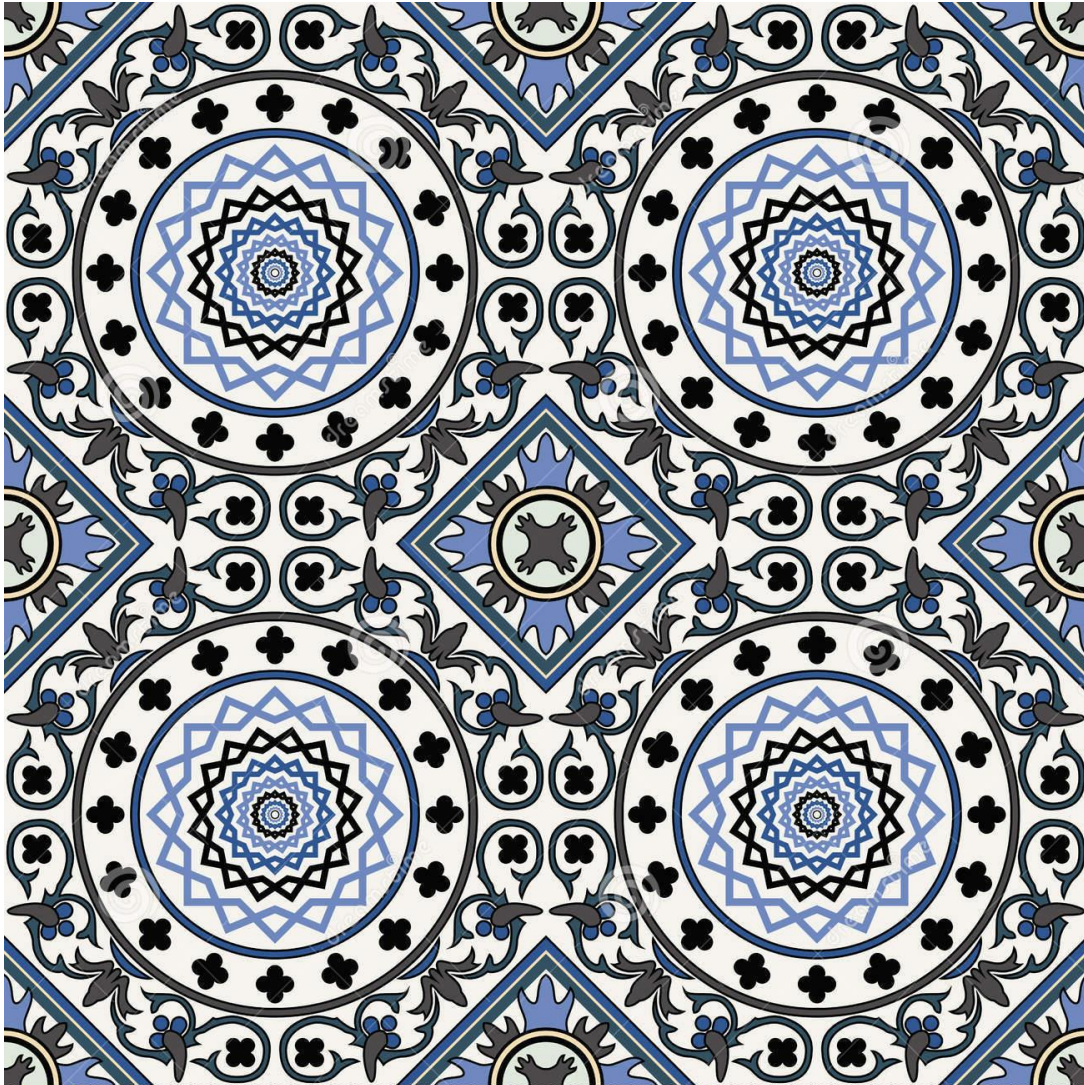


The Comparative Study of Religion

2017-2018 Course Listings: A Guide for Undergraduates



Fall 2017

Introductory Courses	1
Intermediate Courses	7
Advanced Courses	12

Introductory courses: recommended especially for students new to the study of religion and interested in learning about the field of study.

Intermediate courses: recommended for undergraduates with some course work in the study of religion. May be appropriate for undergraduates new to the study of religion, please consult the instructor or the Director of Undergraduate Studies with questions.

Spring 2018

Introductory Courses	14
Intermediate Courses	19
Advanced Courses	24

Advanced courses: Primarily for graduate students; advanced undergraduates should consult the instructor directly with questions and for permission to enroll.


Be sure to check my.harvard.edu for most up-to-date course information!

Introductory Courses in the Comparative Study of Religion: Fall 2017

USW 32: The World's Religions in Multicultural America: Case Studies in Religious Pluralism

Diana Eck


TTh 11:30-1; Lecture + Section; Comparative
An exploration of the dynamic religious landscape of the US with special focus on Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, and Sikh traditions in the most recent period of post-1965 immigration. How are faith and freedom negotiated in a more complex society? In what contexts do minority religious communities encounter long-dominant Christian and Jewish communities? How is America changing as religious communities struggle with civic, constitutional, ethical, and theological issues, especially in the post-9/11 period? Readings, films, discussion, and class projects will focus on particular cases and controversies. (Gen Ed: USW or CB)



CB 39: Hebrew Bible

Shaye Cohen


MW(F) 10-11; Lecture + Section; Judaism, Christianity
This course is a survey of the major books and ideas of the Hebrew Bible (commonly called the Old Testament). The course will also treat the historical contexts in which the Bible emerged, and the Bible's role as canonical scripture in Judaism and Christianity.



CB 57: Animated Spirituality: Japanese Religion in Anime, Manga, and Film

Helen Hardacre

TTh 9-10; Lecture + Section; Comparative
This course addresses the representation of religion in Japanese popular culture, with emphasis on anime, manga, and film. The course examines depictions of religious figures, themes, and human dilemmas in contemporary popular culture as a gateway to understanding the significance of religion in Japanese society and history




REL 1802: Introduction to Islamic Mystical Traditions

Ali Asani

T 1-3; Lecture + Section

the fundamental concepts, practices, and institutions associated with these traditions, their historical development and their influence on the devotional, cultural and social lives of Muslim communities through the centuries. Through case studies drawn from the Middle East, South Asia, West Africa and North America, the course examines ways in which these traditions have developed and promoted alternative perspectives on what it means to be Muslim, challenging in recent times sectarian, legalistic and politicized understandings of Islam such as Wahhabi, Islamism and jihadism. The course assumes no prior knowledge of Islam. (Gen Ed: CB, Study of the Past)




REL 59: The Real Game of Thrones--Culture, Society and Religion in the Middle Ages

Racha Kirakosian

MW 12:00 - 1:00; Lecture + Section

The fictional world of "The Game of Thrones" is often associated with the Middle Ages. Why is this the case? What do our associations today tell us about the ways in which we appropriate history and narratives? In this course, we will use the popular fantasy show Game of Thrones to explore events, structures, and people in medieval history, art, and literature. Students will gain a reflective understanding of medieval culture, society, and religion while engaging in a critical discussion on medievalism.



REL 19: African American Religions: An Introduction

Jonathan Walton

TTh 11:30-1; Lecture + Section; American Religious History, Comparative

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the religious practices, beliefs, and institutions of African Americans from the 17th century to present. Topics include, but are not limited to, black religions in North America under slavery, conjuring traditions, African institutional churches, black Muslims, Jews, the black freedom movement, and the relation of black religion to literature and sacred music. Readings

will include W.E.B. Du Bois, Albert Raboteau, Evelyn Brooks-Higginbotham, James Baldwin, Barbara Diane-Savage, Judith Weisenfeld and Cornel West.



REL 62: Indian Religions Through their Narrative Literatures: The Epics

Anne Monius

TTh 10-11:30; Lecture + Section

An examination of the religious traditions and communities of South Asia through the stories they tell. This semester's focus will be the epics-the Mahabharata and the Ramayana-in their numerous textual, regional, sectarian, and performative tellings.



REL 1491: Power and Piety: Evangelicals and Politics in the Contemporary U.S.

Marla Frederick & Jonathan Walton

W 2-4; Lecture

This course will examine the history, beliefs, practices and aesthetics of evangelical Christians in the United States, paying particular attention to the relationship between evangelical theology and national politics since the American Civil War. Topics covered will include: the development of the Social Gospel; the Niebuhr Brothers and neo-orthodox theology; women's suffrage and Civil Rights; the "Southern Strategy" and the rise of the so-called Religious Right; as well as Christian Reconstructionism.



REL 40: Incarnation and Desire

Courtney Lamberth

TTh 12-1:30; Lecture (CB Study of The Past)

The course offers an introduction to Christian thought by considering major texts, figures and ideas from the first century to the present in their changing cultural contexts. Central themes include the categories of body, flesh and soul; free will, desire and sin in relation to divine grace; and the meaning of incarnation. Texts include canonical and non-canonical early Christian literatures, Patristic and medieval texts, Reformation theologies, as well as modern and contemporary authors. Students will develop a sense of the distinguishing features of the Christian world view, while gaining an appreciation for the significant diversity across the tradition.

ANTHRO 1400: Quests for Wisdom: Religious, Moral and Aesthetic Experiences in the Art of Living

David L. Carrasco, Arthur Kleinman, Stephanie Paulsell, & Michael J. Puett

W 2-4; Lecture; Comparative

This is an experimental course that is intended to be transformative for students and teachers alike, which is part of the Harvard Initiative for Learning and Teaching (HILT). Our goal is to develop, in collaboration with enrolled students, a pedagogy for fostering students' personal quests for wisdom, through lectures and readings, through extensive conversation, and also through multiple other experiences inside and outside of class, including dramaturgical experiences with film or theater, caregiving, and meditation.

Our course is based on a return to William James's conception of knowledge in the University as based in and intended for the strategies needed to live a life of purpose and significance that also contributes to improving the world. Together, we will engage with the problems of danger, uncertainty, failure, and suffering that led the founders of the social sciences to ask fundamental questions about meaning, social life and subjective experience. These are the same existential questions that bring ordinary people all over the world, and throughout history, to question commonsense reality in the face of catastrophes and the violences of everyday life. The many answers to these questions – wisdom that is found in religious, ethical and aesthetic traditions - are intended to furnish individuals' art of living with strategies to respond to pain and suffering, to promote healing, and to address concerns about salvation, redemption, or other kinds of moral- emotional transformation.

We will also consider Mircea Eliade's notions of 'waiting for the dawn' and 'the myth of the eternal return' as quests for wisdom.

(Also offered as HDS 3001)



ER 18: Classical Chinese Ethical and Political Theory

Michael J. Puett

MW 10-11; Lecture + Section

What is the best way to live a fuller and more ethical life? Concretely what should we do to begin to live in a more flourishing and inspiring way? Questions such as these were at the heart of philosophical debates in China. The answers that classical Chinese thinkers developed in response to these questions are among the most powerful in human history. Regardless of

whether one agrees with them or not, they should be studied and taken seriously by anyone who cares about ethics, politics, and the ways to live life more fully.



AFRAMER 187: African Religions

Jacob Olupona

T 2-4; Lecture + Section

This course is a basic introduction to the history and phenomenology of traditional religions of the African peoples. Using diverse methodological and theoretical approaches, the course will explore various forms of experiences and practices that provide a deep understanding and appreciation of the sacred meaning of African existence: myth, ritual arts, and symbols selected from West, East, Central, and Southern Africa.

(Also offered as HDS 3690)



SW 30: Moctezuma's Mexico: Then and Now

David L. Carrasco & William Fash

TTh 10-11; Lecture + Section

Explorations of the mythical and social origins, glory days and political collapse of the Aztec Empire and Maya civilizations followed by study of the sexual, religious and racial interactions of the "Great Encounter" between Mesoamerica and Europe. Focus on the archaeology, cosmovision, human sacrifice, divine kingship, the mystery of 2012 and rebellion in Mesoamerican cities and in colonialism. Hands-on work with objects at the Peabody Museum aid in examining new concepts of race, nation and the persistence of Moctezuma's Mexico in Latino identities in the Mexico-US Borderlands.



HDS 2042: Religion in America's Political Conscience and at the Ballot Box

E.J. Dionne

TTh 10-11:30; Lecture + Section

G. K. Chesterton described the United States as "a nation with the soul of a church," but America's religious institutions have increasingly taken on the souls of political parties. The engagement of churches, synagogues and mosques in politics is not new, and in our history, religious voices have often been lifted on behalf of progressive causes: the abolition of slavery,

social reform during the Progressive Era, labor organizing during the Great Depression, and civil rights from the 1960s forward. But since the 1980s, the dominant religious key – and certainly the aspect of religious engagement highlighted most in the media – has been conservative. And the polarization of politics has divided religious traditions to the point where partisanship may now be more salient than faith itself, and loyalty to party and ideology often trumps religious commitments. This course will explore the transformation of American religious witness in politics. It will examine the contribution of particular religious traditions to movements for social change and also the influence of conservative theological ideas on the broader conservative movement. There will be a particular emphasis on contemporary movements and issues including the role of white evangelical Christians in the Trump coalition; the ongoing importance of the African-American Church in movements for social change; the relative strength of the religious right and religious left and the differences between them; the role of religious prejudice in politics; our ongoing argument over what the "separation of church and state" should mean and whether it is the proper standard for understanding the First Amendment; and the sharp rise of religious disengagement among young Americans.



ANE 102: Introduction to Mesopotamian Religion

Piotr Steinkeller

TTh 11-12; Seminar

A survey of the history and major concerns of ancient Mesopotamian religion from prehistoric times down to the reign of Alexander the Great. Among the topics treated are the key figures of the Sumero-Babylonian pantheon, the major mythological compositions (read in translation), personal religion, cosmogonies and theogonies, magic and divination, Mesopotamian temples, and cult and ritual. The course makes rich use of ancient iconography.

(Also offered as HDS 3661)



ANE 120A: Introduction to the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament 1: Pentateuch and Former Prophets

Andrew Teeter

TTh 10-11:30; Lecture + Section

A critical introduction to the literature and theology of the Hebrew Bible, considered in light of the historical

contexts of its formation and the interpretive contexts of its reception within Judaism and Christianity. The course, the first part of a divisible, year-long sequence, will focus on the major biblical narrative traditions, the Pentateuch and Former Prophets. (Also offered as HDS 1102)



REL 1434: History of Western Christianity, 150-1100

Kevin Madigan

MW 4-5:30; Lecture + Section; Christianity

This course is designed to provide a historical overview of the Church and society in western Europe from the fourth through the twelfth century. Thus, this course will investigate late-antique and early medieval Christianity in its social and its cultural context. Narrative and theological story lines to be pursued will include the varieties of early Christianity; relations with the Roman state (including persecution of Christians by it); the emergence of normative or "early Catholic" Christianity; early and early medieval monasticism; the search for the Christian doctrine of God and Christ; early Christian architecture, piety and worship; Christianity and other world religions (especially Judaism and Islam); western and eastern Christianity; the emergence of the Roman primacy; the Christianization of the north of Europe; the nature of parochial Christianity; the emergence of the pope, in the eleventh century, as an international religious force; the crusades; and early medieval piety. We will also be strengthening our skills as interpreters of primary sources. Some attention will be paid to major historiographical issues.



REL 1742: Introduction to Buddhist Narrative and Story Literature

Charles Hallisey

TTh 8:30-10; Lecture + Section; Buddhism

An introduction to the study of narrative and story literature in the Buddhist world. A primary focus will be on the narrative and story literature found in Buddhist scriptures and commentaries, but there will also be consideration of examples of narrative and story literature that circulated independently.

(Also offered as HDS 3776)

HDS 2188: The Protestant Reformations

Michelle Sanchez

TTh 11:30-1; Lecture + Section

The sixteenth century saw turmoil and rapid change in and beyond Europe: religious fragmentation, but also rising colonization, class warfare, new media, and the seeds of absolutism and nationalism. This course examines major movements of Protestant Reform, focusing on the role of theological arguments in reshaping concepts of power and representation. Why were certain reforms persuasive, and to whom? What were their political and social implications—not only for clergy, princes, and merchant-class men, but also peasants, women, Jews, Muslims, intellectuals, and artists? Finally, we will read these histories alongside our present, in which media-driven crisis has become the norm.



ISLAMCIV 158Y: Qur'anic Exegesis and Prophetic Tradition

Shady Nasser

MW 1-2:30; Lecture + Section

An introduction to Qur'anic exegesis and prophetic tradition (Hadith). A survey of different schools of Qur'anic interpretation within the Islamic tradition. The course introduces the discipline of Hadith and the role it plays in Qur'anic commentary. Topics include: Hadith, transmission, collections of sound Prophetic traditions, Sunni and Shii Hadith collections, Schools of Qur'anic Exegesis, Esoteric interpretation, Modern Interpretation, Qur'an, science and modernity.



FRSEMR 37Y: Muslim Voices in Contemporary World Literatures

Ali Asani

T 7-9pm

What do Muslims think of acts of terrorism committed in the name of Islam, the mixing of religion with politics, the status and rights of women, the hegemony of the "West"? This seminar investigates the viewpoints of prominent Muslim writers on these and other "hot button" issues as reflected in novels, short stories and poetry from different parts of the world. Explores a range of issues facing Muslim communities in various parts of the world by examining the impact of colonialism, nationalism, globalization and politicization of Islam on the search for a modern Islamic identity. Readings of Muslim

authors from the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, Europe and America.



FRSEMR 60H: Faith and Fiction in American History

David Holland

W 3-5

Moving chronologically from the early national period to the turn of the twenty-first century, this course uses key literary works to examine the religious history of the United States. These novels help us wrestle with some of the nation's key cultural questions: Does God have a special relationship with the United States? Is sin an individual responsibility or a social flaw? Why has American religion been so frequently concerned with sexuality? How has religion shaped racial identities and tensions? How do non-Christian immigrants find a place and a voice in a nation with deeply entrenched Christian traditions? To explore these and other areas of concern, we bore into the faith-inflected cultures of American history through the imagined narratives of some of its most celebrated writers, including the likes of Susanna Rowson, Harriet Beecher Stowe, James Baldwin, Rudolfo Anaya, Pearl Abraham and Marilynne Robinson. I will offer mini-lectures to contextualize these works in their historical moment. We will read some scholarly work to sharpen our tools of analysis, but mostly we will read and talk about the novels themselves.



FRSEMR 71D: Zen and the Art of Living: Making the Ordinary Extraordinary

James Robson

Th 3-5

This seminar explores the rich history, philosophy and practices of Zen Buddhism as it developed in China, Korea, and Japan. We will first consider the emergence of the Zen tradition out of the Buddhist tradition and then explore the full range of its most distinctive features (Zen monastic meditation), cultural practices (painting, calligraphy, and poetry), and radical—even iconoclastic—innovations (such as the use of kōans, which are seemingly nonsensical sayings that defy rationality). We will also critically evaluate some less well-known facets of the Zen tradition, such as gender issues, the veneration of mummified masters, and the question of how Zen was implicated in modern nationalistic movements in

Japan during World War II. During the mid-20th century, Zen became a global phenomenon as Zen masters began to move around the world and introduce the practice of Zen meditation to those in search of religious alternatives to Western organized religions, rationalism, and materialism. Zen attracted the attention of writers, musicians, artists, and athletes. Why did Zen develop such a trans-cultural appeal at that moment in history? Why are there so many books with the title: “Zen and the Art of....”? Why do so many computer and tech companies have Zen in their names? How has Zen meditation fed into the current “meditation/mindfulness” boom? These are some of the questions we will explore in this seminar through readings, film screenings, museum viewings, and a visit to a Zen meditation center.



FRSEMR 36P: To Far Places: Literature of Journey and Quest

William Graham

Th 3-5

In this course, we read a highly diverse group of engaging texts in English translation. Most are fictional, mythic, or epic texts. All engage the theme of journey, quest, pilgrimage, passage, or sojourning. We will be attentive to enduring themes and basic questions associated with this varied literature, including parting and return, separation and reintegration, homelessness and homecoming, epic adventure and exploration, trial and suffering, loss and recovery, heroic action, tragedy, pathos, orientation and disorientation, internal and external travel, faith and courage, aesthetic vision, heightened perception, self-discovery and growth, companionship, loneliness, risk, and death. Readings will be selected from among the following: Gilgamesh, J.R.R. Tolkien's *Hobbit*, Homer's *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, Matsuo Basho's *Narrow Road to Oku*, Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha*, Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*, Rudyard Kipling's *The Man Who Would be King*, Ashvagosha's *Life of the Buddha*, Shusaku Endo's *Deep River*, Annie Dillard's *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, John Hersey's *A Single Pebble*, Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain*, Fariduddin Attar's *Conference of the Birds*, Naguib Mahfouz's *Journey of Ibn Fattouma*, Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*, Rachel Joyce's *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry*, and Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*.

**FRSEMR 505: From Galileo to the Big Bang Theory:
Conflict and Dialogue between Religion and Science**

Karin Oberg
W 2-4

It is easy to find controversies at the intersection of science and religion, from the time of Galileo, to Darwin and the emergence of modern cosmology. Yet many scientists throughout the ages have been devoutly religious, challenging claims of an intrinsic enmity between science and religion. This seminar treats a number of historical conflicts between religious beliefs and scientific theories, among them the Galileo affair, the clockwork universe, evolution, and the Big Bang theory. The seminar will introduce students to the main protagonists through their own words, and through contemporary and modern-day commentaries. We will explore why these conflicts arose and, based on these historical lessons, what we can expect the future relationship between science and religion to be. The ultimate aim of this seminar is for students to form their own opinion of which kind of conflicts between science and religion are inevitable and which are accidents of time and place, and under which conditions, if any, interactions between science and religion can be mutually beneficial. Most of the course will focus on Christianity and the natural sciences, with emphasis on astronomy and cosmology, but the relationship between other ancient and contemporary religions and other sciences will be discussed as well to provide a broader context.

FRSEMR 61W: This is the End of the World

Giovanni Bazzana
W 3-5pm

For millennia the end of the world has been feared, imagined, and exorcized by gifted writers, religious leaders, and intellectuals from the most diverse cultural backgrounds. Scholars have even suggested that – over the last few decades – such a worldview centered around an imminent end has become hegemonic by appearing in an almost endless number of very popular media stretching from blockbuster movies to comic books. This seminar will explore the cultural reasons behind this paradoxical attraction of humans towards fantasies detailing the end of the known world in catastrophic and often terrorizing colors. Imaginations of the end seem to have begun with the birth of the “apocalypse” as a literary genre in ancient Judaism and Christianity. The seminar will follow some trajectories of these fantasies by comparing and contrasting exoteric ancient and medieval religious texts with modern and contemporary novels and movies. The ultimate goal will be to see how the rupture of social bonds, zombie or demonic attacks, and natural disasters are preferential occasions to reflect on the relationship of humans with nature, with the supernatural, and with each other. A few scholarly essays will be assigned, but the largest part of the course will be occupied by the direct reading, viewing, and discussion of primary materials (with the final opportunity to write your own tale of “the end of the world”).

Intermediate Courses in the Comparative Study of Religion: Fall 2017

REL 1011A: The Tree at the Center of the World I

Kimberley Patton

W 2-4; Seminar; Comparative

This comparative course will examine historical and contemporary traditions of primordial, cosmic, and sacred trees in religion, folklore, mythology, and ritual, including the ways in which the special natural characteristics of trees have been interpreted metaphorically and metaphysically. We will consider primary iconographic and textual evidence as well as secondary sources. Individual research projects in particular traditions will be featured.



REL 1134: Genesis: Narrative Artistry and Theological Meanings

Jon Levenson

TTh 11:30-1; Seminar

A close critical reading in English of the book of Genesis with an eye both to the storytellers' techniques and to the moral and theological dimensions of the text. Emphasis will be given to literary and religious rather than historical and editorial issues.



REL 1335: Ancient Greek Sanctuaries: Healing and Medicine

Kimberley Patton

Th 2-4; Seminar

How was disease understood and healing sought in ancient Greek religion? What was the relationship of religious healing to the practice of medicine in Mediterranean antiquity? What light does this history shed on contemporary ideologies and practices of health care? Exploring three prominent sanctuaries of the physician-god Asklepios that were sites of pilgrimage and religious healing (Epidauros, Kos, and Pergamon), the seminar will consider a range of archaeological and literary evidence. Enrollment limited to 15 with the permission of the instructor, by application at the first course meeting.

HDS 2755: The Examined Life: Philosophy, Religion, and the Crises of Modernity

Cornel West & David Lamberth

T 2-4; Seminar

An interrogation into how to reflect and act in view of the changing state of our knowledge and self-understanding in a modern world and pluralistic, democratic society. Readings will focus on selected major modern philosophical figures from the American and continental contexts, such as Emerson, Royce, Du Bois, Whitehead, Arendt, Gadamer and Levinas. Questions considered will include the human condition, the divine, the nature of evil, and how to think about the religious in light of the advance of scientific and technological methods of inquiry.



REL 1414: Scripture Stories of Women

Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza

W 4-6; Lecture + Section

This course will engage in a feminist reading of texts of Scripture about wo/men in order to reconstruct wo/men's religious history and to assess whether these texts are "good news" for wo/men. Special attention will be given to feminist hermeneutics, and historical reconstruction. Discussion will focus on the significance of social location, critical methods, and historical imagination for the interpretation and significance of these stories about Jewish wo/men and their significance for contemporary religious self-understanding and ministerial praxis. Lectures, group discussions, and group projects seek to foster a participatory democratic style of learning.



REL 1590: Issues in the Study of Native American Religion

Ann Braude

TTh 10-11:30; Lecture

Based around a series of guest speakers, the course interrogates the study of religion in general and of Native American traditions in particular in light of indigenous perspectives and histories. Questions of appropriation, repatriation and religious freedom will be approached through legal as well as cultural frameworks.

HDS 2141: Pope Francis's Theology of the People, and the Future of Religion

Harvey Cox

Th 4-6; Seminar

Together the instructor and students will explore some of the following questions: How much does Pope Francis's being a Latin American and an Argentine from an Italian immigrant family, and a Jesuit shape his thinking? What is the influence of liberation theology? What is the import of his main encyclicals and other writings and his symbolic gestures? Why has his papacy aroused such fervent support and such unprecedented opposition in the Catholic Church and beyond it? What will his papacy mean for relations to other Christian churches and to other faiths? What might be his impact on the future of religion?



REL 1920: The Politics of Storytelling

Michael Jackson

T 2-4; Lecture

This course explores Hannah Arendt's thesis that storytelling is a critical strategy for bridging the gap between private and public realms. Storytelling is understood as a mode of social and political activity that involves a struggle between personal and collective representations of the truth, and between unofficial and official versions of events. Through the close analysis of storytelling in a variety of situations, we will explore the ways in which the meaning of stories resides not in any ahistorical essence or internal logic, but emerges from everyday human struggles to strike a balance between domains of experience that are, on the one hand, felt to belong to oneself or one's own kind, and, on the other, felt to be shared or to belong to others.



ANE 130: The Birth of Biblical Religion

Israel Knohl

TTh 8:30-10; Lecture

The inscriptions found in recent decades "For YHWH and his Asherah" have created a heated debate about the birth of biblical religion. Was the Canaanite goddess Asherah indeed YHWH's consort? If so, when and how did the biblical God become a single and a jealous God as we see him in the Ten Commandments? And what about Moses and his share in the process? Is he an historical figure? Was he

influenced by the Egyptian revolutionist Pharaoh Akhenaten as Sigmund Freud has argued in his book "Moses and Monotheism"? In this course, we will deal with these and other fundamental questions related to the Bible's beginnings. Based on new readings of biblical and Egyptian sources we will offer new ways to solve the mysteries involved in the birth of biblical religion.



COMPLIT 137: Child Sacrifice, Pros and Cons: The Binding of Isaac in Jewish, Christian, Islamic, and Modern Lit

David Stern

TTh 10-11:30; Seminar; Comparative

Child Sacrifice-- specifically, the story of the parent's sacrifice of the first-born child-- lies at the heart of Western religion and culture. The Biblical narrative in Genesis 22, known as the Binding of Isaac, is one of the most famous and problematic tales in the Bible. The same narrative is foundational to Christianity. Later Jewish tradition has interpreted the Biblical text in countless ways from the ancient period down to the present day. The narrative figures prominently in Islam from the Qur'an on. And the Biblical story has been criticized and critiqued since the Middle Ages as a barbaric narrative. Recent works have blamed it for the ubiquity of child abuse in Western society, and it has become a ubiquitous motif of anti-war and protest poetry all over the world. This course will use the interpretive career and literary history of Genesis 22 as a lens through which to study the place of this foundational narrative in Western culture. Readings will include Biblical texts, Euripides' Iphigeneia in Aulis, Philo of Alexandria, ancient Jewish sources, the New Testament, St. Augustine and other Christian exegetes, the Qur'an and later Islamic traditions, Kierkegaard's Fear and Trembling, Martin Buber, Kafka, Bob Dylan, Yehuda Amichai, and Leonard Cohen, among many other modern writers and poets.



HDS 3957: Religion and Society in Edo and Meiji Japan

Helen Hardacre

W 9-11; Lecture + Section (for Japanese)

Examination of religion and society in Japan from 1600-1912, beginning with an era of state control over religious institutions and religious affiliations of the

populace, followed by the demise of the Edo-period system and diversification of religious practice in context of rapid social change, modernization, and imperialism during the Meiji period. Separate section for students able to utilize primary sources in Japanese will explore the Maruzen Meiji Microfilm collection in the Harvard-Yenching Library.



HDS 3762: The Literatures of Medieval Iberia

Luis Girón Negrón

W 3-5; Seminar; Comparative

The cultural interactions in pre-modern Spain between Muslims, Christians and Jews shaped the literary history of Arabic, Hebrew and the Ibero-Romance vernaculars. Our seminar examines selected scholarly debates on the comparative study of these literatures.



HDS 1127: Messianism in Early Judaism and Christianity

David Stern

W 10-12; Seminar; Comparative

Messianism is one of the messiest, most fraught topics in the history of early Christianity and Judaism. This seminar will trace the evolution and development of the many different ideas of the messiah—his character, his fate, his role in history—from its Ancient Near Eastern beginnings through the Hebrew Bible into early Jewish and Christian tradition up until the early Middle Ages. We will also pay attention to parallel developments in the Greco-Roman world. Topics to be studied include the semi-divinity of the messiah, the idea of the suffering or dying messiah, and the relationship between messianism and apocalypticism. Readings will include primary sources as well as the relevant secondary literature. All readings will be provided in English translation and (in the case of primary sources) in their original languages. Depending on the make-up of the class, the instructors will make special provisions (like an extra class hour) for those students interested and able to read the primary sources in their original languages. Jointly offered in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences as Jewish History 225.

HDS 2125: Religion and Neoliberalism

Todne Thomas

Th 12-2; Conference Course

As it is popularly conceptualized, neoliberalism is a political and economic system that calls for the deregulation of capitalist enterprises, the increasing privatization of government services, and the application of market rationalities in the operation of social institutions. Yet, how does neoliberalism interface with religion? What religious sensibilities are encoded in and spread amidst neoliberal formations? Through our review of theoretical texts and anthropological monographs, this course investigates religion and neoliberalism around some of the following loci: Christian temporal reckonings that shape renditions of millennial capitalism and late liberalism, moral orders, co-constitutive discourses and institutions of prosperity and accumulation, and conflicting paradigms of selfhood and belonging.



AFRAMER 180X: Race, Class and the Making of American Religion

Marla Frederick

T 1-3; Seminar

This class explores the ways in which both race and class are implicated in the development and practice of religion in the U.S. Through historical, anthropological and sociological works we explore the theoretical underpinnings of race and class and ponder their influence upon varying expressions of Islam, Judaism and Christianity.



HDS 2610: Contemplative Prayer in Christianity

Stephanie Paulsell

T 2-4; Seminar

This seminar will explore contemplative prayer in Christianity through the slow and focused reading of six primary texts: Origen, *On Prayer*; The Life of Teresa of Jesus; *The Way of the Pilgrim*; Howard Thurman, *Disciplines of the Spirit*; Thomas Merton, *Contemplative Prayer*; Simone Weil, *Waiting for God*. We will read other short pieces, often by the same authors, and some historical and analytical material, but we will spend most of our time working with these six texts and trying to know them well.

REL 1537: Justice, Human Rights, and Religion

Francis Fiorenza

W 2-4; Seminar

This seminar focuses on the relation between different conceptions of justice and different conceptions of human rights. At the same it will deal with some current criticisms of human rights and the relation between human rights and religion, especially Christianity. Special attention will be given to the work of Farmer, Rawls, Habermas, Sen & Nussbaum, Sandel, Derrida, Butler, Fraser, Young, Wolterstorff, Cohen, and Buchanan. It will seek to show how: a conception of human rights relates to religion within the framework of a discourse ethics.



REL 1573: Sex, Gender, and Sexuality II

Amy Hollywood

T 2-4; Lecture + Section

The second of two parts, the course will continue to explore the theoretical articulation of sex, gender, and sexuality in feminist and queer theory, with attention to the role of other differences –racial, ethnic, religious, and differences in physical ability –in contemporary work. Prerequisite: 2692 or consent of the instructor.



HDS 2854: The Politics and Ethics of Statecraft

J. Bryan Hehir

MW 2:45-4; Lecture

The course examines the relationship of moral reasoning and the study and practice of world politics. The focus of the course is the normative and political analysis of the statecraft of world leaders including: Otto von Bismarck, Woodrow Wilson, John F. Kennedy, Charles de Gaulle, Henry Kissinger, Margaret Thatcher, Nelson Mandela and Barack Obama. Statecraft is examined comparatively among the eight and focuses upon the relevance of their legacies to contemporary world politics in its ethical, political and strategic dimensions.

HDS 3357: Critical Perspectives on the Dynamics and Development of Islam in Africa

Ousmane Oumar Kane

Th 12-2; Conference Course

An estimated 450 to 500 million Muslims live in Africa—close to a third of the global Muslim population. The overwhelming majority of them lives in the northern half of the continent, above the equator. The spread of Islam increased the contact between the peoples of North Africa, the Sahara, and parts of sub-Saharan Africa. The course is designed to provide an understanding of the spread of Islam and the formation and transformation of Muslim societies in Africa. It is organized in two parts. The first part of the course will focus on the history of Islamization of Africa, and topics will include the ways in which Islam came to Africa, the relationships of Islam to trade, the growth of literary in Arabic and Ajami, the rise of clerical classes and their contribution to State formation in the pre-colonial period. The second part of the course will feature guest lecturers who will present cutting edge research on the transformation of Islam in postcolonial Africa.



HDS 3777: Modern Buddhism and Fiction

Charles Hallisey

W 2-4; Conference Course

An examination of how fiction is a vehicle for religious reflection in the modern Buddhist world. The genres of fiction will include both the novel and the short story, with examples drawn widely from across the Buddhist world.



HDS 3602B: Introduction to Islamic Philosophy & Theology: Early Modern & Modern Periods (16th-20th Centuries)

Khaled El-Rouayheb

Th 2-4; Lecture + Section

The course is a continuation of HDS 3602a but may be taken independently. It explores the thought of some of the major Islamic philosophers and theologians from the 16th century to the 20th: Mulla Sadra (d.1635), Shah Waliullah (d.1762), Muhammad Abduh (d.1905), and 20th century thinkers such as Muhammad Iqbal, Said Nursi, Abu l-Ala Maududi, Ali Shariati, Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, Mohammed Arkoun and Fatema Mernissi. Offered alternate years with HDS 3602a. Though the two courses can be taken

in either order, 3602a covers the 9th-15th centuries and HDS 3602b covers the 16th-20th centuries.



AFRAMER 192x: Religion and Society in Nigeria

Jacob Olupona

Th 4-6; Lecture + Section; African Religions

The seminar examines the historical development of religion in Nigeria and explores its intersection with ethnic identity, culture, and society in pre-colonial, colonial, and contemporary periods. The course provides an understanding of various cultural tradition, historical events, and social forces that have shaped Nigeria's religious express. Many topical issues will be explored such as indigenous religious culture, Christian and Muslim identities, civil religion, and civil society and democratization, as well as religion and politics in present-day Nigeria.



REL 1557: Alternative Spiritualities in the United States

Dan McKanan

T2-4; Seminar; Comparative

This course surveys spiritual practices and movements that have been labeled as metaphysical, esoteric, occult, harmonial, and New Age. We will begin with a historical survey of esoteric spirituality from colonial-era astrology and alchemy to New Age and neopagan traditions, then consider some leading constructive

thinkers within alternative spiritual traditions, such as Starhawk and Joanna Macy. The course will also feature field trips to a variety of spiritual organizations and communities.



REL 1426: Apocalyptic Literature from the Second Temple period to Byzantium and Early Islam

Giovanni Bazzana

T 12-2pm

The course will review a broad sample of texts belonging to the apocalyptic genre and composed between the third century BCE and the seventh century CE. The main goal of the course is to reflect on the crucial role played by apocalyptic literature in shaping religious thoughts and practices as well as socio-political movements and ethical choices in a span of time that witnessed the formation of the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions as we know them today. Moreover, the course will introduce students to interpretive tools useful to think about the relationship between ancient apocalyptic literature and the contemporary world in selected areas such as historical imaginations of the future, violence and religion, and means to reflect on change.

Advanced Courses in the Comparative Study of Religion: Fall 2017

EABS 241: Major Issues in the Study of East Asian Buddhism

James Robson and Ryuichi Abe

W 2-4; Seminar

A graduate seminar that critically examines major academic works in English on East Asian Buddhism. It is aimed at preparing EALC graduate students for their general examinations in the fields relevant to Buddhism.



HDS 3892: Tibetan Tantric Literature

Janet Gyatso

TTh 10-11:30; Seminar

Readings will include Indic tantric scriptures and practice texts in Tibetan translation. It will also consider tantric work composed originally in Tibetan. Special attention will be paid to the intertextuality of this material with other Buddhist scriptures, as well as intersections with other Buddhist cosmologies, and attendant interpretational issues. Prerequisite: Middle to advanced reading skills in Tibetan language required.



HDS 3930: Thinking About History in South Asia

Anne Monius

T 2-4; Seminar

This seminar offers an intensive examination of Euro-American and South Asian approaches to time and history and considers their importance for the study of South Asian religions.



REL 2574: Politics of Life

Mayra Rivera Rivera

T 2-4; Seminar

In this advanced seminar, we will analyze conceptualizations of “life itself” in contemporary political philosophy, paying especial attention to the legacy of religious ideas on contemporary “secular” theory. In contemporary philosophical discussions, conceptualizations of life are prominent in two significantly different areas of scholarship: “biopolitics” and the “new materialisms” (or “material ontologies”). Both of them inherit a notion of life

marked by the emergence of biology as a field set apart from religion or metaphysics. Discussions of biopolitics focus on how regimes of power control human bodies. “New materialisms” seek to draw attention to the vitality of matter, claiming that contemporary scholarship has focused exclusively on the power of human actions, especially language. But what is the relationship, if any, between these two recent areas of debate? What conceptions of society and corporeality inform them? And what makes philosophical discussions of the meaning of life particularly important in the 21st century?



REL 2575: Poetry and the Archive

Amy Hollywood

W 2-4; Seminar

Much contemporary American poetry in English, both in the United States and in Canada, roots itself in documentary and archival work, telling often fractured and multi-vocal stories about particular places, times, environments, and events. The course will explore key examples of this work alongside recent theoretical discussions of the archive. Authors to be read will likely include Jacques Derrida, Susan Howe, C. D. Wright, Brenda Coultas, S. Nourbese Philip, C. S. Giscombe, and Jill Magi.



HAA 124E: Architecture and the Construction of Early Modern Islamic Empire

Gulru Necipoglu-Kafadar

T 1-3; Seminar

Between the 16th and 18th centuries, three empires - the Mediterranean-based Ottomans, Safavids in Iran, and Mughals in India - developed interconnected yet distinctive architectural cultures with individualized ornamental idioms by fusing their common Timurid heritage with cosmopolitan regional traditions. Explores connections between empire building and architecture, with respect to aesthetics, religion, imperial ideology, and theories of dynastic legitimacy.

HDS 2123: Race-ing Around: Black Women, Movement and Spirituality

Kimberly Blockett

M 12-2; Seminar

This course focuses on the religious and political discourse flourishing in the 1800s and its influence on the movement of black women evangelists. Using cultural geography and archival research as a framework, we will explore travel in women's autobiography to illuminate how spiritual narratives theorize about identity and difference through geographic movement.



HDS 2825: Religion, Conflict, and Peace in Contemporary Global Affairs

Diane Moore

Th 2-4; Lecture + Section

In this course, we will explore a series of contemporary conflicts in different regions of the world with a special focus on identifying and analyzing the diverse and complex roles that religions play in both promoting and mitigating violence in each context. Students will learn a method for recognizing and analyzing how religious ideologies are embedded in all arenas of human agency and not isolated from political, economic, and cultural life as is often assumed. In addition to examining the conflicts themselves, we will also explore the religious dimensions of the impacts those conflicts have on civic life in areas such as public health, education, and commerce. What roles do religions play in fostering violence and what roles do they play in promoting peace? How do religious institutions and ideologies function to support and/or thwart public health initiatives? What are the ideological justifications for functional economic policies and how do they reflect and/or challenge diverse religious values? What roles do religions play in advancing or suppressing

educational opportunities and for whom? Are media representations of the religious dimensions of conflict accurate? Possible countries of focus include Brazil, Egypt, France, Israel/Palestine, Myanmar, Nigeria, Qatar, the Philippines, Somalia, Syria, Turkey, and the United States. Final projects will be individually shaped based on interest and (where relevant) professional focus. Outstanding student work may be considered for publication on the Religious Literacy Project website at Harvard Divinity School. The course is open to all and especially relevant for aspiring or professional educators, journalists, public health workers, foreign service officers and government officials who wish to better understand how religions function in contemporary world affairs. Professionals from those fields will make guest presentations throughout the term. Special note: a version of this course will simultaneously be offered in the fall of 2017 as a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) through Harvard X and HDS students will have an opportunity to interact with participants of the MOOC version throughout the globe.



HDS 3060: Gender and Sexuality in the Muslim Middle East

Asli Zengin

M 2-4; Seminar

This course explores historical and contemporary debates regarding the construction and organization of gender and sexuality in the Muslim Middle East. We will comprehensively draw on topics, including colonial oriental legacies, recent and past controversies over veiling, family, law, femininities, masculinities, gender nonconforming lives, popular movements, modernity, secularism, nationalism, radical Islam, neoliberalism, and security regimes.

Introductory Courses in the Comparative Study of Religion: Spring 2018

REL 13: Scripture and Classics: Introduction to the History of Religion

William Graham

TTh 10-11; Lecture + Section; Comparative

An introduction to the history of religion through selective reading in significant, iconic texts from diverse religious and cultural traditions. Considers important themes (e.g., suffering, death, meaning, community, transcendence, religion vs. culture) as well as problems of method and definition as they present themselves in the sources considered.

Readings from texts such as the Upanisads, Bhagavad Gita, Dhammapada, Lotus Sutra, Analects, Zhuangzi, Dao de Jing, Basho's Narrow Road to the Far North, Gilgamesh, Aeneid, Torah, Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an.



REL 20: Ethnographies of Religion: Texts and Contexts

Marla Frederick

TBA; Seminar; Comparative

The course presents ethnographic works on Religion in the humanities and social sciences and introduces students to the concept and practice of ethnography.



REL 46: The Letters of Paul: Ethnicity, Sex, Ethics, and the End of the World

Laura Nasrallah

MW 11-12; Lecture + Section; Christianity

This introductory course focuses on 1) the Pauline epistles in their first-century sociopolitical context, and their earliest interpretations; 2) recent trends in Pauline studies, including feminist and postcolonial interpretation, the New Perspective, and European philosophical treatments (Badiou, Zizek). Special attention will be given to ideas of the gendered/enslaved body and its potential for transformation and pollution, ethnicity in the Roman world, the relations of communities to Roman imperial power, and views of time and the impending eschaton.

MODMDEST 100: Introduction to the Modern Middle East

Malika Zeghal

MW 10-11; Lecture + Section

An introduction to Middle Eastern Studies focusing on the modern period (19th and 20th centuries). Lectures will be broadly sequenced according to historical chronology but will be thematically organized. They will provide some historical context for each topic examined, as well as present specific examples through primary sources, visual sources, and numerical data when relevant. This course is designed to give students an overall good grasp of the history of the modern Middle East and of some of the major themes in modern Middle Eastern Studies. Students will critically engage with some of the most important topics that resonate in that area of the world. We will cover topics such as reformism, economic development, colonialism and nationalism, authoritarianism and democratization, sectarianism, culture, gender, literature and the arts, as well as the role of religion in politics. Most of these topics, in one way or another, will speak to the construction of nation-states in the Middle East and to the challenges they have been confronting. This is not a survey course. In particular, it will not be exhaustive in its coverage of the region in space or time, and in its coverage of topics. Students in search of a specific topic, country, or period are strongly encouraged to take a look at the syllabus prior to enrolling to make sure their specific interests will be covered. Assigned readings will consist of primary and secondary sources. Students will be exposed to first-hand accounts by protagonists in the history of the Middle East (primary sources) as well as to the diversity of approaches that the scholarly literature (secondary sources) has taken across disciplines, e.g. anthropological studies, quantitative analysis, philology and textual studies. The larger aim of the course is to develop students' critical thinking in dealing with the history, cultures, politics, and political economies of the contemporary Middle East. Required for all concentrators in The Modern Middle East. Open to all undergraduate and graduate students. There are no prerequisites for this course.

CB 33: East Asian Religions: Traditions and Transformations

James Robson

TTh 10-11:30; Lecture + Section

This course provides an introduction to the study of East Asian religions. It covers the development of Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism and Shinto. It is not a comprehensive survey, but is designed around major conceptual themes, such as ritual, image veneration, mysticism, meditation, death, and category formation in the study of religion. The emphasis throughout the course is on the hermeneutic difficulties attendant upon the study of religion in general, and East Asian religions in particular.



AI 54: For the Love of God and His Prophet: Religion, Literature, and the Arts in Muslim Cultures

Ali Asani

TTh 11:30-1; Lecture + Section; Islam

The course surveys the literary and artistic dimensions of the devotional life of the world's Muslim communities, focusing on the role of literature and the arts (poetry, music, architecture, calligraphy, etc.) as expressions of piety and socio-political critique. An important aim of the course is to explore the relationships between religion, literature, and the arts in a variety of historical and cultural contexts in the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, Europe, and America.



CB 28: Hindu Worlds of Art and Culture

Diana Eck

TTh 11:30-1; Lecture + Section; Hinduism

An exploration of the narratives and arts of the Hindu tradition, considering the great gods - Vishnu, Krishna, Shiva, and Devi - that give expression to a profound vision of the world, the images through which the gods are envisioned, the temples and pilgrimage places where they are worshipped, and the rituals and festivals that are part of Hindu life. Readings include the Ramayana, the Bhagavad Gita, the Gita Govinda, the Shiva Purana, and the Devi Mahatmya. Jointly offered as Culture and Belief 28.

CB 23: From the Hebrew Bible to Judaism, From the Old Testament to Christianity

Shaye Cohen

MW(F) 10-11; Lecture + Section; Comparative

The Hebrew Scriptures, what Christians call the "Old Testament" and Jews call the "Bible," are the basis of both Judaism and Christianity. In this course we shall survey how this work of literature, through interpretation and re-interpretation, spawned two different cultural systems. Topics to be surveyed include: canon and prophecy; exegesis and Midrash; Shabbat and Sunday; temple, synagogue, church; the Oral Torah and the Logos; sin and righteousness; messiah and redemption.



REL 1461: Gender, Religion and Scripture

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza

M 4-5:30; Lecture + Section

This course is an introduction to the field of feminist biblical studies. We will discuss the intellectual history and institutional development of feminist biblical studies around

the globe and explore different methods of analysis such as rhetorical, historical, queer, or intersectional kyriarchal analyses. We also will explore biblical women's stories such as Eve, Sarah, Hagar Mary of Magdala, or the slave girl Rhoda. Lectures, group meetings, discussions, and presentations seek to foster participatory, collaborative and democratic styles of learning.



ER15: If There is No God, All is Permitted: Theism and Moral Reasoning

Jay Harris

MW 12-1pm; Lecture + Section

This course will examine the ways in which a concept of God has informed Western moral discourse trying to help students engage the literature as they consider why one might think "if there is no God, all is permitted" and why one might think if there is a God, human moral achievement is impossible.

REL 1250: Judaism: Text and Tradition

Jon Levenson

TTh 11:30-1; Lecture + Section

A general and wide-ranging exploration of the Jewish religious tradition, from its inception in biblical Israel through its rabbinic, medieval, and modern iterations. The central focus lies on the literary meanings and existential questions of the classical tradition, as well as on the relationships between texts, religious claims, and practices. We shall also consider some of the restatements, reformulations, and challenges to tradition that have arisen in modern times. Open to undergraduates, including first year students, by permission.



REL 97: Sophomore Tutorial

Courtney Lamberth and Jonathan Walton

T 1-3; Required for Concentrators

Introduction to methods and theories in the study of religion, including major themes and arguments that have defined the field. Course emphasizes critical thinking and writing skills. Open to Secondary Field students and non-concentrators with permission of the instructors.



REL 1400: Introduction to the New Testament

Karen King

MW 11-12; Lecture + Section; Christianity

The course will introduce the basic contents, theologies, and ethics of the New Testament through examination diverse interpretations in both ancient and modern contexts. Possible case studies include the meaning of Jesus's teaching, his death, sin, Roman and US slavery, the politics of canon, the roles of women, heresy, empire and colonialism, and sexualities/masculinities/(trans)gender.



REL 1437: History of Western Christianity: 1100-1500

Kevin Madigan

MW 4-5:30; Lecture

This course is designed to provide a historical overview of the Church and society in western Europe from the eleventh through the fifteenth centuries. Thus, this course will investigate high and late medieval Christianity in its social and its cultural context. Narrative and theological story lines to be

pursued will include medieval monasticism and other new forms of religious life; heresy and its repression; scholasticism, the university and Gothic architecture; the bid for papal monarchy; means of Christianization; saints, relics, pilgrimage and other forms of popular devotion; the decline of the late-medieval papacy and conciliarism; late-medieval heresy; Christianity and other world religions (especially Judaism and Islam); and late-medieval attempts at reform. We will also be strengthening our skills as interpreters of primary sources. Some attention will be paid to major historiographical issues. No prerequisites.



REL 1504: The Existence of God: Arguments and Refusals

Michelle Sanchez

T 2-4; Lecture + Section

This introduction to Christian theology will ask why some Christian writers have crafted arguments for the existence of God while others have not. Who do these arguments hope to persuade? Under what conditions are they designed to work, and to what practical end? Conversely, what does it mean when a Christian author refuses the use of such arguments? After reading historical examples from authors including Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, Calvin, Descartes, Kant, and Weil, we will contrast these sources with contemporary discourses in which the existence of God (or not) is often treated as the decisive feature of warring "worldviews."



ANE 120B: Introduction to the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament 2: Latter Prophets and Writings

Andrew Teeter

TTh 10-11:30; Lecture + Section


A critical introduction to the literature and theology of the Hebrew Bible, considered in light of the historical contexts of its formation and the interpretive contexts of its reception within Judaism and Christianity. The course, the second part of a divisible, year-long sequence, will focus on the Latter Prophets and the Writings. (Also offered as HDS 1103)

HDS 1136: Ancient Interpretation of the Bible

David Stern

W 1-4; Seminar; Comparative

This is a course about **READING**; specifically about the different ways in which a single book, the Bible, has been read through the centuries, particularly in the ancient and early medieval periods by Jews and Christians. No book in the history of Western culture has been read more intensively than the Bible, and the main emphasis of the course will fall on close readings of major ancient Jewish and Christian interpreters of the Bible, with a view to considering their exegetical approaches historically as well as through the lens of contemporary critical and hermeneutical theory. We will also consider how the respective religious and theological beliefs of these interpreters shaped and were shaped by the ways they read Scripture. As a consequence, this will also be a course about the early development of Judaism and Christianity although the focus will always be on the interpretation of the Bible. (Also offered as COMPLIT 258)




HDS 1740: Introduction to Early Christian Thought

Michael Motia

MW 2-3:30; Lecture + Section

This overview course will focus on the major themes, controversies, and questions of Christian late antiquity (the third through eighth centuries). What questions did early Christians wrestle with among themselves and with their constitutive “others”? What names, spaces, and characters filled their imaginations? How did a relatively small religion in the Roman Empire become a dominant force in medieval Europe? And what about Christians outside the Roman empire? The course aims to familiarize students with some of the theological debates, ascetic programs, modes of persuasion, and philosophical questions that emerge in this formative period of Christian thought. The course will cover: early Christian monasticism, Trinitarian and Christological debates, mysticism, anthropology, and saint’s Lives (hagiography). Major authors include: Origen, Evagrius, Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, Ephrem the Syrian, Cyril of Alexandria, Nestorius, Pseudo-Dionysius, Maximus the Confessor, John Cassian, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, and Augustine of Hippo.




HDS 2337: Christianity, Identity, and Civil Society in Africa

Jacob Olupona

Th 4-6; Lecture

This course is a historical survey of the centuries-old Christian traditions in Africa. It begins with an outline of the trajectory of Christianity's origins and presence in Africa from its beginning in ancient Mediterranean lands through the early period of European missionaries to the contemporary period. The course provides the ethnography of the old mission churches, indigenous independent African churches, and contemporary evangelical and Pentecostal Charismatic movements. The course explores the role of Christianity in relation to historical, cultural, social, and material realities of the African continent. It examines a broad range of topical issues related to conversion, missionization, and the development and growth of Christian agencies in Africa in relation to the construction of social, theological, and religious identities, as well as Christianity's response to cultural pluralism, nationhood, citizenship, and civil society. Also offered as African and African American Studies 160.



FRSEMR 70T: Mixing Religion and Politics?

Harvey Cox

TBA

Some of the best known religious personalities in the last one hundred years have had a notable impact on the political sphere. What was the nature of their spiritual basis and how did they translate their various faith traditions into the coinage of public life? Who were their religious and political opponents? In this course we will examine a number of figures including Mahatma Gandhi, a Hindu who led the non-violent struggle against British imperial rule in India; Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the Lutheran pastor who was killed by the Nazis for his involvement in the plot to assassinate Hitler; Martin Luther King, Jr., a Baptist pastor who inspired both civil rights and peace movement in America; Dorothy Day, founder of Catholic Worker movement; and Malcolm X, an American Black Muslim who drew on that tradition to attack racial and economic inequality.

FRSEMR 61T: Emptiness, Non-attachment, and the Problem of Suffering

Andrew Graham

TBA

Some philosophers, considering the suffering that we all naturally face, have recommended non-attachment as a way of overcoming that suffering and living a better life. Often they defend this stance by appealing to ideas concerning the nature of the world, the nature of ourselves, and the relationship between ourselves and the world. In particular, they emphasize the "emptiness" of these phenomena, and argue that grasping this emptiness can help us eliminate attachments and understand why such elimination is sensible. In this seminar, we explore these themes, drawing on perspectives found in both the Eastern philosophical tradition and the Western philosophical tradition. We will begin with a general overview of ideas along these lines from the Eastern tradition, starting with ancient Buddhist philosophy and some of its later developments, including work by Nāgārjuna and other Eastern philosophers. We will then shift to the Western tradition and consider points of contact with the ideas already discussed. In particular, we will look at philosophical work on the nature of the ordinary objects that make up the world around us, work on what we can know and should believe about that world, and finally work on our selves, our agency, and our freedom to act in that world. Our aim in

these explorations will be to understand these philosophical notions of emptiness and non-attachment and their application to the problem of suffering.



FRSEMR 61Y: Aristotle's Heirs: Greek and Roman Culture in Christianity and Islam

Julian Yolles

TBA

Who owns the Greeks and Romans? For centuries, civilizations in regions as diverse as Iraq and Iberia, northern Europe and North Africa, have laid claim to the cultural and intellectual heritage of Ancient Greece and Rome. Christians and Muslims in Baghdad, Palermo, and Toledo translated philosophical, scientific, and literary works into Arabic and Latin. Why did they devote so much time and money to studying and teaching Plato, Aristotle, and Virgil? This freshman seminar follows the story of how ancient Greek and Roman thought was transmitted and transformed in the Christian and Muslim intellectual traditions. Students will read seminal works by Plato, Augustine, al-Farabi, and Dante, and engage critically with modern depictions of the recovery of ancient thought in literature (Borges) and film (The Name of the Rose).

Intermediate Courses in the Comparative Study of Religion: Spring 2018

REL 1011B: The Tree at the Center of the World II

Kimberley Patton

W 2-4; Seminar; Comparative

This comparative course will examine historical and contemporary traditions of primordial, cosmic, and sacred trees in religion, folklore, mythology, and ritual, including the ways in which the special natural characteristics of trees have been interpreted metaphorically and metaphysically. We will consider primary iconographic and textual evidence as well as secondary sources. Individual research projects in particular traditions will be featured. Note: This is a continuation of a fall-term course, HDS 3823a/FAS 1011a. It is not necessary to have taken the fall course to take the spring course; each of the two semesters is designed to stand alone.



REL 1566: Malcolm, Martin, & Masculinity

Jonathan Walton

TTh 11:30-1; Lecture + Section

The Civil Rights and Black Power movements (narrowly defined) were principally struggles for racial equality and economic justice. Yet both Martin and Malcolm extend from religious traditions where notions of social respectability and hyper-masculinity are inextricably linked to gendered conceptions of racial progress. The aim of this course, then, is to engage the theological, philosophical and social thought of these men while unmasking normative assumptions about race, domesticity and sexuality that informed their outlooks and animated their gendered moral frameworks and masculinist organizing strategies. We will critically unpack the gender ideologies that underlay the thought and praxis of Malcolm X and Martin King while assessing ethical implications for contemporary politics and activism.

REL 1760: Knowing Animals: Buddhist Resources For a New Interspecies Ethics

Janet Gyatso

TTh 11:30-1; Lecture

This course will study exemplary new writing in the “post-human” turn, works on animal ethics, animal anthropology, and stories and videos of experiences with animals. Buddhist resources will include cosmology, the epistemology of seeing, and the epistemology of compassion.



REL 1467: Historical Jesus

Giovanni Bazzanna

Th 2-4; Seminar

The course will introduce the students to the history of the quest for the historical Jesus by examining the most relevant methodological issues and by reviewing the ideological and socio-political stakes in this enterprise that has been intertwined to the cultural history of the western world from the XVIII to the XXI century.



ISLAMCIV 178: Muslim Societies in South Asia: Religion, Culture, and Identity

Ali Asani

W 12-2; Seminar

South Asia (India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh) is home to the largest concentration of Muslims in the world. This course introduces students to a variety of issues that have characterized the development and evolution of South Asian Muslim communities. While the course will briefly survey the historical development of Islamic and Muslim institutions in the region, its central focus will be the formation of identity - as expressed through language, literature, and the arts - among South Asian Muslim communities. The issues that influence these identities will be considered with regard to the constantly evolving religious and political contexts of South Asia. Special attention will be given to recent attempts to redefine Muslim religious identities through reform and revivalist movements as well as state policies of Islamization. We will look at the impact of these policies on issues such as the status of Muslim women, relations between Muslim and non-

Muslims and the growth of sectarian tensions between Muslim groups. The course is appropriate for those who wish to acquire a bird's-eye view of the Islamic tradition in South Asia, as well as those interested in exploring some of the issues confronting Muslim populations in contemporary times.



REL 1033: The Animal Imaginary

Kimberley Patton

Th 2-4; Seminar; Comparative

This course considers the history and meaning of fantastic beasts, holy animals, and magical creatures in religion, folklore, and mythology. In light of the past global abundance of animal species, and now in the face of their rapid, large-scale extinction, why have existing animals not been “enough” for the human imagination?



REL 1472: The Ethical and Religious Thought of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Preston Williams

M 4-6; Seminar

A study of the life, thought, and actions of Martin Luther King, Jr. An ethical analysis of his primary concepts, ideas, and strategies based upon a reading and discussion of his writings and their sources.



REL 1527: After Luther: Faith, Will, Law, and the Question of Goodness

Michelle Sanchez

Th 4-6; Seminar

Is it possible for a person to know and do “the good”? Can we trust in the law, the will, or faith to make us good? These questions were central to Luther’s reforms. Kant, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche, who spent their formative years in a Lutheran context, would also engage these questions in explicit, implicit, and deeply critical ways. Later, theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer drew from all of these authors in order to rethink his own ethics of political resistance to fascism. This course will trace these questions across these five authors in critical conversation with contemporary ethical theorists.

REL 1529: The Holocaust and the Churches, 1933-45

Kevin Madigan

W 2-4; Seminar; Christianity

This seminar will approach the Nazi persecution of European Jewry from several disciplinary perspectives. Initially the seminar will explore the topic historically. In these weeks, the seminar will use a variety of historical materials dealing with the history of European anti-semitism, German history from Bismarck to the accession of Hitler, the evolution of anti-Jewish persecution in the Third Reich, and the history of the Holocaust itself. Sources to be used will include primary sources produced by the German government 1933-1945, by Jewish victims-to-be or survivors, documentary films, and secondary interpretations. The aims of this part of the seminar will be to understand the basic background to and narrative of the Holocaust, to introduce students to the critical use of primary historical sources, and to familiarize them with some of the major historiographical debates. Then the members of the seminar will ponder religious and theological reactions to the Holocaust. The seminar will also consider the historical question of the role played by the Protestant and Catholic churches and theologies in the Holocaust. Throughout the seminar, participants will use various literary and cinematographic sources and test their limits in helping to understand and to represent the Holocaust.



HDS 2026: The Invention of Virginity: Gender and Power in Judaism and Christianity

M 2-4; Seminar

The course explores the changing social functions and cultural meanings assigned to virginity in the western Judeo-Christian culture, from antiquity to the present, in light of both intra-cultural developments and intercultural encounters.



HDS 2033: Religions and Sexualities in the United States

Lynne Gerber

T 4-6; Conference Course

The interplay of religions and sexualities fundamentally shape individual lives, communities, and American social and political life. Whether they overlap, diverge, stand in creative tension and/or unbearable tension, the ongoing exchange between

the two are the focus of intensive intellectual attention across traditions, intellectual disciplines and literary genres. In this class we will look at some of the fundamental issues and questions at the intersection of religions and sexualities, including the problem of desire, the social regulation of sexual practices, religion and sexual violence, forging and dissolving religio-sexual identities, and the politics of sexual morality. Our focus will be on the United States from about 1900 to the present and readings will include ethnography, social theory, history, memoir and case studies.



HDS 2126: Religion and Family

Todne Thomas

T 12-2; Conference Course

Religion and family are contested concepts that become politicized as they are mobilized and debated in the public sphere. Religion and family are also often depicted as separate forms of social organization. This course explores the ways in which religious and familial concepts, institutions, and relationships intersect to shape the lived experiences of religious participants who create and imbue their relationships with social and sacred significance. In particular, we will examine how rituals, practices, and meanings surrounding sexuality, marriage, parenthood, siblinghood, and genealogy become important signifiers of religious identity and membership. Our discussion of these case studies will also open up broader conversations about the politics ethnicity/race, gender, sexuality, fundamentalism, and trans/nationalism and their imprint on modes of religious and spiritual belonging.



HDS 2127: Religion and Race in the United States

Todne Thomas

W 1-4; Conference Course

Religion and race mediate contested social memberships. Religious imaginaries often possess power through their association with eternal and transcendent truths. Racial identities have existed as powerful social taxonomies because they are believed to be fixed, innate, and biologically-determined. Thus, religious and racial phenomena are powerfully imagined as somehow existing beyond the realm of the social. When set in the context of the United States—a society that is self-referentially exceptional

and multicultural but that is informed by hegemonic and colonial white Anglo-Saxon Protestant cultural norms—the critical, deconstructive study of religion and race emerges as a complex yet significant intellectual project. This new intermediate class examines how religion and race intersect in the United States from the nineteenth century until the present. Through our shared analysis of texts that straddle a number of disciplines and genres, we will explore how religion and race mutually inform shared understandings of socio-political belonging, hierarchy and boundaries, recuperative institutional projects, and structural and personal identities.



HDS 2173: The Sacramental Imagination

Matthew Potts

T 12-2; Lecture

How do communities set apart the sacred from the everyday? In what ways might the holy and quotidian overlap? How can we recognize holiness? Using the Christian ritual of eucharist or communion as a primary lens, this interdisciplinary course will investigate the sacramental imagination through a study of both historical theology and contemporary literary fiction. In studying the various tropes and images that have been used to characterize Christian eucharist, we will seek to generate a broadly construed sacramental theology that might prove useful for both theological study and practical ministry. Note: Course has additional hour to be arranged.



HDS 2729: The Historical Philosophy of W. E. B. Du Bois

Cornel West

Th 4-7; Seminar; African and African-American Studies

This course will examine the historical philosophy of the towering Black scholar and great freedom fighter of the 20th Century. We shall engage in close readings of Du Bois' classic work, "The Souls of Black Folk" (1903) as well as subsequent essays in his magisterial corpus, especially his classic autobiography, "Dusk of Dawn" (1940). (Also as African and African American Studies 123Y)

HDS 2853: The Politics and Ethics of the Use of Force

J. Bryan Hehir

TTh 2:45-4; Lecture; Religion, Ethics, and Politics

The course will examine normative discourse about the use of force. Primary attention will be paid analytically and historically to the "Just War/Just Defense" ethic. Reading and lectures will assess the ethic in light of challenges to it from the tradition of nonviolence and from the nature of modern warfare. The ethic will be tested in light of distinct challenges posed by weapons of mass destruction, humanitarian military intervention, and response to terrorism. Jointly offered as HKS IGA 220.



HDS 3034: The Jewish Experience in Modern America

Sally Finestone

M 2-4; Seminar

Jews have been a religious and cultural presence in America since the colonial era, and the community of Jews in the United States today--some six million people--continues to make a significant contribution to the American religious landscape. This seminar will examine the history of the Judaic tradition in America and the vitality and variety of contemporary American Judaic life, from the arrival of the first Jews to the present, highlighting the emergence and continual development of the four branches: Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Reform. We will also examine the variety of ways in which Jews became part of the communal, social, and political landscape of America, and the roles they continue to play in American life today. We will then look at the practical aspects of working as Jewish professionals in American life and the different skills that are needed, whether one works in a congregational, campus, hospital, or organizational setting. Note: Not open to auditors.



HDS 3061: Muslim Women's Piety and Agency in the Arab World and the Middle East

TBA

M 12-2; Seminar

Ethnographic accounts of Muslim women's piety from the Arab world and the Middle East (including, but not limited to, Morocco, Sudan, Egypt, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine and Turkey), will provide a basis for a reconsideration of theories of Islamic women's activism, piety and

religiosity, especially as relevant to the question of agency.



HDS 3244: The Lotus Sutra: Engaging a Buddhist Scripture

Charles Hallisey

TTh 8:30-10; Lecture

A critical introduction to the literature and religious thought of the Lotus Sutra, considered in the light of the historical contexts of its formation and the contexts of its reception across Buddhist Asia, including commentarial, devotional, and artistic contexts. Close attention will be given to both ecumenical and sectarian engagements with the Lotus Sutra. This course is part of a series of five courses on the critical interpretation of Buddhist scriptures; unlike the others, the foci of which are defined by key interpretive issues in the study of Buddhist scriptures generally, this course focuses on the range of interpretive demands made by a single Buddhist scripture, albeit a very important one. There will also be a separate hour for those who want to read the selections from the Saddharma Pundarīka Sūtra in Sanskrit.



HDS 3368: Islam, Modernity and Politics

Ousmane Oumar Kane

F 10-12; Seminar

The aim of this seminar is to study the evolution of Islamic thought and political practices in Muslim societies from the 19th to the early 21st centuries. Attention will be devoted to the patterns of interaction between the Muslim World and the West because it is our assumption that these patterns contribute to influence ideological formations and modes of religious/political mobilizations in the Muslim World. By the end of the eighteenth century, much of the Muslim World was in "decline" whereas European imperial powers, mainly France and Great Britain, were on the rise. The course will explore the response of Muslim societies and intellectuals to the rise of European prominence. The major 19th century reformist movements that appeared in the Muslim World will be discussed, ranging from movements advocating mild reform to those rejecting all influence of "Western civilization" and advocating a return to the Tradition of Muhammad. In the twentieth century, virtually all the Muslim World came under European

colonial domination. During colonial rule and after, the Muslim world experienced major transformations which affected the nature and administration of law, politics and society. It is in this context, that the new Islamic revival that some have called "Islamism" was articulated as an alternative to Westernization. The course will address the rise of contemporary "Islamism," as an alternative to Western domination and modernization/Westernization. The major theorists of political Islam as well as the different trajectories of "Islamism" in diverse Muslim societies will be covered. The impact of political Islam in the West will also be addressed. The final part of the course will assess the trajectories of political Islam and address the ongoing debates on post-Islamism, secularism and modernity. (Also offered as Islamic Civilizations 170)



HDS 3690: Shinto

Helen Hardacre

TBA; Conference Course

An examination of Shinto, emphasizing its concepts of deity (Kami), patterns of ritual and festival, shrines as religious and social institutions, political culture and interactions with party politics, and its contribution to contemporary youth culture. Note: **General knowledge of Japanese history and religion is helpful.** Japanese language is not required, but several meetings will be held for students able to use Japanese-language sources. (Jointly offered as Japanese History 126)

GOV 94GO: Politics of Religion in Liberal

Democracies: America and the European Union

George Soroka

Th 3-5; Seminar

This course examines the various ways, normative and practical, in which politics interact with religion in the U.S. and select EU-member countries. Structuring it are three main tasks: to examine the utility of secularization theory in explaining changes on the political landscape; to compare and contrast American and European experiences with religion in the public sphere; and to consider the political implications of increasing religious/ideological pluralism within these societies.



HDS 2861: Religion and World Politics: Connections and Collisions

J. Bryan Hehir

MW 1:15-2:30; Lecture

This course will examine from a historical and analytical perspective, the role of religion in the modern state system: its place, its absence and its recent resurgence. (Also offered as HKS IGA 121)



HIST 1046: Islamicate Societies to 1500

Rodrigo Adem

MWF 12-1; Lecture + Section; Islam

This course surveys the history of societies where Islam was culturally dominant from the 7th to the 15th century. Contextualizing the genesis of Islam and Islamicate societies between world religions and empires in late Antiquity, this class goes on to cover the formative period of Islamicate political and institutional history in a geographical expanse spanning Central Asia to Iberia. This class likewise incorporates historical approaches to the study of Islamic law, philosophy, and mysticism, and addresses the topics of gender and religious minorities in Islamicate societies.


Advanced Courses in the Comparative Study of Religion: Spring 2018

REL 2063: South Asian Religious Aesthetics

Anne Monius

T 2-4; Seminar

An examination of South Asian theories of aesthetics and their relevance for understanding Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain discourses of ethics, literature, and theology.




REL 2014: The Elementary Forms of Religious Life

Michael Jackson

T 2-4; Conference Course

In as much as the academic study of religion privileges sacred texts, and identifies religious life with liturgy or institutions like mosques, temples, churches, shrines and sacred sites, it reinforces an intellectual bias toward intransitive forms rather than transitional phenomena, and risks reducing lived experience to pre-established rubrics. The focus of this course is on modes of experience that dissolve or transgress the lines conventionally drawn between human and divine, body and mind, life and death, self and other, subject and object, human and animal, culture and nature, reality and dream. Readings for this course challenge entrenched Eurocentric distinctions between science and superstition, or modernity and premodernity, and explore the roots of religious experience in the human capacities for play, creative apperception, active imagination, and attachment.



REL 2580: Politics and Scripture in the United States

Laura Nasrallah & David Holland

W 2-4; Seminar; Christianity, American Religious History


Course participants will consider together how to construct a course about the intersection of the interpretation of scripture with key political and social issues in the history of the United States. Topics to be considered include the formation of canon, the history of scriptural interpretation in the academy, colonization, race, slavery, women's rights, public education, the Bible and state violence, LGBTQ rights, and the parallels between scriptural and constitutional interpretation. In addition, course members will discuss issues of pedagogy, syllabus construction, and teaching with objects, including materials at the Houghton. While this is aimed especially for those thinking about undergraduate teaching, those interested in teaching settings in religious contexts and elementary and high schools are also welcome.

HDS 1123: Baruch and the Epistle of Jeremiah

Andrew Teeter

T 4-6; Seminar; Judaism, Hebrew Bible

An examination of the nature and function of the apocryphal book of Baruch and the Epistle of Jeremiah. Class meetings will be devoted to close reading of these texts in Hebrew and Greek. These books will be considered in connection with the shape and development of the Book of Jeremiah in particular, as well as in relation to the broad range of relevant scriptural traditions outside of Jeremiah. Particular attention will be given to the reuse and interpretive reception of existing scriptural language. NB: The course presumes facility in Biblical Hebrew and Greek. Working knowledge of both languages is required.




ANTHRO 2085: Archaeology of Ritual and Religion

Rowan Flad & Matthew Liebmann

TBA; Seminar

Graduate seminar exploring ritual and religious practices in archaeological contexts. Topics to be covered include anthropological perspectives on religion; origins of religion; religion and political economy; burial practices; materiality in/of ritual practice; and revitalization movements.



HDS 2270: Reformation and the Making of Religious Practice in Britain and Colonial America, c. 1550-1700

David Hall

M 1-3; Seminar; Christianity

A research seminar, this course covers the coming of Reformed (Calvinist) Protestantism to England and Scotland in the sixteenth century and the maturing of the Puritan movement in those countries and New England in the seventeenth. Attentive to theology and politics, this course also explores lived religion, especially devotional practice. (Also offered in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences as History 2270).