

# Religious Studies

The Department of Religious Studies at Brown University provides students with an understanding of diverse religious traditions, an exposure to a variety of approaches employed within the academic study of religion, as well as an opportunity to explore diverse intellectual, social-theoretical, and ethical issues that arise when one considers the various manifestation of religion in human affairs. While the graduate program in religious studies, with select areas of concentrated strength, is one of the finest in the world, the undergraduate program is broad and creative, serving a large number of students both inside and outside the concentration.

For additional information, please visit the department's website: <http://www.brown.edu/academics/religious-studies/>

## Religious Studies Concentration Requirements

The concentration in Religious Studies cultivates understanding of societies and cultures throughout the world by exploring religious thought and practice in various historical, geographic, and political contexts. Concentrators discover new ways of engaging the complex world in which they live by studying the public and private concerns that the study of religion highlights, including understandings of self, community, good, evil, authority, and inequality. Equipped with interdisciplinary skills of interpretation and analysis, students learn how political affairs, institutions, conflicts, and social spheres commonly recognized as secular have taken shape through the formation and transmission of religious beliefs, behaviors, values, and rituals. These skills include: close analysis of texts, images, artifacts, artistic works, and other social data; synthesis of research through written and verbal expression; interpretation of the past and present through multiple forms of evidence; and engagement with contemporary social issues and communities.

### 1. Basic Requirement

A concentration in Religious Studies includes a minimum of nine semester-long courses. Those nine courses include RELS 1000 (a seminar in theories and methods in the study of religion), RELS 1995 (the senior capstone seminar) and seven other concentration courses, which must satisfy the concentration's distribution requirements. Students who transfer to Brown or study abroad must complete at least five courses in Religious Studies at Brown.

### 2. Distribution of Introductory, Intermediate, and Advanced courses:

Among the seven concentration courses, no more than four courses can be at the introductory level (0001-0199). The plan of study must include at least two advanced-level courses (above 1000), in addition to RELS 1000 and RELS 1995.

### 3. Distribution of Focus and Approach:

Concentrators are encouraged to develop a broad understanding of religious activity as well as a deep understanding of particular forms of religion. A concentrator's course plan should include courses that examine a variety of geographic and cultural contexts, through a variety of approaches. The seven concentration courses (that is, the courses other than RELS 1000 and RELS 1995) must:

1. examine more than one religious tradition or culture;
2. reflect more than one primary approach to the study of religion (e.g., philosophical, historical, textual)
3. include at least one course designated as examining Race, Power, and Privilege (RPP). The RPP curricular program highlights courses that examine issues such as structural inequality, racial formations, disparities of power, and autocritique of academic disciplines. In addition to RELS 1000, many Religious Studies courses bear this designation.

To help students create a program of study that balances breadth of focus and approach with attention to the concentrator's particular

interests and objectives, concentrators will meet with the Director of Undergraduate Studies (or an approved advisor from within the department) when declaring the concentration to discuss their intellectual priorities and provisional course plans. (In the concentration declaration form, concentrators will describe their priorities and plans.) Through these initial discussions as well as advising meetings in subsequent semesters, concentrators and their advisors will work together to recognize and cultivate each concentrator's theoretical, interpretive, or thematic interests.

### 4. Courses in Other Departments

Courses cross-listed from other departments and courses listed in other departments but taught by Religious Studies faculty count toward the program of study. Up to two courses taught by faculty in other departments also can count toward the program (pending approval by the DUS) if relevant to the student's program of study. Students who transfer to Brown, study abroad, or otherwise petition to include Brown courses not cross-listed with Religious Studies must complete at least five courses in Religious Studies at Brown.

### 5. Capstone Project

In the final year of study, all concentrators enroll in the department's Senior Capstone Seminar. Concentrators undertake a capstone project that builds upon a student's previous work in the department and provides a culminating focus for a student's concentration. In extenuating circumstances, a student may petition the DUS to fulfill the capstone within an existing course (subject to approval by its instructor) or an independent study; a concentrator must still enroll in at least nine courses total. Concentrators also may satisfy the capstone requirement by undertaking an honors thesis. Whichever context concentrators choose to complete their capstone within, they will develop a plan for their project no later than the end of the spring semester of the junior year, in consultation with the Director of Undergraduate Studies and other faculty as appropriate.

### Honors Thesis (Optional)

A thesis is an opportunity for students to conduct extended independent research under the guidance of faculty. If a student chooses to write an honors thesis, in addition to completing the typical seven concentration courses (in addition to RELS 1000) the student will enroll in RELS 1995 during Fall and RELS 1999 during Spring semester of the senior year. Whether or not a student receives honors, RELS 1995 will serve as the student's capstone course. To be eligible to write a thesis, a student must have earned a grade point average of greater than 3.5 (A=4, B=3, C=2) on courses that count toward the concentration. Additionally, to be eligible for honors, concentrators may take no more than two of the concentration courses with the "S/NC" option, after declaring a Religious Studies concentration. (Note: if a student is philosophically committed to taking the majority of her or his courses at Brown as "S/NC," that student may petition the Department to waive this "S/NC" limit.) Writing the thesis is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for receiving Honors. In order to receive Honors, the student's thesis must earn an A from its two readers, and the student must have earned a grade point average of greater than 3.5 in the concentration and satisfied all other concentration requirements.

Jason Protass, Director of Undergraduate Studies

Tina Creamer, Departmental Administrator

## Contemplative Studies Concentration Requirements

The concentration in Contemplative Studies investigates the underlying philosophical, psychological, and scientific bases of human contemplative experience. Students pursue a "third person" academic approach drawn from the humanities and sciences to analyze the cultural, historical, and scientific underpinnings of contemplative experiences in religion, art, music, and literature. This is developed in combination with a "critical first-person" approach based in practical experience of contemplative techniques and methods to provide an integrated understanding of the role of contemplative thought and experience in societies and on the individuals who constitute them.

## Concentration Core (6 courses including the Senior Concentration Seminar)

COST 0100	Introduction to Contemplative Studies	1
Two introductory science courses addressing the biological, psychological, and neurological functioning of the human body/mind complex with health implications, and how contemplative practices affect it.		
Select one from the following list:		
BIOL 0200	The Foundation of Living Systems	1
CPSY 0200	Human Cognition	
CPSY 0500	Perception and Mind	
NEUR 0010	The Brain: An Introduction to Neuroscience	
Others with approval		
Select one from following list:		
COST 0200	Meditation and the Brain	1
COST 1020	Cognitive Neuroscience of Meditation	
Two humanities courses that present important themes that can emerge from bringing a Contemplative Studies perspective to the study of contemplative religious traditions and to the philosophical analysis of the key questions of human existence.		
ANTH 1240	Religion and Culture	2
CLAS 0990	Karma and Free Will: The Self in Indian Philosophy	
CLAS 1120G	The Idea of Self	
COST 0040	Great Contemplative Traditions of Asia	
or RELS 0040	Great Contemplative Traditions of Asia	
COST 0145	Karma, Rebirth and Liberation: Life and Death in South Asian Religions	
or RELS 0145	Karma, Rebirth and Liberation: Life and Death in South Asian Religions	
COST 0450	Stages of the Contemplative Path	
PHIL 0010	The Place of Persons	
PHIL 0015	Introduction to Philosophy	
PHIL 0510	Psychology and Philosophy of Happiness	
PHIL 1800	Philosophy of Mind	
PHIL 1825	Consciousness	
RELS 0056	Spiritual But Not Religious: Making Spirituality in America	
RELS 0065	On Being Human: Religious and Philosophical Conceptions of Self	
RELS 1370B	Philosophy of Mysticism	
Others with approval		
COST 1950	Senior Concentrators' Seminar	1
Students must complete six additional courses in either a Science or Humanities track.		
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>12</b>

## Track Requirements (6 additional courses Including a Capstone Course)

Students must complete either a Science or Humanities track in addition to the concentration core.

### Science Track

The Science track in Contemplative Studies gives concentrators a foundational understanding of the scientific methods used to investigate the biological, psychological, and neurological effects of contemplative practice and their potential implications on physical and mental health both for individuals and for the general public. Students will be taught how to critique current research as well as how to develop, operationalize, and test hypotheses related to contemplative practice. Students will become well-versed in how to study first-person reports related to

the *phenomenology* of contemplative experience as a foundation for formulating third-person tests of the effects of practice on brain function and behavior. The Contemplative Studies Science Track trains students to investigate these types of questions not only for academic scholarship, but also to provide a method of self-inquiry that can be used to augment any area of life.

**Five thematic science courses, including a Capstone Course, drawn primarily from BIOL, COST, NEUR, CLPS, and PHP, at least one of which must include laboratory work and two of which must be 1000-level; and one Statistics course for a total of six courses.** 5

The Capstone Course is intended to be a culmination of the students' concentration in which they will bring to bear what their interests have been in developing their focused work in the program. The Capstone course can be either:

a. A one semester Independent Reading and Research course, either COST 1910 or 1920 OR BIOL 1950 or 1960, depending on the semester; OR

b. A special project done within an existing Contemplative Studies core or related course at the 1000-level in which the student brings to bear the larger concerns of her concentration on a problem or issue within the course. It is expected that such Capstone research papers will be more substantial than a term paper.

BIOL 0280	Biochemistry (lab)
BIOL 0470	Genetics (lab)
BIOL 0530	Principles of Immunology
BIOL 0800	Principles of Physiology (lab)
BIOL 1880	Comparative Biology of the Vertebrates
CPSY 0700	Social Psychology
CPSY 0710	The Psychology and Philosophy of Happiness
CPSY 1193	Laboratory in Genes and Behavior
CPSY 1194	Sleep and Chronobiology Research
CPSY 1291	Computational Methods for Mind, Brain and Behavior
CPSY 1400	The Neural Bases of Cognition
CPSY 1490	Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging: Theory and Practice
CPSY 1492	Computational Cognitive Neuroscience
CPSY 1570	Perceptual Learning
CPSY 1590	Visualizing Vision
CPSY 1791	Laboratory in Social Cognition
COST 0200	Meditation and the Brain
COST 1020	Cognitive Neuroscience of Meditation
NEUR 1020	Principles of Neurobiology
NEUR 1030	Neural Systems
NEUR 1540	Neurobiology of Learning and Memory
NEUR 1600	Experimental Neurobiology
NEUR 1940I	Neural Correlates of Consciousness
PHP 1600	Obesity in the 21st Century: Causes, Consequences and Countermeasures
PHP 1920	Social Determinants of Health
Others with approval	
<b>One statistics course (others with approval)</b> 1	
APMA 0650	Introduction to Probability and Statistics
APMA 1650	Introduction to Probability and Statistics with Calculus
BIOL 0495	Statistical Analysis of Biological Data
CPSY 0900	Statistical Methods
PHP 1501	Essentials of Data Analysis

## Humanities Track

The Humanities track explores the origin and development of contemplative practices within specific religious, cultural, and historical contexts and gives students a foundation in the Philosophy of Mind relevant to the scientific study of contemplative practice. Students will choose a concentration program that includes three intermediate and three advanced seminars drawn from the two areas below. While it is recommended that students focus primarily on one of these two areas, the precise balance of the individual concentration program for each student will be established with the concentration advisor when the student applies to enter the concentration, normally in their fourth semester of study.

### Six courses, including a Capstone Course, from across the two areas below:

The Capstone Course is intended to be a culmination of the students' concentration in which they will bring to bear what their interests have been in developing their focused work in the program. The Capstone course can be either:

- A one semester Independent Reading and Research course, either COST 1910 or 1920 OR BIOL 1950 or 1960, depending on the semester; OR
- A special project done within an existing Contemplative Studies core or related course at the 1000-level in which the student brings to bear the larger concerns of her concentration on a problem or issue within the course. It is expected that such Capstone research papers will be more substantial than a term paper.

#### Contemplative Religious Traditions

CLAS 0210Y	The Philosophy of Classical Indian Yoga
CLAS 0820	Epics of India
CLAS 0850	Mythology of India
CLAS 0990	Karma and Free Will: The Self in Indian Philosophy
CLAS 0995	India's Classical Performing Arts
CLAS 1140	Classical Philosophy of India
CLAS 1160	Love and Devotion, Power and Poverty: India's Literary Classics
COST 0145	Karma, Rebirth and Liberation: Life and Death in South Asian Religions
COST 0535	Self Transformation and Transcendence in Later Daoist Contemplative Traditions
COST 0550	Tibetan Buddhism and the West
COST 1420	The Contemplative Foundations of Classical Daoism
EAST 1420	The Confucian Mind
RELS 0045	Buddhism and Death
RELS 0100	Buddhist Thought, Practice, and Society
RELS 0120	The Classical Chinese Philosophy of Life
RELS 1441	Zen Meditation in China, Korea, and Japan
RELS 0570	Science, Religion, and the Search for Happiness in Traditional Asian Thought
RELS 0580	Experiencing the Sacred: Embodiment and Aesthetics in South Asian Religions
RELS 1370B	Philosophy of Mysticism
RELS 1425	Buddhist Poetry
RELS 1442	The History, Philosophy, and Practice of Rinzai Zen Buddhism

#### The Philosophy of Mind

PHIL 0110	Ancient Greek Philosophy
PHIL 0510	Psychology and Philosophy of Happiness
PHIL 1230	Kant: The Critique of Pure Reason
PHIL 1240	Kant's Moral Philosophy
PHIL 1430	Moral Theories

PHIL 1705	Epistemology
PHIL 1735	Metaphysics
PHIL 1755	Philosophy of Science
PHIL 1800	Philosophy of Mind
UNIV 1520	The Shaping of World Views
Others with approval	

## Honors Requirement

Students with a minimum GPA of 3.5 in the concentration may apply for entrance into the Honors program in the middle of their sixth semester. To apply, students submit a proposal for a senior thesis project describing the work to be undertaken and its relevance to the field of Contemplative Studies, along with a copy of their academic transcript. Students accepted into Honors must complete the required Capstone seminar, UNIV 1010, and enroll in an additional semester of independent study in their advisor's department. Students must complete an Honors Thesis to the satisfaction of their advisor and present the results of their studies in formal talks or poster sessions open to all interested faculty and students.

## Religious Studies Graduate Program

The graduate program in Religious Studies at Brown is one of the finest in the nation. From among a large pool of highly qualified applicants, the department admits around four to six doctoral students a year. Our students receive six years of full funding; additional funding is possible but not guaranteed. The department's graduates have an excellent placement record, teaching in such institutions as Harvard, Stanford, Indiana University, University of California, Brooklyn College, Reed College, Haverford, University of Pennsylvania, and University of Wisconsin (Madison). Current graduate students have distinguished themselves by presenting papers at international conferences and earning recognition and support from prestigious external funding organizations.

We offer a fifth year Master's Degree for current Brown undergraduate students:

Eight graduate level courses are required, including RELS 2000A, "Method and Theory in the Study of Religion: Historicizing the Discipline" and RELS 2000B, "Method and Theory in the Study of Religion: Interpreting Religion." Students must demonstrate competency in modern research languages (usually French and/or German) as well as in whatever other languages are relevant to their research. A thesis is required.

We offer Ph.D. studies in four areas:

- Asian Religious Traditions (ART) (<http://www.brown.edu/academics/religious-studies/graduate/doctoral-tracks-phd/asian-religious-traditions-art/>)
- Islam, Society and Culture (ISC) (<https://www.brown.edu/academics/religious-studies/graduate/doctoral-tracks-phd/graduate-study-2/>)
- Religion and Critical Thought (RCT) (<http://www.brown.edu/academics/religious-studies/graduate/doctoral-tracks-phd/religion-and-critical-thought-rct/>)
- Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean (RAM) (<http://www.brown.edu/academics/religious-studies/graduate/doctoral-tracks-phd/religions-ancient-mediterranean-ram/>) (including Ancient Judaism, early Christianity, early Islam, and numerous others)

For more information on these programs, please click on the program link above.

<http://www.brown.edu/academics/gradschool/programs/religious-studies>  
(<http://www.brown.edu/academics/gradschool/programs/religious-studies/>)

For general questions about applications, how and when to apply, information for international applicants, application fees, waivers, and any other general inquiry please consult the Brown Graduate School's main information page, and especially the Application Information menu on the left-hand side of the page:

<https://www.brown.edu/academics/gradschool/application-information>  
(<https://www.brown.edu/academics/gradschool/application-information/>)

## Courses

### Contemplative Studies

#### **COST 0030. Sound, Song and Salvation in South Asia.**

Sound, Song and Salvation in South Asia explores both the theoretical formulations and the performative expressions that constitute the inextricable nexus of sound, music and religious practice in South Asia. By investigating fundamental concepts such as *nāda*, *rāga*, *bhakti* and *rasa*, this course historicizes the ongoing discourse on the soteriological underpinnings of several genres of South Asian music from Vedic chanting to Hindustani and Carnatic music traditions.

#### **COST 0032. Music and Meditation.**

Music and Meditation explores the contemplative nature of sonic experience from humanistic, artistic and scientific perspectives. By drawing from various traditions across both time and space, and by engaging with a variety of disciplinary methodologies from Contemplative Studies, Ethnomusicology, Religious Studies and Cognitive Science, we will seek to better understand how diverse religious communities have used music as a meditative tool, a mystical philosophy, a communal exercise, a ritual performance, and more. We will examine the philosophies of thinkers, scientists and musicians to investigate music making as both an instrument, and a goal, of contemplative practice.

#### **COST 0034. Dharma: A History of Classical Indian Civilization.**

Dharma—a Sanskrit word encompassing duty, ethics, law, and religion—is a common thread running through the cultures of premodern India. This course offers a history of Indian civilization from its origins up through the end of the classical period. Drawing on a rich array of textual, material, and expressive cultures, we trace the arc of human history on the subcontinent, paying special attention to the intersections of religion and politics. The sources at hand reveal the dynamic interplay between tradition and innovation, and attest to human efforts to redefine what it means to live a life according to dharma.

#### **COST 0035. Saints and Mystics of India.**

Saints and Mystics of India explores the rich variety of religious experience in India as expressed in the inspired poetic productions of several mystics through time. By critically listening to these powerful voices of the past, we will endeavor to understand how mystical poems from divergent Indian traditions exhibit multiple points of interaction, influence and convergence. Our investigation will draw on the spontaneous literary outpourings of several mystics including but not limited to: Nammalvar, Andal, Kabir, Mahadeviyakka, Nanak, Mira, Tukaram, Caitanya, Ramakrishna and Ramana Maharshi.

#### **COST 0036. Love and War in India.**

Love and War in India explores two fundamental cultural tropes that have significantly shaped the religious, literary, social and political life of South Asia. Building on the ancient Tamil conceptions of *aham* (love/interiority) and *puram* (war/exteriority), and the Sanskrit ideas of *kama* (desire), *dharma* (duty) and *ahimsa* (non-violence) we will investigate a variety of texts on religious devotion, ethical behavior and political theory in order to contextualize the concepts of love and war within multiple arenas of Indian social and cultural life.

#### **COST 0037. Sensing the Sacred: Sensory Culture in South Asian Religions.**

This course explores South Asian religions through the body, the senses, and aesthetics. Drawing on Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain traditions, and concentrating on embodied practices such as meditation, chanting, eating, sex, asceticism, ritual, possession, and performance, we will examine experiences of the sacred in India, past and present. How has sensory culture shaped lives, practices, and doctrines? What place do the senses have in South Asian traditions? Drawing on premodern law codes, erotic handbooks, and medical treatises; and integrating new media from ethnographic films to graphic novels, we will plunge into the rich sense-worlds of religions in South Asia.

#### **COST 0040. Great Contemplative Traditions of Asia.**

Introduction to the critical study of contemplative practices and experiences emphasizing philosophical and scientific analyses of works from the major Asian contemplative traditions of South and East Asian Buddhism and Chinese Daoism in historical context. Theoretical studies of mysticism and studies from the psychological sciences will be included. Additional weekly meditation lab section.

#### **COST 0067. Divine Drugs: Psychedelics, Religion, and Spirituality.**

From LSD to magic mushrooms, mescaline to ayahuasca, psychedelics are drugs that alter consciousness and perceptions of reality. This course investigates the central role that religion and spirituality have played in the long, tangled history of psychedelics, from colonial eradication of psychedelics as indigenous sacraments, to psychedelic modes of expanding consciousness in 1960s counterculture; from the moral panic around these substances as a tool of mind control, to their present scientific investigation as a panacea for mental health, addiction, and self-realization. Interweaving primary sources and scholarly accounts on psychedelics, our inquiry will use an interdisciplinary approach, blending religious studies, philology, anthropology, the history of science, and art history. To explore this varied terrain, we survey the history of divine drugs around the world, even as we ruminate on the wisdom and philosophy they have inspired over the ages.

#### **COST 0100. Introduction to Contemplative Studies.**

Introduction to the new field of Contemplative Studies focusing on identifying methods human beings have found, across cultures and across time, to concentrate, broaden and deepen conscious awareness. We will study what these methods and experiences entail, how to critically appraise them, how to experience them ourselves, and how they influence the development of empathy, health, and well-being. Prerequisites: None. Enrollment limit is 40.

Spr	COST0100	S01	26221	W	3:00-5:30(10)	(H. Roth)
Spr	COST0100	L01	26245	TTh	12:00-12:50	(H. Roth)

#### **COST 0120. The Classical Chinese Philosophy of Life.**

An introduction to the origins and early development of the indigenous religious thought of China from the oracle bone divination of the Shang Dynasty to the ethical philosophy of Confucianism and the cosmology and mysticism of Daoism. The course will seek to identify and elucidate the basic elements of the distinctive Chinese world view and demonstrate how they have shaped the nature of religious practice and experience and how they have been shaped by them. Works of interpretive scholarship will be used to supplement the primary texts in translation that will form the course. Optional lab section.

Fall	COST0120	S01	18212	TTh	1:00-2:20(06)	(L. Difiori)
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#### **COST 0140. Food, Religion and Politics in South Asia.**

Why study food? What can food tell us about religion, politics, and culture? Food in South Asia often shapes identity, social status, ritual purity, religious belonging, and political activism—the notion that you are what you eat has wide currency. Whatever form it takes, food embodies histories of migration, trade, empire, colonialism, and ethics. Through reading primary texts and ethnographic articles, watching films, and (of course) eating delicious food, we will explore the rich foodways of South Asia and their social, religious, and political ramifications.

#### **COST 0145. Karma, Rebirth and Liberation: Life and Death in South Asian Religions.**

Karma, Sanskrit for the "action" that makes up a human life, has been a central concern for the religious traditions of South Asia throughout their history. Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism share the belief that after death people are reborn, taking on lives according to their actions in lives previous. In these traditions, liberation from the cycle of rebirth becomes the ultimate goal of human existence. This course examines the ideas of karma, rebirth and liberation in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism from historical, cosmological, ritual, narrative, iconographic and theological points of view. We also look at these ideas in Western culture.

**COST 0200. Meditation and the Brain.**

This course provides an exploration and critique of psychological and neuroscientific research on meditation by situating the current applications of meditation in the West in the broader historical context of the development of Buddhism. In this course, we will critically evaluate the findings of scientific and clinical studies of meditation in terms of their methodological rigor, implicit assumptions, and biases. We will also study the transmission of Buddhism from Asia to the West in order to understand the influence of Buddhism norms and worldviews on contemporary applications of meditation. This course will also feature first-person experiential learning in select meditation practices.

**COST 0440. Contemplation and the Natural World.**

The course begins with an examination of contemplative practices in select Buddhist and Christian contexts and their associated goals, values, and worldviews. Particular emphasis will be placed on the significance of nature as a context for or object of contemplative practices. The course then turns to modern Western naturalists and nature writers to uncover the contemplative dimensions to their craft. Throughout, the course investigates how human relationships to the natural world are defined and influenced by the cognitive, perceptual, and emotional dimensions of human experience. The course includes contemplative practice labs and field trips to the natural world.

**COST 0450. Stages of the Contemplative Path.**

One common metaphor for human life and self-transformation is the journey or the path. Contemplative traditions have also employed this image, offering both concise and expansive maps of the stages of practice and anticipated end goals of the contemplative life. The study of path structures allow us to carefully compare the relationship between specific cognitive, affective, and somatic practices, their resultant states and traits of human experience, and the meaning and value ascribed to them in different historical and cultural contexts.

**COST 0480. Buddhist Ethical Theory.**

Discussions of ethical questions in the classical Buddhist philosophical literature focus not only on how one should act, but also – perhaps more fundamentally – on which habits of mind and heart should be cultivated. In this course, students will (1) gain an understanding of Buddhist approaches to ethical questions, (2) learn to compare Buddhist approaches to ethical questions and ethical theorizing with prominent approaches in Western philosophy, and (3) examine whether and how classical Buddhist approaches to ethical questions might improve on and move forward contemporary discussions in the philosophical literature on ethics, and in society more broadly.

**COST 0520. Tai Chi, Qigong, and Traditions of Energy Cultivation in China.**

In recent years Taijiquan (Tai Chi) and Qigong have become increasingly popular forms of exercise, alternative medicine and contemplative practice. This course aims to provide students with a foundation for understanding these practices through an exploration of their roots in Chinese medicine, philosophy and religion, as well as their more recent history in modern China and the rest of the world. In addition to studying historical and scholarly interpretations of these practices, students will also have the opportunity to learn basic Qigong and Taijiquan in weekly labs.

Fall COST0520 S01 18257 W 3:00-5:30(10) (L. Difiori)

**COST 0525. The History and Practice of Yoga in India and Beyond.**

From its roots in premodern India to its current popularity worldwide, yoga has a rich a complex history. As a practice of the mind, body, and spirit, yoga has taken many forms—meditation, chanting, breath control, postures—in order to achieve a range of goals: liberation from rebirth, supernatural powers, strength, pleasure, peace, wellness. As its reputation and commodification have increased, yoga has attracted deep interest, debate, and even controversy. In this course we will study yoga from its earliest texts to its status in the modern world, addressing its historical, religious, social, and political ramifications in many different contexts.

Fall COST0525 S01 18232 F 3:00-5:30(11) 'To Be Arranged'

**COST 0526. This Whole World is OM: Mantras in Indian Religions.**

A mantra is a syllable or formula used in ritual and meditation. Mantras are central to Indian religions—not only Hinduism, but also Jainism, Buddhism, Sufism, and Sikhism. Some mantras are made up of words and language—usually in Sanskrit—while others are sound fragments with no semantic meaning. The sacred syllable OM, now a global symbol of Eastern spirituality, exemplifies the power and authority of mantra. What are mantras? What do they accomplish? How do they shape identities, beliefs, and practices? Engaging with sacred utterance in various media, this course explores the world of mantras in India and beyond.

**COST 0535. Self Transformation and Transcendence in Later Daoist Contemplative Traditions.**

Who are we? How do we fit in the universe? Like many other systems of thought around the world, the Daoist tradition approached these questions both through the creation of texts, teachings, and theory, and through the development of at times extremely complex embodied contemplative practices. Starting from a perspective of a person not as a unitary, monolithic entity, but rather as a composite of energies and influences, these practices seek to harmonize, balance, and transform the person. This course will explore how the possibilities of personal transformation were expressed in Daoist contemplative literature from the first centuries CE up to the modern day. Contemplative practice labs will also offer students an opportunity to explore the ideas in the texts through direct experience. No prerequisites.

**COST 0550. Tibetan Buddhism and the West.**

This course traces the history and development of the various lineages of Tibetan Buddhism from its origins in Indian Buddhism through to encounters between Tibet and the West in the modern period. The course investigates the religious, political, and geographical conditions in Tibet that influenced the development of some of the unique characteristics of the lineages of Tibetan Buddhism. The course explores key doctrines, practices, institutions, and religious leaders of the major lineages, and delves into key events in the modern period, beginning with the age of missionaries and explorers and ending with the Cultural Revolution and subsequent diaspora.

**COST 0555. Zen: An Introduction.**

"Zen" has become a common trope in modern North American Culture but few people know what the term really means. This course will study Zen's origins in Indian Perfection of Wisdom teachings, follow its meanderings through China from the legend of Bodhidharma through the Five Houses of Chan, and chart its arrival and developments in Japan and eventual transplanting to the West. We will focus on several important Zen teachers: Huineng and Linji in China, Dōgen, Bankei and Hakuin in Japan. We will also explore the essential technique of kōan meditation and the practice of "just sitting."

**COST 0560. Contemplation and Social Action.**

The spiritual path is often called an inward journey. Practices like contemplation, renunciation, meditation and seclusion are often experienced in isolation with the mind drawn towards the self. This may seem counterproductive to social action, almost selfish, but exemplary spiritual aspirants from across time and space have demonstrated how contemplation can be a powerful medium of social change. By exploring key historical movements (Indian Independence, Abolitionism, Civil Rights) and transformational figures who have embodied the ideals of engaged contemplation (Gautama Buddha, Mohandas K. Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Thich Nhat Hanh and the Dalai Lama), this course seeks to elucidate relevant ways in which contemplative philosophies and practices can challenge, critique, and ultimately transform the world in which we live by way of peaceful, inclusive and socially engaged means.

**COST 0650. Psychology and Philosophy of Happiness (PHIL 0650).**

Interested students must register for PHIL 0650.

**COST 0725. Psychedelics in Religion, Science, and Healing.**

Psychedelics are in the midst of a renaissance of public attention. Though used for millennia in indigenous ceremonies and religious rites, it is only in the last century that they have played a role in Western science, medicine, and culture. Literally “manifesting the soul,” psychedelics have been both stigmatized and hyped, remaining illegal or controversial in many contemporary contexts even as they are marketed as the “next big thing” in mental health care. This course compares and contrasts the cultural and ontological contexts for psychedelic use from indigenous and religious ceremonies to contemporary scientific clinical trials and neuroscience. Along the way, pressing questions within the psychedelic field will be investigated from an interdisciplinary lens and with an appreciation for history and context.

Spr COST0725 S01 26227 TTh 10:30-11:50(09) (N. Canby)

**COST 0855. The Bhagavad Gītā (CLAS 0855).**

Interested students must register for CLAS 0855.

**COST 0990. Concepts of the Self in Classical Indian Literature (CLAS 0990).**

Interested students must register for CLAS 0990.

**COST 1020. Cognitive Neuroscience of Meditation.**

Buddhist philosophy describes a model as to how the mind works. Neuroscientists have begun to study the impact of meditation on brain structure and function, often using Buddhist philosophy to guide their hypotheses. We will review neuroscientific literature and discuss how it relates to Buddhist philosophy, using the four foundations of mindfulness as the primary framework. The course will be a mixture of lecture, discussion of a primary scientific paper that is assigned each week, and presentations by students. Pre-Requisites: NEUR0010 or Declared Contemplative Studies Concentration.

Spr COST1020 S01 26342 T 4:00-6:30(16) 'To Be Arranged'

**COST 1030. The Contemplative Science of Compassion.**

This course will focus on the historical foundations and science of contemplative-based compassion trainings, with a particular focus on Buddhist psychology. We will critically examine clinical and social science literature while reviewing potential mental health (e.g., depression, posttraumatic stress disorder) and social benefits (e.g., “re-humanization,” reducing intergroup bias) as well as drawbacks and limitations, adverse effects, controversies, and important unasked questions and perspectives. Alongside teachings from the Compassion Cultivation Training, developed by Dr. Thupten Jinpa, a historical and equity lens will be integrated throughout. We will draw from literatures in contemplative science, critical theory, history, psychological and neurosciences, public health, and religious studies.

Fall COST1030 S01 18428 T 4:00-6:30(07) (T. Braun)

**COST 1080. Meditation, Mindfulness and Health (PHP 1880).**

Interested students must register for PHP 1880.

Fall COST1080 S01 19262 Arranged 'To Be Arranged'

**COST 1082. Me, Myself, and I: Exploring Senses of Self from a Multidisciplinary Perspective.**

Human beings have long puzzled over how precisely to conceptualize and understand what and how it is that we are. Questions about the nature of the self have informed the speculations of philosophy, the soteriologies of religion, the trajectories of self-cultivation in contemplative traditions, and the therapeutics of psychology. Recently, cognitive science and phenomenology have developed new explanations for how multiple senses of self shape lived experience and give rise to various self-concepts. Students in this course will engage with dimensions of selfhood that we often take for granted by studying senses of self from multidisciplinary and cross-cultural perspectives.

Fall COST1082 S01 18224 Th 4:00-6:30(04) (N. Canby)

**COST 1090. The Craving Mind.**

We are creatures of habit. Driven by biological processes set up to help us survive, our minds are constantly craving experiences and substances—from smartphones to romance to alcohol—and this craving leads to habit formation. This course will explore the behavioral and mental processes that foster craving and consequent habit formation, the impact these have on individual and societal health, and how we can “hack” our own neurobiological reward circuitry using practices such as mindfulness, to foster greater health and wellbeing.

**COST 1420. The Contemplative Foundations of Classical Daoism.**

Introduction to classical Daoism, one of the two indigenous religions of China, through the history, philosophy, and contemplative practices found in its foundational works the Daodejing and the Zhuangzi. Through careful study of these texts, we will attempt to reconstruct the intellectual and experiential elements on which this tradition was based.

Spr COST1420 S01 26224 Th 4:00-6:30(17) (H. Roth)

Spr COST1420 L01 26249 TTh 12:00-12:50 (H. Roth)

**COST 1442. The History, Philosophy, and Practice of Rinzai Zen Buddhism.**

An advanced seminar that considers Rinzai Zen Buddhism from origins in India to developments in China to its transmission to Japan and eventual transplanting to the West. Course will examine the nature of cultural and historical influences on the practices and adaptations through the Asian and American contexts, including the secular pedagogy of Contemplative Studies. Pre-Requisite: Any of the following courses: COST 0040/RELS 0040; RELS 0045; RELS 0100; COST 0100; COST/RELS 0125; COST/RELS 0145; COST/RELS 0555; RELS 1425; RELS 1440. Meditation lab: T/Th at 11:00- 11:50 PM.

**COST 1520. Consciousness (PHIL 1520).**

Interested students must register for PHIL 1520.

**COST 1700A. The History, Philosophy, and Practice of Rinzai Zen: Zen Master Hakuin Ekaku.**

Explores Japanese Rinzai Zen Buddhist tradition by focusing on its seminal figure, Hakuin Ekaku (1686-1769). Examines his biography, core practices, and key philosophy by looking at selections from his essential autobiographical and philosophical writings as well as his artwork. Focuses on the following aspects of Hakuin's importance in the history of Japanese Buddhism: Hakuin as reviver of Rinzai Zen, especially kōan practice; Hakuin as a meditation master; Hakuin as talented artist; Hakuin as social critic. Readings will be primary sources in translation.

**COST 1705A. Principles and Practices of Contemplative Studies.**

Advanced study of the distinctive methods of the field of Contemplative Studies that includes third-person, second-person, and critical first-person perspectives. Will focus on the study of meditative practices in their cultural contexts and on essential scientific research on their nature and effects. Prerequisite: COST 0100 or Permission of Instructor. Meditation Lab to be scheduled

**COST 1870. Neuroethics (SCSO 1700P).**

Interested students must register for SCSO 1700P.

**COST 1885. Measuring Mindfulness.**

Recently, the cover of Time magazine declared a “mindful revolution” due to its popularity and growing body of research suggesting that mindfulness may help to treat a number of health-related problems from general stress to anxiety to addiction. However, little is known about the underlying mechanisms of how it works. This course will investigate the many ways that mindfulness is measured (e.g. self-report, behavior, EEG, fMRI etc.), and use these as a doorway for our own experiential exploration of what mindfulness is for ourselves.

**COST 1890. The Craving Mind (PHP 1890).**

Interested students must register for PHP 1890.

Fall COST1890 S01 19263 Arranged 'To Be Arranged'

**COST 1910. Individual Study Project – Semester 1.**

COST Individual Study Project Semester 1, directed reading and research arranged with individual faculty. Section numbers vary by instructor. Please check Banner for the correct section number and CRN to use when registering for this course.

**COST 1920. Individual Study Project - Semester 2.**

COST Individual Study Project Semester 2, directed reading and research arranged with individual faculty. Section numbers vary by instructor. Please check Banner for the correct section number and CRN to use when registering for this course.

**COST 1950. Senior Concentrators' Seminar.**

A selection of topical readings that will enable concentrators in the Sciences and Humanities Tracks of the concentration to synthesize their knowledge of the field of Contemplative Studies and its current principal issues. Students will also share ideas and methods regarding the research and writing of their Capstone Projects, which typically they will be working on concurrently via their other course.

Spr COST1950 S01 26220 M 3:00-5:30(13) (L. Difiori)

**COST 1980. Thesis Preparation.**

Required of seniors in the honors program, (second semester of two-semester sequence that includes COST 1950 in first semester). Open to others only by permission of the Director. Section numbers vary by instructor. Please check Banner for the correct section number and CRN to use when registering for this course.

**Religious Studies****RELS 0010. Happiness and the Pursuit of the Good Life.**

What is happiness, and how does it relate to the "good life," or a life well-lived? This is an age-old question, and in this course we will investigate religious and philosophical answers alongside insights drawn from modern positive psychology. A major goal of the course is to give you intellectual tools that will help you to construct a meaningful life. Areas of study will include value determination; gratitude; status and wealth; and mindfulness.

Spr RELS0010 S01 26138 TTh 2:30-3:50(11) (M. Satlow)

Spr RELS0010 C01 26175 W 6:00-6:30 'To Be Arranged'

Spr RELS0010 C02 26176 W 6:00-6:50 'To Be Arranged'

Spr RELS0010 C03 26177 Th 12:00-12:50 'To Be Arranged'

Spr RELS0010 C04 26178 Th 12:00-12:50 'To Be Arranged'

Spr RELS0010 C05 26179 M 6:00-6:50 'To Be Arranged'

Spr RELS0010 C06 26180 T 12:00-12:50 'To Be Arranged'

**RELS 0011. Faith and Violence.**

Explores the relationship between religious texts and rhetoric and violence. How do sacred texts promote or discourage violence, and how have later religious communities understood (and continue to understand) these texts? While the course will focus mainly on Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, occasional Asian examples will be used. No prerequisites.

**RELS 0012. The Religious Lives of Everyday People.**

For centuries, scholars have looked to religious institutions, theological doctrines, and sacred texts to explain religion's form and function in culture and society. And while this approach has enabled scholars to neatly prescribe what counts as religious, it's also caused them to ignore the ways people's daily faith practices make a mess of this work. Drawing on sub-fields in religious studies, anthropology, and sociology, this course explores how formal ideas of religion expand when confronted with the normality of everyday life. From cooking and talking to prayer and devotion, the "religious" and "non-religious" things people do tell us a lot about how religion animates and is animated by lived experience, and how porous the boundary is between the "sacred" and "profane".

Spr RELS0012 S01 26139 TTh 10:30-11:50(09) (K. Street)

**RELS 0014. Jesus.**

Who was, and is, Jesus? Who decides? What can we know about the historical Jesus and who he became? In this course, we will begin with the earliest accounts of Jesus as recounted in the canonical gospels and outside it (e.g., the Gospel of Judas). Then we will turn to the many ways that later generations of Christians (both heretical and orthodox) and non-Christians depicted Jesus, especially in art, literature, theology, politics, and entertainment. We will read canonical and non-canonical Christian texts, Jewish accounts of Jesus, the Quran, modern Christian apologetic literature, and analyze films like the Life of Brian.

Spr RELS0014 S01 26140 MWF 10:00-10:50(03) (J. Han)

**RELS 0015. Sacred Stories.**

What do stories do? How do stories underlie who we are, where we are, or why our world is as it is? Ancient religious stories have been formative for western culture in all its expressions, lasting into our modern, secularized times. They underlie how we think about life, death, suffering, or joy. They sustain foundational categories of power, gender, sexuality, race and class. How do they work? This course will examine narrativity – the telling, sharing, and contesting of stories – as a means for constructing and maintaining religious identity, community, and world view. Jewish, Christian, and Muslim materials. Mini-lectures; in-class discussion.

**RELS 0021. Inequality in the Ancient World.**

This course examines various forms of inequality in the ancient world as well as the range of responses to it by those who resist it and reject it. The axes of inequality we shall investigate vary from culture to culture, but often include the privileging of male/masculine over female/feminine, native over foreign, whole-bodied over "defective" or "blemished," old over young, ritually pure over polluted, holy over common or profane, rich over poor, free over enslaved, honored over shamed, or the couplings of men and women over same-sex couplings. The course is comparative, with a primary focus on texts and artifacts from ancient Israel and coastal West Asia, Babylon and Assyria, Greece and Rome. Texts we will study include various passages from the Hebrew Bible (Christian Old Testament), the Epic of Gilgamesh, Hammurabi's Laws, the Middle Assyrian Laws, the Iliad, and

Fall RELS0021 S01 18144 W 3:00-5:30(10) (S. Olyan)

**RELS 0022. Introduction to the New Testament.**

The New Testament, the product of a Jewish social movement two thousand years ago, remains one of the most interesting and important collections of texts in history. This course explores the origins of these texts in their social context, and through close readings, the development of the various theologies contained within them. Comparisons will also be made to ancient Jewish, Greek, and Roman texts and the non-canonical Christian texts that were contemporary with the New Testament. In addition, the modern appropriation of the "Jesus paradigm" in film and pop culture will be discussed.

**RELS 0025. Wealth: Religious Approaches.**

This course will survey religious approaches to the acquisition and use of wealth: How do religious thinkers understand the notion of ownership and private property? Is the fact of ownership of significant possessions seen as a moral good or an impediment to the spiritual life? Are there better or worse ways to acquire wealth? To spend it? The course will focus primarily on Judaism and Christianity, although examples from Islam and perhaps eastern religions will be brought in as appropriate. Topics to be covered will include religious understandings of poverty, charity, finance, and the link between religion and capitalism.

**RELS 0030. Sound, Song and Salvation in South Asia.**

Sound, Song and Salvation in South Asia explores both the theoretical formulations and the performative expressions that constitute the inextricable nexus of sound, music and religious practice in South Asia. By investigating fundamental concepts such as nāda, rāga, bhakti and rasa, this course historicizes the ongoing discourse on the soteriological underpinnings of several genres of South Asian music from Vedic chanting to Hindustani and Carnatic music traditions.

**RELS 0032. Music and Meditation.**

Music and Meditation explores the contemplative nature of sonic experience from humanistic, artistic and scientific perspectives. By drawing from various traditions across both time and space, and by engaging with a variety of disciplinary methodologies from Contemplative Studies, Ethnomusicology, Religious Studies and Cognitive Science, we will seek to better understand how diverse religious communities have used music as a meditative tool, a mystical philosophy, a communal exercise, a ritual performance, and more. We will examine the philosophies of thinkers, scientists and musicians to investigate music making as both an instrument, and a goal, of contemplative practice.

**RELS 0034. Dharma: A History of Classical Indian Civilization.**

Dharma—a Sanskrit word encompassing duty, ethics, law, and religion—is a common thread running through the cultures of premodern India. This course offers a history of Indian civilization from its origins up through the end of the classical period. Drawing on a rich array of textual, material, and expressive cultures, we trace the arc of human history on the subcontinent, paying special attention to the intersections of religion and politics. The sources at hand reveal the dynamic interplay between tradition and innovation, and attest to human efforts to redefine what it means to live a life according to dharma.

**RELS 0035. Saints and Mystics of India.**

Saints and Mystics of India explores the rich variety of religious experience in India as expressed in the inspired poetic productions of several mystics through time. By critically listening to these powerful voices of the past, we will endeavor to understand how mystical poems from divergent Indian traditions exhibit multiple points of interaction, influence and convergence. Our investigation will draw on the spontaneous literary outpourings of several mystics including but not limited to: Nammalvar, Andal, Kabir, Mahadeviyakka, Nanak, Mira, Tukaram, Caitanya, Ramakrishna and Ramana Maharshi.

**RELS 0036. Love and War in India.**

Love and War in India explores two fundamental cultural tropes that have significantly shaped the religious, literary, social and political life of South Asia. Building on the ancient Tamil conceptions of *aham* (love/interiority) and *puram* (war/exteriority), and the Sanskrit ideas of *kama* (desire), *dharma* (duty) and *ahimsa* (non-violence) we will investigate a variety of texts on religious devotion, ethical behavior and political theory in order to contextualize the concepts of love and war within multiple arenas of Indian social and cultural life.

**RELS 0037. Sensing the Sacred: Sensory Culture in South Asian Religions.**

This course explores South Asian religions through the body, the senses, and aesthetics. Drawing on Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain traditions, and concentrating on embodied practices such as meditation, chanting, eating, sex, asceticism, ritual, possession, and performance, we will examine experiences of the sacred in India, past and present. How has sensory culture shaped lives, practices, and doctrines? What place do the senses have in South Asian traditions? Drawing on premodern law codes, erotic handbooks, and medical treatises; and integrating new media from ethnographic films to graphic novels, we will plunge into the rich sense-worlds of religions in South Asia.

**RELS 0040. Great Contemplative Traditions of Asia.**

Introduction to the critical study of contemplative practices and experiences emphasizing philosophical and scientific analyses of works from the major Asian contemplative traditions of South and East Asian Buddhism and Chinese Daoism in historical context. Theoretical studies of mysticism and studies from the psychological sciences will be included. Additional weekly meditation lab section.

**RELS 0045. Buddhism and Death.**

Death is universal but seldom discussed in contemporary culture. In this class we will address how the varieties of Buddhist religion represent and understand dying, death, and the afterlife. Using images, films, and texts, we will ask, How should we die? How does death influence the living? Is there an afterlife? What should be done with dead bodies? The class will move between theories and practices, and past and current events. Coming to terms with these diverse materials may reveal to us some of our own assumptions about death, dying, and the afterlife.

**RELS 0050. Love: The Concept and Practice.**

A study of love (in classical and modern texts and in film) that provides a window into a host of religious, philosophical, and ethical issues. Topics include the potential conflict between divine and human love, between transcendent and earthly love, and the nature of friendship, romance, marriage, and love at the crossroads. Although the scope is love in the West, the *Kamasutra* and other texts furnish a comparative component. All students must register for one conference in addition to the primary section.

**RELS 0052. Experiencing Powerlessness, Power, and Religion in the Ancient World.**

We often speak of power and powerlessness but how are these things experienced? By what means can we say someone experiences power? What are the nuances of that experience? Is powerlessness merely a lack of something or does the experience of powerlessness have a more complex interaction with its subjects? In this class we will be investigating the effects of experiencing power and powerlessness in the context of religion in the ancient world. We will be analyzing the means by which people acted upon others and the ways in which those actions affected both themselves and their subjects.

**RELS 0055. Modern Problems of Belief.**

Some say it is impossible to be both a modern person and a religious person. What are the assumptions behind this claim? And what is it about the modern (or postmodern) era that, according to some, has made religion difficult to believe in? These questions will be discussed as we explore the ways religion has been understood in Western culture from the Enlightenment to the present. We will read such influential thinkers as Hume, Kant, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, Durkheim, Buber, and Woody Allen. Each figure has left a decisive mark on the way we think about religion.

**RELS 0056. Spiritual But Not Religious: Making Spirituality in America.**

When people call themselves "spiritual but not religious," what does that mean? This course answers that question by exploring many of the diverse ideas, practices, and desires that the idea of spirituality has included. To see how spirituality has saturated American society, students will examine phenomena such as yoga, hip hop, ghosts, self-help gurus, countercultures, and protest movements. By studying the making of spirituality in the past and present, this course will enable students to recognize how Americans have made sense of their own lives and institutional attachments through shifting concepts of race, pluralism, science, capitalism, secularism, and more.

**RELS 0058. Christianity and Culture.**

The aim of this introductory level lecture course is to interrogate the relationship between culture and religion. The foundation for our study will be exemplary works by major cultural critics and theologians since the early 19th century. Our focus will be on forms of cultural criticism put forward by interdisciplinary thinkers that attempted to gain a better grasp of both modern social crises and sources of communal joy. The course shall rehearse debates in cultural studies, theology, postmodernism, and politics.

**RELS 0060. Judaic Studies Introductory Cross Listings.****RELS 0060A. Believers, Agnostics, and Atheists in Contemporary Fiction and Memoirs (JUDS 0050A).**

Interested students must register for JUDS 0050A.

**RELS 0060B. Foreigners, Refugees, and the Ethics of Minority (JUDS 0061).**

Interested students must register for JUDS 0061.

**RELS 0060C. The Bible and Moral Debate (JUDS 0060).**

Interested students must register for JUDS 0060.

**RELS 0060D. Antisemitism: A History (JUDS 0063).**

Interested students must register for JUDS 0063.

**RELS 0060E. Angels and Demons Past and Present (JUDS 0064).**

Interested students must register for JUDS 0064.

**RELS 0060F. Ancient Israelite and Jewish Narrative and Artistic Image (JUDS 0065).**

Interested students must register for JUDS 0065.

**RELS 0060G. Hope, Despair, and Longing in Jewish Thought (JUDS 0050K).**

Interested students must register for JUDS 0050K.



**RELS 0065. On Being Human: Religious and Philosophical Conceptions of Self.**

An examination of classic and contemporary views on the nature of human existence. Central themes include human freedom, the relation between reason and emotion, and the significance of personal history and memory. We also ask how conceptions of who we are shape views about how we should live. Sources include religious and philosophical texts as well as recent films.

**RELS 0067. Divine Drugs: Psychedelics, Religion, and Spirituality.**

From LSD to magic mushrooms, mescaline to ayahuasca, psychedelics are drugs that alter consciousness and perceptions of reality. This course investigates the central role that religion and spirituality have played in the long, tangled history of psychedelics, from colonial eradication of psychedelics as indigenous sacraments, to psychedelic modes of expanding consciousness in 1960s counterculture; from the moral panic around these substances as a tool of mind control, to their present scientific investigation as a panacea for mental health, addiction, and self-realization. Interweaving primary sources and scholarly accounts on psychedelics, our inquiry will use an interdisciplinary approach, blending religious studies, philology, anthropology, the history of science, and art history. To explore this varied terrain, we survey the history of divine drugs around the world, even as we ruminate on the wisdom and philosophy they have inspired over the ages.

**RELS 0068. Religion and Torture.**

The debates about the moral and legal status of torture have acquired a new urgency since 9/11. People are now questioning the consensus of law and human rights declarations that torture is never permissible. Indeed, some argue that in extreme cases, it may be obligatory to torture a captive for information that could save many lives. This class explores the recent debates about torture from secular and religious perspectives. It also deals with more general themes related to torture: What are the nature and effects of pain? Are human beings sacred, and does sacredness involve a prohibition against torture?

**RELS 0072. Asian Classics.**

An introduction to the most influential religious writings of South and East Asia. These "Great Books of the East" depict the values, ritual concerns, symbols, and philosophical speculations of the major religious communities of ancient and medieval India, Tibet, China, and Japan. Emphasis will be on key ideas with an eye to their broader significance. Readings may be drawn from the Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Analects, Dao De Jing, Journey to the West, and Life of Milarepa, among others. No prerequisites.

**RELS 0080. Japan: Nature, Ritual and the Arts.**

This course is an introduction to Japanese culture and aesthetics as represented in pre-modern literature, drama, tea practices, landscape and the fine arts. Recurring themes include Japanese attitudes toward the natural world; traditional conceptions of beauty; and the function of ritual in artistic cultivation. The course is designed for students who have no previous exposure to Japanese studies at the college level; no prerequisites.

Fall RELS0080 S01 18146 TTh 1:00-2:20(06) (J. Sawada)

**RELS 0082. Japan's Floating World.**

An introduction to visual, literary, and dramatic expressions of Japan's moral and aesthetic values in the early modern period (17th-19th centuries). We will seek to identify recurring intellectual and cultural patterns, as illustrated in woodblock prints, Kabuki, puppet theatre, and popular fiction, with an eye to connections with later popular culture. Course materials are primary readings in translation, secondary scholarship, and audiovisual works. No previous knowledge of Japan or Japanese language is expected.

**RELS 0085A. Exodus: Freedom in the Modern Black and Jewish Religious Imaginations.**

A symbol of the journey from exile and captivity, slavery and oppression to liberation and freedom, the story of the Biblical Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt has helped many communities articulate narratives of suffering and redemption. In this class, we will examine Black and Jewish confrontations with catastrophic conditions in modernity and try to understand the distinctive and yet paralleled ways the Exodus narrative has helped these communities undertake projects of racial, ethnic, and collective struggle for freedom and cultural self-transformation.

**RELS 0085B. Blues People: Topics in African American Religion and Culture.**

African American religious practices and cultural expressions have been a significant force in American culture and a sustaining force for African-Americans. Some have argued there is nothing distinctive about African-American cultures, others contend that African American religion is merely a response and a regurgitation of European forms of Christianity, while others have erected strict boundaries about what does and does not constitute black culture and religion. This introductory course will investigate what constitutes African American religion and culture, the social and political impact of African American religion and culture, and their relationship, among other things.

**RELS 0085C. Religion, Spirituality, and Ecology in the West.**

We live in an age of immense and intersecting environmental problems. Has Western philosophical and religious thought contributed to them? If so, how? What theoretical and practical tools – of these traditions or others – can be used to resolve these problems? This course will address these broad questions by exploring classical and contemporary representations of nature and the place of human beings within it. Special emphasis will be given to the relation between nature and culture; the relation between nature and technology; the relation between nature and gender; our ethical duties to the natural environment; and the normativity of nature.

**RELS 0085D. Religion and Place: An Introduction.**

The intersection of religion and place is a complex and fundamental aspect of the human experience. It is a theme that scholars and thinkers have explored for a long time, yet it still holds a powerful sway over our understanding of the world. In this course, we will delve into the intricacies of this intersection, drawing on a range of critical works and perspectives to gain a deeper understanding of its significance. By examining critical works from environmental humanities, social sciences, legal studies, and indigenous studies, we will gain a greater appreciation for the diversity and complexity of how religion and place intersect. We will explore the roles of religion and place in creating and maintaining social structures, shaping our relationships with the natural world, and providing a framework for understanding our place in the cosmos.

**RELS 0085E. Sex Wars: Religion and Gender in the Public Sphere.**

Religious traditions have always had a lot to say about sex, gender, and sexuality—be it eunuchs under Roman rule or reproductive autonomy in the US today. Many heated and long-standing public debates take place at this very intersection. While we tend to imagine religion as inherently sex negative, religious communities have diverse and diverging approaches to sex and sexuality. In this course, we turn to "Sex Wars" in the public imagination, including but not limited to: abortion, gay marriage, sodomy, contraception, trans life, child and sexual abuse, consent, and the AIDS crisis. Using resources from religious studies and gender studies, we will investigate the way such public debates appear and recur, deepening our understanding of the relationship between religion, gender, and public discourse, and developing tools to both research on and intervene in these ongoing debates.

**RELS 0085F. The Christian Right.**

An introductory cultural and historical study of conservative Christianity in the United States. The Christian Right has played a defining role in American and global politics since at least the 1940s. What is the history of this movement? Who are conservative Christians, and how are they distinct from other kinds of religious actors? What, exactly, do they believe—about feminist and LGBT rights, healthcare, education, civil rights, religious liberty, and capitalism? This course explores these questions and more, with an emphasis on intersectional feminist and critical ethnic studies analysis of the themes and histories at hand. Students will analyze primary sources from the movement, complete a field visit to a thematic site of their choosing, participate in biweekly film screenings, and do a final “unessay” project related to their specific areas of interest.

**RELS 0086. Religion and Movement Politics.**

This course considers the relationship between religion and social movements in democratic societies. Political theorists often invoke social movements and the Civil Rights Movement, in particular, as examples of salutary political uses of religion. But what does ‘religion’ mean in these debates? What is its relationship to race and gender? And under what conditions – and to whom – do religions and social movements pose problems for democratic politics? This course explores these questions using a range of theoretical sources as well as historical, ethnographic and personal accounts of twentieth- and twenty-first-century social movements.

**RELS 0087. Religion in America.**

From Native American traditions and Puritan migrations in the seventeenth century to Barack Obama's “crypto-Islam” and debates over gay rights in the twenty-first: American history is religious history. For centuries, religion has shaped how Americans have carried out their everyday lives, interacted with others, understood themselves, and perceived the wider world. Focusing primarily on religious life in the United States, this course invites students to explore the relationship between religion and society in North America by addressing key questions and critical tensions surrounding such issues as race, ethnicity, science, gender, capitalism, pluralism, sexuality, and secularism.

**RELS 0088. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.**

A survey of the history and major beliefs and rituals of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, with special attention to issues of contemporary concern. Will serve also to introduce basic methods for studying religion in an academic context.

**RELS 0089. Jews and Muslims: Their Contacts through the Ages.**

What are the contours and major themes of interactions between Jews and Muslims from the 7th century to the present? What can we learn from this history about ways in which minority and majority communities develop—socially, intellectually, and so on—in relationship to one another, in varying political and demographic circumstances? This course explores the topic of Jewish–Muslim relations from such angles as religion, literature, philosophy, politics, economics, and social life. Some of the contexts and themes we will examine are the following: attitudes toward Jews and Judaism in earliest Islam; the Judeo-Arabic “symbiosis” of the Middle Ages; social developments in the Jewish–Muslim relationship in the Near East and Europe in the early modern period; Jews and Muslims as ethnic and religious minorities in Western countries today; and Islamic life in the State of Israel.

**RELS 0090A. Women and Gender in Ancient Religions.**

What was religion like for women in the ancient Mediterranean world? What experiences, emotions, and constraints characterized women's religious lives? What was public and what was private? What were the family issues involved? How were religions gendered? Were there major differences between religions that included goddesses and priestesses, and those that did not? Were notions of gender fixed or fluid? Could they enable religious freedoms for women? We will explore these and other questions through a consideration of religions Greek, Roman, Jewish, and Christian between roughly 500 BCE and 500 CE, with a focus on the Roman Empire. Discussion

Fall RELS0090A S01 18147 W 3:00-5:30(10) (S. Harvey)

**RELS 0090B. Indigenous Ecologies.**

A collaborative exploration of (mainly North American) Indigenous traditions, practices, and beliefs in relation to ecology. We will learn about a variety of Indigenous environmental perspectives and practices as expressed by Indigenous authors, elders, film producers, and community members. Topics will include: Indigenous knowledge systems, environmental activism, sacred lands, the importance of place, kinship relations to the human and more-than-human, climate change adaptation, storytelling, tribal and food sovereignty, and how settler colonialism and dispossession have affected Indigenous populations in their relation to the environment. Additionally, we will learn about Brown University's relation to local Indigenous lands and populations, and how Indigenous research methods can inform the Brown community of scholars. Our community of learning will discuss broad topics that relate to life and learning at the University, and will offer guidance and support for students' first year experience at Brown.

Fall RELS0090B S01 18148 M 3:00-5:30(03) (M. Cladis)

**RELS 0090E. Faith and Violence.**

Explores the relationship between religious texts and rhetoric and violence. How do sacred texts promote or discourage violence, and how have later religious communities understood (and continue to understand) these texts? While the course will focus mainly on Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, occasional Asian examples will be used. No prerequisites. Reserved for First Year students. Enrollment limited to 19. Instructor permission required.

**RELS 0090F. Friendship in the Ancient World.**

How have ancient societies understood friendship, and how do ancient ideas about friendship differ from or resemble those of contemporary Westerners? This seminar, a comparative investigation of the ways in which friendship has been represented in the Hebrew Bible, Mesopotamian literature, and Greco-Roman texts, will address these and other questions through study of materials such as the Epic of Gilgamesh, the Iliad, the Book of Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel (on Jonathan and David), the Wisdom of Ben Sira (Sirach), and Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics. Enrollment limited to 19 first year students.

**RELS 0090I. Radical Romanticism: Politics, Ecology, and Religion.**

We will endeavor to create an intimate community of learning as we jointly explore political, environmental, and religious aspects of Romanticism (especially British Romanticism). It has become commonplace to think of Romanticism as nostalgic notions of the pastoral or narcissistic reports of the individual's private gaze on the sublime. In contrast to this approach, we will focus on the radical political and environmental perspectives embedded within Romantic religious and poetic sensibilities. In the process, we will reflect on how this Romantic heritage can serve as a contemporary public resource for the cultivation of interrelated environmental and democratic beliefs and practices.

**RELS 0090J. Death and Afterlife in the Biblical Tradition.**

A close analysis of the development of ideas about death and the afterlife in the Hebrew Bible and in the literatures of Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity. Topics: life and death in Israel and ancient West Asia; the abode of the dead and its denizens; from Sheol to Heaven, Hell, and the final judgment; religious specialists, rituals, and the literature of death: necromancy; burial and mourning rites; cults of the dead ancestor. No prerequisites. Enrollment limited to 19 first year students.

**RELS 0090K. Christmas in America.**

This course explores how Christmas became a religious, consumer, and social extravaganza. Every year, many Americans devote several months to preparing for and recovering from Christmas. Most participate as Christians, but others participate despite other religious identities. Yet Christmas has not always loomed so large. Through encounters with such phenomena as sacred stories, consumer practices, and legal controversies, this course invites students to ask how and why Christmas became an important event. By the end of the course, students not only will recognize how religion and culture take shape together but also will appreciate how popular practices develop.

**RELS 0090L. Pilgrimage and Quest.**

An exploration of pilgrimage broadly conceived, encompassing devotional visits to revered sites, personal travel quests, and literary or imagined journeys. Emphasis on the ritual dimension of specific pilgrimages across cultures, as well as the transformative effects of the travel process itself. Some consideration of relations between pilgrimage and tourism. Materials include historical and anthropological records as well as biographical, fictionalized, and poetic accounts.

**RELS 0090M. Religion Violence and Media.**

This first-year seminar studies the phenomenon and representation of religious violence, with a focus on the critical study of contemporary media. and the nature and roots of militant Islamist violence in the contemporary world. We will learn about historical contexts, theoretical structures, and comparative case studies and explore self-styled religious movements, including the rhetoric of martyrdom, domestic (US) and international terrorism, and social media.

**RELS 0090N. What is Islam? Rethinking Centers and Peripheries in Religious Tradition.**

Islam is a major religion with over a billion adherents living in different parts of the world. One can easily speak of "Islam" as an all-encompassing religious tradition with a scripture and a fixed set of beliefs shared by many a follower, but Islamic/Islamicate history and heritage is a tapestry of multiple patterns and colors. In this class we will survey Islamic history and traditions by reading and discussing both primary and secondary sources. We will question what we might mean when we say something, or someone is "Islamic". We will examine how Muslims elaborated on their religious corpus to build political, ethical, legal, and religious institutions. We will also discuss how gender, sexuality, race, and class functioned in the building of these institutions.

**RELS 0095A. Islam from the Ground Up.**

Current events and popular culture alike direct our attention to the centrality of discourse on the Islamic world. In this course, we examine the historical origins and development of Islamic religion and practice in light of the sources and communities that shaped them in a variety of contexts. The goals of this course are to learn the fundamentals of: how people have studied the Qur'an, the concept and development of "Shariah", sectarianism, approaches to gender and sexuality, and Muslim theology, philosophy, and mysticism in pre-modern and contemporary Muslim life.

**RELS 0096. The Imaginary Lives of Muslims.**

How have Muslims understood the natural and social world that forms the backdrop for human lives? We will use this question to chart a variety of Islamic perspectives pertaining to thought and action. Topics include: worldviews contained in the Quran and other early Islamic materials; formal cosmologies that reflect continuity with late antique ideas; mystical thought pertaining to Sufis and Shi'is; reflection on politics and ethics; impact of modern science; and contemporary perspectives concerning the environment, gender, race, and class. No prerequisites or presumption of prior knowledge regarding the subject.

**RELS 0100. Buddhist Thought, Practice, and Society.**

From its beginnings to the 21st century. Principal teachings and practices, institutional and social forms, and artistic and iconographical expressions.

**RELS 0105. Judaism.**

Surveys the major practices, traditions, and beliefs of the Jews, with an emphasis on modern Jewish communities. How does a Jewish community shape its practices and beliefs against its own specific historical circumstances to create a coherent and meaningful religious system? What is "Judaism," and how do scholars of religion explain and interpret it?

**RELS 0110. Christians.**

A historical survey of Christianity from its foundations to the present, tracing its development into three main branches: Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant. Readings from a variety of Christian "classics" accompany the survey, pursuing the theme of how-in different times, places, and circumstances-Christians have understood their relations to the divine and to the world.

**RELS 0120. The Classical Chinese Philosophy of Life.**

An introduction to the origins and early development of the indigenous religious thought of China from the oracle bone divination of the Shang Dynasty to the ethical philosophy of Confucianism and the cosmology and mysticism of Daoism. The course will seek to identify and elucidate the basic elements of the distinctive Chinese world view and demonstrate how they have shaped the nature of religious practice and experience and how they have been shaped by them. Works of interpretive scholarship will be used to supplement the primary texts in translation that will form the course. Optional lab section.

Fall RELS0120 S01 18149 TTh 1:00-2:20(06) (L. Diffiori)

**RELS 0140. Food, Religion and Politics in South Asia.**

Why study food? What can food tell us about religion, politics, and culture? Food in South Asia often shapes identity, social status, ritual purity, religious belonging, and political activism—the notion that you are what you eat has wide currency. Whatever form it takes, food embodies histories of migration, trade, empire, colonialism, and ethics. Through reading primary texts and ethnographic articles, watching films, and (of course) eating delicious food, we will explore the rich foodways of South Asia and their social, religious, and political ramifications.

**RELS 0145. Karma, Rebirth and Liberation: Life and Death in South Asian Religions.**

Karma, Sanskrit for the "action" that makes up a human life, has been a central concern for the religious traditions of South Asia throughout their history. Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism share the belief that after death people are reborn, taking on lives according to their actions in lives previous. In these traditions, liberation from the cycle of rebirth becomes the ultimate goal of human existence. This course examines the ideas of karma, rebirth and liberation in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism from historical, cosmological, ritual, narrative, iconographic and theological points of view. We also look at these ideas in Western culture.

**RELS 0150. Islam Unveiled.**

In this course, the historical origins and development of Islam will be studied in light of the sources and communities that shaped it. Themes to be explored include the central doctrines of Islam as derived from the Qur'an and traditions (sunna), the development of Islamic law (shari'ah) the Shi'i alternative, the growth of Muslim theology, philosophy, and mysticism (Sufism), and controversial issues among contemporary Muslims.

**RELS 0195. Gender in Early Jewish and Christian Narratives.**

Many of the favorite narratives of Jews and Christians in the ancient period (for this course, about 400 BCE to 300 CE) featured women characters or emphasized issues of gender: Esther, Judith, and Susanna; Mary Magdalene and other gospel women, or Thecla, the perhaps legendary companion of Paul. Both Jewish and Christian texts used gender to explore new ways of constructing heroic women and men that either re-inscribed or challenged traditional roles. This seminar takes up a close reading of narrative texts, compared also with wisdom texts (Proverbs, Ben Sira, Wisdom of Solomon, Avot).

**RELS 0200A. Christianity and Economic Inequality.**

In the face of the vast, increasing economic inequality, this sophomore seminar interrogates the role of religious institutions and individuals. Do our religious institutions sustain or challenge economic inequality, and how? We will attempt to answer this question with a focus on three types of texts: classical texts that shaped 20th Century U.S. Christian consciousness (e.g., Weber, Niebuhr, and Ayn Rand); contemporary works that analyze the effects of economic inequality on the social fabric (e.g., Stiglitz, Freeland, Wilkinson/Pickett); and texts that clarify the vital roles some contemporary religious movements are playing in supporting economic inequality (e.g., Bowler, Walton, Byrne).

**RELS 0200B. Ethics and Politics of Intelligibility and Otherness.**

This course will explore philosophical and religious ideas about intelligibility and otherness, with a close eye to how these ideas have significant value for identifying, understanding, and addressing how we relate to and engage with others – especially “others” not like “us” – in modern democratic societies. Toward these ends, the course will address several interconnected questions. Are we intelligible to each other, despite profound differences of belief, practice, identity, and experience? Or do these deeply ingrained differences engender a radical unintelligibility between persons and between persons and nature? How our views about the intelligibility and otherness of other persons and of nature impact the way we construe ethical and political dialogue, contestation, conflict, and change? How can philosophical and religious ideas, traditions, and practices aid in cultivating mutual intelligibility across difference? What is the relation between intelligibility, otherness, and power?

**RELS 0210A. Religion, Politics, and Culture in America (HIST 0253).** Interested students must register for HIST 0253.

**RELS 0210B. Pilgrimage Art and Architecture in the Middle Ages (HIAA 0432).**

Interested students must register for HIAA 0432.

**RELS 0240. Judaism and Christianity in Conflict.**

Explores the tense relationship between Judaism and Christianity from antiquity to the present, with an emphasis on theological issues and polemics. Readings include selections from the New Testament and early Christian writers on Jews and Judaism, Jewish writings on Jesus and Christianity, transcripts of medieval debates, philosophical broadsides, parodies, and contemporary theological documents (e.g., Vatican II).

**RELS 0260. Religion Gone Wild: Spirituality and the Environment.**

A study of the dynamic relation between religion and “nature” or the more-than-human world. Religion, in this course, includes forms of religion within and outside the bounds of conventional religious traditions. In this course, then, religion includes Buddhism, Christianity, and Aboriginal religion, but also ecofeminism, nature literature, and environmentalism. Topics in this study of religion, ethics, and environmental humanities include: religious depictions of humans in relation to “nature” and the more-than-human; the contribution of religions to environmental degradation and environmental health; religion and environmental justice; and North American and Australian indigenous eco-spiritual perspectives.

**RELS 0265. Philosophy as Spiritual Practice.**

From antiquity to the present, the philosopher has been concerned with cultivating artful ways of living through intentional “spiritual exercises.” This seminar offers a historical survey of ancient and modern approaches to philosophy as a way of life and the spiritual exercises these approaches entail. Special attention will be given to ideas about the self and human flourishing, the nature of freedom and responsibility, the question of democratic community and tradition, the question of God and religion, and the ethical status of nature. We will carefully consider how these ideas intersect with various spiritual practices and exercises, including walking, storytelling, cultivating the senses, paying attention, cultivating virtue and character, stoic contemplative exercises, ritual practice, work, prayer, forgiveness, and love. Finally, we will try out some of these exercises to gain a deeper understanding of these different philosophical approaches to life.

**RELS 0290D. Islamic Sexualities.**

In this course we examine gender and sexuality in a range Muslim cultures past and present, as well the ways in which Islam is imagined (in and against Orientalist scholarship) in relationship to gender and sexuality. In addition to topics such as Islamic law, the representation of women in the Quran, and gender and family issues in the life of the Prophet Muhammad, we will also explore scholarship on how constructions of gender and sexuality shape the representation of Islam and Muslims in a variety of contexts. Students will learn to engage with and complicate key terms including “masculinity,” “cultural difference,” “women’s and LGBT rights,” and “modernity/civilization” that are widely, and often uncritically, deployed in the study of Islamic life and culture.

**RELS 0290E. Engaged Buddhism.**

“Engaged Buddhism” is a term used to describe social activism that applies Buddhist insight and ethics. This course will examine the historical background of engaged Buddhism, explore its central concepts, analyze it theoretically, and look at practical applications. Since many engaged Buddhist movements employ meditation, we will also study, first hand, the effects of meditation on prosocial attitudes in the “Meditation Labs” that are integral to the pedagogy of the course. Preference given to students who have taken RELS 0500 or UNIV 0540 or who have prior coursework in Buddhism. Additional weekly meditation lab section.

**RELS 0290H. Defense Against the Dark Arts in the Ancient World.**

Alongside their Jewish and Pagan neighbors, ancient Christians sought to control and defend themselves against unseen forces teeming around them. They bound powerful angels to their will and harnessed the spirits of the recently deceased to activate their spells. Though none found the Elixir of Life, they left behind spells, recipes, and talismans as evidence of their quest to master spirits both hostile and sympathetic. This course will interrogate Christian and non-Christian conceptions of magic, its relationship with “religion” and “philosophy,” contextualize Christian magical practices alongside their neighbors, and conclude by examining the reception of “magic” into the modern West.

**RELS 0320. Israelite Religion.**

The origins and development of ancient Israel’s religious beliefs, rituals and cultic institutions will be considered from an historical and contextual (i.e., wider West Asian) perspective. Topics include method in reconstructing religion; myth, epic and history; the identity of Yahweh, Israel’s national god; covenant; Yahweh and other deities (monotheism and monotheism; angels; a consort of Yahweh?); temples, their iconography and ideologies; festivals and sacrifice; purity; death and afterlife; religious specialists (priests, prophets, mediums, professional mourners). No prerequisites.

**RELS 0323. Great Jewish Books.**

A survey of classic Jewish texts, from the Bible to modern literature. Each text will be discussed from the perspective of both its own historical and social context and its engagement with earlier ones. Attention will be paid on how these authors address perennial issues of human concern and how their answers are shaped by their experience as Jews.

**RELS 0325. How the Bible Became Holy.**

No book in human history has exercised as much influence as the Bible. Over the past 2,000 years, people have killed and died for the Bible, and it continues to exercise a powerful if contested role in modern politics. Yet how did it achieve this power? This course will trace the development of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) from its origins in ancient Israel to its development about five hundred years later as a foundational text of both Judaism and Christianity. The focus will be on how Jews and early Christians throughout antiquity understood and ascribed authority to the Bible.

**RELS 0340. Kabbalah: An Introduction to Jewish Mysticism.**

In the 12th and 13th centuries, new ways of approaching Judaism sprung up in France and Spain that would come to be known as “kabbalah.” These new approaches expressed aspirations for mystical illumination and elaborated vast mythological narratives about divine and demonic beings. The kabbalists radically departed from the then-conventional understandings of Judaism, particularly those of philosophers like Maimonides. However, they also claimed to find their new worldviews in the tradition’s most ancient texts. This course will introduce students to kabbalah’s founding period, focusing on primary texts (in translation), especially the Zohar, the magnum opus of classical kabbalah.

**RELS 0410. Ancient Christianity: Jesus to Muhammad.**

The communal struggles, personal rivalries, and theological conflicts that shaped Christianity in its formative centuries: heresy and orthodoxy, hierarchy and charisma, gender and class, persecution and martyrdom, paganism and classical tradition, creeds and councils, asceticism and the body, church and state, eastern and western Christianity. Focused in the 2nd through 6th centuries A.D.

**RELS 0415. Ancient Christian Culture.**

How did the Jesus movement that originated in a backwater of the Roman Empire become the Empire's dominant religion? What was it like to be a Christian in a world full of religions, cults and philosophical traditions, and of diverse social and cultural identities? An introduction to the history of early Christianity, and to the ancient Christian culture through the exploration of selected topics by means of textual, material and epigraphic evidence. Multiple Christianities; literacy and orality; visual culture; the episcopal authority; wealth and poverty; asceticism and monasticism; hagiography and the cult of saints; sacred landscape and pilgrimage; women, gender; burial.

**RELS 0420. Sacred Bodies.**

How did ancient Christians understand embodied holiness? What did the bodies of saints demonstrate or reveal? Different notions of what makes a body "sacred" have abounded in Christian history, and continue to inflect our broad cultural thinking about gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and health. This course will explore those constructions and their malleability through the reading of ancient Christian hagiography (stories about saints). We will ask whether and how multiple notions of sacred bodies might be visible in Christian imagination. The course is organized around three broad categories of holy bodies: the heroic body, the desiring body, and the performing body. Seminar format. WRIT

Spr RELS0420 S01 26141 W 3:00-5:30(10) (S. Harvey)

**RELS 0430. Sacred Stories.**

Ancient Christian narrative imagination and the formation of Western culture. Emphasis will be on the ancient stories that accompanied the spread and "triumph" of Christianity, but attention will also be given to how these themes and images have prevailed in western history. Biblical legends, heroes and heroines, saints and sinners, the demonized Religious Other.

**RELS 0500. The Theory and Practice of Buddhist Meditation.**

Examines the theory and practice of Buddhist meditation in historical and modern contexts. Traces this practice from its origins in 6th-century B.C.E. India to its transmission through Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand and on to modern insight meditation movements in the West. Students will examine selected textual sources and explore how Buddhist meditation is practiced today, both as an individual practice and as part of broader social institutions. Additional weekly meditation lab section.

**RELS 0505. Big Screen Buddha.**

"Big Screen Buddha" examines representations of Buddhism(s) in diverse Asian cinemas. Classic, contemporary, documentary, and experimental films include Thai ghost stories, a Tibetan comedy, and portrayals of Japanese priests as sound artists. We will survey major traditions of Buddhism, and closely examine local lived traditions. Students will confront problematic representations of race and ethnicity as well as misogyny. The existence of death, sex, and drugs will arise in discussion. Additional topics include sound and Buddhists experimenting with making the medium sacred. Background in the study of Buddhism or film not required, though preferred. Lecture with screening plus discussion each week.

**RELS 0510. Confucian Ethics.**

An examination of Confucian moral thinking as contained in the *Analects*, *Mengzi*, *Xunzi*, and *Records of Rituals*. Issues considered include the absence of a concept of transcendence, the relationship between moral and ritual norms, and moral activity as an aesthetic and spiritual discipline, against the background of Western patterns of moral thought. Prerequisite: Previous work in ethics or Chinese studies.

**RELS 0520. Tai Chi, Qigong, and Traditions of Energy Cultivation in China.**

In recent years Taijiquan (Tai Chi) and Qigong have become increasingly popular forms of exercise, alternative medicine and contemplative practice. This course aims to provide students with a foundation for understanding these practices through an exploration of their roots in Chinese medicine, philosophy and religion, as well as their more recent history in modern China and the rest of the world. In addition to studying historical and scholarly interpretations of these practices, students will also have the opportunity to learn basic Qigong and Taijiquan in weekly labs.

Fall RELS0520 S01 18151 W 3:00-5:30(10) (L. Difiori)

**RELS 0525. The History and Practice of Yoga in India and Beyond.**

From its roots in premodern India to its current popularity worldwide, yoga has a rich a complex history. As a practice of the mind, body, and spirit, yoga has taken many forms—meditation, chanting, breath control, postures—in order to achieve a range of goals: liberation from rebirth, supernatural powers, strength, pleasure, peace, wellness. As its reputation and commodification have increased, yoga has attracted deep interest, debate, and even controversy. In this course we will study yoga from its earliest texts to its status in the modern world, addressing its historical, religious, social, and political ramifications in many different contexts.

Fall RELS0525 S01 18152 F 3:00-5:30(11) 'To Be Arranged'

**RELS 0526. This Whole World is OM: Mantras in Indian Religions.**

A mantra is a syllable or formula used in ritual and meditation. Mantras are central to Indian religions—not only Hinduism, but also Jainism, Buddhism, Sufism, and Sikhism. Some mantras are made up of words and language—usually in Sanskrit—while others are sound fragments with no semantic meaning. The sacred syllable OM, now a global symbol of Eastern spirituality, exemplifies the power and authority of mantra. What are mantras? What do they accomplish? How do they shape identities, beliefs, and practices? Engaging with sacred utterance in various media, this course explores the world of mantras in India and beyond.

**RELS 0530. Laozi and the Daodejing.**

Introduction to classical Daoism, one of the two indigenous religions of China, through the history, philosophy, and contemplative practices found in its famous foundational work, the Daodejing. Through careful study of this text and its many early iterations, including the recently discovered manuscript versions from Ma-wang-tui and from Guodian and early commentaries, we will attempt to reconstruct the intellectual and experiential elements on which this tradition was based. Limit: 10.

**RELS 0535. Self Transformation and Transcendence in Later Daoist Contemplative Traditions.**

Who are we? How do we fit in the universe? Like many other systems of thought around the world, the Daoist tradition approached these questions both through the creation of texts, teachings, and theory, and through the development of at times extremely complex embodied contemplative practices. Starting from a perspective of a person not as a unitary, monolithic entity, but rather as a composite of energies and influences, these practices seek to harmonize, balance, and transform the person. This course will explore how the possibilities of personal transformation were expressed in Daoist contemplative literature from the first centuries CE up to the modern day. Contemplative practice labs will also offer students an opportunity to explore the ideas in the texts through direct experience. No prerequisites.

**RELS 0545. Confucianism and Its Critics.**

This course confronts the changing historical phenomenon we call "Confucianism" on its own terms, as represented by its advocates, as well as from the perspective of its interlocutors and critics. It is an opportunity to become familiar not only with the Confucian canon and its main commentarial traditions, which undergirded education in East Asia into the nineteenth century, but also with the ways in which these ideas were rejected, adjusted, and reconfigured in early Daoist discussions, Neo-Confucian debates with Buddhists, and modern disputes over their socioeconomic, political, and/or gender impact. Readings are drawn from primary Chinese, Korean, and Japanese texts in translation, and from modern interpretations of Confucianism and its legacy. The course format is primarily discussion and short lecture. No prerequisites. Counts for concentration credit in East Asian Studies and Religious Studies.

**RELS 0550. Tibetan Buddhism and the West.**

This course traces the history and development of the various lineages of Tibetan Buddhism from its origins in Indian Buddhism through to encounters between Tibet and the West in the modern period. The course investigates the religious, political, and geographical conditions in Tibet that influenced the development of some of the unique characteristics of the lineages of Tibetan Buddhism. The course explores key doctrines, practices, institutions, and religious leaders of the major lineages, and delves into key events in the modern period, beginning with the age of missionaries and explorers and ending with the Cultural Revolution and subsequent diaspora.

**RELS 0555. Zen: An Introduction.**

"Zen" has become a common trope in modern North American Culture but few people know what the term really means. This course will study Zen's origins in Indian Perfection of Wisdom teachings, follow its meanderings through China from the legend of Bodhidharma through the Five Houses of Chan, and chart its arrival and developments in Japan and eventual transplanting to the West. We will focus on several important Zen teachers: Huineng and Linji in China, Dōgen, Bankei and Hakuin in Japan. We will also explore the essential technique of kōan meditation and the practice of "just sitting."

**RELS 0560. Contemplation and Social Action.**

The spiritual path is often called an inward journey. Practices like contemplation, renunciation, meditation and seclusion are often experienced in isolation with the mind drawn towards the self. This may seem counterproductive to social action, almost selfish, but exemplary spiritual aspirants from across time and space have demonstrated how contemplation can be a powerful medium of social change. By exploring key historical movements (Indian Independence, Abolitionism, Civil Rights) and transformational figures who have embodied the ideals of engaged contemplation (Gautama Buddha, Mohandas K. Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Thich Nhat Hanh and the Dalai Lama), this course seeks to elucidate relevant ways in which contemplative philosophies and practices can challenge, critique, and ultimately transform the world in which we live by way of peaceful, inclusive and socially engaged means.

**RELS 0570. Science, Religion, and the Search for Happiness in Traditional Asian Thought.**

The search for true happiness is as relevant today as it was 2500 years ago in South and East Asia. Is it attained through sense pleasures or through spiritual satisfaction? Attained through self-indulgence or through self-denial? Can you be completely and truly satisfied in life if you flourish while others suffer? What are the roles of compassion for self and others and of mindfulness and meditation in the creation of a life of genuine happiness? This course will explore these issues through readings in the Buddhist, Confucian, and Daoist traditions and via recent scientific research on mindfulness, meditation and compassion.

**RELS 0580. Experiencing the Sacred: Embodiment and Aesthetics in South Asian Religions.**

This course explores South Asian religions through the body, aesthetics, and the senses, with a focus on Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain traditions. Concentrating on embodied practices like meditation, chanting, eating, sex, asceticism, ritual, possession, and performance, we will examine experiences of the sacred past and present. How have sensory and material cultures shaped lives, practices, and doctrines? What placed does the pursuit (or denial) of sensual pleasure have in South Asian religious cultures? This course will draw on texts as various as sermons of the Buddha and the Kamasutra, and integrating a range of media from ethnographic films to graphic novels.

**RELS 0580A. Anticolonial Perspectives from South Asia (SAST0740).** Interested students must register for SAST 0740.**RELS 0600A. Islam Today: Religion and Culture in the Modern Middle East and Beyond.**

Lupe Fiasco, Al-Jazeera News, the so-called Arab Spring, surreal sectarianism and reality shows produced by Ryan Seacrest: Contemporary Islam is now having an impact on modern culture in unprecedented ways. Islam is often said to be the fastest growing religion in the world, and is second to Christianity in all the countries of Western Europe. In this class we will study the contemporary life, culture and thought of Muslims in the Middle East and beyond, including America and Europe.

**RELS 0600B. Islam in America.**

Lupe Fiasco, the Al-Jazeera News Network, and Mos Def: from films to fiction, poetry and music, contemporary Islam is having an impact on modern culture in unprecedented ways. Islam is often said to be the fastest growing religion in America, and in this class we will study the contemporary life, culture and thought of Muslims in the US. We will begin with exploring Muslims in the US from its beginnings, as a result of the Atlantic slave trade, through the civil rights movement and the Nation of Islam, Malcolm X and mainstream Sunnis, and conclude with the multicultural present.

**RELS 0600C. Radical Islam (?).**

One of the most controversial issues in contemporary political discourse is the question of radicalization and its relationship to Islamic religion and practice. In this course, we will explore the phenomenon of religious radicalization, and explore its relationship to a number of institutions and issues, including but not limited to: religious texts, terrorism, global politics, war, immigration, nationalism, and law.

**RELS 0600D. Black & Brown Islam in America.**

This class is a survey of Black and Brown Islam in America, in which we explore the contemporary life, culture and thought of Muslims in the US-context. We will begin with exploring Muslim life in the US from its beginnings in the Atlantic slave trade, to the civil rights movement and the Nation of Islam, to Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam, and conclude the course with the multicultural present, Donald trump's presidency and continuing the War on Terror in all its political complexity. There are no prerequisites or previous knowledge of Islam required to take this course.

**RELS 0600E. Islamic Modernities: Religion, Culture, and Power.**

In this class, we will explore the culture and practice of contemporary Islam in a variety of geographical contexts. From the United States to South Asia, from Europe to the Middle East, we will look at how Islam is practiced, discursively shaped, and represented across a variety of media. We will also introduce and learn about major phenomena including orientalism, colonialism modernity, and the post-modern--what do these terms mean, and why are they relevant to understanding the Islamic world? No previous study of Islam or religious studies is required for this course, and it is open to all undergraduates.

**RELS 0600F. Contestations Within Political Islam.**

9/11 catapulted figures such as Osama bin Laden as the face of Political Islam. But there is a longer, complex history behind the relationship between Islam, modern politics, and violence. Examining thinkers such as Sayyid Qutb, Hassan Al-Bana, Zaynab Al-Ghazali, Ayatollah Khomeini, Ali Shariati, Murtaza Mutahhari, and Abul Ala Maududi, this seminar will explore the diversity of intellectual and political positions within Political Islam. We will discuss how such figures employed conceptions of state, nationalism, secularism, democracy, law, gender, and minority rights to articulate multiple futures for national and global Muslim communities and influenced a variety of popular struggles as well as armed movements. As such, we will think through their intellectual, political, and hermeneutical departures from more traditionalist understandings as a critique of the modern condition and examine the strengths as well as limitations of their ideas and receptions.

Fall	RELS0600F S01	18156	T	4:00-6:30(07)	(S. Yaseen)
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**RELS 0640. Dying To Be With God: Jihad, Past and Present.**

This course will examine the concepts of martyrdom and jihad, past and present. We will begin with a comparison of Jewish, Christian, and secular "martyrdom, but focus extensively on the concept and evolution of jihad and jihad ideology in Islam, asking: How are war and martyrdom presented in the sacred texts of religious traditions? Historically, how have religious people idealized and problematized the martyr in different ways? In what ways have modern religious revivalism, geopolitical conflict and nationalism changed how people appropriate martyrdom and jihad today? Enrollment is contingent on attendance on the first day of class.

**RELS 0700A. Great Jewish Books (JUDS 0681).**

Interested students must register for JUDS 0681.

**RELS 0700B. The Bible as Literature (JUDS 0830).**

Interested students must register for JUDS 0830.

**RELS 0700C. Race, Religion, and the Secular (JUDS 0603).**

Interested students must register for JUDS 0603.

**RELS 0700D. How the Bible became Holy (JUDS 0682).**

Interested students must register for JUDS 0682.

**RELS 0700E. The Language of Religious Faith (JUDS 0820).**

Interested students must register for RELS 0700E.

**RELS 0700F. War and Peace in the Hebrew Bible and Its Environment (JUDS 0670).**

Interested students must register for JUDS 0670.

**RELS 0700G. Gender in Early Jewish and Christian Texts (JUDS 0606).**

Interested students must register for JUDS 0606.

**RELS 0700H. The Parting of the Ways?: Questioning Jewish/Christian Difference (JUDS 0608).**

Interested students must register for JUDS 0608.

**RELS 0725. Psychedelics in Religion, Science, and Healing.**

Psychedelics are in the midst of a renaissance of public attention. Though used for millennia in indigenous ceremonies and religious rites, it is only in the last century that they have played a role in Western science, medicine, and culture. Literally “manifesting the soul,” psychedelics have been both stigmatized and hyped, remaining illegal or controversial in many contemporary contexts even as they are marketed as the “next big thing” in mental health care. This course compares and contrasts the cultural and ontological contexts for psychedelic use from indigenous and religious ceremonies to contemporary scientific clinical trials and neuroscience. Along the way, pressing questions within the psychedelic field will be investigated from an interdisciplinary lens and with an appreciation for history and context.

Spr RELS0725 S01 26142 TTh 10:30-11:50(09) (N. Canby)

**RELS 0750. Law and Religion.**

In our arguably “post-secular” age, conflicts over the relationship between religion and law have again moved to the forefront of international debate. In a multicultural and globalized world, such conflicts often provoke contestation over the very possibility of universal definitions of either “religion” or “law,” let alone their proper relationship. Our interdisciplinary inquiries on these questions will include concrete legal disputes in domestic and international courts; theoretical debates over the construction of “religion” in fields such as anthropology, religious studies, and philosophy; and historiographical controversies about the relationship between “secularization” and sovereignty, particularly in light of the legacy of colonialism.

**RELS 0795. Religion and Morality in Modern Philosophy.**

This course explores the relationship between religion and morality in the context of modern philosophy. This period, roughly the nineteenth century, spurred tremendous creativity in thinking about the relation between religion and morality – by defenders of religion as well as its critics – that continues to dominate philosophical reflection today. Through critical analysis of primary texts, students will explore key philosophical debates surrounding the foundation of moral values, the power and limits of human reason, the relation between reason and religion, the concept of the secular, the nature of transcendence, and the implications of God’s existence or non-existence on ethical systems and ideas about social progress. Considerable attention will also be given to the contemporary legacy of modern philosophical thinking on religion and morality. Readings include selections from Immanuel Kant, Hermann Cohen, G.W.F. Hegel, Soren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, William James, Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida, and Iris Murdoch. The course will be run as a seminar with heavy discussion and writing components.

**RELS 0800. Death: Religion, Philosophy, Law.**

Profound meditations on human life always confront its perhaps most baffling feature: death. We will study human mortality from a variety of perspectives, highlighting the powerful implications of death for the living. These include religious perspectives, with their paradox of the quest of mortal beings for the infinite, as well as of life after death; philosophical perspectives, with their insistence on confronting death for an authentic life; legal perspectives, with their enforcement of the intent of the deceased in the lives of survivors. That “our little life is rounded with a sleep” (Shakespeare) will be our central mystery.

**RELS 0810. Conservatives vs. Liberals: Religion and Identity in America.**

This course explores how Americans have cultivated, articulated, and contested religious and cultural identities during the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries. Identifying and interrogating apparent oppositions between religious conservatives and liberals, students will consider whether and why such oppositions have developed and persisted. Throughout the seminar, students will engage varied theoretical, historical, and thematic approaches to the study of religious identity, evaluating how attention to such issues as politics, ideology, gender, and class illumine the ways in which people come to understand themselves and others.

**RELS 0815. Sacred Economy: Religion and Capitalism in the United States.**

This course explores the ongoing relationship between religion and capitalism in the United States and the wider world. Although systems of economic organization and activity often seem to function as natural and secular spheres of social life, they meanwhile rely upon social priorities, intellectual presumptions, and cultural practices that continually have taken shape through the realm of religion. By exploring histories of capitalism from slavery to Silicon Valley, students will recognize how successive economic forms have drawn authority from religious ideas, initiatives, and individuals.

**RELS 0817. Race, Religion, and the Secular.**

The history of race is intertwined with religion. From the Spanish Inquisition to the trans-Atlantic slave trade, to the European construction of a secular “humanism” in the Enlightenment, the relationship between Christianity and Whiteness has entailed dehumanizing consequences for non-Christian, racialized Others. This class will explore the relationship between religion, nationalism, secularism, and racism by drawing on theological, historical, sociological, theoretical and literary texts. This class will outline a genealogy of both racialization and secularization to understand how “whiteness” is bound up with the history of Christianity and secular power in liberal democracies, as well as how racial logics rely upon and redeploy the language of religion in purportedly secular sites of social systemic discriminations. Topics will include racialization and religio-racial formation; Anti-Blackness, Anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia; nationalism and populism; citizenship, civic religion, and public morality.

**RELS 0820. African American Religious Strategies: Martin and Malcolm.**

MLK, Jr. and Malcolm X are two iconic figures in the pantheon of black religious leadership. Their profoundly influential ideas about justice, freedom, democracy and racism, along with their activist strategies and personal biographies have generated extraordinary interest over the past 50 years. Despite this, the rich and complex tradition out of which their ideas and world-views evolve; the 300 year old religious strategies and practices employed by African-Americans have been understudied, disconnected from our understanding of their significance. This course will examine these traditions and these two central figures’ roles within them in order to shed important light on both.

**RELS 0821. Black Religion and Media in America.**

The religious lives of Black people have been represented across media forms for centuries. This course surveys the history and practice of this phenomenon, and what it reveals about race, belief, and culture in the United States. Paying special attention to print, film, radio, television, and social media, this class examines how Black religious actors use media to articulate the boundaries of blackness and religiosity; how religion and media have been integral to Black people's calls for equity and inclusion in American society; and how popular images of Black faith continue to inform cultural discourse on race, religion, gender, class, sexuality, and citizenship.

**RELS 0825. Foundational Texts in African American Theology.**

Central topics and foundational texts in the field of scholarship historically known as Black Theology. Major African American responses to those writings by Marxists, Womanists, process theologians, and religious humanists.

**RELS 0830. Religion, Reason, and Ethics from Kant to Nietzsche.**

The nineteenth century witnessed revolutionary transformations in thinking about the power and limits of human reason, the relation between reason and religion, revelation, the role of humanity in creating religion, morality and religion, the significance of history, and the plurality of religions. This course examines major thinkers from this period who continue to shape our own assumptions and reflection.

**RELS 0835. Black and Brown Religion in America.**

This course explores Black and Brown religious experience in American life, mainly from the perspectives of Christianity and Islam. We will explore topics such as secularism, White supremacy, Orientalism, imperialism, immigration, the history of segregation, and democratic political thought. The course goals are to: understand the histories of Islam and African American religion vis a vis race, religion, and theory in historical, cultural, and political context. We will also explore connections between solidarity movements and politics such as Black Lives Matter and the Palestinian/Israeli conflict.

**RELS 0840. Religion and Politics.**

This course examines the role of religion in public life, especially in pluralistic, democratic societies. We consider whether religion and politics can or should be separated; what role government should have in regulating religion; and whether a cohesive society needs a shared religion. Readings from early modern Western thinkers, contemporary theorists, and recent Supreme Court decisions.

**RELS 0841. Far-Right Religious Terrorism.**

Since 9/11, far-right violent extremists in the U.S. have committed almost twice as many terrorist attacks as Islamist terrorists, and are responsible for nearly half of all terrorism fatalities. While not all of these attacks are religiously motivated, in many instances they are explicitly Christian in their orientation. This course examines domestic and international far-right religious terrorism – as well as the U.S. government's response to this violence – by looking at attacks that are anti-abortion, white supremacist, anti-government, and anti-immigrant.

**RELS 0842. Religion, Sex, Citizenship.**

An exploration of the relationship between religion, sex, and citizenship with a focus on the United States. What has been the role of religion in the creation of sexual norms in United States history? How has this relationship changed over time, in relation to intersecting systems of class and race? What are "family values" and where did they come from? What is secularism, and does it promote sexual freedom? This course takes up questions like these, anchoring its inquiry in interdisciplinary feminist theories of gender and sexuality. Linking theoretical texts to a range of grounded contexts—from Court rulings on religious freedom, to fights over sex education in schools, to militarized sexual violence, to capitalism's regimes of gendered labor—students will develop critical vocabularies for analyzing intimacies between religion, sex, and politics in American empire.

**RELS 0843. How do you Feel? The History of Emotions.**

This online course is an introduction to the history of emotion. How do we feel, and how do we know what we feel? How did concepts like shame, pride, wonder, happiness, or grief change over time? Are emotions primarily the result of neurological processes, or are they learned and performed within culturally determined social constructs? And finally, what are the politics of emotional expression from the point of view of racial, religious, and gender differences? We will explore these questions and more through readings on the theory and history of emotion, various media sources, and pre-modern as well as modern literature.

Fall RELS0843 S01 18157 MWF 1:00-1:50(08) (N. Khalek)

**RELS 0845. Religious Freedom in America.**

This course examines the ideal of religious freedom, which often is seen a cornerstone of American society. Interrogating that view, students explore the idea and practice of religious freedom in the past and present, paying close attention to its limitations, contradictions, and ironies. Although the course draws especially upon studies of religion, law, and politics in the United States, students also consider forms of religion and secularism from around the world. Reading-intensive and discussion-driven, this course has no prerequisites.

Spr RELS0845 S01 26143 TTh 1:00-2:20(08) (D. Vaca)

**RELS 0850. Liberation Theology in the Americas.**

Liberation theology seeks to bring the social teachings of Christianity to bear on political and economic injustice. This course treats liberation theologies as socially grounded, politically engaged currents in religious thought. We will investigate the historical contexts and central themes of liberation theology: the relationship between theory and practice, the political function of the church, the relation between political freedom and salvation, and the role of intellectuals.

**RELS 0880D. Fascism: 1933 - Present (UNIV 0701).**

Interested students must register for UNIV 0701.

**RELS 0915B. The Bhagavad Gita (CLAS 0855).**

Interested students must register for CLAS 0855.

**RELS 0915C. Mythology of India (CLAS 0850).**

Interested students must register for CLAS 0850.

**RELS 0915D. Dreaming in the Ancient World (CLAS 0771).**

Interested students must register for CLAS 0771.

**RELS 0916A. Islam between Theatre and Performance(TAPS 0800K).**

Interested students must register for TAPS 0800K.

**RELS 0916B. Of Emotions Unbound: Feeling Middle Eastern Theatre and Performance (TAPS 0900J).**

Interested students must register for TAPS 0800J.

**RELS 1000. Methods in Religious Studies.**

Intensive introduction to classical and contemporary theories of religion and the principal methods for the study of religion. Junior seminar for religious studies concentrators. Enrollment limited to 25.

Fall RELS1000 S01 18158 W 3:00-5:30(10) (S. Bush)

**RELS 1050A. Problems in Israelite Religion and Ancient Judaism (JUDS 1625).**

Interested students must register for JUDS 1625.

**RELS 1050B. The Political Theology of the "Jewish Question" (JUDS 1614).**

Interested students must register for JUDS 1614.

**RELS 1050C. Prophets and Priests in Exile: Biblical Literature of the 6th Century BCE (JUDS 1690).**

Interested students must register for JUDS 1690.

**RELS 1050D. Jewish Magic (JUDS 1801).**

Interested students must register for JUDS 1801.

**RELS 1050E. Jewish and Christian Identity in the Ancient Period (JUDS 1601).**

Interested students must register for JUDS 1601.

**RELS 1050F. Digging for the Bible: Science, Religion, and Politics (JUDS 1974).**

Interested students must register for JUDS 1974.



**RELS 1050G. On the Margins of the Bible: Jewish and Christian Non-Canonical Texts (JUDS 1603).**

Interested students must register for JUDS 1603.

**RELS 1050H. Problems in Israelite History (JUDS 1635).**

Interested students must register for JUDS 1635.

**RELS 1050I. The Talmud (JUDS 1630)..**

Interested students must register JUDS 1630.

**RELS 1105. Kabbalah: An Introduction to Jewish Mysticism.**

In the 12th and 13th centuries, new ways of approaching Judaism sprung up in France and Spain that would come to be known as "kabbalah." These new approaches expressed aspirations for mystical illumination and elaborated vast mythological narratives about divine and demonic beings. The kabbalists radically departed from the then-conventional understandings of Judaism, particularly those of philosophers like Maimonides. However, they also claimed to find their new worldviews in the tradition's most ancient texts. This course will introduce students to kabbalah's founding period, focusing on primary texts (in translation), especially the Zohar, the magnum opus of classical kabbalah.

**RELS 1130. Philo.**

Examines Philo's life and writing, and their importance for the study of Judaism and Christianity in antiquity. How typical was Philo? How did he interpret the Bible? How does his thought "fit" into the religious landscape of the first century CE? Focuses on reading Philo's writings, but will also survey scholarly approaches to Philo. Knowledge of Greek helpful.

**RELS 1144. Adam and Eve in Early Jewish and Christian Interpretation.**

In antiquity, the biblical story of Adam and Eve generated an enormous volume of commentary. Early Jews and Christians saw in this story profound lessons about the nature of humanity, God, and the world. We will examine how, in antiquity, both religious groups interpreted this relatively short story. We will also pay close attention to the different ways that both Jews and Christians developed to interpret these texts. Genres such as allegory, inspired interpretation (pesher), midrash, and the letters of the New Testament will be covered.

**RELS 1150. Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls.**

An examination of the Dead Sea scrolls and the archaeology of Qumran with a particular focus on the religious aspects of this community. How did the authors of these scrolls envision their relationship with the divine? How did they worship? How did they understand religious and moral perfection? This class will have an additional section for graduate students. Enrollment limited to 20.

**RELS 1190. Religious Japan.**

An introduction to the history of Japanese religion in the early and medieval periods, with some attention to related modern and contemporary manifestations. Emphasis on the development of both native practices ("Shinto") and Buddhism, and on the historical interaction between them. Readings include primary texts in translation and selected modern interpretations. A previous course in Asian religion or culture is recommended but not required.

**RELS 1300. Ancient Christianity and the Sensing Body.**

Bodily experience and sensory engagement became increasingly important for Christians during their first six centuries. This seminar examines how and why the body and its senses gained worth for ancient Christians as instruments for gaining knowledge of God. Prerequisites: RELS 0110, 0400 or 0410.

**RELS 1315. Religious Authority in an Age of Empire.**

How does one live in a hostile Empire? How do you carve out a niche? Where do you allow the Empire in and where do you draw a hard line? Such were the questions that both Jewish and Christian communities faced at various times in the Roman Empire. In this course, we will look at the variety of ways that both communities negotiated with and against Empire. We will read texts across religious lines, including gospels, gnostic texts, Rabbinic literature, apocalypses, and Church orders. To sharpen our thinking, we will also read literature associated with post-colonial critical thought.

**RELS 1320. Social World of the Early Christians.**

The followers of Jesus created a movement that spread quickly from rural Galilee to the largest cities of the Roman Empire, ultimately to become the largest religion in the world. Increasingly, scholars write a history of the early movement by learning more about its historical context, the Jewish, Greek, and Roman worlds. The fascinating texts of the followers of Jesus will be studied in comparison to equally fascinating non-Christian texts, with a focus on social categories: patterns of new religious movements, with reference to race, class, gender, ability, and other categories.

**RELS 1325A. Educating Bodies in Ancient Christianity.**

How did ancient Christians learn to be Christian? Did Christian education look different from the ways that "Pagans" learned to be Pagan, Jews Jewish, or "heretics" heretics? This course explores the many ways that Christians learned to be Christian, paying particular attention to the role of the family, city, liturgy, and, of course, "schools." We will adopt a comparative approach, looking at education among heretical "Gnostic" communities, on the one hand, and the rabbinic Jewish community, on the other. Some familiarity with the ancient Mediterranean world, through prior study of early Christianity, Judaism, Classics, or Ancient History, is recommended.

**RELS 1325B. Early Christian Asceticism: Rhetorics of Practice.**

A study of eastern Christian asceticism and its literary expressions during late antiquity, with attention to forms, motivation, theological understandings, and cultural impact. Particular focus on Egypt, Cappadocia, and Syria.

**RELS 1325C. The Virgin Mary in Christian Tradition.**

Who was the Virgin Mary? How did she become important, when and to whom? What was inherited? What was new? How were Mary's meanings demonstrated? A study in the developing theological and devotional traditions regarding Mary the Mother of Jesus, focused on the first thousand years of Christian history. Major theological positions; relationship to pre-existing religious practices and goddess traditions; the role of popular violence; Marian piety; Marian relics; Mary as cultural metaphor. Seminar format.

**RELS 1325D. Desire and the Sacred.**

Relationality, sexuality, and the quest for holiness in medieval and Byzantine Christianity. How did medieval and Byzantine Christians understand human relationships as instrumental in the human advancement towards God? How did they utilize erotic desire as an ontological aspect of embodiment? What sorts of relationships, lived in what kinds of social arrangements, enabled pursuit of human divine union? Seminar.

**RELS 1325E. Ecotheology in Ancient Christianity.**

How did early Christians understand the relationship of humanity to the natural world, the animal kingdom, and the created order? What were the obligations and responsibilities of Christians regarding care for the world? How did they manifest a relationship to God? A study of the ancient Christian conception of humanity's place in the cosmos, as lived out in the daily life of the Christians in the Roman Empire. The course will focus on the first seven Christian centuries, with attention to how legalization and ascendancy reshaped Christian ideas on these matters. Seminar.

Spr RELS1325E S01 26144 TTh 1:00-2:20(08) (S. Harvey)

**RELS 1330A. The Life and Afterlives of the Apostle Paul.**

While the writings of the Apostle Paul are commonly understood as early Christian scriptures, the Apostle Paul never converted to "Christianity." He was and remained Jewish. We must therefore reexamine his writings within his Jewish context, not apart from it. We also need to see how the earliest "Christians" talked about Paul within the context of an emerging "Christianity." In this course, we will first dive into both the authentic and spurious letters of Paul in the New Testament. We will then turn to the figure of Paul in later Christian texts, both canonical and non-canonical.

**RELS 1340A. Roman Religion (CLAS 1410).**

Interested students must register for CLAS 1410.

**RELS 1370A. Augustine and Hegel.**

A theoretical comparison of Augustine of Hippo and G.W.F. Hegel, highly influential thinkers at different turning points in Western history, on various facets of their understanding of religion. Potential themes for comparison include the relationship between Christian faith and philosophy, God and the world, and religion in history and society.

**RELS 1370B. Philosophy of Mysticism.**

Covers important attempts to understand the nature of religious experiences and mysticism. We will look at several philosophical issues surrounding religious experience, including: (a) whether mystical experiences are too private for outsiders to understand or evaluate them; (b) what the relationship between religious experiences, language, and culture is; (c) whether religious experiences justify religious beliefs; and (d) how gender and religious experiences are related. We will treat theorists from various perspectives, including philosophical, historical, theological, psychoanalytic, and neuroscientific. Previous work in philosophy courses (or philosophically-intensive courses) is highly recommended. Enrollment limited to 20.

**RELS 1370C. David Hume and Religion.**

This course will consider and challenge traditional scholarly views of philosopher David Hume as a critic of Christianity, by examining a wide range of his writings (letters, historical writings, moral enquiries, philosophical and religious writings). How might his corpus inform work in philosophy of religion? Previous coursework in philosophy or philosophy of religion strongly advised. Enrollment limited to 20.

**RELS 1370D. Modern Mystics: Bataille, Weil, Murdoch.**

Description: Georges Bataille, Simone Weil, and Iris Murdoch all drew from mystical traditions to fashion a religious sensibility that engaged constructively and critically with modernity. Bataille and Murdoch were atheists, Weil a highly unconventional theist. Their mysticism was about experiences of self-rupture and self-transformation rather than traditional religious ideas or practices. They were highly literary (Bataille and Murdoch both wrote fiction) and saw connections between art and ecstatic experience. We will explore their writings across various genres (philosophy, social theory, fiction, and notebooks).

**RELS 1380A. Money, Media, and Religion.**

This course explores the relationship between religious life, forms of capitalism, and media technologies in the history of the United States. From constructing buildings and printing texts to disseminating teachings and communicating with members: essential aspects of religious life require both money and media. Yet forms of money and media continually have changed, and those changes have taken shape in dialogue with religious beliefs, practices, and sensibilities. This seminar examines this dialogue by visiting such varied sites as Puritan marketplaces, Santa Claus displays, Bible factories, television talk shows, and Occupy protests.

**RELS 1380C. Law and Religion.**

In our arguably "post-secular" age, conflicts over the relationship between religion and law have again moved to the forefront of international debate. In a multicultural and globalized world, such conflicts often provoke contestation over the very possibility of universal definitions of either "religion" or "law," let alone their proper relationship. Our interdisciplinary inquiries on these questions will include concrete legal disputes in domestic and international courts; theoretical debates over the construction of "religion" in fields such as anthropology, religious studies, and philosophy; and historiographical controversies about the relationship between "secularization" and sovereignty, particularly in light of the legacy of colonialism.

**RELS 1380E. Critiques of Religion + Capitalism.**

This interdisciplinary and comparative seminar analyzes the economic aspects of religion and the religious aspects of capitalism. It takes up these questions in relation to historical and contemporary archives, and it prioritizes feminist, critical race, and queer analysis. Readings and course themes press boundaries of how we might think about religion and reveal new directions for an analysis and critique of capitalism. We will ask questions like the following: How can we trace the growth of the idea that participation in global free markets can facilitate relations of justice? What moral frameworks and theories of human life underwrite the vision of capital markets as a theater for political-ethical action? Under what circumstances can capitalist philosophies and practices be understood in terms of religion?

**RELS 1385. Religion and Postmodernism.**

This advanced seminar treats the central ideas in the thought of Zizek, Sloterdijk, Bauman, and others. It will pay particular attention to the idea of God in the works of Derrida, Foucault, and Deleuze as it filters through these contemporary, popular efforts. Students will trace some of the normative aspects of a postmodern ethics and theology by looking at "Emergent" churches, "New Thought", and post-foundational Christian theology in practice.

**RELS 1410. Directed Readings in Chinese Religious Thought: Zhuangzi.**

Entails a careful reading of the entire text of the *Chuang Tzu* in translation. Secondary sources on the philosophy and textual criticism of the book--drawn from the writings of Graham, Liu Hsiao-kan, Ivanhoe, Mair, Roth, and others--are also read. Seminar format. Pre-requisites: At least one of the following courses: RELS0040; RELS0120; UNIV0540.

**RELS 1415A. Classical Daoist Thought.**

Considers philosophical issues in early Daoism. We will work with classical texts such as Guanzi's "Inward Training," the Laozi, the Zhuangzi, and the Huainanzi and examine issues in them that have been of interest to comparative philosophers, such as cosmology and cosmogony, the nature of religious experience, and the types of implicit and explicit moral thought. The course will feature primary works in translation and secondary works by authors such as Graziani, Ivanhoe and Kjellberg, Moeller, Ames, Yearley, Raphals, Cook, Roth, and Slingerlands. Prerequisites: RELS 0040 and 0120. Enrollment limited to 20.

**RELS 1420. The Contemplative Foundations of Classical Daoism.**

Introduction to classical Daoism, one of the two indigenous religions of China, through the history, philosophy, and contemplative practices found in its foundational works the *Daodejing* and the *Zhuangzi*. Through careful study of these texts, we will attempt to reconstruct the intellectual and experiential elements on which this tradition was based.

Spr	RELS1420	S01	26251	Th	4:00-6:30(17)	(H. Roth)
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Spr	RELS1420	L01	26252	TTh	12:00-12:50	(H. Roth)
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**RELS 1425. Buddhist Poetry.**

This course surveys Asian and Anglophone literary cultures that emerged in response to Buddhist teachings and practices. Through close reading, we will engage epic poetry celebrating the Buddha's life; verses in Buddhist scripture; the landscape poetry of Chinese hermits; the poetry of early nuns; Japanese poems of spiritual travel; American beatniks; and contemporary Taiwanese poetry. All readings are available in English. Students may complete a creative or imitative project, an original translation, or a research paper for the final project.

**RELS 1430. Buddhist Classics.**

An opportunity to read and understand the canonical texts of East Asian Buddhism. Through close reading, written analysis, and discussion, participants will become conversant with the major Mahayana Buddhist teachings in their original scriptural or literary articulations. Selected later interpretations may also be considered. All readings are in English translation. Previous study of Buddhism is recommended, but not required. Enrollment limited to 10 students.

**RELS 1435. Buddhism in Motion.**

This advanced seminar examines Buddhism as it moves across the edges of China. Telling histories of Buddhism in motion will challenge us to reimagine the encounters between the Indian Buddhist religion and native Chinese cultures. After reviewing foundational works in the field, including theories of cultural translation, we engage recent studies of Chinese Buddhism that focus on interstices, borders, and contact zones; examine sources for the study of Chinese Buddhism from cross-cultural perspectives, including objects, emigrants, medicine, and bathing practices; and practice critical thinking about how we talk about Chinese Buddhism when the object of study is in motion.

**RELS 1440A. Japanese Buddhism.**

An exploration of key ideas and debates in the study of Japanese Buddhism. Influential paradigms of medieval Japanese Buddhism, including "original enlightenment," "transfer of merit," and "harmonization of gods and buddhas," will be brought into conversation with aspects of Japanese religious life in premodern and modern contexts, such as healing; care of the dead; bodily self-denial; and ritual uses of language. Materials include primary texts in English translation, modern secondary interpretations, and related literary and visual expressions.

**RELS 1440B. The Archaeology of Japanese Buddhism.**

This course explores the history of Japanese Buddhism through archaeological sites, artifacts, and interpretations. It aims to introduce students to the major contours of Japanese Buddhist history by examining the relationships between religious transmission, belief, ritual, and material culture. We will first focus on the major issues surrounding material culture in the study of Buddhism, and religion more broadly. The remainder of the course will consist of an survey of the chronological transmission and development of Buddhism in Japan in the early and medieval periods through case studies of specific sites, objects, architectural features, sculpture, and human remains.

**RELS 1441. Zen Meditation in China, Korea, and Japan.**

Intensive study of the development of Zen Meditation in China, Korea and Japan featuring historical origins in Indian Mahayana Buddhism and Chinese Daoism. Historical and social contextualization will be balanced by first-person investigations. Examines both kōan and silent illumination methods. Weekly seminars on representative texts in translation; labs will experiment with meditation techniques directly drawn from the readings. Students register for both seminar and lab. Prerequisite: Any of the following: COST 0100, 0420, 0480; RELS 0040, RELS 0100, RELS 0145; RELS 0290E; RELS 0500, or UNIV 0540; or instructor's permission. Enrollment limited to 20. Additional weekly Lab section.

**RELS 1442. The History, Philosophy, and Practice of Rinzai Zen Buddhism.**

An advanced seminar that considers Rinzai Zen Buddhism from origins in India to developments in China to its transmission to Japan and eventual transplanting to the West. Course will examine the nature of cultural and historical influences on the practices and adaptations through the Asian and American contexts, including the secular pedagogy of Contemplative Studies. Pre-Requisite: Any of the following courses: COST 0040/RELS 0040; RELS 0045; RELS 0100; COST 0100; COST/RELS 0125; COST/RELS 0145; COST/RELS 0555; RELS 1425; RELS 1440. Meditation lab: Tuesday and Thursday at 11:00- 11:50 AM .

**RELS 1445. Sinners and Seers in Japanese Literature.**

Exploration of Japanese Buddhist sensibilities as expressed in poetry, popular tales, drama, and fiction. Recurring themes include wrongdoing and its karmic consequences; renunciation; tension between aesthetic and religious commitments; pilgrimage as creative process; the role of nature in the quest for enlightenment. Reading and discussion in a seminar-style format. A previous course in Buddhism or East Asian culture is helpful but not required. Counts for concentration credit in Religious Studies and East Asian Studies.

**RELS 1500. From Moses to Muhammad: Prophets of the Ancient World.**

The figure of "the Prophet" forms the backbone to many of history's major religions. From well-known prophets like Moses and Muhammad to more obscure figures like Mani, ancient prophets claimed to have unique access to God(s). Yet the concept of prophethood, and its twin, "prophecy," was as diverse as those who claimed its mantle. This seminar will explore ancient discourses of prophethood and prophecy from the Ancient Near East up to the early medieval era. Our reading selection will include the Hebrew Bible, apocalypses, Greek theories of divination, the Manichaean corpus, the Qur'an, and other "non-canonical" texts.

**RELS 1510. Islamic Imaginaries from South Asia.**

This course will examine the intellectual, political, and cultural imaginaries of South Asia's Muslims as they engaged with the institutions and technologies of modernity. It will explore the formations of religious community, conceptions of rule, anticolonial thought, national belonging, minoritization, and subalternity among Muslims across colonial and postcolonial periods. Through a close reading of primary sources, films, and literature, the course will critically examine the tensions between collective identity and individual aspirations, secularism and religion, ethics and politics to understand what it has meant to be a Muslim in the modern era. Finally, the course will pay particular attention to historical methods and think through alternative ways of researching and writing the histories of marginalized communities.

Spr RELS1510 S01 26145 T 4:00-6:30(16) (S. Yaseen)

**RELS 1520. Pilgrimage and Sacred Travel in the Lands of Islam.**

This seminar focuses on pilgrimage and travel to loca sancta in the Islamic world. We will read travelogues and pilgrimage manuals in translation, and will address theoretical and anthropological studies on the phenomenon of pilgrimage and sacred travel in a variety of geographical and chronological contexts. We will study physical, artistic, and architectural aspect of pilgrimage shrines. Enrollment limited to 20 students.

**RELS 1530A. Methods and Problems in Islamic Studies.**

Examines the problem of historical thinking and writing in the first six centuries of Islam. It will specifically emphasize the rise and development of Islamic narratives as they are discussed in contemporary scholarship on how to "do" Islamic studies. As such, we will discuss, in depth, theoretical issues pertaining to source criticism, Orientalism, the Cultural Turn, anthropology, and narrative. Enrollment is limited to 20 students.

**RELS 1530B. Heresy and Orthodoxy in Islamic Thought.**

Orthodoxy is defined as "right belief" while Heresy is just the opposite, but those definitions have always been in tension with society and culture. This course will interrogate theory and history to ask "What are Islamic Orthodoxy and Heresy?" From Islamic Law to who is or is not a "heretic" we will uncover interpretations of religious law, practice, and culture to learn how scholars apply orthodoxy or heresy to disrupt and unsettle notions of what "Islam" was at different moments, and how their interpretations force us to think of new ways to envision the formation of communities.

**RELS 1530D. Medieval Islamic Sectarianism.**

Sunni and Shi'i conflict and sectarian division have been an enduring issue in the Islamic world. From Iraq to Syria, Iran to Egypt, inter-Muslim conflict and conflicting ideologies seem to be central issues. But how accurate and historical is this impression? In this course, we examine the origins and evolution of Islamic sectarianism, with an emphasis on the politics of religious authority in the Islamic world, old and new. This is an upper level seminar, and juniors and seniors will be given preference for enrollment. Shoppers must attend the first day of class if they wish to enroll.

**RELS 1530H. Problems in Islamic Studies: Shaking up the Study of the Islamic World.**

This course examines exciting new approaches to the study of Islam. In the form of a weekly salon, in each seminar we will examine recent and exciting paradigm-shifting works from a variety of perspectives (including but not limited to religious studies, anthropology, and history). We will consider these works within the broader context of how Islam has been studied in the past, and discuss why and how methods for the study of religion are changing. Themes include secularism, orientalism, gender, and politics.

All readings will be accessible electronically and posted on the course page via Canvas. Previous work in religious studies, Islamic Studies, or Middle East studies is an asset but is not required.

**RELS 1530J. The Problem of Evil.**

What kind of God would preside over a world in which injustice occurs? One of the earliest debates in Islamic history had to do with the question of theodicy: the problem of evil. This was connected to issues of free will and predestination. From the early Middle Ages onward people asked, what kind of all-powerful God holds humans accountable for things out of their power to control? If people are in fact in control of their own actions, what would that say about the nature and power of God? Does evil come from people or God, and if the latter, what does that say about the nature of Divinity? In this course we will discuss these issues and much more from the perspective of Islamic philosophy, ethics, history, politics, and theology from the Middle Ages to the present day.

Spr RELS1530J S01 26596 M 3:00-5:30(13) (N. Khalek)

**RELS 1540. Monks, Mystics and Martyrs: Abrahamic Traditions Compared.**

This course explores the process of "standing out" from mainstream society, from traditional kinship relationships, from local practices of community and economic production, undertaken by ascetics and mystics in the three Abrahamic traditions. We will explore monasticism and mysticism in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, from the period of late antiquity to the high Middle Ages. Using primary sources in translation and scholarship on the phenomena of asceticism and mysticism, we will address the motivations for and manifestations of non-traditional practices of worship and community-building in the Mediterranean and Middle-Eastern world.

**RELS 1600A. Race, Religion, and Ethnicity in the Study of Antiquity.**

Critical theory presents new challenges and opportunities for the study of antiquity. What is critical theory and how might it be useful for understanding categories such as race, religion, and ethnicity in antiquity? How might critical theory help us to think about the ethical implications of contemporary study of the distant past? Graduate and advanced undergraduate students with interests in any premodern society are welcome. All class readings will be in English.

**RELS 1600B. The Ethics of Community.**

Community as an ideal promises a common life with others, sharing norms and values. On the other hand, it can easily engender stultifying conformity and homogeneity. Religion has and continues to play a key role in forming communities. This course will examine questions surrounding community, with a particular focus on how communities cope with loss, suffering, and trauma. We will also pose questions about the boundaries of communities, including ecological questions about community between humans and non-humans.

**RELS 1600C. Angels and Monsters: Queer and Trans Religion.**

Gender and sexual diversity is often described in religious terms: before "gay" became shorthand for homosexuality, German activist Karl Heinrich Ulrichs proposed "Uranian" in the 1860s, based off Greek mythology; in 2023, a Florida state representative called trans people "demons." Queers have used religious language to make sense of experiences and carve out space for gender and sexual non-normativity to flourish. At the same time, those who decry such forms of life also use religious language to make their case. In this seminar, we use religious studies and queer and trans studies to examine the relationship between queerness, transness, and religion, thinking across religious difference through fiction, film, poetry, and academic work alike. Students will undertake an independent project of their choice, building analytical and argumentative skills. What might thinking queerly about religion, or religiously about queerness, do for us?

**RELS 1610. Sacred Sites: Law, Politics, Religion.**

Sacred sites have long been flashpoints for inter-communal conflict the world over, as well as posing challenges to sovereign State authority. Such sites range from natural landscapes to architectural masterpieces. They often come to symbolize the perennial clash between the religious and the secular, the sacred and the political, tradition and modernity. We will discuss a diverse array of specific disputes and ask whether one may even speak of "sacred sites" cross-culturally. Can legal frameworks embrace different notions of the sacred? We will also examine the historical contexts that provoke such disputes, particularly the aftermath of colonialism.

**RELS 1620. Disability in Antiquity.**

An investigation into the ways in which physical deformities and mutilations are represented in texts from ancient Israel, Mesopotamia, Greece, and other Mediterranean cultures. Primary focus: texts of the Hebrew Bible.

**RELS 1700A. The History, Philosophy, and Practice of Rinzai Zen: Zen Master Hakuin Ekaku.**

Explores Japanese Rinzai Zen Buddhist tradition by focusing on its seminal figure, Hakuin Ekaku (1686-1769). Examines his biography, core practices, and key philosophy by looking at selections from his essential autobiographical and philosophical writings as well as his artwork. Focuses on the following aspects of Hakuin's importance in the history of Japanese Buddhism: Hakuin as reviver of Rinzai Zen, especially kōan practice; Hakuin as a meditation master; Hakuin as talented artist; Hakuin as social critic. Readings will be primary sources in translation.

**RELS 1705A. Principles and Practices of Contemplative Studies.**

Advanced study of the distinctive methods of the field of Contemplative Studies that includes third-person, second-person, and critical first-person perspectives. Will focus on the study of meditative practices in their cultural contexts and on essential scientific research on their nature and effects. Prerequisite: COST 0100 or Permission of Instructor. Meditation Lab to be scheduled

**RELS 1705B. The Contemplative Science of Compassion.**

This course will focus on the historical foundations and science of contemplative-based compassion trainings, with a particular focus on Buddhist psychology. We will critically examine clinical and social science literature while reviewing potential mental health (e.g., depression, posttraumatic stress disorder) and social benefits (e.g., "re-humanization," reducing intergroup bias) as well as drawbacks and limitations, adverse effects, controversies, and important unasked questions and perspectives. Alongside teachings from the Compassion Cultivation Training, developed by Dr. Thupten Jinpa, a historical and equity lens will be integrated throughout. We will draw from literatures in contemplative science, critical theory, history, psychological and neurosciences, public health, and religious studies.

Fall RELS1705B S01 18436 T 4:00-6:30(07) (T. Braun)

**RELS 1730. Epics of India: Ethics, Politics, and Expressive Traditions.**

Existing for centuries, kept alive through vibrant forms of composition, transmission, performance, the epic tradition in India is a constantly emerging one. We will read translations of the Sanskrit Ramayana and the Mahabharata and retellings of these stories to explore why India's epics occupy such an energetic place in the ritual, literary, visual, and political imaginary of India. Why do these great epics continue to speak beyond borders of time and culture? In what ways does the epic culture of India challenge Western ideas about text and authorship? Why have the epics and given rise to wide and divergent interpretations, critiques, and recreations? How do different regions claim and create their regional identity through their own epic traditions? How do devotional traditions or national politics play in the interpretation—and revival—of epics?

Fall RELS1730 S01 18438 W 3:00-5:30(10) (L. Prasad)

**RELS 1741A. International Law (INTL 1700A).**

Interested students must register for INTL 1700A.

**RELS 1742A. Great Authors and Works of Italian Renaissance (ITAL 1320).**

Interested students must register for ITAL 1320.

**RELS 1743A. Gospel Music from the Church to the Streets (MUSC 1927).**

Interested students must register for MUSC 1927.

**RELS 1744C. When Religion meets Modernity: Tibet Enters the World System (HIST 1978H).**

Interested students must register for HIST 1978H.

**RELS 1744D. Wonders, clerics, and natives: The Construction of Mesoamerican Christianities. A political reading.**

Interested students should register for HIST 1978G.

**RELS 1745D. Theo-Politics: Political Readings of the Hebrew Bible (HMAN 1974P).**

Interested students must register for HMAN 1974P.

**RELS 1745E. Religion from Below (HMAN 1975R).**

Interested students must register for HMAN 1975R.

**RELS 1760. Religion and Suspicion.**

Religion has arguably been the classical locus of suspicious models of interpretation. Social and critical theorists from Marx to Foucault have argued that we only understand what religion really does if we interpret it with suspicion—if we refuse to take its claims at face value. Others have sought to redirect suspicion back against suspicion itself, and religious thinkers have sought to incorporate critiques of religion into their own theological projects. This seminar studies key figures in this complex interplay of religion and suspicion. Likely readings from Feuerbach, Marx, Nietzsche, Barth, Horkheimer, Adorno, Gadamer, Foucault, Said, Gutiérrez, Schüssler-Fiorenza, and Butler. Enrollment limited to 20.

**RELS 1830A. Pragmatism, Religion, and Politics.**

Pragmatism is a distinctive American school of thought that sees the goal of philosophy not as the apprehension of timeless truths but as a practical project of bettering individual lives and society. Pragmatists such as William James and John Dewey were devoted to deepening America's commitment to democracy. Both saw an important place for an unconventional sort of religion in democratic life. This course explores the pragmatist thought of James, Dewey, and others, looking especially at their views on religion and politics. We also will explore the influence of pragmatism on Barack Obama. Enrollment limited to 20 juniors and seniors.

**RELS 1830D. Constructing the Human: Humanness and Animality in the Ancient World.**

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

**RELS 1880A. The Gift in Antiquity.**

This course is an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural examination of gift-giving in antiquity, with a focus on the Mediterranean in late antiquity. We will examine a range of gift-giving activities, such as sacrifices (gifts to the gods), civic donations, and almsgiving. Several visiting lecturers will participate in the course, and it will culminate in an international conference to take place at Brown.

**RELS 1990. Individual Study Project.**

Directed reading and research arranged with individual faculty. Section numbers vary by instructor. Please check Banner for the correct section number and CRN to use when registering for this course.

**RELS 1995. Senior Capstone Seminar.**

This course is a culminating experience for the Religious Studies concentration. While introductory gateway courses introduced concentrators to the discipline and upper-level courses examined particular topics or methodologies, this capstone seminar provides concentrators with an opportunity to synthesize what they have learned, while also delving more deeply into the themes and topics that they find most central to their own interests. Thesis writers receive support including small group interaction and supportive criticism. Non-thesis writers create a capstone portfolio over the course of the semester. Through activities and guest presentations, all concentrators will connect their studies to their future goals.

**RELS 1999. Thesis Preparation.**

Required of seniors in the honors program. Open to others only by permission of the chair of the department. Section numbers vary by instructor. Please check Banner for the correct section number and CRN to use when registering for this course.

**RELS 2000. Theory of Religion.**

Critical examination of major approaches to the study of religion, especially those of the anthropology and the history of religions, with attention to issues in current debate.

**RELS 2000A. Method and Theory in the Study of Religion: Historicizing the Discipline.**

This seminar introduces the academic study of religion as a discipline by historicizing its emergence. The course engages both historical materials and recent critical engagements with these histories. Through critical reflection on the discipline, it attends explicitly to questions around race, gender, sexuality, and empire.

Fall RELS2000AS01 18725 W 11:00-1:30 (D. Vaca)

**RELS 2000B. Method and Theory in the Study of Religion: Interpreting Religion.**

This seminar examines diverse methodological and theoretical resources for studying religion. Readings may include influential recent theorists from across the humanities and social sciences, as well as contemporary scholars of religion who bring such theorizing to bear on religion.

**RELS 2010A. Exegesis at Qumran.**

Focuses on Hebrew exegetical texts such as the Temple Scroll, MMT, pHab, 4QJub, CD. Intended for doctoral students and others with sufficient knowledge of Hebrew.

**RELS 2010B. 1 and 2 Kings.**

Translation and exegesis of Kings. Intended for those with advanced Hebrew.

**RELS 2011. Religion, Race, and Ethnicity in the Ancient Mediterranean.**

An examination of the categories of race, religion, and ethnicity among Greeks, Romans, Jews, and Christians in antiquity. How did they use (or not) these different modes of identity?

**RELS 2015. American Religious Histories.**

This course explores the histories and historiographies of religion in North America, focusing especially the lands that became the United States. By engaging both classic and contemporary approaches to the historical study of religious life, this course not only familiarizes students with persistent scholarly debates and narratives but also helps students understand how and why historians have used particular methods to address varied challenges and objectives. Ultimately, the course will equip students to pursue their own research projects in ways that build creatively and rigorously on existing scholarship.

**RELS 2050. Religious Identities in Sasanian Persia.**

Sasanian Persia is rapidly emerging as a locus of study among scholars of Syriac Christianity, Rabbinic Judaism, and Ancient Iran. This course synthesizes recent advances in scholarship within these individual fields and experiments with alternative modes of contextualization. Primary sources include the Talmud, the Hekhalot corpus, Syriac martyrdom narratives, Manichaean literature, and Mandaean texts. We will also interrogate broader methodological questions, including comparative projects between "Roman" and "Persian" contexts, models of scholarly representation, and the limits of agonistic/assimilative frameworks. Reading knowledge of one of the following languages required: Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac, Greek, Coptic, Arabic, or Middle Persian.

Fall RELS2050 S01 18160 F 3:00-5:30(11) (J. Han)

**RELS 2100B. Exegesis at Qumran.**

Focuses on Hebrew exegetical texts such as the Temple Scroll, MMT, pHab, 4QJub, CD. Intended for doctoral students and others with sufficient knowledge of Hebrew.

**RELS 2100E. Literature of the Early Second Temple Period.**

A close reading of selections from surviving literary texts of the late sixth century (e.g., Isaiah 56-66, Zechariah 1-8, Haggai) and the fifth century (Ezra-Nehemiah, Malachi). Prerequisite: An advanced knowledge of biblical Hebrew and permission of the instructor.

**RELS 2100F. Seminar in Biblical Studies: Ugaritic.**

Survey of Ugaritic grammar followed by readings in mythic and epic literature (e.g. the Baal Cycle, Kirta, Aqhat) and ritual texts. Prerequisite: Knowledge of the grammar of one Semitic language. Open to graduate students only.

**RELS 2100G. Early Rabbinic Literature: The Mishnah.**

Readings in the Mishnah and related rabbinic literature. While the focus will be on gaining textual skills, we will also survey academic approaches to the Mishnah: What is the Mishnah and its relationship to earlier and contemporaneous texts? How was it composed, transmitted, and received? Prerequisite: Reading knowledge of Hebrew.

**RELS 2101. The Court Narrative in Ancient Israel.**

A number of ancient Israelite and Jewish narratives are set in the court of the foreign king: the story of Joseph in Genesis 37-50, Esther, Daniel 1-6 (along with the additions from the Apocrypha: Susanna and Bel and the Dragon), and the Prayer of Nabonidus from Qumran. These entertaining narratives are often set off from the more strictly historical tradition, and seem to have been part of a resilient and international genre of popular stories. In this course we will read and analyze these narratives in their original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

**RELS 2110A. Religion and Romanticism: Religion, Democracy, and the Environmental Imagination.**

The seminar will explore the central radical religious, democratic, and environmental dispositions and ideologies that mutually informed each other in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British Romantic literature and their subsequent and sustained legacies in America. We will read such authors as William and Dorothy Wordsworth, Coleridge, Mary Shelley, Emerson, and Thoreau.

**RELS 2110B. Radical Romanticism: Progressive Democratic, Environmental, and Religious Traditions.**

To what extent does Romanticism inform progressive democratic, environmental, and religious traditions and cultures in the U.S.? We will explore the sustained legacies of a particular strand of Romanticism, namely, radical Romanticism: an aesthetic tradition and way of life that seeks to cultivate perspectives, practices, and affect that bring dignity and justice to the human and the more-than-human worlds. Special attention will be given to the interrelated topics of democracy, the environment, and religion when reading such authors as Henry David Thoreau, Frederick Douglass, Walt Whitman, Zora Neale Hurston, W.E.B. Du Bois, Terry-Tempest Williams, Leslie Silko.

**RELS 2110E. Just Home: Place, Belonging, and Justice.**

What helps to establish beneficial (just and nurturing) homes, communities, and connections to place? What works against these? This seminar explores the relation between people, place, identity, and belonging, with a strong emphasis on racial, Indigenous, feminist, queer, and environmental justice. The seminar begins by interrogating the concept of home broadly. What constitutes notions of home and belonging? We then move to different frameworks through which we explore the concept of home: for example, nationhood, colonialism, and globalization; Earth as home and more-than-human dwelling; Indigenous dispossession and homemaking; feminist and queer ways of belonging; Black homes as sites of resistance, tenderness, and beauty; belonging and precarity among the unhoused and the incarcerated. The readings addressing these topics are diverse in disciplinary and genre.

Fall RELS2110E S01 18439 Th 3:00-5:30 (M. Cladis)

**RELS 2160. Aramaic Readings.**

A survey of epigraphic and biblical Aramaic intended for doctoral students and others with sufficient background in Aramaic grammar.

**RELS 2200B. Asceticism.**

A study of eastern Christian asceticism during late antiquity, with attention to forms, motivation, theological understandings, and cultural impact. The focus in this offering will be eastern Syriac monastic traditions, 4th through 8th century.

**RELS 2200E. Christianizing Antioch.**

Antioch from the first century CE until the Muslim conquest in the seventh, as Christians first utilized the city and its resources for their own formative developments, and then came to assume ascendancy over its society, culture, and landscape as the Roman Empire took on its Christianized identity.

**RELS 2200J. The Virgin Mary in Late Antiquity.**

A study in the developing theological and devotional traditions regarding Mary the Mother of Jesus, focusing on the fourth through the sixth centuries A.D. Major theological positions; relationship to pre-existing civic cults and goddess traditions; the role of popular violence in the Mariological definitions of the Council of 431; imperial Marian piety; Marian relics; Mary as cultural metaphor.

**RELS 2200M. Early Christian Hymnography.**

Select examples of early Christian hymnography, 2nd-6th centuries. Particular attention to poetic forms, types of content, ritual contexts and functions, and performative elements. Weekly readings in Greek.

**RELS 2200Q. Readings in Syriac.**

Dramatic narratives in liturgical poetry. Readings from Cyrillonas and Jacob of Serug.

**RELS 2250A. Is Gandhi Relevant?.**

Mahatma Gandhi's influence on freedom movements and personal practice is unmatched, yet legend often obscures his evolving experiments and struggles. In this prison-based course, we will examine Gandhi's complexity and relevance. He was a sharp critic of modern civilization yet embraced progressive views—raising questions about whether his critique remains prophetic and can guide us toward a more equitable society founded on empathy and resource-sharing. We will especially study how he tried to embody self-practices that, despite their challenges, ultimately make hope and transformation possible even under dire conditions. We will read Gandhi's core writings to engage him not as a static icon but as a person who learned through trial and error, faced controversy, and experienced hardship and loneliness. Yet, he stayed inspired by the search for truth and a resolute commitment to nonviolence and human rights.

Spr RELS2250A S01 26604 W 3:00-5:30(10) 'To Be Arranged'

**RELS 2300A. Seminar: Early Taoist Thought.**

The foundational philosophical texts of the Taoist tradition will be read in Classical Chinese and analyzed from a number of possible perspectives including comparative religious thought, and historical and textual criticism. Texts for each year's version of the course will be drawn from the following list: *Chuang Tzu*, *Lao Tzu*, *Huang-Lao po-shu*, *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*, *Han-fei Tzu*, *Kuan Tzu*, and *Huai-nan Tzu*. Pre-requisites: reading knowledge of Classical Chinese and prior study of Taoist thought. Advanced undergraduates may be admitted.

**RELS 2300B. Huai-nan Tzu.**

No description available.

**RELS 2350A. Tokugawa Religion.**

Key issues in the study of Japanese religious formations from the late sixteenth through mid-nineteenth centuries. Readings will be drawn from primary texts, both in English translation and in Japanese and/or Chinese, depending on enrolled participants; and from selected secondary accounts.

**RELS 2350B. Readings in Japanese Religion and Thought.**

Study of developments in Japanese religion, thought, and culture from the late Edo through the Meiji periods (ca. 1800-1912), and associated scholarly debates. We will read and discuss primary texts in English translation, modern secondary interpretations, and selected works in Sino-Japanese and/or Japanese, depending on the language capacities of enrolled students. Qualified undergraduates may enroll with permission of the instructor.

**RELS 2380A. Chinese Buddhist Texts.**

Each week we will engage in close reading through translation of Buddhist texts in the original Chinese. Selections will draw from sutras, commentaries, prefaces, colophons, biographies, and Chan literature. The course introduces research methods, major sources, dictionaries, and digital tools, and culminates in a seminar paper demonstrating original research using the tools and methods practiced in class. Prerequisite: Reading competence in classical Chinese.

**RELS 2400A. Orthodoxy and Heresy in Islamic Thought.**

This graduate seminar comprises advanced readings exploring the concepts of "orthodoxy" and "heresy" in a range of scholarly and theoretical contexts. We will explore the historiography of these two terms, their problematization and limits, and related concepts in primary and secondary literature. This course is best suited for graduate students with background training in Islamic Studies, and knowledge of Arabic and/or other relevant languages is preferred.

**RELS 2400B. Historiography of Islam.**

A critical appraisal of the field of Islamic history in light of issues in contemporary philosophy of history. We will discuss various ways in which 'Islam' has been imagined as an object of historical description and analysis. Topics include: historical thought generated by Muslims; relationship between historical projection and religious ideology; impact of contingent factors such as Mongol domination and modern colonialism; Orientalist views of the Islamic past; significance of narrative patterns, poetry, and modern historical fiction; and contemporary academic and popular trends. Intended for graduate students, with time devoted to materials in original languages (Arabic, Persian, and/or Urdu).

**RELS 2400C. Sufism Seminar.**

A survey of Sufism—as an Islamic religious phenomenon as well as a modern academic field—from the earliest sources to expressions in contemporary Muslim contexts. We will discuss Sufi mystical philosophies, liturgical practices, social organization, and historical development in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Readings consist of translations and academic treatments from various perspectives in the humanities and the social sciences. There will also be an optional weekly session dedicated to reading materials in original languages pertinent for course participants' research agendas.

**RELS 2400L. Topics in Islamic Studies: Methods and Theories.**

This graduate level course is survey of recent theoretical infusions into the academic study of Islam. We will examine paradigm shifting works, mainly from the last decade or so, and consider them within the broader context of contemporary historiography, methods, and theory. This course is designed for graduate students in order to aid them as they craft their own research agendas.

**RELS 2450. Exchange Scholar Program.**

Fall	RELS2450	S01	16736	Arranged	'To Be Arranged'
Fall	RELS2450	S02	16737	Arranged	'To Be Arranged'
Spr	RELS2450	S01	25299	Arranged	'To Be Arranged'

**RELS 2460. Professionalization Seminar.**

In addition to acquiring and practicing the arts of scholarship, teaching, and service, graduate students need to learn how to relate to colleagues, apply and interview for jobs, and submit proposals to conferences and publishers. The details of these processes are often mysterious, even to the initiated. The purpose of this seminar is to explore these various features of academia and graduate studies in a well informed manner. It is intended for fourth-year doctoral students in the Department of Religious Studies. Instructor permission required.

Spr	RELS2460	S01	26146	W	3:00-5:30(10)	(N. Khalek)
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**RELS 2510. Secularism and Secularity.**

A graduate seminar on secularity, and related concepts, as they have been formulated to describe and interpret political and social life. What difference does "the secular" name? How do theories of the secular implicate our understandings of history, subjectivity, agency, and reason? Reading historical and recent scholarship on the secular, and paying particular attention to themes of coloniality and empire, we critically reflect on a concept that has been central to the formation of modern religion and politics.

**RELS 2550D. Project Development Workshop (HMAN 2500).**

Interested students must register for HMAN 2500.

**RELS 2600D. Pragmatism and Religion.**

Readings in the original American pragmatists and their recent admirers with special attention to the topic of religion.

**RELS 2600E. Seminar in Religion and Critical Thought: Hegel.**

To Be Determined

**RELS 2600F. Religious Ethics.**

This class will provide a survey of some of the most influential works in religious ethics in the past fifty or so years and also present a number of quite recent texts. Two areas of focus will be virtue ethics and questions around religion and politics.

Spr	RELS2600F	S01	26238	W	12:30-3:00	(S. Bush)
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**RELS 2600G. Reason, Tradition and Modernity.**

The modern West has been defined largely by pervasive challenges to inherited religious beliefs, ethical mores, and political institutions. Since the Enlightenment, these developments have provoked widespread reflection on the nature and significance of tradition, the limits of reason, as well as the relation between reason and tradition. We will trace this current from the developments of German romanticism through recent "new traditionalist" thought, such as that of Alasdair MacIntyre.

**RELS 2600J. Religion, Power, and Practice.**

The turns to power and practice are among the most important recent events in the academic study of religion, and in the humanities generally. Power speaks of the ways in which social arrangements produce social differences, resulting in domination, cooperation, and resistance across lines of class, race, gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity. Practice speaks of what people *do*, a broader emphasis than prior emphases on what people *think*. This seminar will look at the social theorists who initiated these methodologies and some of the figures who have appropriated these theorists in the field of religious studies. Open to graduate students only.

**RELS 2600K. Religion and Interpretation.**

One of the most influential approaches to the study of religion views religion as primarily a matter of meanings or symbols. The task of the scholar of religion, then, is to interpret these meanings and symbols. This course examines this theoretical perspective on religion by looking at its proponents and its critics, as well as philosophical treatments of meaning and interpretation that have influenced religious studies. Readings include Hans-Georg Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur, Clifford Geertz, Mary Douglas, Donald Davidson, and Robert Brandom. Open to graduate students only.

**RELS 2600L. Seminar: Afro-Theism.**

This graduate seminar places a theological lens on Black life in North America. Its premise is that Afro-Theisms, not the institutional "Black Church" or Black prophetic religion, have been seminal to the self-conception of Black people and their way of constituting racial "others". Different theistic emphasis at different historical moments demonstrates both the importance and fluidity of Afro-Theisms and sheds unique light on quest for equity and self-actualization. Starting with the conventional Christian theologies into which New World Africans under slave conditions were indoctrinated, this course will explore the role and impact of Afro-Theisms.

**RELS 2890. Preliminary Examination Preparation.**

For graduate students who have met the tuition requirement and are paying the registration fee to continue active enrollment while preparing for preliminary examinations.

Fall	RELS2890	S01	16738	Arranged	'To Be Arranged'
Spr	RELS2890	S01	25300	Arranged	'To Be Arranged'

**RELS 2910. Independent Research.**

The staff is willing to offer independent reading courses in selected areas. See the Instructor for more information. Please check Banner for the correct section number and CRN to use when registering.

**RELS 2990. Thesis Preparation.**

For graduate students who have met the residency requirement and are continuing research on a full time basis.

Fall	RELS2990	S01	16739	Arranged	'To Be Arranged'
Spr	RELS2990	S01	25301	Arranged	'To Be Arranged'