Opening
This seminar takes a twofold approach to religious corporealities, via sense and via sex, which mark crossings of materiality and discursivity. Its methodological wager is intersectional: that taking these two figures (“sense” and “sex”) together offers a multidimensional means of exploring the malleability of religious bodies and embodied religions, as these two figures complicate one another and, in doing so, doubly complicate understandings of embodiment and religion. We will test this methodological wager by drawing together a variety of voices and perspectives from philosophers of religion, historians of sexuality, and queer theorists, whose critical vocabularies include affect, desire, ecstasy, and transformation—terms that serve as tools in our unfolding explorations of sense and sex, sensuality and sexuality, corporeality and religiosity.

Ways and Means
After an orienting (or disorienting) introduction via Sigmund Freud, Michel Foucault, and Sara Ahmed, we will turn to creative, compelling meditations on sense and sensuality by Michel Serres and Jean-Luc Nancy. We will then consider test cases, as we apply, extend, reflect, refract, question, and/or contest themes and trajectories developed by Serres and Nancy. At the seminar’s heart is an extended engagement with Luce Irigaray, who provocatively entwines sensuality and sexuality in inventive ways, particularly vis-à-vis praxial interstices of corporealities and divinities. After considering additional test cases, we will undergo another disorientation through encounters with Judith Butler, José Esteban Muñoz, and Marcella Althaus-Reid, who remind us to query our own queries by phenomenologically and performatively reminding us that sensuality and sexuality, corporeality and religion, remain supple, pliable, polymorphous.

Texts
Michel Serres, The Five Senses
Jean-Luc Nancy, The Sense of the World
Luce Irigaray, An Ethics of Sexual Difference
Marcella Althaus-Reid, The Queer God
Additional texts will be available on Blackboard and on reserve in Bird Library.

Assignments
Active participation
Active participation begins with carefully reading each text and engaging it and its author as conversation partners. Preparation plays a crucial role in participation. Active participation in class includes commenting on passages, asking questions, and engaging the texts, fellow students, and me as conversation partners. Remember that
this seminar is ours, not only mine or yours, so it is our responsibility to engage one another and the texts in a discussion with as many participants as possible.

Critical responses
For any 4 of the first 11 weeks, you will share with our seminar a 1-page critical response to that session’s readings (or a portion thereof), which we will use to start our conversations.

Reflection papers
You will transform 2 of your 4 critical responses into reflection papers (each approximately 1000 words) that expand and develop your responses’ ideas in the context of our seminar. Both reflection papers must be submitted by 18 November.

Interlude presentation
The interlude presentation provides an occasion to test our seminar readings and conversations via particular case studies of religious materials. Working in groups, you will select and present primary sources and complementary texts in ways that analyze, extend, compare, question, and/or challenge seminar readings and conversations. You should be ready to lead our conversation on the day of your presentation.

Option 1: Interpretive essays
The 2 interpretive essays offer opportunities to explore seminar texts very closely and carefully as you construct analysis-arguments based on textual interpretations and using textual citations to support your claims. The interpretive essays, each approximately 3000 words, will focus, respectively, on Serres or Nancy (due by noon on 7 October) and on Irigaray (due by noon on 16 December).

Option 2: Colloquium paper and presentation
The colloquium concludes our explorations with a mini-conference, where you will give a formal presentation of your work that substantially engages and broadens our understandings of seminar materials by synthesizing your original analyses of them with additional research. You must discuss your topic with me in advance so that your project is approved and underway by 27 October. Your colloquium paper (approximately 3000 words) is due by noon on 16 December.

Grading
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NB: Late work will not be accepted.
**Words for Thought**

“The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism ... is that the thing, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of an object or of contemplation, but not as sensuous human activity, practice.” —Karl Marx

“If a revolt is to come, it will have to come from the five senses!” —Michel Serres

“Each becoming the other in consumption, the nothing of the other in consummation. ... Where soon will once more melt, mingle, and melt again these amazing matrices of our last embraces.” —Luce Irigaray

“Always a matter of surprise, religion is, I believe, most interesting where it is least obvious.” —Mark C. Taylor

**Schedule of Meetings and Readings**

1 September—Orientations
8 September—Michel Serres, *The Five Senses*
15 September—Michel Serres, *The Five Senses*
22 September—Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Sense of the World*
29 September—Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Sense of the World*
6 October—Interlude: Test Cases
13 October—Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*
20 October—Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*
27 October—Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*
3 November—Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*
10 November—Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*
17 November—Interlude: Test Cases
24 November—Thanksgiving
1 December—Disorientations and Colloquium
8 December—Disorientations and Colloquium