno declared, "To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric." The Holocaust is a challenge to our understanding of modern society, ethics, and what it means to be human. We will engage films, graphic novels, art, and philosophical works as we try and grapple with the contemporary presence and relevance of the Holocaust. Are comparisons of other genocides to the Holocaust helpful or offensive? Was the Holocaust a lapse into barbarism or a dark side to the logic of modernity? We will see how thinkers such as Hannah Arendt, Emmanuel Levinas, and Martin Buber grappled with these and related questions such as the problem of evil, the meaning of suffering, and the presence of God in the death camps.

Offering: Host

Grading: OPT

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: CJST272F, GRST266F

Prereq: None

RELI275F Religions Resisting Modernity (FYS)

Why did some Native Americans turn to dance while resisting federal troops? Why do creationists reject evolution? Why do some French Muslims wear a veil when their mothers didn't? Why did Gandhi insist that Indian nationalists spin their own thread? Throughout the last century, resistance has risen to modernity, and religion has played an increasingly important role in challenging the globalization of modern Western values. This seminar will explore how Europe transformed itself into a modern society with worldwide influence. Then it will investigate how the Lakota Sioux, Christian creationists, and Mohandas Gandhi each have used religion in an attempt to resist some aspect of modernity, either outside the Western world or within it. No background in the study of religions is necessary. Ultimately, the course will challenge our very understandings and expectations of what it means to be modern.

Offering: Host

Grading: OPT

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: RL&L275F

Prereq: None

RELI276 The Gospels and Jesus

In this examination of the history and literature of the earliest writings about Jesus, attention will be given to the literary forms used in the composition of gospel literature, the social and religious functions of the traditions, the role of imagination in the production of gospel texts, and the diversity of interpretations of Jesus in the early church. Readings will focus on the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Thomas, and "Q."

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Prereq: None

RELI277 Magick and Her Practices, of Late

In this course we ask why paganism and Goddess worship have become "the fastest growing American religion," examining the tensions between science and society that so often provoke magic-infused social resistance movements. We

explore the rise of Goddess worship in the Americas since the 1970s, considering its ties to ecofeminist, womanist, indigenous, and environmentalist movements. We examine the force of agency and its relation to ritual magic.

We then dive into the purported roots of several modern magic traditions, including Wicca, Dianic witchcraft, Fieri traditions, and Haitian Vodou, among others, and ask how these cosmovisions define and/or transcend our gendered personhoods.

As we find our way back to a renewed understanding of modern paganisms, students will design individual or small group projects wherein they experience, ethnographically consider and/or perform extant manifestations of magic and ritual, bringing peoples lived experiences into conversation with course readings. This class is taught as a twice-weekly seminar designed around written assignments and engaged discussions, while inviting but not requiring students to engage in phenomenological experiences outside of class that may inform their written work. Students will produce ethnographic essays that are both analytical and personally reflective.

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: FGSS278, AMST171

Prereq: None

RELI278 Magick and Her Practices, of Late: A Digital Humanities Course

As soon as you step foot into this course, you will become an active member of a podcasting production team, and the teaching modalities and weekly DH seminar format of this course are designed to promote small team engagement, pre-and post-production workshops, and an approach to aural argumentation that moves from written reflective essay to effective audio storytelling intended for public engagement.

In this course we ask why paganism and Goddess worship have become "the fastest growing American religion," examining the tensions between science and society that so often provoke magic-infused social resistance movements. We explore the rise of Goddess worship in the Americas since the 1970s, considering its ties to ecofeminist, womanist, indigenous, and environmentalist movements. Student teams will then dive differentially into case studies that explore the purported roots of these reclaiming traditions, including Wicca, Dianic Witchcraft, Fieri traditions, and Haitian Vodou, among others, and produce podcast episodes for the broader University community that ponder where our human practices of magic originated, and why.

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: FGSS279, AMST172

Prereq: None

RELI279 Christianity and Globalization

This course focuses on recent developments in global Christianity. We will look at various interlinked dynamics: the rise of spirit-filled Evangelicalism, especially Pentecostalism, faith-based humanitarianism, child-sponsorship programs, and themes of militarism such as spiritual warfare. We will pay attention to the role of U.S. power in the world and how the narratives that various Protestant Christians tell through their writings and media shape life across international spaces. We will sample a variety of methods in how one studies the field of Christianity. These will include historical, sociological, and anthropological methods, all of which challenge traditional scholarly accounts (meaning those in

the field of church history) in order to expand our understandings of Christianity in the modern period.

Offering: Host

Grading: OPT

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: AMST299, LAST279

Prereq: None

RELI279F Christianity and Globalization (FYS)

This course focuses on recent developments in global Christianity. We will look at various interlinked dynamics: the rise of spirit-filled Evangelicalism, especially Pentecostalism, faith-based humanitarianism, child-sponsorship programs, and themes of militarism such as spiritual warfare. We will pay attention to the role of U.S. power in the world and how the narratives that various Protestant Christians tell through their writings and media shape life across international spaces. We will sample a variety of methods in how one studies the field of Christianity. These will include historical, sociological, and anthropological methods, all of which challenge traditional scholarly accounts (meaning those in the field of church history) in order to expand our understandings of Christianity in the modern period.

Offering: Host

Grading: OPT

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: AMST127F

Prereq: None

RELI280 Mixed in America: Race, Religion, and Memoir

This course examines the history of mixed-race and interfaith identities in America. Using the genre of the memoir as a focusing lens, we will look at the various ways that Americans of mixed heritage have found a place, crafted an identity, and made meaning out of being considered "mixed." How has being multiracial or bi-religious changed in the course of history in this country? What has occasioned these changes, and what patterns can we observe? We will explore questions of racial construction; religious boundary-making; rites of passage; gender, sexuality, and marriage; and some literary and media representations of mixed-heritage people.

Offering: Host

Grading: OPT

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: AFAM282

Prereq: None

RELI280F Mixed in America: Race, Religion, and Memoir (FYS)

This first-year seminar course examines the history of mixed-race and interfaith identities in America. Using the genre of the memoir as a focusing lens, we will look at the various ways that Americans of mixed heritage have found a place, crafted an identity, and made meaning out of being considered "mixed." How has being multiracial or bi-religious changed in the course of history in this country? What has occasioned these changes, and what patterns can we observe? We will explore questions of racial construction; religious boundary-making; rites of passage; gender, sexuality, and marriage; and some literary and media representations of mixed-heritage people.

Offering: Host

Grading: OPT

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: AFAM282F

Prereq: None

RELI281 Political Fantasies of Zion

Palestine, Zion, Judah, the Promised Land. A small piece of land in the Middle East has a very long and contested history full of religious meaning for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Some imagine the State of Israel as an island--"the only democracy in the Middle East" or the only Western state in the region--surrounded by a hostile environment. The geographical area, by contrast, has often been portrayed as a crossroad, a place where cultures clashed, merged, and exchanged ideas.

In this class, we will examine this tension between a physical and imagined space, between political reality and idea, by recovering alternative Zionist, non-Zionist, and anti-Zionist visions of the Zion. Jewish statehood is a very recent phenomenon. Throughout the modern period, the vast majority of Jews lived under empires, whether Habsburg, French, Romanov, British, or Ottoman. How did the imperial experience shape Jewish religious and political views? What role does the imagination of Zion play in today's political context? Reading political pamphlets, poetry, maps, artworks, and utopian fiction, we will pay attention to the construction of the Zionist idea not just in political Zionism but also in contrasting visions including Canaanism, cultural Zionism, diaspora nationalism, a Jewish-Arab federation, a binational state, and the rejection of statehood as heresy. In the last part of the class, we will look at recent contemporary issues from the news, e.g., the agreements between the State of Israel and the United Arab Emirates, or government corruption in Israel, in order to see how these ideas of Zion are still present in today's discourse.

Offering: Crosslisting

Grading: OPT

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM

Identical With: CHUM281, CJST281

Prereq: None

RELI282 Religion and the Scientific Imagination

Where do we get the idea that science and religion are opposed to one another? What did Darwin do to classic proofs of the existence of God and how have those proofs bounced back? What sort of evidence do theologians marshal in support of their hypotheses, and what sort of spiritualities do scientists generate in support of theirs? What do neuroscientists think they're finding when they measure the neural activity of meditating monks? What are the "new atheists" so annoyed about? How do cosmologists talk about the origins of the world, and how do climate scientists talk about its end? In this class we will explore the many ways "religion" and "science" have interacted, conflicted, collided, and combined with one another--in an effort to move beyond the frankly boring "debates" between them.

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: SISP282

Prereq: None

RELI289 Indigenous Religions: Politics, Land, Healing

From wise old shamans to heroic pipeline protestors, the media is full of romantic representations of indigenous religion, but what do you really know beyond the stereotypes? If indigenous religion is just religion practiced by indigenous people, is it a category at all? Since the first days of colonialism the question of whether or not the "natives" have or are capable of having religion has had political consequences. This class introduces students to the historical and political contexts within which indigenous peoples practice their religions, and critically engages with popular stereotypes. Using ethnography, fiction, critical theory, and the instructor's own fieldwork materials, we will examine some of the criteria by which indigenous religious practices have been

romanticized or judged lacking by outsiders: What does an oral tradition sound like? What does it mean to engage in place-based religion? What is a "noble savage," what are sacred sites, animate landscapes, and what are some of the ways indigenous peoples really do relate to the environment in radically different ways? What are some of the contradictions and complications of multiculturalism and the politics of recognition when it comes to indigenous populations? While this is not a survey course, students will be introduced to case studies of indigenous religious practices from North America, Australia, and Siberia.

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: REES289

Prereq: None

RELI291 From Jerusalem to Ground Zero: Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Sioux, and Hindu Notions of Sacredness

Many Jews, Christians, and Muslims view Jerusalem as a "sacred" place. But what does this mean? How does a place--or an object or person--become sacred, holy, revered? Is Ground Zero sacred? If so, how do we compare the destruction of an office building that makes part of Manhattan sacred and Native American efforts to protect venerated sites from "development" that they describe as "desecration"? Does the term "sacred" even translate in other languages? When does a stone sculpture become an embodiment of a Hindu deity?

Using examples such as Jewish, Christian, and Muslim views of Jerusalem, Lakota Sioux recognition of revered places and wicasa wakan (medicine men), and Hindu engagements with divine images, this seminar will explore these questions.

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: GSAS291

Prereq: None

RELI292 Reason and Revelation: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion

With the dawning of modernity, Europe's colonial and scientific adventures opened a distinction of mutual suspicion between theology and philosophy. Broadly speaking, "philosophy of religion" is the effort to evaluate the claims of revelation and reason in terms of one another. We will examine some of the major texts within this field, whose authors include deep skeptics, committed Christians, committed anti-Christians, secular and nonsecular Jews, feminists, ethicists, idealists, empiricists, Romantics, and liberationists. Themes include proofs of God's existence--along with refutations of those proofs and rebuttals to those refutations--the problem of evil, religious ethics, religious experience, the possibility of a universal religion, "divine" racism, the gender of God, the ecocidal tendencies of Abrahamic theology, and the role theology might or might not play in efforts toward ecological, sexual, and racial justice.

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: HA-RELI

Identical With: PHIL282

Prereq: None

RELI295 Religion in Dungeons and Dragons

As a fantasy roleplaying game, Dungeons & Dragons has been prevalent for over 40 years. In this game, players partake in fantastical journeys, slaying beasts, completing quests, and interacting with divine beings. Though not often

discussed, religion has played an important role in Dungeons & Dragons since its creation: clerics pray to their gods and invoke physical changes in the world, strange cults organize and perform perverse rites, summoning ancient beings for evil. There have been many different editions of Dungeons & Dragons, and each treats these religious elements in a different way. This course answers the questions, "What role does religion play within Dungeons & Dragons and how does the presentation of religion within Dungeons & Dragons map onto scholarly trends within Religious Studies?"

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: CJST295

Prereq: None

RELI299 Imagining Communities: National Religions and Political Rituals

From the Catholic-Protestant troubles in Northern Ireland, Christian nationalism in Serbia, Hindu-Buddhist conflict in Sri Lanka, and the Taliban in Afghanistan, religious nationalism often produces virulent and violent conflict. Yet the Virgin of Guadeloupe is a national symbol of Mexico, Catholicism was central to the Polish Solidarity movement, and America defines itself as "one nation under God." How are we to understand the relationship between religion and national identity, and how do political rituals, both religious and secular, help form communities? Popular media and political science analysis define religious nationalism as dangerous and secular nationalism as good. We will investigate this claim over the course of the semester by asking what the study of religion and ritual can bring to the topic. Are religious and secular political rituals really as different as they seem? We will read and discuss the classic social theories of Samuel Huntington, Benedict Anderson, Emile Durkheim, Victor Turner, Clifford Geertz, and Talal Asad, and these readings will be interspersed with case studies that illustrate how these theories help us understand the world. Case studies include the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the arrest and trial of the punk band Pussy Riot in Russia, and the Yasukuni shrine in Japan, where the souls of kamikaze pilots and World War II war criminals are enshrined. In addition, students will pick a case study of their own for a research project. This project will be conducted through multiple small assignments over the course of the semester that will be combined into a final research paper and class presentation.

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: REES299

Prereq: None

RELI300 Semiotics of al-Barzakh: The Grammars of the End of Days and Horizons of Possibility

This course builds from the Islamic eschatological concept of "al-Barzakh" as it has been taken up in anthropological theories, as well as in Islamic thought more generally, with careful attention to the term's semiotic transformations and significations. It does so in order to explore both how the term describes an earthly place and an eschatological hereafter as well as a theoretical and practical alternative to the notion of the liminal personhood.

Since at least the 12th century, thinkers have explored the Islamic concept of al-Barzakh to explore the connection between the earthly present and the heavenly hereafter and the scales of judgment in between. This term, somewhat akin to Christian notion of purgatory or limbo, appears only three times in the Qur'an. It is explained as being like the productive firmament that separates salt and sweet water. In places like Morocco, this is commonly interpreted as referring to the

Strait of Gibraltar and the underwater isthmus that separates and produces the waters of the Atlantic Ocean and the Strait of Gibraltar.

We will read both contemporary scholarly apprehensions of this term and its various applications in Muslim-majority contexts such as Morocco, Egypt, Sudan, and Iran--often ethnographic--as well as Islamic philosophy that attempts to bring the concept into relation with earthly personhood. In our approach, we will move through a variety of scholarly genres and epochs in order to trace the genealogies of present-day popular invocations of the term as we contrast it with other apprehensions of the eschatological and the liminal.

We will work to understand how this term contains space for both an imagination of everyday life as well as the boundary-generating difference marking here and there, then and now, by looking at how the term is evoked by artists, scholars, religious adherents, psychoanalysts, and border crossers. As we go along, we will pay special attention to the languages of belonging and difference evoked by this term and attend to how an anthropological approach to semiotics might elucidate new grammars of community and horizons of possibility that exist alongside notions of the liminal, uncanny, dreaming, the hereafter, and the imagination of the end of days.

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **HA-CHUM**

Identical With: **CHUM305, ANTH305**

Prereq: **None**

RELI301 Jesus and the Gods: Christianity and the Religions of Antiquity

How did Jesus of Nazareth come to be understood as a god, who dies and rises, in a world brimming with gods? Why was he remembered as a philosopher and a martyr, like Socrates? How did early Christians understand their rituals of death and resurrection in terms of salvation and sacrifice? How--and with what motives--did writers throughout history compare Jesus with the priests and kings of ancient Israel or with the gods and goddesses of the "Mystery Religions"? This course will focus on the methods and politics of comparing Christianity and the religions of antiquity. Considering themes and theories of religion and sacrifice, wisdom and prophecy, ethics and philosophy, and mythmaking and cultural critique, we will ask how the politics of classification and comparison have shaped not only our understanding of Jesus and Judaism, and of ancient Greece and Rome, but also the construction of Judaism and Christianity as religions, and the very category of religion itself.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Prereq: **None**

RELI302 Kierkegaard: An Advanced Seminar in Absurdity

Throughout Kierkegaard's "pseudonymous authorship"--a set of books written by different characters he dreamed up to remove the burden of authorship from himself--we encounter the possibility that, from the perspective of ethics, philosophy, and even religion, the truth will seem ridiculous. Truth, for these pseudonymous authors, takes the form of paradox, that reason and common sense can only call "absurd." Of course, it is no surprise that a paradox seems absurd; if it is not absurd, it is not a paradox. For the pseudonyms, it is therefore either the case that truth is paradoxical, exceeding the realms of ordinary thinking and existing, or that it is not. If it is not, then the absurd is simply absurd and both philosophy and religion are right to reject it. But if truth "is" paradoxical, then we are faced with the problem of thinking the unthinkable,

communicating the incomunicable, and getting serious about absurdity. In this seminar, we will wrangle some of these pseudonyms' best-known, most exciting, and crankiest books, along with a few of Kierkegaard's signed, vitriolic attacks on the established church.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **HA-RELI**

Prereq: **None**

RELI303 Extinction/Rebellion: Christianity and the Climate Crisis

Although this course is not devoted specifically to the subject of "XR"--the decentralized environmental activist organization and global campaign of civil disobedience--it borrows the movement's self-designation as a point of departure for an exploration of the historical, conceptual, and geopolitical significance of Christianity to the "Anthropocene." How is Christianity entangled among the "historical roots of our ecologic crisis"? What is "eco-theology"? How do ancient narratives of creation and traditional Christian teachings regarding the origin of humankind continue to shape modern, scientific, and popular assumptions about the natural world and our place in it? What does the book of Genesis have to say about commercial agriculture, ethical veganism, and the relation of divinity with the more-than-human, animal-vegetal-mineral web of life? Whence this "planet of slums" and whither Paradise or the Promised Land? Which elements of the Christian imagination enabled colonization of the New World, indigenous displacement and genocide, the transatlantic slave trade, and capitalist globalization? Is another world still possible, and could Christian thought and practice play a pivotal part in actualizing an alternative planetarity today? We will pursue these questions together by way of readings in theology, philosophy, critical science studies, ecology, geography, political economy, Black feminism, queer theory, and Indigenous studies. Ultimately, the course analyzes aspects of Christianity's intimate involvement in the history of climate change and considers how critical attention to this history may contribute to collective acts of rebellion against mass extinction.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **ENVS302, SISP313**

Prereq: **None**

RELI305 Pantheologies: Animal, Vegetable, Mineral, World

Pantheism teaches that the world itself is divine. The idea seems simple enough, yet it has suffered extraordinary ridicule at the hands of western philosophers and theologians, who have considered "matter" to be lifeless, dark, and feminine (which is to say, as different as possible from "God.") This course will explore this generalized panic over pantheism--in particular, the anxieties it encodes over gender, race, nationality, and class, and the contribution such anxieties have made to an unequally distributed attack on the "environment."

Seeking an alternative to our raced and gendered ecocidal metaphysic, the course then turns to contemporary pantheologies. To what extent are recent theories of cosmology, complexity, and materiality setting forth subtle pantheisms? What are the feminist, anti-racist, and ecological stakes of these theories? Properly conceived, what is pantheism; is it ultimately distinguishable from atheism; and what use are any of these platforms in developing an ethic and politic of environmental justice?

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **FGSS304, SISP305**

Prereq: **None**

RELI306 Animate Landscapes: Spirits and Sovereignty in Indigenous Religions

Scientific understandings of the world are grounded in a distinction between animate beings and inanimate matter, but people all over the world have understood land and landscapes as alive and filled with agency. Indigenous religious practices often include relationships with mountains, rivers, glaciers, and other "other-than-human persons." Using case studies drawn from North America, Siberia, and Mongolia, and the instructor's fieldwork materials with place beings in Buryatia, we will explore the different relationships human beings have with animate and sacred landscapes and think about the ramifications these relationships have for thinking about sovereignty over and in the "natural" world.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **ENVS309**

Prereq: **None**

RELI307 Ritual

Religion can be defined through beliefs or traditions or texts, but it always takes physical form through ritual. Ritual is the one universal in religion, but the question of how to understand ritual is possibly the most contested question in the study of religion, and not all rituals are religious. Can a ritual be read like a text? How do symbols produce effects, and how should we understand these effects? What is performative speech and how does it work? How does ritual behavior reflect and shape social relationships? This course introduces students to the major approaches to the study of ritual. The readings draw heavily, but not exclusively, on anthropological approaches to ritual, both classic texts and recent innovative approaches focusing on language and embodiment. Students will pick a ritual that they are interested in and will attend that ritual several times over the semester, conducting practical fieldwork exercises and applying the theories we read in class. The assignments culminate in a paper in which students will be required to analyze "their" ritual using the theory we read together in class. For these assignments, students are encouraged to define ritual broadly and creatively. The goal of the class is to gain an understanding of theoretical approaches to ritual by applying these theories to the social world around them.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **ANTH303**

Prereq: **None**

RELI308 Trump-Evangelicals: the History of Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism in America

This course examines the history of American evangelicalism, seeking to understand the nature of its support for the presidency of Donald Trump. Beginning with a brief overview of religion in the colonial and revolutionary eras, the course examines revivalism, slavery, and the emergence of fundamentalism during the 19th century. Special attention is paid to the re-emergence of evangelicalism after World War II, the establishment of the religious right, global evangelicalism, and the core evangelical support for the candidacy and presidency of Donald Trump. Students will be challenged to consider the ways issues of gender, race, and economics have shaped 21st-century evangelicalism, and reflect on how the movement's view of American history contributes to its own sense of identity and purpose.

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-HIST**

Identical With: **HIST308, AMST246, CSPL308**

Prereq: **None**

RELI309 Scoundrels, Sinners, and Saints: Approaches to Buddhist Life Writing

This seminar will examine a variety of religious biographies and autobiographies in order to evaluate the significance of life writing in the Buddhist traditions of Asia. Materials will cover a broad range of historical periods, from early medieval to modern, and geographic regions, including South Asia, East Asia, the Himalayas, and Tibet. Topics include the structure, function, style, production, and reception of biographies and autobiographies, as well as more thematic questions of religious transmission, soteriology and praxis, formations of self-identity, gender, and the relationships of biographical literature to art and pilgrimage. Readings include primary Buddhist texts in translation supplemented by secondary scholarship on hagiography and sainthood, literary theory, narrative constructions of the self, and Buddhist history.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **CEAS309, GSAS309**

Prereq: **None**

RELI311 Pain and Punishment in the Hebrew Bible

The Hebrew Bible has many graphic depictions of pain and punishment; some inflicted upon the Israelites and many inflicted by the Israelites themselves. Many of the laws of the Hebrew Bible describe the proper ways to inflict punishment and many of those same laws describe the ways in which someone might be absolved of punishment. This course aims to answer the questions of: What role did pain and punishment play in the ancient world? How was the physical experience of either connected to religious experience? In what ways was pain, and often disgust, utilized to either connect or separate someone from the divine? What is the relationship between divinity, power, physicality, and punishment? In asking these questions, this course will demonstrate that, much of the time, spirituality, devotion, and religiousness, need not be divorced from the physical world and need not be considered metaphysical qualities.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **CJST311**

Prereq: **None**

RELI312 Judaism in the Time of Jesus

This course is designed to help us understand the emergence of Judaism--its practices and beliefs, as a philosophy, a way of life, a religion--from the formation of the Hebrew Bible (ca. 400 BCE) to the parallel development of rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity (ca. 100 CE). We will be concerned with the creation of community and its institutions, the rise of sectarianism and claims of normativity, the creation of the Bible as scripture and various modes of its interpretation, the relationship of early Judaism to ancient Israelite religion and society, and relations between Jews and Judaism to gentiles and gentile culture. Attention will be given to the creativity of Jewish literature, its common setting in times of oppression, and its place in the religious heritage of Judaism and Christianity.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **HA-RELI**

Identical With: **CJST312**

Prereq: **None**

RELI313 Curating Religion: Museums, Monuments, and Memorials

Museums, monuments, and memorial sites have long been important sites for public reckoning with the past. But they are not only about the past, they represent present struggles about the meaning of history and the possibility of

imagining different futures. In this multidisciplinary class, we will work as a group to examine diverse case studies in which religion and memorial culture intersect in acts such as curation, representation, conservation, and repatriation. Visiting exhibitions and working with Wesleyan's collections, some of the questions we will ask include: What are the ethics of the treatment of objects in museums and of repatriation? How does space shape religious experience in an arguably secular setting? How do monuments invoke religious imagery and symbolism in their construction of history? In what ways does placing something behind a glass case give it a religious aura, and in what ways does it drain an object of its sacrality?

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **ANTH314, CJST314**

Prereq: **None**

RELI314 Buddhist Traditions of Mind and Meditation

This seminar surveys a range of Buddhist meditation practices in the context of traditional theories of mind, perception, and cognition, with an emphasis on the traditions of South Asia, East Asia, and the Himalaya. Beginning with canonical descriptions of the mind and its variety of mental states, the course will then examine early scriptural expositions on the two principal types of meditation techniques: tranquility or concentration meditation (*samatha*) and insight meditation (*vipasyana*). Next will be an examination of techniques for cultivating compassion and the view of emptiness that were central to the later Indian traditions of the Mahayana or Great Vehicle. The course will finally turn to the elaborate systems of Tantra that developed in India and spread through Tibet, which incorporate the visualization of deities and recitation of mantras. Readings will include both primary Buddhist canonical works and commentaries by contemporary Buddhist teachers in English translation as well as secondary scholarship on the historical context of Buddhist meditation systems, cognitive theory, and ritual practice.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **GSAS314**

Prereq: **None**

RELI315 Ethics and Action in the Buddhist Cosmos

We often think about nirvana, or "enlightenment," as the ultimate goal of Buddhist practice. But the reality is much more complex. Buddhist traditions imagine a huge range of positive outcomes for moral behavior: immediate material benefits, rebirth in a better body or in a wealthier family, and enjoyment of gold-paved heavens or eternally blissful Pure Lands.

In this seminar we will read Buddhist scriptures, commentaries, biographies, narrative anthologies, and scholarly works that trace the many ways of thinking about ethics, action, and rebirth in the vast Buddhist cosmos. We will tour Buddhist heavens and hells, Pure Lands and political dystopias, as well as the complex worlds of Buddhist modernity. Along the way we will begin to think about key issues in the study of religion: narrative and ethics, magic and material culture, cosmology and sacred presence, modernity and globalization.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Prereq: **None**

RELI316 Human Rights and Spiritual Ecologies of Indigenous Peoples

This seminar will explore the social, legal, and metaphysical aspects of indigenous spiritual ecologies and their relation to United Nations discourses, indigenous community media production, and land rights movements. We will consider how indigenous peoples both respond to legal frameworks and press their positions into national and international human rights standards, on issues ranging from governance to cultural survival, from environmental management to language policy.

A particular emphasis will be put on the Andean and Amazonian regions of South America, the Mesoamerican highlands (Chiapas, Guatemala), the United States, and the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, but students are encouraged to pursue their research projects across Abya Yala (the Americas).

This course focuses on developing critical thinking skills and places a special emphasis on writing and thoughtfully responding to the materials presented in class. Classes will not only consist of framework lectures and discussion questions, but also a combination of student panel presentations and writing in a collaborative environment. Participation in these activities is crucial to success in this course. Opportunities for student engagement in Manhattan at the April 2024 United Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues are currently in development.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **ENVS328, AMST317**

Prereq: **None**

RELI317 Colonizing Space: Exploration, Extraction, and Inhabitation

Under its "Artemis Mission," NASA plans to put "the first woman and first person of color" on the Moon to build a permanent outpost. This lunar base will allow NASA to mine the Moon, extract precious metals from asteroids, and eventually colonize Mars--hopefully before China and Russia do the same. Thanks to recent legislation, NASA will rely throughout this mission on the rocket and extractive technologies of private corporations like SpaceX, Blue Origin, Moon Express, and Deep Space Industries, whose CEOs proclaim they are saving the human race by expanding it into space. It will also rely on the backing of the newly-created sixth branch of the U.S. military: the Space Force.

This course will track the ideological and colonial history of the Apollo era before approaching the scientific, corporate, and legislative landscape of "NewSpace." It will explore the mythological underpinnings, narrative imaginings, and theological justifications for the unfettered exploitation and inhabitation of the Earth and its cosmic neighbors. Finally, it will ask whether an ethically and ecologically sustainable space program is possible.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **ENVS317, SISP327**

Prereq: **None**

RELI317F Colonizing Space: Exploration, Extraction, and Inhabitation (FYS)

Under its "Artemis Mission," NASA plans to put "the first woman and first person of color" on the Moon to build a permanent outpost. This lunar base will allow NASA to mine the Moon, extract precious metals from asteroids, and eventually colonize Mars--hopefully before China and Russia do the same. Thanks to recent

legislation, NASA will rely throughout this mission on the rocket and extractive technologies of private corporations like SpaceX, Blue Origin, Moon Express, and Deep Space Industries, whose CEOs proclaim they are saving the human race by expanding it into space. It will also rely on the backing of the newly-created sixth branch of the U.S. military: the Space Force.

This course will track the ideological and colonial history of the Apollo era before approaching the scientific, corporate, and legislative landscape of "NewSpace." It will explore the mythological underpinnings, narrative imaginings, and theological justifications for the unfettered exploitation and inhabitation of the Earth and its cosmic neighbors. Finally, it will ask whether an ethically and ecologically sustainable space program is possible.

Offering: Host

Grading: OPT

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: ENVS317F, SISP327F

Prereq: None

RELI318 Awesome Cinema: Religion, Art, and the Unrepresentable

How does one represent the unrepresentable? In particular, how might a medium like cinema--founded on recording the visible world--move us to sense something beyond human experience? Various artistic, religious, and religiously artistic traditions use mystery, horror, surprise, disgust, and pleasure to evoke the uncanny, the majestic, the terrifying, and even the sublime in us. This class examines how filmmakers prompt audiences to feel awe (which might be awesome, awful, or both) and how that relates to religious engagement with the nonrational. Noting parallels in painting, ritual, architecture, and other means of expression, we consider how art structures emotion, perception, and cognition to exceed representation of the known. This class will examine how aliens, avatars, black holes, death, deities, demons, saints, saviors, superheroes, and nature have been conduits to that which appears to escape reason. Films may include "Arrival," "Interstellar," "The Exorcist," "Jai Santoshi Maa," "Passion of Joan of Arc," and "Yeelen."

Offering: Crosslisting

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: HA-FILM

Identical With: FILM318

Prereq: RELI151 OR FILM307 OR FILM304

RELI320 Schemers and Redeemers: Capitalism and Christianity in the Early Republic

This course examines the intersection of two of the most significant themes in U.S. history: Capitalism and Christianity. Beginning with the Early Republic (1790s) and continuing through the mid-19th century, this course asks students to explore how Americans used their religious identities to negotiate and shape market activity and institutions (and in turn, how the marketplace shaped their religion). Students will investigate the varied ways in which religious women and men resolved tensions between gender, class, slavery, moral dogma, and market imperatives. Finally, this course will require students to reflect on how the early 19th-century U.S. experience informs our understanding of the relationship between capitalism and Christianity in 21st-century America.

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST

Identical With: HIST313

Prereq: None

RELI321 Visual Worlds of Himalayan Religions

How do Tibetan Buddhists look at religious images? What do pilgrims in Nepal see when faced with sacred monuments? Why do devotees in Bhutan display erotic caricatures in public? This seminar will explore the ubiquitous role of images and imagining in the religious traditions of the Himalayan region. Readings and viewings will examine the painting, sculpture, architecture, and performing arts of the Himalaya (including Tibet, Nepal, north India, and Bhutan), placing them in the context of local religious beliefs, ritual practices, and literary canons. The seminar aims to understand how Himalayan cultures produce religious images and the ways of seeing that invest them with meaning. Classes will address specific modes of visual representation, the relationships between text and image, and the social lives of images, as well as processes of reading and interpretation. Particular attention will be paid to representations of Buddha Sakyamuni and visual expressions of his life.

Offering: Host

Grading: OPT

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: GSAS321

Prereq: None

RELI322 Playing God: Race, Colonialism, and Raising Dinosaurs from the Dead

This seminar draws on the fields of religious studies, ecocriticism, philosophy of science, decolonial thought, Black studies, political anthropology, and queer theory to examine our culture's fascination with dinosaurs. Questions discussed include: What are the ethical implications of "discovering" dinosaur fossils on stolen Indigenous land? How have "philanthro-capitalists" used dinosaurs to promote the ideology of American exceptionalism? How do fossil fuels and their extraction relate to searches for fossil animals? Why do creationists believe dinosaurs still live, and how is this a remnant of European imperialism? Is the dream of resurrecting extinct species scientific or religious? How do natural history museums benefit from and contribute towards colonialism? Is the past more like a natural resource or public utility? In the process of addressing these and many more questions, students will examine what dinosaurs can teach us about humans, non-humans, post-humans, extinction, and the end of the world.

Offering: Host

Grading: OPT

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Prereq: None

RELI323 The Black Charismatic

In this course we will explore the interplay between black politics and popular culture in the post-civil rights era. More specifically, we will examine the aesthetics of affective (commonly called "charismatic") black political leadership by attending to Tavis Smiley's yearly "State of the Black Union" address, 2000-2010. We will rely almost entirely on film, video, and digital archives in order to trace the eleven-year-long evolution of Smiley's annual event, while focusing our hermeneutic attention on the racialized and gendered performances of Louis Farrakhan, Michael Eric Dyson, Cornel West, and others. Through close readings of their televised performances, then, this course will require students to think and write about the practice and rhetoric of the black charismatic. How might the black charismatic threaten to undermine the political opportunities afforded by the success of the modern civil rights movement? How did Smiley's yearly event create the illusion of a black public sphere? What are the unintended consequences of substituting affect for political action? Similarly, what are the potential perils of a politics that results in ephemeral catharsis without dangerous political consequences? While participating in the general discussion across the semester, students will be searching out specific research topics of their own, topics relating the seminar conversation to original research questions about: the new liberalism of black politics; the crisis of the black public intellectual; the importance of technology (particularly the ways in which new media have changed, even upended the political habitus itself); and

the relationship between gender (particularly black masculinity), charismatic leadership, and respectability politics. Authors will include (in no particular order): Adolph Reed, Richard Iton, Hazel Carby, Hortense Spillers, Houston Baker, Erica Edwards, Melissa Harris-Perry, and others.

Offering: Crosslisting

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM

Identical With: CHUM311, AFAM314, FGSS313

Prereq: None

RELI373 Religion, Science, and Empire: Crucible of a Globalized World

The development of modern science--and of modernity itself--not only coincided with the rise of European imperialism, it was abetted by it. Meanwhile, religion was integral to both the roots of European science and Western encounters with others. This class will explore how the intersections of religion, science, and empire have formed a globalized world with examples of European engagement with the Americas, Middle East, and, particularly, India from the age of Columbus through to the space race. We will examine how the disciplines we know today as biology, anthropology, archaeology, folklore, and the history of religions all crystallized in the crucible of imperial encounter and how non-Westerners have embraced, engaged, and resisted these epistemes.

Offering: Host

Grading: OPT

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: SISP373, EDST373, GSAS373

Prereq: None

RELI375 Relic and Image: The Archaeology and Social History of Indian Buddhism

This course investigates the social history and material culture of Indian Buddhism from the fifth century BCE through the period of the Kushan empire (first to third century CE). The course begins with the examination of the basic teachings of Buddhism as presented in canonical texts, then turns to consideration of the organization and functioning of the early Buddhist community, or sangha. The focus then shifts to the popular practice of Buddhism in early India and the varied forms of interaction between lay and monastic populations. Although canonical texts will be examined, primary emphasis in this segment of the course is given to the archaeology and material culture of Buddhist sites and their associated historical inscriptions. Specific topics to be covered include the cult of the Buddha's relics, the rise and spread of image worship, and the Buddhist appropriation and reinterpretation of folk religious practices. Key archaeological sites to be studied include the monastic complex at Sanchi, the pilgrimage center at Bodh Gaya (site of the Buddha's enlightenment), the city of Taxila (capital of the Indo-Greek kings and a major educational center), and the rock-cut cave monasteries along the trade routes of western India.

Offering: Crosslisting

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: HA-ART

Identical With: ARHA381, CEAS381, ARCP380, GSAS381, ARHA381, ARCP380,

CEAS381

Prereq: None

RELI377 Worlding the World: Creation Myths from Ancient Greece to the Multiverse

This course will focus on two questions that have thwarted and enthralled scientists, philosophers, and theologians for millennia: Where have we come from? and Where are we going? By reading ancient Greek and early Christian sources alongside contemporary astrophysicists, we will witness the reconfigured resurrection of some very old debates about the creation and unmaking of the world. Is the universe eternal, or was it created? Is it finite or infinite?

Destructible or indestructible? Linear or cyclical? And is ours the only universe, or are there others?

The semester will be divided into four sections. The first will explore the dominant, or "inflationary," version of the big bang hypothesis in relation to Christian and indigenous myths of creation. The second will consider the possibility that the whole universe might be a negligible part of a vast "multiverse" in conversation with the early Greek atomists, who posited an extra-cosmic space teeming with other worlds. The third will explore contemporary cyclical cosmologies—that is, theories that posit a rebirth of the cosmos out of its fiery destruction—in relation to early Stoic philosophy and cross-cultural cyclic mythologies. The fourth will explore quantum cosmologies, in which the universe fragments into parallel branches each time a particle "decides" upon a position. We will examine these varied cosmologies of multiplicity, not with a view toward adjudicating among them, but toward pointing out their mythic and ontological genealogies and consequences.

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: SISP377

Prereq: None

RELI379 Christianity and Sexuality

This course will explore a range of Christian teachings on, attitudes toward, and technologies of sex and sexuality. We will read medieval and modern theologies of sexuality, as well as contemporary historical, sociological, and cultural studies. Points of focus will include confession, mysticism, marriage, celibacy, queer and trans practices and identities, and reproductive justice.

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: HA-RELI

Identical With: FGSS309, MDST379

Prereq: None

RELI391 Religion and the Social Construction of Race

In this course we examine aspects of the intersections between race and religion in a number of historical and social contexts. We place at the center of our discussions the question of how race and religion are co-constructed categories that function as a prism through which people come to understand and experience their own identities and those of others. We will privilege interpretations that emphasize (a) the intersections of race and religion as a process in which power plays a pivotal role; and (b) the means through which communities form collective identities. We will read a range of historical analysis and primary source materials from the U.S. and the Caribbean. After a theory module, we will examine a colonial-era captivity narrative, antebellum pro-slavery document, missionary works, analyses of anti-Semitism, works on Father Divine, the Nation of Islam, Rastafari, Haitian Vodou, Jonestown, the Christian White Supremacy movement, as well as the contemporary U.S. relationship to the Middle East.

Offering: Host

Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

Identical With: AFAM280

Prereq: None

RELI393 "If there is no God, then everything is permitted?" Moral Life in a Secular World

In Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dmitri Karamazov famously poses the question of what would happen to mankind "without God and immortal life," asking whether this means that "all things are permitted." Made famous by Dostoevsky, the question of whether we can be moral without God has always haunted secularism and has consistently been the most vocal criticism of unbelief. From papal condemnations of secularism and "godless Soviets," to the contemporary consensus that belief in God is evidence of moral goodness and its absence a sign of a broken ethical barometer, the assumption has been that transcendental authority is all that stands between us and moral abyss. When the atrocities committed by "totalitarian" regimes are cited as evidence of this, it is only the most radical articulation of a broader narrative of secular modernity.

One of modernity's master narratives is that people go from being under the care of the church to being under the care of the state, and our focus will be on historical cases where the question of secular values was explicitly engaged by the state. We will examine individual and collective articulations of morality in three prominent models of secularism: American civil religion, French laïcité, and Communist official atheism. What constitutes the moral foundation of a world without God? Can religion's moral and spiritual function be performed by a different kind of belief system?

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-HIST**

Identical With: **HIST395, REES344**

Prereq: **None**

RELI393Z "If there is no God, then everything is permitted?" Moral Life in a Secular World

Please note: Students should expect some readings and assignments to be due during winter break, prior to beginning Winter Session. Please visit the Winter Session website for the full syllabus -- <http://www.wesleyan.edu/wintersession>.

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Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-HIST**

Identical With: **HIST395Z, REES344Z**

Prereq: **None**

RELI395 The Anthropology of Religion

What do we study when we study religion? We can observe practices, record speech, examine objects and actions—but what do these things tell us? If religion is about belief, what can we say about belief from documenting actions? Perhaps we must conclude that religion is not about belief, but if so, are in danger of "explaining away" the very phenomena we seek to understand? This course will introduce students to a cross-cultural, comparative perspective on religious practice and belief in order to critically reflect on the role of methodology and research design in the study of religion and the social sciences more broadly. How do we know what we know? How do we plan research in order to find out what we want to know? The course has a significant methods component. Students will be expected to do field research exercises in a local religious community and prepare a methodology research proposal for a fictional or real project as a final assignment. Methodological exercises will be interspersed with ethnographic texts that allow us to reflect on how religion is studied, experienced, and explained. Students planning theses or other research projects with an ethnographic component, in any social science field, may use the class and the final assignment to conceptualize and plan their projects.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **ANTH395**

Prereq: **None**

RELI398 Majors Colloquium in Religious Studies

This seminar provides an opportunity for majors to reflect even more critically upon the theories, methods, and discourses that constitute the academic study of religion. We will be concerned with current studies in history and the history of religions, the interpretation of texts, anthropology, feminist theory, and post-colonial theory.

With particular emphasis on case studies, the seminar will explore how scholars operate within disciplinary communities, choose their topics, engage interlocutors, weigh issues of emic and etic interpretation, and—on good days—publish their analyses.

Each member of the seminar will choose a local religious community to engage throughout the semester as a further opportunity to consider the choices scholarship entails.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Prereq: **RELI151**

RELI401 Individual Tutorial, Undergraduate

Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

RELI402 Individual Tutorial, Undergraduate

Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

RELI403 Department/Program Project or Essay

Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

RELI404 Department/Program Project or Essay

Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **Cr/U**

RELI407 Senior Tutorial (downgraded thesis)

Downgraded Senior Thesis Tutorial - Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor. Only enrolled in through the Honors Coordinator.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

RELI408 Senior Tutorial (downgraded thesis)

Downgraded Senior Thesis Tutorial - Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor. Only enrolled in through the Honors Coordinator.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

RELI409 Senior Thesis Tutorial

Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

RELI410 Senior Thesis Tutorial

Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

RELI411 Group Tutorial, Undergraduate

Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

RELI412 Group Tutorial, Undergraduate

Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

RELI420 Student Forum

Student-run group tutorial, sponsored by a faculty member and approved by the chair of a department or program.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **Cr/U**

RELI466 Education in the Field, Undergraduate

Students must consult with the department and class dean in advance of undertaking education in the field for approval of the nature of the responsibilities and method of evaluation.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

RELI467 Independent Study, Undergraduate

Credit may be earned for an independent study during a summer or authorized leave of absence provided that (1) plans have been approved in advance, and (2) all specified requirements have been satisfied.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

RELI468 Independent Study, Undergraduate

Credit may be earned for an independent study during a summer or authorized leave of absence provided that (1) plans have been approved in advance, and (2) all specified requirements have been satisfied.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **None**

Prereq: **None**

RELI469 Education in the Field, Undergraduate

Students must consult with the department and class dean in advance of undertaking education in the field for approval of the nature of the responsibilities and method of evaluation.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **None**

Prereq: **None**

RELI491 Teaching Apprentice Tutorial

The teaching apprentice program offers undergraduate students the opportunity to assist in teaching a faculty member's course for academic credit.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

RELI492 Teaching Apprentice Tutorial

The teaching apprentice program offers undergraduate students the opportunity to assist in teaching a faculty member's course for academic credit.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

RELI495 Research Apprentice, Undergraduate

Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **Cr/U**

RELI496 Research Apprentice, Undergraduate

Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **Cr/U**

RELI501 Individual Tutorial, Graduate

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**