

**RELIGION DEPARTMENT**  
**2011-2012 FALL**  
**COURSE OFFERINGS**

**Graduate Program**

**REL 500 / EAS 500**

**The Scripture of Brahma's Net and East Asian Buddhism**

**Professor(s): Toru Funayama** W 1:30-4:20

**Description:** Close reading of one of the formative texts of Mahayana Buddhism in East Asia. Analysis of the language of the Chinese original as well as broader historical issues, including changing understandings of the bodhisattva ideal, the creation of apocryphal texts in Chinese Buddhism, the formation of Chinese Buddhist ethics.

**REL 501**

**Religion and the Tradition of Social Theory**

**Professor(s): Stephen F. Teiser** F 9:00-11:50

**Description:** A critical introduction to developments in social theory that have influenced the academic study of religion, including the classic contributions of Marx, Durkheim, and Weber as well as more recent debates in anthropology and cultural theory. Required of, and designed for, first- and second-year graduate students in religion; others must receive the instructor's permission to enroll.

**REL 504**

**Studies in Greco-Roman Religions - Genres of Rabbinic Literature**

**Professor(s): Peter Schäfer** TH 10:00-1:00

**Description:** This seminar will lead us through the corpus of texts amassed by the rabbis of late antique Judaism, from the Mishna through the Tosefta, the early halakhic midrashim, the Palestinian and Babylonian Talmud, the later aggadic and homiletic midrashim up to the first manifestation of Jewish mysticism. We will pay particular attention to the problem of parallel traditions in different works.

**REL 505**

**Studies in the Religions of the Americas - Twentieth-Century American Religious History**

**Professor(s): Judith L. Weisenfeld** W 1:30-4:20

**Description:** This course provides a broad introduction to major themes in and recent literature exploring the history of American religions in the twentieth century.

**REL 507**

**Studies in Religion and Philosophy - Agency and Interpretation**

**Professor(s): Jeffrey L. Stout** T 1:30-4:20

**Description:** This seminar will examine recent philosophical work on agency, with an interest in assessing attributions of intention, desire, belief, virtue, vice, rationality, and irrationality in interpretations of religious behavior.

**GER 511 / COM 511 / REL 591**

**German Literature in the 17th Century**

**Professor(s): Christiane Frey** M 1:30-4:20

**Description:** This year's topic: The Political Theologies of Baroque Tragedy. German Baroque tragedies deal with the question of political power and its divine legitimation and reflect the aporias of sovereignty in their aesthetic structure. This seminar will analyze several prominent tragedies of the 17th century in order to explore the history and structure of the tragic, the relationship between politics and theology, and the advent of secularism. Plays by Gryphius, Lohenstein, and several of their English and French contemporaries; theoretical readings by Kantorowicz, Carl Schmitt, Benjamin, and Agamben.

**REL 515 / AAS 510****Race, Religion, and the Harlem Renaissance****Professor(s): Wallace D. Best** T 1:30-4:20

**Description:** The Harlem Renaissance (HR) of the 1920s is most often depicted as "the flowering of African American arts and literature." It can also be characterized as a period when diverse forms of African American religious expressions, ideologies, and institutions emerged. This course will explore the literature of the Harlem Renaissance, particularly the writings of Langston Hughes, to understand the pivotal intersection of race and religion during this time of black "cultural production."

**REL 518****Religion and Critical Thought Workshop****Professor(s): Eric S. Gregory** W 10:00-12:00

**Description:** A weekly, year-long workshop focused on current student and faculty research in religion and critical thought, designed primarily for graduate students working on dissertations and general examination essays on the philosophy of religion, religious ethics, and the role of religion in politics.

**REL 521****Religion and Culture Workshop****Professor(s): John G. Gager** W 12:30-2:00

**Description:** A weekly, year-long workshop devoted to the critical discussion of research in progress in the ethnographic, historical, and normative study of religion and culture. Designed for dissertation writers receiving fellowships from the Center for the Study of Religion and post-doctoral fellows.

**REL 523****American Religious History Workshop****Professor(s): Kathryn A. Gin** Th 3:00-4:20

**Description:** A weekly, year-long workshop focused on the current research of visiting presenters, current students, and faculty in American religious history. The workshop is designed primarily for Ph.D. students in the field, but is open as well to undergraduate concentrators with a strong background in the study of American religion and culture. In order to receive a grade, students must take the course both semesters.

**REL 525****Religions of Late Antiquity Workshop****Professor(s): Martha Himmelfarb** W 3:00-4:20

**Description:** A weekly, year-long workshop providing students in the Religions of Late Antiquity with the opportunity to present their current research for discussion.

**REL 533****Readings in Japanese Religions - Religion in Modern Japan****Professor(s): Jacqueline I. Stone** T 1:30-4:20

**Description:** This seminar will focus on selected issues in Japanese Religion from the seventeenth century to the present. Topics may include lay confraternities, millenarian movements, funerary and mortuary ritual, religion and the state, religious nationalism, new religions, and issues in contemporary "spirituality." Readings may include primary texts as well as works of classic and recent scholarship in English and Japanese. To some extent, readings may be chosen to accommodate student interests.

**REL 538**

**Studies in Tibetan Religions**

**Professor(s): Jonathan C. Gold** TH 1:30-4:20

**Description:** This course introduces Tibetan Buddhist traditions based on sources in translation, emphasizing the historical development of the major lineages and their distinctive practice traditions. Course topics will include Tibetan tantric systems and rituals; Tibetan innovations in and approaches to Buddhist philosophy; Tibet's distinctive approach to religion and politics; Tibetan views of space and locality; Tibetan scholasticism; and the challenges posed by modernity and Chinese rule.

**REL 582 / AAS 582**

**Study of Race, Gender & Slavery in Western & Non-Western Societies**

**Professor(s): Shaun E. Marmon** TH 1:30-4:20

**Description:** Interdisciplinary inquiry into the changing and often fraught study of "race," "ethnicity," slavery and gender in a variety of historical, cultural contexts and academic disciplines. How does gender inflect the experience of slavery/racial difference and how has the representation of female slaves been influenced by literary topoi? Practices of slavery and understandings of race/ethnicity in non-Western societies, specifically so-called "Islamic" societies through pre-modern, colonial, post-colonial and modern periods.

**PHI 511 / JDS 514 / REL 592**

**Pre-Kantian Rationalism - Rationalism**

**Professor(s): Daniel Garber , Oded Schechter** W 4:00-6:50

**Description:** This course will focus on the philosophy of Spinoza. We will mainly discuss the metaphysics of the Ethics and its account of the human being, and how that, in turn, supports the politics as outlined in the Tractatus Theologico-Politicus. Topics discussed may include Spinoza's monism, his necessitarianism, his rejection of final causes, his account of the mind as the idea of the body, and the claim that everything strives for self-preservation. We will also show how this account of the human being is intended to support an interesting variant on Hobbes' contractarian conception of the commonwealth.

**For more detailed information on each course, please visit:**

**<http://registrar1.princeton.edu/course/course.cfm>**