

Department for the Study of Religion Graduate Course Descriptions

Please note that only a subset of these courses will be offered each year

RLG1000Y METHOD AND THEORY IN THE STUDY OF RELIGION

The seminar is the core course of the Department's doctoral program. It is required of, and limited to, all first year Ph.D. students of the Department. The purpose of the course is to provide doctoral students with a general understanding of the study of religion through constructive engagement with a number of fundamental challenges--theoretical and methodological--that commonly confront researchers in the field. It revisits major interpretive controversies that have shaped the history of "religious studies" as an interdisciplinary field, inviting students to join in this ongoing scholarly conversation.

JAR1001H Anthropology of Religion Gateway Seminar

This gateway course will offer an introduction to the anthropology of religion. We will selectively cover some of anthropology's "turns" and current trends, contextualizing them in longer histories of anthropological debate and research. Throughout, the course will address three aspects of the anthropology of religion: theory, fieldwork as method, and ethnographic writing. The goals of the course include: 1) to help students situate their own research projects in ongoing or emerging disciplinary conversations; 2) to develop and fine-tune the students' research design; and 3) to prepare students for future teaching in the field of the anthropology of religion.

RLG1002H Philosophy of Religion Gateway Seminar

This gateway course introduces students to the philosophy of religion. It does so by working through some of the foundational elements of modern attempts to understand and assess religious concepts through various combinations of reason and experience. Additionally, we will utilize principal methods of analysis (e.g., hermeneutical, conceptual, phenomenological); and provide examples of central topics in the field. By its conclusion, students should be better able to locate their research within the field and imagine their own ways of teaching it to undergraduates.

RLG1003H Islamic Studies Gateway Seminar

This gateway seminar will introduce students to the field of Islamic studies and the basic research methods of the field. The aim of the course is to introduce students to the history of Islamic studies and the major questions that has animated it as a field in religious studies. Since Islamic Studies is made up of various subfields, each week will be devoted to one particular branch of Islamic studies. For each of these subfields we will cover the history of the discipline, the research tools and the most recent developments. Students become familiar with the research tools and methods available and learn how to utilize them in their own research projects. By the end of the course students will have a metahistory of the field as well as an ability to construct a syllabus to teach Islamic studies at the introductory level.

RLG1004H Religions of Mediterranean Antiquity Gateway Seminar

This gateway seminar will introduce students to approaches to the study of religions of Mediterranean antiquity. The purpose of the course is to provide a broad understanding of the history of the discipline and how methods have evolved in the study of Hebrew Bible, Early Christianity, and Early Judaism in the context of Greco-Roman antiquity. Topics covered in the course include source and form criticism; archaeology; social sciences; conceptualization of diversity; the material text; and positionality. By the end of the course, students will be prepared to teach a range of methods at the introductory level and equipped to refine an approach to frame their own research projects.

RLG1005H Jewish Studies Gateway Seminar

This gateway seminar will introduce students to the field of Jewish studies, both as an interdisciplinary academic formation and as a subfield of religious studies. It aims to provide students with a schematic

account of the field's history and the major questions that have animated research in it, as well as showcasing more recent or cutting-edge work. Students will gain familiarity with key research tools and methods and, at the end of the semester, will be able to construct a syllabus to teach Jewish studies at the introductory level.

RLG1006H South Asian Religions Gateway Seminar

This gateway seminar will introduce students to the field of South Asian Religions, both as an interdisciplinary academic formation and as a subfield of religious studies. It aims to provide students with a schematic account of the field's history and the major questions that have animated research in it, as well as showcasing more recent or cutting-edge work. Students will gain familiarity with key research tools and methods and, at the end of the semester, will be able to construct a syllabus to teach South Asian religions at the introductory level.

RLG1200HF THE MA METHOD AND THEORY GROUP

The M.A. Workshop Group is required of all first year M.A students of the Department. M.A. students will meet every week during the first term in a seminar course designed to provide rigorous training in method and theory in the study of religion. Topics considered include: historical development of religious studies, significance and application of interdisciplinary methodologies, key theorists and theoretical controversies.

RLG 1501H Directed Reading/Staff

RLG 1502H Directed Reading/ Staff

Independent Study Courses – Undertaken in Any Term with Approval

With the approval of the Associate Director, and, in the case of a doctoral student, with the approval of the student's Advisory Committee as well, a student may construct an independent study course of Directed Reading with a professor who agrees to supervise the work. The form for this purpose is available at the Centre. Normally no more than one full-year or two half-year courses of this type are permitted in a degree program. These courses may be undertaken during any term, including the summer.

RLG 2000Y Major MA Research Paper/Staff

Prepared Under Direction of a Professor

Major research paper (at least 50 pages) on a topic relevant to the study of religion, prepared under the direction of a professor. By January 30 of the year in which they intend to write the paper, students should identify their topic and secure the approval of the professor who will direct their work on the paper.

RLG2001H Transhuman Bonding Rites / Emmrich

The key objective of this course is to understand the ritual efficacy of bonding in terms of enabling, perpetuating, regulating, and dissolving partnerships transcending exclusively human social ties. The course will focus on practices constituting friendship, alliance, and marriage, and other forms of bonding whether temporary or perpetual problematizing the inherent assumptions regarding time, commitment, intimacy, power, sexual difference, and species. The course will explore rites involving the transhuman, designed along the lines of, but at the same time questioning the priority of human weddings.

RLG2002HS Material and Sensory Cultures and Religious Practice / Ruffle

This interdisciplinary graduate seminar examines the role of material and sensory cultures in lived religious experience in comparative perspective. The goal of the course is to study the complex relationships, hierarchies, and roles of images, objects, the built environment, and ritual performance, and the cultural construction of the human sensorium (including consideration of whether a religious

sensorium exists) in its external and internal forms. Using case studies, the tools to analyze and describe materiality and/or sensory experiences in religious practices will be developed through the study of topics such as sacred objects, space and place, ethnography of the object (how to write about things), the idea of a religious sensorium, perception, digital religion, and the non-human.

RLG2005H Religion and Posthumanism/*Garrett*

This course examines religious, cultural, and philosophical perspectives on the human and other-than-human. Themes and religious traditions studied will vary by year but may include human-environment relationships; animal ethics; multispecies subjectivity and embodiment; legacies of scientific racism; ecological, legal, and ethical consequences of human exceptionalism and anthropocentrism; religious uses of intelligent technology; global and historical transhuman movements; or religious responses to climate crisis.

RLG2014HF Digital Religion: Mediation and Method / *Klassen*

Digital Religion orients students to two critical issues in the study of religion: 1) how do digital modes and platforms shift how people and communities mediate, experience, and deploy religion, and 2) how do digital tools (including AI) transform research methods and modes of knowledge sharing. Readings will include historical, anthropological, and media studies approaches, as well as addressing issues such as digital ritual, algorithmic self-fashioning, and Indigenous data sovereignty. Assignments will enable students to develop skills with digital humanities tools, as well as abilities to undertake the ethical deliberation required to use them.

RLG2015H/ RLG414H Comparing Religion / *Locklin*

Few methods have been more foundational to the scholarly study of religion, or more subject to searching criticism, than the practice of comparison. This seminar offers an advanced introduction to comparative method in the contemporary academy by means of a close study of 4-6 significant comparative projects published in the last decade. Examples will be drawn from different sub-disciplines of Religion, including but not limited to ritual studies, philosophy of religion, comparative theology and/or ethnography.

RLG2016HS/RLG417H1/TST5936 Radical Evil / *Hewitt*

Are people innately evil, or do they become evil due to negative life experiences? Can a universal internal moral imperative rooted in an innate good will exist independently of self-interest? Contemporary theorists from a variety of disciplines in the humanities and sciences argue that human beings are motivated by amoral internal forces that are shaped into moral action through diverse cultural learning processes. Notions such as the nature of subjectivity, agency, relationality, and capacities for critical self reflection are brought into question. These and other issues are explored through the lenses of philosophy, social theory, psychoanalysis and religion in dialogue with relevant classical and contemporary thinkers.

RLG2017H Religion, Secularism, and the Public Sphere / *Joshua Bart Scott*

In a secular age, public religion is—to recall Mary Douglas’ definition of dirt—matter out of place. Since the early modern consolidation of the category, “religion” has been understood as fundamentally private, cordoned off from politics, economics, and other social domains both conceptually and (in some cases) legally. But despite the emergence of regulatory structures meant to circumscribe or privatize it, religion has remained a vital component of public life worldwide, thus posing significant problems for secularist modes of thought. To make sense of this predicament, recent work in the emergent field sometimes described as critical secular studies has undertaken a critical reappraisal of secularism and related categories. This seminar introduces students to this ongoing scholarly conversation by asking how a critical genealogy of “the public” can contribute to it. What is a public? What is the genealogy of this term as a category of modern thought, and what is its relationship to political liberalism (or “government by discussion”)? Assigned readings will survey critical approaches to these questions

emerging from media studies, postcolonial studies, critical legal studies, queer theory, and affect theory, as well as various fields within religious studies.

RLG2020/RLG447H Early Christianity, Ancient Judaism, Ancient “Magic” / *John Marshall*

Primary readings in curse tablets, grimoires, objects of ritual power, and literary accounts of socially marginal acts of ritual power, as well as of culturally approved acts of miracle. These will be coupled with readings in secondary literature on the methodological problem of “magic” as a category that often spans folk and academic domains as well as historical and critical scholarly literature on “magical” materials and related primary sources.

RLG2022H Religion, Mourning and Trauma / *Marsha Hewitt*

A cross-cultural, psychoanalytic examination of subjective religious experiences through myths, narratives, rituals and communal actions express the multifaceted dimensions of trauma and their impact on individuals and their social cultural contexts. Exploration of ways religious narratives and social practices encode multiple levels of psychodynamic processes that attempt to symbolize unbearable anxiety, grief, loss deriving from personal and social traumas. Different religious and cross-cultural narratives and popular spiritualities will be explored, focussing on ways they may both reproduce and symbolize trauma while also providing resources for healing. Cross-cultural case studies examining the depth psychodynamics of individual and group trauma from the perspective of psychoanalysis, psychology and anthropology that emphasize emotional creativity and healing potential without relying on discourses of pathology will be considered.

RLG2023HS/RLG411H1S Mystical Poetics / *Hampton*

This course will consider some of the consummate poet-mystics of Western Christianity, including Iacopone, Dante, Hadewijch, Silesius, Traherne, and Blake. It will examine how the recording of mystical experience in poetic form allows the mystical writer to achieve a result not otherwise possible in discursive communication. Readings will explore how, through the practice of mystical poetry, language becomes approximate and playful, capable of giving presence to absence, materiality to the immaterial, and lexicon to the non-lexical. It is recommended that graduate students have some facility in at least one language in addition to language of instruction (Italian, Dutch, German).

RLG2025H/RLG421H/TRT5948H Fragments of Redemption: Sigmund Freud and Theodor W. Adorno / *Hewitt*

This course will challenge the prevailing view that the thought of Sigmund Freud and Theodor Adorno are so deeply pessimistic as to be devoid of hope. Freud’s psychoanalytic theories are widely (mis)interpreted in the register of a crude pansexulism and biological determinism. Adorno’s critique of society and the individual is often (mis)interpreted as so ruthlessly pervasive that it forecloses on any possibility for emancipatory transformation. This is a distorted view of both thinkers, that misses the hopeful, utopian currents that motivate and shape psychoanalysis and critical theory. The course will explore the emancipatory currents in Freud and Adorno, and their implications for potentialities of individual, social and ecological transformation.

RLG2040 Commentary: Theory and Practice / *Gibbs*

Commentary is a privileged genre in many religious traditions. It also has a long standing value in contemporary scholarly traditions. The course will explore different kinds of commentary, looking at theories of writing, of studying and of meaning constituted across generations. We will also explore commentaries in different religious traditions. Thus the course will be a crossroads of historical traditions and scholarly approaches to religions. The seminars will be organized around excerpts from specific commentary texts and theoretical reflections on those texts.

RLG2041H Decolonizing Philology: Asian Textual Traditions / *Graheli*

This course is an introduction to the basics of critical editing for students of Asian languages. Students will enter the atelier of critical editors of Asian works, with a focus on religious texts: they will understand the purposes of inventories, descriptions, and collations of textual witnesses, studies of their genealogy, examination and choice of the variants, and reconstructions of the best texts. The course may also select specific topics in Asian textual cultures, involve the study of sources in their original format, and convey specialized notions in paleography, codicology, bibliography, stemmatics, and digital humanities. This course is based on the assumption that philology is a hermeneutic enterprise that centers the text and is therefore neither Anglocentric, nor Eurocentric, nor simply obsolete. Indeed, every text has been historically transmitted, reconstructed, received, or even falsified. However, the present disciplines, categories, strategies, and techniques of classical philology were developed in a European milieu and tailored to the needs of European languages. The course will therefore critically assess these current Eurocentric categories, techniques, etc... in order to adapt them to the various Asian textual traditions, especially religious ones. The broader purpose of this course is to nourish the awareness that our historicity shapes our interpretation. As such, the course will be useful to all textually oriented students.

RLG2043H/RLG465H Buddhism as Translation / *Emmrich*

In terms of both idiom, volume and time span, Buddhist texts are arguably the most widely translated texts in the world. This process of ongoing transfer and reformulation spans from the Middle Indic languages in the early centuries BCE to the 'classical' Buddhist languages such as Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese, including most 'big' East, South, Southeast Asian and European tongues and many less well-known languages such as Mon, Newar or Tocharian. It is in these shifts that both the continuities and the discontinuities of Buddhism have been reinscribed into its very textual fabric. In that sense, Buddhism has been forever both lost and found, and in fact may have never existed anywhere else than, in translation. This course will take a peep into the Buddhist translator's workshop and confront the insights gained there with new theories that have emerged out of the current theoretical interest in translation

RLG2045H Modern Buddhist Fiction / *Emmrich*

Buddhism, the Buddha, and indeed a Buddhist twist on storytelling have shaped modern world literature from its very beginnings. One could in fact argue that one of the many beginnings of modern fiction in many parts of the world is Buddhist and further that Buddhism has consistently played a role in recurring renewals of how to write fiction since the onset of modernity. In this course students will explore that role by analysing key works, in English or in English translation and written between 1879 and today, which either modernize motifs drawn from premodern Buddhist texts or process contemporary material by adopting a Buddhist aesthetic or philosophical stance. That will involve not only reading modern religious fiction in its own right and within the context of its composition and reception in mind, but also confronting the works with the classical sources, both narrative or doctrinal, which they draw from. Students will explore: the beginnings of modern Buddhist fiction in Europe and Asia with Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia* (1879), Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1901), and Niṣṭhānanda Vajrācārya's *Lalitavistara* (1914), confronting European Orientalist aesthetics with religious reform literature in Asia, the secularization of Buddhist hagiography in Dalit and Marxist 1940-50s narrative literature by B. R. Ambedkar and D. D. Kosambi, 1920s and 1950's Germanophone and US-American counterculture Buddhist literature with Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha* (1922) and Jack Kerouac's *Dharma Bums* (1958), the emergence of post-war Japanese modernism through the processing of WWII in Michio Takeyama's *The Burmese Harp* (1946), the influence of Buddhism on postmodernist and experimental writing in Roger Zelazny's SF classic *Lord of Light* (1967), the collection *Nixon under the Bodhi Tree* (2004), and in George Saunders' much-acclaimed *Lincoln in the Bardo* (2017), right up to recent feminist and queer retellings of the life of the Buddha's wife Yashodhara in the homonymous novels in Telugu and in Canadian English by Volga (2017) and Vanessa Sasson (2021), respectively, as well as, staying with Canadian literature, in Shyam Selvadurai's latest novel *Mansions of the Moon*

(2022). Each session will focus on one book which will be embedded in select readings drawn both from related contemporary Buddhist-inflected writing and from classical Sanskrit, Pali, Tibetan, and Newar Buddhist sources in translation. The larger question this course will ask is about the importance of religion for poetics and the role of the novel as a space in which authors and readers can experiment globally with both with religious hybridity and literary innovation.

RLG 2060H/RLG420H Religion and Philosophy in the European Enlightenment/ *DiCenso*

This is an advanced study of selected Enlightenment thinkers with a focus on their analyses of religion. The course is mainly devoted to the work of Spinoza, Hume, and Kant, although this may vary from year to year. Issues addressed include the rational critique of traditional religious sources and concepts, the relations among religion, ethics and politics, and the modern re-interpretation of religious ideas.

RLG2065H Philosophical Texts in Religion / *Goldberg & Emmrich*

This seminar will provide students with the opportunity to practice close, line-by-line reading of a classical philosophical text in its original language (often German). Texts, which will vary from year to year, will be selected for their importance to the study of religion, and attention will be paid equally to linguistic and philosophical points of interest.

RLG2066H/RLG423H Great Critics of Religion / *DiCenso*

An advanced study of the work of critical thinkers such as David Hume on the topic of religion. Works studied include the Enquiry concerning Human Understanding, Natural History of Religion, and Dialogues concerning Natural Religion.

RLG2067H Philosophical Topics in the Study of Religion/*Goldberg/Gibbs*

A seminar that explores a topic in the philosophical study of religion. Possible topics include: the nature of religious truth; the phenomenology of religion; religion and respect; religion and the meaning of life; the literal and metaphorical aspects of God-talk and other religious language; naturalizing religious belief; tolerance and religion.

RLG2068H Philosophy of Religion: Proofs of the Existence of God

This course deals with the most important point of intersection between theology and philosophy: the existence of God. This intersection is only possible when theologians are interested in philosophical argument, and when philosophers are interested in the "God question." This course will deal with this intersection on the specific question: Are there proofs of the existence of God? We will be examining how this question has been dealt with by some prominent Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and Hindu thinkers, such as Avicenna, Maimonides, Aquinas, Leibniz, Kant, Rosenzweig, and Barth.

RLG2072H/422H Kant's Theory of Religion / *DiCenso*

An advanced study of Immanuel Kant's interpretation of religion, as developed in major writings such as *Critique of Practical Reason and Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. Emphasizes rational ethical criteria as the basis for analyzing the doctrines, symbols, and institutions of historical religions.

RLG2081H/TRP6523H Trauma, Healing and Transformation / *Hewitt*

Study of key theoretical concepts in psychoanalytic theory, i.e. the unconscious, repression, aggression, sexuality, dreams, unconscious fantasy, transference and projection and their implications for understanding religious experience and belief in the work of Sigmund Freud, D. W. Winnicott, R. D. Laing, and other analytic writers. Freud was consistent in asserting that theory must reflect and elaborate clinical observation. Thus, the course will also include extensive discussions of clinical case material in order to illustrate the ways in which these concepts illuminate and help explain not only internal psychic experience but also the ways in which culture, society and politics structure and shape the human mind.

The course will also examine the historical trajectories of psychoanalytic concepts, including some of the main controversies and debates around issues such as repression, dissociation and trauma.

RLG3104H Feminist and Womanist Biblical Interpretation / *Junior*

Both “feminist” and “womanist” are terms that are greatly debated. Alice Walker popularized the term “womanist” in her 1983 collection of essays *In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens: Womanist Prose*. Walker’s four-part definition includes a definition of a “womanist” as “a black feminist or feminist of color.” This course provides a survey of the history and development of feminist and womanist biblical interpretation in North America. It includes interpreters of the Hebrew Bible (sometimes called Old Testament or Tanakh) and New Testament

RLG3114H/RLG453H Ancient Judaism and Christianity in a Colonial Context / *J. Marshall/Charles*

This seminar sets the study of early Christianity and Second Temple Judaism into relation with a movement in critical historiography of the modern world, namely postcolonial theory. Though the term “postcolonial theory” encompasses a panoply of approaches and dispositions, the basic insight that founds the seminar is the non-givenness of colonial domination and the resulting close attention to the endeavour of constructing such domination as “natural” as well as to the subaltern strategies of negotiation to which such situations typically give rise. Ideally, the conversation between contemporary postcolonial theory and research and scholarship on early Christianity and Second Temple Judaism will go two ways. On the one hand, students of early Christianity and Second Temple Judaism into awareness of methodological developments in historical research on other periods and settings. On the other hand, postcolonial theorists can benefit from how some of their insights are modified, applied, and developed in the context of the ancient world. This, in turn, expands and strengthens both the scope of the theory and the field of early Christian studies.

RLG3123H Samson in Text and Tradition / *Schipper*

This seminar will focus on Judges 13 – 16, sometimes called the “Samson Cycle.” It will introduce a variety of critical methods and issues central to the scholarly interpretation of these texts. It will also cover examples of the reception of these texts across a variety of religious and secular traditions from antiquity to the present. Seminar discussions will be organized around close readings of primary texts and secondary literature. This course requires reading knowledge of biblical Hebrew narratives.

RLG3124H Biblical Reception Histories / *Schipper*

Over the centuries, biblical literature has captured the imagination of countless scholars, writers, artists, religious leaders, and members of the general public. This seminar explores the interpretative histories of select biblical texts and characters as reflected in not only scholarly literature and literature from various religious traditions, but also popular literature and culture. The specific types of reception discussed may differ from semester to semester depending on instructor’s interests and specialization.

RLG3144H/EMB 5203 Isaiah and Prophecy in Early Judaism and Christianity / *Newman*

The course considers the various ways in which the medium of prophecy is transformed in the post-exilic period, particularly as this relates to the retrieval and extension of Isaianic traditions. The course will focus on the deployment of Isaiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament. The prerequisite languages for this course are Biblical Hebrew and Koine Greek.

RLG3190/RLG448 Pseudepigraphy in Ancient Mediterranean Religion / *John Marshall*

A seminar examining the phenomenon of falsely claimed and/or attributed authorship in religions of the ancient Mediterranean, mainly Christianity and Judaism. The course examines understandings of authorship and other cultural forms that facilitate or inhibit ancient pseudepigraphy, ancient controversies over authorship, as well as specific pseudepigraphical writings.

RLG3200H The Politics of Bible Translation / Naomi Seidman

This course will explore the history of Bible translation from antiquity to our own day, focusing on translation as political and cultural as well as linguistic negotiation. We will ground ourselves in the history of translation theory (and in particular in postcolonial translation theory), recognizing that theoretical approaches to the problem of translation themselves emerge from theologically and politically charged historical conditions. With our philological, cultural, and historical tools in hand, we will explore the history of translations and revisions of the Bible, immerse ourselves in unusual examples of translation (children's Bibles, the Emoji Bible, R. Crumb's Genesis, etc.), and try our hand at the craft of Bible translation.

RLG3203H The Talking Book / Junior

The trope of the "Talking Book" appears within early Black American literature. Those who were not yet literate regarded others moving their lips and reading aloud as seemingly "talking" to the book. The Bible was one of the central works that Africans in the Americas confronted as a written and oral text.

This course explores the history and development of biblical interpretation by Black biblical scholars in North America. It considers how these scholars address the use, impact, and influence of biblical texts in African Diasporic cultures and traditions. It examines the disciplinary and methodological diversity of their work as well as their challenges and contributions to academic biblical studies.

RLG3212H Martyrdom in Early Christianity/ Smith

In late antiquity, narrative accounts of Christians who chose to suffer and die rather than renounce their beliefs emerged as a distinct (and hugely popular) literary genre. The "acts" of the martyrs did more than preserve the memory of those who had died—they helped to shape the very identity of the remembering community. In this course, we will examine the persecution of Christians in the Roman and Persian Empires historically, literarily, theoretically, and culturally. Why were Christians persecuted, and what can we know about the periods of persecution? Furthermore, how did Christians narratively represent and celebrate pain and death, and how did the literary "making" of martyrs forge a religious identity premised upon the collective memory of suffering? In asking these questions, we will consider how literary concepts about the body, death, and holiness ultimately drove the development of the cult of the saints.

RLG3216H Christianity in the Ancient Near East / Smith

The historical study of Christianity traditionally begins in the eastern Mediterranean and then turns westwards, focusing on the historical and theological development of Christianity in its Greek and Latin contexts. But such an approach paints an extremely partial picture of the development and spread of Christianity in late antiquity and the early medieval period more broadly—one that, for example, completely omits the rich heritage of Christianity in the Syriac tradition. A dialect of Palestinian Aramaic, Syriac was, for several centuries, the preeminent Christian literary language from the Syrian countryside through Mesopotamia to the Iranian plateau. In addition to surveying (in English translation) the unique biblical, theological, liturgical, hagiographical, and historiographical contributions of Syriac-speaking Christians and their literatures from the first centuries of the Common Era up to the early Islamic period, this course will focus on the importance of Syriac and Syriac Christianity as a bridge linking Rome with Persia and Byzantium with Baghdad. As such, some time, too, will be spent examining the history of Christianity in upper Egypt, Ethiopia, and the Arabian Peninsula. This course should thus be of interest to graduate students in a variety of fields, including biblical studies and Christian origins, Christianity in late antiquity, Sasanian/Zoroastrian studies, and early Islam.

RLG3217H Social Networks and Elective Cults in Antiquity / John Kloppenborg

Social networks are critical keys to the transmission and exchange of various non-material and material commodities, including rumours, information, employment opportunities, influence, infections and religious cults. Social Network Theory provides useful models to account for the diffusion of elective

cults within the deregulated religious environment of the ancient Mediterranean World (300 BCE--300 CE). The course will examine selected elective cults, reconstruct the social networks in which they are embedded, and develop theoretical models by which to account for the successes or failures in propagation.

RLG3228H/RLG454H1F Social History of the Jesus Movement / *John Kloppenborg*

Focus on the social setting of the early Jesus movement in Roman Palestine and in the cities of the Eastern Empire. Topics will include: rank and legal status; age and population structure; patronalia and clientalia; family structure; marriage and divorce; forms of association outside the family; slavery and manumission; loyalty to the empire and forms of resistance; legal and social issues concerning women; taxation; the structure of the economy, and how these issues are variously reflected in documents of the early Jesus movement. Open to qualified graduate students and advanced undergraduate students. Graduate students will be expected to read primary texts in the original languages; knowledge of Greek is essential; knowledge of a modern research language (French, German, or Italian) is necessary.

RLG3242H/RLG412H Christian Asceticism in Late Antiquity / *Kyle Smith*

Through studies of fasting, sexual renunciation, and other bodily disciplines, this course considers the ways by which ascetic elites and their promoters constructed a Christian ascetic ideal in late antiquity. In surveying the development of Christian asceticism from its Greco-Roman philosophical roots through to the rise of a flourishing monastic movement, our sources will include hagiographies, church histories, letters, sermons, rules, and practical treatises that address various modes and methods of ascetic renunciation. Thematic explorations include ascetic interpretations of the bible, solitary and communal forms of asceticism, asceticism as the basis for conversion and contemplation, asceticism and gender, and the importance of asceticism as a marker of class, status, and authority in the late ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern worlds.

RLG3243H/RLG449H The Synoptic Problem / *Kloppenborg*

This course investigates the literary relationships among the Synoptic gospels, the Gospel of Thomas, and other early gospels. Special attention is paid to the major solutions to the Synoptic Problem current today, the revival of the Griesbach hypothesis and the Farrer hypothesis, and recent advances in the Two-Document hypothesis. A range of issues will be presented, from the assessment of minor agreements to theories of synopsis construction. The currently competing hypotheses will be tested carefully by an examination of Synoptic texts.

RLG3249H/RLG452H Studies in the Synoptic Gospels: The Death of Jesus / *Kloppenborg*

This course is designed to introduce major modern approaches to the interpretation of the parables and to offer the basis for a new approach to the parables as realistic fiction, interpreted through a reconstruction of the economic and social world of Jewish Palestine.

Synoptic Passion Narratives/ *Kloppenborg*

This course examines the accounts of the passion and death of Jesus in their original historical and literary contexts. Topics include: Roman and Jewish judicial procedures; crucifixion and burial in the ancient world; the editorial tendencies of the gospel writers; incipient anti-Judaism in the gospels; conceptual trajectories of the passion narratives.

RLG3250H/RLG455H Heresy and Deviance in Early Christianity / *John Marshall*

A study of the construction of deviance or heresy within the literature of first and second century Christianity: tasks include a survey of sociological theory in its application to deviance in the ancient world and close readings of selected texts from first and second century Christian and pre-Christian communities. Prerequisite: RLG 241Y1 and at least one of RLG 319H1-327H1

RLG3252H The Letter of James and Early Christian Wisdom

An examination of key issues for the understanding of the letter of James: authorship, date, historical setting, genre, manuscript tradition, and attestation. The course situates James in the context of Second Temple Jewish wisdom literature of the Judaeen diaspora.

RLG3280H/CHC456H Christianities of South Asia/ Reid Locklin

This seminar explores the claim of diverse Christian traditions *in* South Asia to be religious traditions *of* South Asia, with special attention to these traditions' indigenisation and social interactions with majority Hindu traditions. Our study will begin with an overview of the historical development of Christianity in India from the first century CE to the present and then move to close readings of selected primary sources, comprehending both significant theological writings and contemporary ethnographic approaches to distinctive social and ritual practices. Representative topics of discussion include the legacy of Thomas Christianity, Hindu-Christian dialogues, the Christian ashram movement, Dalit theology, conversion controversies, liturgical inculturation and religious hybridity.

RLG3290HS/RLG441 Words and Worship / Simon Coleman

How are we to analyze the words that Christians use? How might oral forms compare with written ones? And how should we understand the relationships between religious language and ritual action without seeing one as merely derived from the other? This course provides the opportunity both to explore theories of language use and to apply them to forms of verbal discourse ranging from prayers, speaking in tongues, and biblical citations to more informal narratives. Protestant and Catholic attitudes to religious language are examined in ways that sometimes reinforce, something challenge, theological distinctions between the two, and there will be the opportunity for students to bring their own texts for analysis. Some techniques for the analysis of ritual texts are explored, and the advantages and disadvantages of close textual analysis are discussed. Although the focus is on Christianity, the aim is to provide methodological and analytical tools that can also be applied to the study of other religions.

RLG3401H Reading Buddhist Texts I / Christoph Emmrich & Amanda Goodman

With the aim of familiarizing students with texts that have been critical for the development of Buddhist literature across regions, historical periods, and languages, this course offers a close reading of one or more primary texts in translation or in the source language(s). Texts read may include, but are not limited to, sūtras, tantras, jātakas/avadānas, verse, commentarial and scientific literature, historiography, and epigraphy. The course focuses on texts from East and Central Asia.

RLG3402H Reading Buddhist Texts II / Christoph Emmrich & Amanda Goodman

With the aim of familiarizing students with texts that have been critical for the development of Buddhist literature across regions, historical periods, and languages, this course offers a close reading of one or more primary texts in translation or in the source language(s). Texts read may include, but are not limited to, sūtras, tantras, jātakas/avadānas, verse, commentarial and scientific literature, historiography, and epigraphy. The focus will be on texts from South or Southeast Asia.

RLG3419H Teaching Buddhism / Garrett

An overview of the field of Buddhist Studies, a review of pedagogical approaches common in the field, and discussion of emerging theories and practices focused on teaching Buddhism in higher education contexts.

RLG3425HS/RLG468H1S Special Topics in Buddhism: Transnational Buddhism / Kim

How and why do Buddhists move across borders, and what does it take to establish transnational Buddhist networks? Since its emergence in 5th century BCE India, Buddhism has been a highly mobile and adaptable tradition, actively shaping and being shaped by cross-cultural exchanges. From ancient pilgrimage routes and monastic networks to modern diasporic communities and digital Buddhist spaces, the movement of people, texts, objects, languages, and ideas has played a crucial role in Buddhism's

evolution. This course explores Buddhism's transnational dimensions from philosophical, anthropological, and historical perspectives, examining how Buddhist traditions have been transmitted, adapted, and redefined across time and space. We will analyze transnational Buddhist movements at both the micro-level (e.g., individual agents, families, sects, linguistic adaptations) and the macro-level (e.g., imperial patronage, trade networks, migration, and globalized Buddhist institutions). Topics include premodern Buddhist exchanges such as the Silk Road transmission of Buddhist texts, missionary activities of monks like Xuanzang, the role of translation in shaping Buddhist thought, and the movement of Buddhist relics and icons. We will also explore modern and contemporary Buddhist transnationalism, including the spread of engaged Buddhism, transnational Buddhist activism, monastic and lay migration, and the influence of digital media on Buddhist communities worldwide. Through primary sources, case studies, and critical scholarship, this course will provide a deeper understanding of Buddhism as a dynamic and border-crossing tradition, fostering discussion on the challenges and opportunities of transnational Buddhist networks in a globalized world.

RLG3457H Buddhism and Healing / *Garrett*

The course explores how health and healing have interacted with Buddhist traditions in historical and contemporary contexts globally. Topics may include ritual healing and sorcery, contemplative practice, disease etiology and frameworks of physiology, materia medica and dietetics, and how these appear as part of personal and professional religious practices and doctrines.

RLG3460H/RLG474H Sanskrit Readings 1 / *Ajay Rao*

This course will have students read choice pieces of South Asian literature. While tackling a text in simple Sanskrit from a major literary tradition, Buddhist or Hindu, and discussing its content and context, students will learn strategies for translating and interpreting Sanskrit literature.

RLG3461H: Sanskrit Readings 2 / *Ajay Rao*

This course will have students read choice pieces of South Asian literature. While tackling a text in simple Sanskrit from a major literary tradition, Buddhist or Hindu, and discussing its content and context, students will learn strategies for translating and interpreting Sanskrit literature.

RLG3501H Special Topics in Islamic Studies (Religion and the Liberal State: The Case of Islam)/*Fadel*

This seminar will address, as a theoretical matter, the relationship of religion to a liberal state, with particular attention to the writings of John Rawls as set forth in *Political Liberalism* and leading "religion" cases law from Canada, the United States and the European Court of Human Rights that address the relationship of religion and a liberal constitutional order. The course will also provide an introduction into classical and modern Islamic thought on the State.

RLG3504H Biblical Narratives in the Qur'an / *Dost*

It is well known that the Qur'ān refers to many biblical stories, events and personalities but it almost never directly quotes the Hebrew Bible or the New Testament. The Qur'anic version of biblical narratives often follows the synopsis that one finds not in the text of the Bible but in various sources of the para-biblical literature such as the Talmud, midrashim, apocryphal gospels and early patristic writings. The Qur'anic version of a given biblical narrative is also usually bent towards the larger theological exigencies of the Qur'ān. In this course students will read and discuss the textual development of biblical and para-biblical narratives from their source-texts to their retellings in the Qur'ān. After reading some of the most recent scholarship on the complex relationship between the Qur'ān and the biblical literature, the course will follow the stories of major Qur'anic figures within a rough chronological framework. Beginning with the creation story and the Adam narrative we will go through the stories of Noah, the Patriarchs, Joseph, Job, Jonah, Moses, David and Solomon. We will end our survey with Qur'anic portrayals of Christian figures such as Mary, Zechariah, John the Baptist and Jesus. This means that each

week we will be reading portions from the Qur'ān and corresponding sections from the biblical literature often with the help of some secondary literature.

RLG3516H Islamic Law and Society / *Moumtaz*

This course places Islamic Law within the wider debates on law and society, a field that evolved out of the social scientific study of law, with a special focus on the anthropology of Islamic Law. It is organized thematically, and combines readings from different periods, emphasizing the profound changes to Islamic law and society since the nineteenth century. The course will be mostly focused on the early modern and modern Islamic history, and will not delve into the debates of the formation of Islamic Law, legal schools and genres. Each session will combine theoretical readings addressing the questions we will be tackling in the nexus of law/ society, and we will address various substantive topics (like gender, property, punishment, war).

RLG3519H Islamic Intellectual Traditions / *Saleh*

This seminar will cover three main areas of the Islamic intellectual tradition: legal, theological and mystical. Each section will be covered by reading an original work translated into English with the aid of secondary literature. The aim of the seminar is to develop the students' knowledge of the classical Islamic tradition. Students will choose a research topic and develop and present to the class a synopsis of their research. The seminar culminates in writing a research paper on one aspect of the Islamic religious tradition.

RLG3523H Islamic Origins: Sources, Debates and Prospects / *Dost*

The orientalist Ernest Renan famously said in the 19th c. that Islam, compared to Judaism and Christianity, "was born in full light of history". After two centuries of scholarship, however, there are still many questions about the rise of Islam that remain unanswered not least because the authority and reliability of Muslim sources, as vast and detailed as they are, have been doubted in the last few decades. The revisionist wave that started in the 1970s questioned nearly everything that we thought we knew about the life of Muhammad, the Qur'an's textual history, Islam's relationship with other monotheistic religions of its time and the Muslim conquests. In the meantime, new discoveries such as ancient Qur'an manuscripts and inscriptions from the Arabian peninsula further reinvigorated the debate.

In this course we will explore the field of Islamic origins and the hot debates that made it a lively field in the last few years. A large portion of the class will be devoted to what we know about the rise of Islam and from what kind of sources we generate that knowledge. Students will be introduced to the fields of epigraphy, numismatics and manuscript studies to get a sense of what is at stake when it comes to identifying and analyzing sources that inform the beginnings of Islam. We will also look at how the study of Islamic origins can benefit from the tools and methods of similar or adjacent fields such as biblical studies, early Christianity and New Testament studies.

RLG3527H The Anthropology of Islam / *Moumtaz/Mittermaier*

This course highlights the anthropological contributions to the study of Islam, providing students both an historical overview of anthropological approaches to the study of Islam and readings of seminal contemporary ethnographies of Islam, highlighting the latest interventions in the field. The course will cover a variety of areas of the Muslim world, from Muslim-minority to Muslim-majority countries, East and West.

RLG3544H: Muslim Material Cultures / *Karen Ruffle*

This course examines the role of things, practices, circulation, space, and embodiment have played a critical role in shaping material forms of religious culture to reveal the historically contingent nature of trans-local practices in Muslim history. As Muslims settled beyond the Arab core in Iberia, South Asia, China, Iran, and Sub-Saharan Africa, we will focus on issues of repurposing and reuse of objects and

space and questions of ownership, gifting and alienability, and the many lives of an object. We will examine such topics as relics, re-use/appropriation of sacred spaces/objects, amulets, and tombs. Primary sources for this course will include the Islamic collection at the Royal Ontario Museum and the Aga Khan Museum.

RLG3555H: The Prophetic Family in Islamic Tradition / *Virani*

The conception of the *ahl al-bayt*, the family of the Prophet Muhammad, plays a vital role in Islamic history, thought and piety. In the *tashahhud* portion of the ritual prayers, Muslims of all persuasions supplicate daily, "O God! Bless Muhammad and his family (*āl*) as you blessed Abraham and his family." From the Arabic teachings of the Prophet's cousin 'Ali and the Shi'i Imams descended from him, to the legitimacy drawn from their *sayyid* lineage by Sunni religious and political leaders, from the Persian poetry of countless Muslim mystics to the Indic and Turkish stories about members of the hallowed lineage, this course draws on both primary and secondary sources to explore the significance of the Prophet's family in the Islamic tradition.

RLG3610H/EMB5347H Wisdom in Second Temple Judaism / *Newman*

In different years, this seminar treats either books (Job, Ben Sira/Sirach, Ecclesiastes, Wisdom of Solomon) or thematic aspects (creation, prayer, eschatology) of the wisdom tradition as it evolved in the period 333 BCE - 70 CE with an eye to the relationship of these books to the broader swath of sapiential traditions of the era, including the instruction literature from Qumran. In 2012, the focus will be on the book of Daniel and related prophetic and wisdom materials from the Dead Sea Scrolls and their significance for our understanding of the formation of the Bible. Seminar participation, seminar presentations, major paper. Requires working knowledge of Hebrew, Aramaic

RLG 3621H/RLG455H Modern Jewish Thought / *Green*

The course will consist of a close study of major themes, texts, and thinkers in modern Jewish thought. Attention will be focused on the historical development of modern Judaism, with special emphasis on the Jewish religious and philosophical responses to the challenges of modernity. Among the modern Jewish thinkers to be considered will be: Spinoza, Mendelssohn, Krochmal, Steinheim, Cohen, Rosenzweig, Buber, Scholem, Strauss, and Fackenheim.

RLG3622H/RLG433 Maimonides / *Green*

An introduction to The Guide of the Perplexed by Moses Maimonides, and to some of the basic themes in Jewish philosophical theology and religion. Among topics to be considered through close textual study of the Guide: divine attributes; biblical interpretation; creation versus eternity; prophecy; providence, theodicy, and evil; wisdom and human perfection. Also to be examined are leading modern interpreters of Maimonides.

RLG3623H The Thought of Leo Strauss / *Green*

The course will offer an introduction to the philosophic thought of Leo Strauss (1899-1973), which will examine his major interests: philosophy, theology, and politics. We shall approach his thought through his writings on modern Judaism and on modern Jewish thought.

RLG3634H/EMB5401H Worship and Scripture at Qumran / *Newman*

This graduate seminar will examine selected psalms, prayers, and hymns and other less overtly "liturgical" texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls. We will consider the performative role of such texts in the Qumran movement and their relation to the evolving growth of the Hebrew Bible in the two centuries before and after the common era. The relationship of these texts to later Jewish and Christian liturgical texts (e.g., the book of Psalms) and the New Testament will also be considered. Seminar participation, seminar presentations, major paper. Requires working knowledge of Hebrew.

RLG3704H Readings in Sanskrit Literature

In this course, we explore the major genres of Sanskrit literature, including epic, courtly poetry, inscriptional poetry, drama, and devotional praise poetry. Students will become familiar with philological methods for interpreting Sanskrit literature and learn about Sanskrit literary criticism and Sanskrit literary theory, in conversation with relevant theoretical debates in modern literary studies. The objective is to use the reading of Sanskrit to enhance our understanding of the religious and cultural history of South Asia. While class sessions will be devoted to primary source readings, this is a content course culminating in a final research paper.

RLG3705H Becoming Hindu: Ritual Life in Hindu Traditions / *Raman*

This course will cover the range of Hindu rituals that define Hindu life and lead towards the constitution of a Hindu social and religious personhood. They range from the life cycle rituals, to initiatory rituals, to rituals of fasting, festivities and penance. The course explores how these rituals are part of the Hindu social order, even while they are marked by differences of caste, gender and religious communities. The course will look at a wide range of textual materials on Hindu rituals including prescriptive texts, ethnographies and literary accounts. These materials will be explored also within the help of ritual theory in order to understand the relationship between religion, ritual and personhood.

RLG3712H Religion, Culture, and Politics in South Asia

This graduate seminar surveys classic and recent scholarship on religion in modern South Asia, as well as select primary sources, to provide students with a strong grounding in this interdisciplinary field that cuts across history, anthropology, literature, visual studies, and other disciplines. While the seminar's scope is defined chronologically (1800 to present), it organizes material thematically around such topics as empire, law, secularism, reform, caste, communalism, gender, sexuality, family, image, cinema, city, ecology, etc., and cut across multiple religious traditions (Hinduism, Islam, etc.) and scholarly methodologies (ethnography, history, etc.).

RLG3722H Approaching the Literary in South Asian Religions / *Obrock*

This course will introduce the student to the study of South Asian Religions from a literary perspective; literary primary sources will be highlighted and literary theoretical models will be explored and discussed. While a variety of sources from a number of traditions will be investigated (from Vedic to vernacular devotion and modern novels), the stress in this course will be reading literature carefully in through different methodological lenses. Students will learn to be more comfortable using literature in their own work on South Asian Religions.

RLG3725HS/RLG463H1S Tibetan Buddhist Canons / *Lindsay*

This course explores Tibetan Buddhism through careful readings of selected canonical sources. It examines prominent Buddhist stories as preserved in various versions of the canon and more obscure canonical materials not typically referenced in commentarial literature or modern scholarship. Students will learn about traditional printing practices and the material aspects of book making in Tibet. They will also be introduced to the ritual roles of Tibetan canons and ways in which these books have acted as community members. Readings will be conducted in English, though graduate students with a background in Tibetan will be expected to consult Tibetan source texts.

RLG3744H/RLG460/471 Hindu Epics / *Dhand*

Advanced study in specialized topics on Hinduism such as Ramayana in Literature: This course explores how this conception is the result of a historical process by examining documentable transformations in the reception of the Ramayana. Our focus will be on the shift in the classification of the Ramayana from the inaugural work of Sanskrit literary culture (adi-kavya) in Sanskrit aesthetics to a work of tradition (smṛti) in theological commentaries, the differences between the Ramayanas ideal of divine kingship and

medieval theistic approaches to Ramas identification with Visnu, the rise of Rama worship, and the use of Ramas divinity in contemporary political discourse.

Prerequisite: RLG205Y; Instructor's permission required for admission to course.

RLG3746HF Women and South Asian Religions / *Dhand & Chojnacki*

In Indian society, the role models of the women can vary greatly today as in the past. To investigate diverse aspects of the roles of women in religion, the course will be organised around three main themes. In the lay life, we will examine the various images of virtue, practices of observance and acts of patronage; in the ascetic life, we will look at the role of saints and nuns and the debates about their access to salvation, which vary from tradition to tradition and from period to period; and in the divine world, we will study the positions of the goddesses and their specific functions.

RLG3763H Readings in Sanskrit Philosophy

Advanced reading of classical Sanskrit philosophical texts. Students will learn techniques and strategies for analyzing Sanskrit primary sources in hermeneutics, logic, metaphysics, aesthetics, or language philosophy. While the course will include a review of Sanskrit grammar, our focus will be on specific philosophical problems encountered in the readings.

RLG3771H After the Śaiva Age: Regional Śaivism in the Second Millenium / *Raman*

The aim of this course is to examine the spread of Śaivism after the first millenium in South Asia which, in Alexis Sanderson's magisterial work, has come to be seen as the commencement of the Śaiva Age. In order to see how this Śaiva Age comes to expand locally the course concentrates on one specific locale – the Tamil region – and the emergence of Śaivism as the elite textual religion between the 14-18th centuries of the Common Era. The course will thus concentrate on looking at specific texts – Vedāntic (doctrinal) and/or Bhakti (devotional) - of the Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta and the Tamil Vīraśaiva tradition, to understand the construction of a trans-sectarian Śaiva religious landscape by the colonial period.

RLG3789H Burmese Buddhist Literature / *Emmrich*

Burma, also known as Myanmar, offers one of the richest literary landscapes in the Buddhist world. This course introduces students to the Buddha's sermons, to the animal lives of struggling bodhisattvas, to the poetic creativity of Mandalay princesses, to the intricacies of the Buddhist philosophy of mind, to the textual regimes of monastic dress codes, and to cosmographies of Buddhist kingship in the interface of South and Southeast Asian religions. Students will be trained to take a critical look at the fascinating world of Buddhist texts, inflected by the scriptural language of Pali, through a specifically Burmese prism. Burmese/Pali language knowledge is not required.

RLG3800H The Anthropocene: Indigenous Perspectives / *White*

Discourse on the Anthropocene engages scientific thought, religious studies, and philosophy to think about humanity's impact upon the earth at the ecological stage. This course will analyze the Anthropocene from Indigenous perspectives. First we will examine how the Anthropocene is understood from Western theological, philosophical, and scientific understandings. Next we will engage and enrage the Anthropocene from an Indigenous perspective drawing up on Indigenous scholarship and critique of the Anthropocene. The course will also bring forth many perspectives from within Turtle Island itself. While we have overlaps under the frameworks constructed around "Indigenous," we have profound differences as well between regions and different geographic perspectives based on our home territories or lands.

RLG3823H Buddhism and Indigeneity / *Emmrich*

Recent scholarship has witnessed a shift away from the image of Buddhism as historically reactive and reformist or as locally imported and foreign, in other words as a missionarizing religion which always arrives late and produces historical narratives of conquest, civilization, and acculturation. This course

will confront these older dominant narratives with emergent visions of Buddhism as originary, autochthonous, oppressed, and subversive that have shaped much of politically active, ritually creative, and textually productive Buddhist life between the 19th and the 21st century, in Asia and beyond. The course will look at the connections between early Orientalist theories of the Buddha's tribal origins and the revolutionary historiographies of Dalit theorists like Jyotirao Phule, B. K. Ambedkar, and Iyothee Dass which turn on their head claims to the Brahmanical beginnings and supremacy of religion in South Asia and theorize Buddhism as India's original religion ("We have always been Buddhists.") that holds the promise to liberate the oppressed. In a second move, the Dalit Buddhist indigenous will be confronted with a rich array of ethnically oriented cultures of resistance across Central, South, and Southeast Asia, such as the Gurung, the Newars, the Baruas, and the Tibetans, for which their religious identity is associated with place, genealogy, gender, and belonging and is articulated in forms of resistance to state power associated with the repression and/or appropriation of Buddhism. Students will be encouraged to juxtapose those passages in premodern Buddhist literature that have been hermeneutically mobilized to support such struggles with other Buddhist scriptural passages that have dehumanized the indigenous and have advocated for their oppression. Thirdly, students will explore the interest in Buddhism, mediated by Anglophone New Age ecology and spirituality, among authors and activists from the indigenous communities of the Americas, through the engagement with work by scholars such as Chicana Apache Natalie Avalos and Canadian Cree poet and UTSC faculty Randy Lundy. The teaching plan includes reaching out to one or more community representatives for in-class discussions. The course will aim at formulating an answer to the question what Buddhism may have contributed and what Buddhist Studies may contribute towards decolonization and indigenous empowerment.

RLG3931H/RLG422 North American Religions *Klassen/O'Neill*

The course considers the varieties of religious practices in North America from anthropological and historical perspectives. Of particular interest are the ways religions have mutually influenced each other in the context of North America from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century. Each year it is offered, the course will focus on a specific theme, for example, millennialism, religion and consumerism or gender and the body, as found across a range of religious traditions including Christianity, Judaism, Afro-Caribbean religions, and new religious movements. In addition to analysis of primary and secondary texts, students will be required to submit a research paper (20-25pp.) concerning the theme under study.

RLG 4001H Directed Reading: TST Seminar

Reading course designators for those who wish to take appropriate, upper level Toronto School of Theology Courses.

RLG4003H Dissertation Writing Seminar / *Smith*

This seminar seeks to support students in the dissertation process, from proposal to successful defense by providing a space to discuss research and writing practices. The seminar meets twice per month over the full academic year and focuses on workshopping dissertation chapters. Along the way, it also covers topics ranging from setting a writing schedule and cultivating better writing habits to improving style, strengthening prose, sharpening analyses, and making clearer arguments. Prerequisite: candidacy achieved.

RLG 4004H Centre Colloquium

Once General Exams are completed, students in the PhD program are required to participate at least once in the Centre for the Study of Religion's colloquium before undertaking their final oral exams. The colloquium participation is recorded as a credit/non credit on the transcript.

JPR2051H/JPR459H Fanaticism: A Political History / *Ruth Marshall*

This seminar in theory will explore the modern history of the concept of ‘fanaticism’ and its role in the development of political modernity. A focus on the concept of the “fanatic” (and its cognates) from the perspective of its various uses in political and religious thought from the Early Modern period through the Enlightenment and up to the present day, provides a fascinating opportunity for a critical review of the secular, rationalist, and scientific assumptions underwriting modern political forms and concepts, especially those of liberal democracy. At the same time, the course will offer critical insight into the ways in which religious and political differences among colonial “others” were, and continue to be, central to the elaboration of Western theoretical discourse on fanaticism and extremism as forms of “political pathology”. (Given by the Departments of Political Science and Religion)
(hosted by Poli Sci)

JPR2058H/JPR458H Postsecular Political Thought: Religion, Radicalism, and the Limits of Liberalism / *Ruth Marshall*

This seminar in theory examines the postsecular as a series of questions opened by the so-called return of religion to public debate, the rise of politicised religious movements, and the limits of liberal democracy’s ability to respond to the challenge of religion and religious otherness. The course will examine the debates on religion’s public, political role as articulated by thinkers such as Habermas, Rawls, Brown, Zizek, et al by focusing on politically radical or revolutionary challenges to liberalism that are grounded upon or draw their inspiration from religious traditions, doctrines and practices. We will focus especially on challenges emerging from the colonial and post-colonial world in response to colonialism and the globalization of liberal democracy and capitalism, from thinkers such as Gandhi, Qutb, Ali Shariati, Gutierrez, recent contributions by postcolonial theorists to a ‘postsecular’ debate that is dominated by Western thought, as well as examining forms of globalized ‘fundamentalist’ thought.