

**RELIGION DEPARTMENT
2009-2010 SPRING
COURSE OFFERINGS**

Undergraduate Program

JDS 202/REL 202

Great Books of the Jewish Tradition

(HA)

Total Course Enrollment: 20

Professor(s): Peter Schäfer

Department Area Requirement: Ancient Mediterranean

Description/Objective:

This course is intended to introduce students to the classical Jewish tradition through a close reading of portions of some of its great books. These books include the Bible, rabbinic midrash, the Talmud, Rashi's commentary on the Torah, Maimonides' Guide for the Perplexed, the Zohar (the central work of the Kabbalah), Moses Mendelssohn's Jerusalem, Salomon Maimon's Autobiography, Leo Baeck's The Essence of Judaism, and Gershom Scholem's The Messianic Idea in Judaism. As we read, we will consider what these works tell us about creation, revelation, and salvation in Jewish tradition and how they come to define that tradition.

REL 219

Business Ethics and Modern Religious Thought

(EM)

Total Course Enrollment: 24

Professor(s): David W. Miller

Department Area Requirement: Critical Thought

Description/Objective:

The course objective is to learn basic ethics theory and develop practical tools for business ethics, with particular attention throughout the course to the role of religion and spirituality in ethical formation, frameworks, and decision making. This will be applied to contemporary business ethics case studies, and will include several guest CEO visitors.

REL 222/HUM 222

Religion in Modern Thought and Film

(EC)

Professor(s): Jeffrey L. Stout

Department Area Requirement: Required Course, Departmental

Description/Objective:

This course surveys conceptions of religion that have been influential in the modern period, and critically examines the theories of knowledge, interpretation, society, and culture associated with them. Among the approaches considered are Augustinian theology, Enlightenment skepticism, Marxism, cultural anthropology, phenomenology, feminism, and Freudian psychology. Films by such directors as Hitchcock and Kurosawa are used to explore the main issues covered.

REL 227

Tibetan Buddhism

(EM) na

Professor(s): Jonathan C. Gold

Department Area Requirement: Religions of Asia

Description/Objective:

This course is a survey of the Buddhist traditions of Tibet, focusing on the doctrines and practices associated with the main schools of tantric ritual and meditation. Topics covered will include: the origins of the distinct forms of Buddhism in Tibet; Buddhist responses to historical challenges; the special relationship between politics and religion in Tibet; the role of Tibetan Buddhist scholars and scholasticism; Tibet through the lenses of the Chinese, and the West; and Tibetan Buddhist art. Required field trip to the Rubin Museum of Art in NYC.

REL 236 /NES 236 - CANCELLED**Introduction to Islam**

(SA)

Professor(s): Shaun E. Marmon**Department Area Requirement:** Islam**Description/Objective:**

This introductory course provides a thematic overview of Islamic beliefs, rituals and practices. We will study both majority Muslim societies and Muslim minority communities in the past and present. The course will highlight commonalities among Muslims but will also focus on historical, geographical and cultural diversities. Course materials include primary sources in translation, academic articles and books, feature and documentary films, fiction in translation, internet sites and power point presentations.

REL 242/JDS 242**Jewish Thought and Modern Society**(EM) *na***Professor(s):** Leora F. Batnitzky**Department Area Requirement:** Critical Thought**Description/Objective:**

What is Judaism's, and the individual Jew's, relation to the modern world? Is Judaism a religion, a nationality, an ethnicity, or a combination of these? This course explores different answers to these questions by examining various historical and cultural formations of Jewish identity in Europe, America, and Israel from the seventeenth century to the present, as well as by engaging particular issues, such as Judaism's relation to technology, the environment, bioethics, feminism, and democracy.

REL 251**The New Testament and Christian Origins**

(HA)

Professor(s): AnneMarie Luijendijk**Department Area Requirement:** Ancient Mediterranean**Description/Objective:**

A historical introduction to early Christian texts within and outside of the New Testament canon. The course emphasizes studying ancient sources relevant for early Christianity from a variety of backgrounds (Jewish, Greco-Roman, Christian) and teaches different strategies to read these texts. When possible, archaeological remains and papyrological sources are brought in as material context. The precepts function to explore important topics such as early Christian attitudes towards slavery and the position of women in Early Christianity and to bring up debates in contemporary culture involving New Testament and other early Christian texts.

WOM 302**Topics in the Study of Gender - Gender, Sexuality, and Religion in Colonial Latin America**

(SA)

Professor(s): Jessica Delgado**Department Area Requirement:** Does NOT satisfy sub-field requirement. DOES count as a departmental.**Description/Objective:**

This seminar will explore recent scholarship on the subjects of gender, sexuality and religion in colonial Latin America. Students will be asked to consider the connections between church teachings, spiritual and sexual practices, gendered social relations, and ideas about sex and sexuality in the historical periods we are studying. They will also be challenged to think critically about how scholars have portrayed and explored these connections in recent decades.

NES 324 (EM)**Introduction to Later Sufism (ca. AD 1200 to present)****Professor(s):** Michael Barry**Department Area Requirement:** Islam**Description/Objective:**

Popularized through translations of world famous poets like the 13th century Rûmî, the Sufi mystical strain pervaded Islamic culture for a thousand years and played a major historic role in furthering friendly relations between Muslims and other religious communities through endorsement of spiritual tolerance. The Spring session of this two-term course addresses the overwhelming influence of the Spanish-Muslim Ibn `Arabî (d. 1240 AD) on all subsequent higher Islamic mystical speculation and poetical literature - as far as India.

NES 325/ HIS 338/ REL 325**Christianity along the Silk Road****(HA)****Total Course Enrollment:** 18**Professor(s):** Emmanuel Papoutsakis**Department Area Requirement:** Does NOT satisfy sub-field requirement; does NOT count as departmental.**Majors may petition to count this as a cognate course (in addition to the 8 required courses for the major).****Description/Objective:**

Syriac is a dialect of Aramaic very similar to the language spoken by Jesus in first-century Palestine. Aramaic-speaking Christians in the Near East soon adopted Syriac as their literary language; by the early fourteenth century, Syriac Christianity spread from the western Mediterranean to China. In this seminar we shall be exploring the origins of Syriac Christianity in the Near East and its spread along the Silk Road before 1500.

REL 341/JDS 341**Jews and Judaism in Ancient Egypt and Other Diaspora Communities****(HA)****Total Course Enrollment:** 15**Professor(s):** Martha Himmelfarb**Department Area Requirement:** Ancient Mediterranean**Description/Objective:**

This course covers the development of Judaism in the diaspora from 33 BCE to 200 CE, including the rich body of literature produced by Egyptian Jewry, the best documented of the ancient diaspora communities, the archeological and epigraphic evidence for Judaism in Rome and Asia Minor, and the writings of ancient non-Jews on the Jews and Judaism.

NES 345**Introduction to Islamic Law****(SA)** *na, npdf***Total Course Enrollment:** 20**Professor(s):** Hossein Modarressi**Department Area Requirement:** Islam**Description/Objective:**

A survey of the history of Islamic law and its developments, and the attempts of the Muslim jurists to come to term with the challenges of modern times. It will focus on issues in constitutional and personal laws that have the greatest relevance to the modern era.

REL 352**Jesus: From Earliest Sources to Contemporary Interpretations****(HA)** *na, npdf***Enrollment by application. Departmental permission required.****Total Course Enrollment:** 15**Professor(s):** Elaine H. Pagels**Department Area Requirement:** Ancient Mediterranean**Description/Objective:**

In this seminar we will first investigate the earliest known sources--both gospels in the New Testament and "gnostic gospels" outside the NT, including the Gospels of Thomas, Mary Magdalene, and Philip. Second, we will explore a range of attempts to place Jesus in historical context. And third, we will look at interpretations of Jesus in poetry, theology, fiction, and film.

REL 355/HLS 356**The Apostle Paul in Text and Context: His Letters, His Communities, and His Interpreters**(HA) *na, npdf***Enrollment by application. Departmental permission required.****Application can be found on Religion website, <http://www.princeton.edu/religion/courses/>****Total Course Enrollment:** 12**Professor(s):** AnneMarie Luijendijk**Department Area Requirement:** Ancient Mediterranean**Description/Objective:**

In this seminar we will: 1) study the New Testament letters of the apostle Paul in their first-century context and their earliest interpretations; and 2) explore recent trends in Pauline scholarship, including the New Perspective. We will pay special attention to archaeological finds from the Pauline cities, which help us understand better the cultural, political, and religious milieu in which the letters were received and read. In the Spring break (March 11-21) the class will travel to Greece and visit the archaeological sites of the cities with early Christ-communities and other important or relevant sites.

REL 359**Religion and Immigration to the United States**

(HA)

Total Course Enrollment: 15**Professor(s):** Albert J. Raboteau**Department Area Requirement:** Religion in America**Description/Objective:**

Covering a variety of texts dealing with religion and immigration, one of the major themes of American history, this seminar focuses on immigration as a socio-historical factor in the formation of American civic and political culture. Themes will include immigration as religious experience; the transfer and transformation of religious practice from "old" world to "new"; religion as a "map of meaning" for immigrant communities; and religious institutions as social agencies and facilitators of change.

AAS 368/ POL 424/ REL 368**Topics in African American Religion - Black Religion and Black Political Thought**

(EM)

Total Course Enrollment: 12**Professor(s):** Melissa V. Harris-Lacewell**Department Area Requirement:** Does NOT satisfy sub-field requirement; does NOT count as departmental.**Majors may petition to count this as a cognate course (in addition to the 8 required courses for the major).****Description/Objective:**

Scholars of the African America experience have located the black church as the cultural, social, and political womb of the black community. This research tends to think of the church as a structure that brings actors into contact with one another; it has paid less attention to the church as a place that brings actors into contact with ideas. This course will use a variety of classic and contemporary texts about black political thought as an entry into investigating the connections between black religious ideas and political activism. The class links the work on religion to an intensive introduction to black political thought.

REL 371**Religious Radicals**(HA) *npdf***Total Course Enrollment:** 15**Professor(s):** Albert J. Raboteau**Department Area Requirement:** Religion in America**Description/Objective:**

This seminar offers students an opportunity to reflect upon the lives and writings of several 20th century American religious figures whose socially radical visions were based upon religious experiences and ideals. Examining the relationship between biographical, historical, social, intellectual, and religious factors in the lives of these figures will be a major focus of our discussion, as will be the interrelationship and cross influences among them.

REL 372/AAS 382**Race, Religion, and the Harlem Renaissance**(HA) *na, npdf***Total Course Enrollment:** 15**Professor(s):** Wallace D. Best**Department Area Requirement:** Religion in America**Description/Objective:**

The Harlem Renaissance 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."

SOC 340/ REL 390**God of Many Faces: Comparative Perspectives on Migration and Religion**

(SA)

Professor(s): Patricia Fernandez-Kelly**Department Area Requirement:** Does NOT satisfy sub-field requirement; does NOT count as departmental.**Majors may petition to count this as a cognate course (in addition to the 8 required courses for the major).****Description/Objective:**

Immigrants often experience discrimination in areas of destination. Religion can strengthen their sense of worth, particularly when the circumstances surrounding departure from the country of origin are traumatic, as with exiles and refugees. We take a comparative approach and use examples from the United States, Asia, Europe, and Latin America. The course broaches questions such as: how does religion transform and is transformed by the immigrant experience? When is religion used to combat stereotypes? Are there differences between the way men and women or dominant groups and racial minorities understand religion?

ENG 338/REL 395**Faith and Form: Religion and Poetry in the 19th Century**(LA) *npdf***Total Course Enrollment:** 15**Professor(s):** Meredith A. Martin**Department Area Requirement:** Does NOT satisfy sub-field requirement; does NOT count as departmental.**Majors may petition to count this as a cognate course (in addition to the 8 required courses for the major).****Description/Objective:**

In his 1880 essay "The Study of Poetry," Matthew Arnold famously proclaimed "[m]ore and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us. Without poetry, our science will appear incomplete, and most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry." This course will ask how "poetry," both broadly and specifically conceived, succeeded and failed in this charge in the nineteenth century. What do poetry and religion borrow from one another? How does the history of the two together help us to understand the fate of each in the twentieth century?

REL 396/GER 304/PHI 396**Genealogy of Secularism**

(EM)

Total Course Enrollment: 15**Professor(s):** Oded Schechter**Department Area Requirement:** Critical Thought**Description/Objective:**

This course explores the philosophical development of the concept of secularism, its philosophical and religious sources, as well as its critiques. Among the questions we will consider are: what is universal about secularism? Is critical thought necessarily secular? What is the relation between secularism and readings of the Bible? Our method will be genealogical, meaning that our focus will be on the philosophical aspects of secularism, rather than on the history of secularism.

REL 397**Mad Prophets? The Prophetic Voice in the History of Christianity***(HA) na, npdf***Total Course Enrollment:** 15**Professor(s):** Phillip N. Haberkern**Department Area Requirement:** Ancient Mediterranean**Description/Objective:**

This course explores the dynamics of prophecy in Christian history. It begins with a theoretical exploration of prophecy's role in the church and proceeds to consider the biblical models for prophets. The course then examines case studies on the impetus and impact of prophets in the church, ranging from Hildegard of Bingen to Thomas Müntzer. The main goal of this course is to introduce students to the relationship between prophets and their historical contexts, and to analyze the prophets' ability to dramatically alter them.

NES 398/JDS 398/REL 398**Clash of Civilizations? Perceptions of East and West from Medieval Period to the Contemporary World***(SA)***Total Course Enrollment:** 30**Professor(s):** Elisha R. Russ-Fishbane**Department Area Requirement:** Does NOT satisfy sub-field requirement; does NOT count as departmental.**Majors may petition to count this as a cognate course (in addition to the 8 required courses for the major).****Description/Objective:**

Among the most pressing issues of our time is the perceived divide between the Islamic "East" and the European and American "West." As this course explores, the meeting of Islamicate and western civilizations has a long, complicated history. We shall examine the roots of this tension and the ways in which the two perceived one another from the Middle Ages to modernity through classic works of literature and art. Likewise, we shall examine the experience of "eastern" Judaism and Christianity, including how they viewed their western counterparts, and the complex relationship between religion and culture in the formation of identity.

REL 399**God and Human Nature***(EM) na***Total Course Enrollment:** 15**Professor(s):** Robert W. Jenson**Department Area Requirement:** Does NOT satisfy sub-field requirement. DOES count as a departmental.**Description/Objective:**

This course considers the question of what it means to be human from the perspectives of Jewish and Christian theology. Among the questions we will ask are: what does God have to do with understanding human nature? Who is the human being? What are the differences and overlaps between contemporary secular and theological accounts of human nature? What are the differences and overlaps between Jewish and Christian theology?

For more detailed information on each course, please visit:

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