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**Spring 2018
Religion Department Course Offerings**

REL 100 m001 ST: Introduction to African-American Religion
TTh 9:30-10:50 Dr. Biko Gray

African Americans in the United States have made considerable contributions to the religious and social geography of this country. This class will explore the histories, traditions, and approaches to African American religions that have defined its contexts and contours.

This class focuses specifically on the African American religious experience. We will be focusing on the connection between race and religion in this course, and you will be challenged on how African Americans have contributed to and transformed various forms of religious expression.

REL 103 Religion & Sports
TTh 8:00-9:20 Dr. Philip Arnold

Nearly all sports have the origins in religious ceremonies. Olympic Games, Hockey, Sumo wrestling, and the Martial Arts are obvious examples, but also more popular games like Football, Basketball, Soccer, and Golf connect directly with ancient ceremonial practices. The most important local example of this is with the Haudenosaunee (i.e., Iroquois) game of Lacrosse. Even more important than its ceremonial history, however, sports are currently understood by enthusiasts and critics alike as a “religious activity.” The course will take the perspective that it is clearer to understand the current popularity and appeal of sports (including games of all types) as ceremonial activities rather than as business or entertainment activities.

REL/JSP 114 The Bible in History, Culture and Religion
TTh 3:30-4:50 Dr. James Watts

Jewish and Christian scriptures in their ancient Near Eastern and Hellenistic contexts, with particular attention to their literary forms, the history of their composition, and their role in the development of Western religions and cultures.

REL 120 Introduction to the Study of Religion
MW 5:15-6:35 Dr. William Robert

This course is an engaged, dynamic exploration of what we talk about when we talk about religion. It is not a distanced consideration of how others have studied religion. Instead, we will learn how to study religion by studying religion. So our class becomes a learning laboratory, exploring extended case studies from different times and traditions. We will use these case studies to consider how religion works, what religion does, and why religion matters.

REL//MES/SAS 165 Discovering Islam
On-line Dr. Tazim Kassam

Islam is the world's fastest growing religion. One of the three Abrahamic traditions, it shares the monotheistic and ethical worldview of Judaism and Christianity. Yet, there is a dangerous vacuum of ignorance about Islam that is filled with misinformation about its history, beliefs and followers. The public relies on a constant diet of sensationalist media portrayals of Islam that focus exclusively on post-colonial zones of war and conflict. Discovering Islam's historical roots, core teachings, and cultural diversity will enable you to assess critically its representations in multiple contexts, to interact meaningfully with Muslims in daily life, and to make informed decisions in any profession. You will learn about its founder, Prophet Muhammad, the Qur'an, differences between Sunni and Shi'a, the spiritual search of Sufis, the position of Women and the role of faith in Islamic art and music.

REL/SAS 186 Buddhism
MWF 10:35-11:30 Dr. Gareth Fisher

This course will provide a general introduction to the Buddhist religion from its origins in India to its practice today throughout the world. We will explore both the historical development of Buddhist teachings and the diversity of its lived practices across cultures.

REL 191 Religion, Meaning and Knowledge
TTh 5:00-6:20 Dr. Marcia Robinson

An exploration of the age-old quest for wisdom and faith in the face of suffering, injustice, and loss, using art, theology, philosophy, music, and literature.

REL 200 m001 ST: blacklivesmatter and Religion
TTh 3:30-4:50 Dr. Biko Gray

REL 227 God/s: A Cross-Cultural Gallery
MW 12:45-2:05 Dr. Joanne Waghorne

This course is designed to begin a new discussion about deities/God/gods/Gods in a cross-cultural context. The accent will be on those forms of God/s that are perceived and experienced in embodied/visible/concrete form, which means that course will also confront older issues of "idolatry" and iconoclasm. In their embodied form, the image of God/s appear in unlikely places from films to advertisements as well as in temples and churches—all these sites will be considered.

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REL 200 U800

On-line

ST: Gender in Islam

Dr. Tazim Kassam

Is Islam anti-woman? Muslim women are typically identified with the veil. Their religion is seen as the cause of their oppression. What is the basis of this stereotype? How do Muslim women themselves view the veil? Is it a tool of Oppression or a symbol of defiance? Having abandoned it, why have many reclaimed it and reverted to revealing? How is dress implicated in the politics of identity, gender and space? In what forms does patriarchy exert control over fe/male bodies? How do cultural practices and socio-political contexts shape the experience of Muslim women in different parts of the world?

Students will pursue some of these questions by examining multiple ways that women's status, nature, and roles have been inscribed in religious, legal, and theological works including the Qur'an and Hadith. In addition to reading critical works by Muslim activist and feminist scholars who have challenged patriarchal structures while also criticizing Western feminist stereotypes of Muslim women, students will also hear directly the voices of Muslim women.

REL/JSP/LIT 235

TTh 12:30-1:50

Travel Narratives and Pilgrimages

Dr. Ken Frieden

When does a trip become a pilgrimage? We can make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, but we could also make a pilgrimage to a recording studio in Nashville or Hollywood. The more we care about something, the more we invest it with emotional or spiritual meaning, and the more appropriate it is to call a visit a pilgrimage.

Travel has been a prominent motif in religious literature and in popular culture. We will look at accounts of secular travel and pilgrimage narratives, primarily by Jewish travelers. Most claim authenticity, although the line between fact and fiction is not always easy to determine. In any case, travel narratives have played a central role in literary and religious history.

REL 255

TTh 2:00-3:20

Depth Psychology & Religious Ethics

Ms. Terry Reeder

This course invites you to look at your own dreams, loves, conflicts, moral beliefs, and religious practices, and those of people around you, from the perspective of the unconscious passions at play. Drawing on the clinical findings of Freud, Jung, Fromm, Erikson and contemporary psychoanalysts, the course investigates various aspects of unconsciously motivated conduct. The main criticisms that depth psychological theorists have directed at conventional religion and morality are considered alongside the guidance these same theorists offer regarding how to live and what to believe.

REL 292/PHI 241 The Human & Divine in Christian & Muslim Philosophy
TTh 12:30-1:50 Dr. Ahmed Abdel-Meguid

An investigation of the complex relationship between humanity and divinity and its implication for the formation of Christian and Islamic philosophy and theology.

**REL 300 m002 ST: Religion & Art in America: Experience, Presence, Sacred Space
and Expression**
TTh 2:00-3:20 Dr. Marcia Robinson

This course focuses on the expression or suggestion of the religious in the visual arts, architecture, and the natural and human-made landscapes of North America, particularly the United States, from the pre-colonial and colonial eras to today. It defines the religious tentatively as experience and/or presence, while also engaging the ideas, practices, scriptures, and symbols of traditions of faith such as Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and indigenous religions. It immerses students in an experience and examination of:

- the rock painting of the Ojibwe people and the writing of Louise Erdrich;
- the individual genius of painters and photographers such as Henry Ossawa Tanner, Augustus Vincent Tack, Alfred Stieglitz, Charles Sheeler, Marsden Hartley, Arthur Dove, Georgia O'Keefe, Romare Bearden, Alma Thomas, Andrew Wyeth, and Alice Dalton Brown;
- the unique combination of painting, drawing, landscape and interior design, and architecture in the work, parallel works, and/or collaborations of Frederic Edwin Church, Calvert Vaux, and Frederick Law Olmsted at Olana and Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman, and John and Dominique de Menil at the Rothko Chapel; and
- the interaction of photography, music, and literature in the work of Ansel Adams and John Muir in their respective responses to the American wilderness, particularly in regard to the development and maintenance of national parks.

Art and cultural history, aesthetics, philosophy, and theology provide the means for students to understand the figures covered, and to frame and/or to interpret the works of these figures and the development and preservation of land as religious and aesthetic expression.

REL 300 m003 ST: Jews & Muslims in North Africa
MW 2:15-3:35 Ms. Rebecca Moody

Between 1948 and 1967, the vast majority of Jews left Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt, emigrating to Israel, France and the US, among other places; some had lived in North Africa for generations, even millennia, in vibrant and diverse communities. Following an introduction to the broader history of Jews and Muslims in North Africa,

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we will explore this brief but particularly fraught moment by engaging its representation in film, memoir and ethnography. In so doing, we will tease apart complicated relationships, including those of colonizer and colonized (which, in this case, often meant white European and Arab Muslim, respectively), the tenuous relationship that North African Jews navigated between these two poles, and the equally complicated role of women, since women were often used as propaganda for both colonizer and colonized.

REL 300 m004 **ST: Jewish Sacred Space**
TTh 3:30-4:50 **Dr. Sam Gruber**

The notion of the sacred – and by extension sacred places and spaces – has varied over time and place and between cultures. For some these places are distinctly linked to the Divine (however that might be perceived). For others, they are more broadly understood as appropriate, designated and respected places for the practice of religion. In Judaism sacred spaces have served both roles, since the practice of Judaism involves both engagement with the Divine and the more mundane but constant practice of maintaining a functional society (albeit one traditionally organized to follow divinely inspired rules).

This course will investigate the development of a wide range of sacred spaces recognized in Judaism, from those described in the Bible to those designed and built today, or those appropriated when needed for Jewish use. This involves the Jerusalem temple(s), but most of the course will focus on the architectural, artistic and liturgical development of the synagogue and ancillary spaces as well as on cemeteries and memorial spaces. We will discuss how sacred spaces are designed – and how they can be discovered.

REL 300 m005 **ST: Care of the Soul: Ancient Texts on Body and Soul**
MW 12:45-2:05 **Dr. Mattheiu van der Meer**

Who does not think about ways to improve oneself: optimizing time management, developing study techniques, or making oneself a morally better or simply more likeable person? Who never gives thought to getting into better shape – by practicing sports, following diets, or even undergoing plastic surgery? Concerns about the soul and the body are as old as humanity itself. In this course, we explore how authors in antiquity and beyond (mainly Greek and Roman) write about methods to shape their souls so as to become better human beings – be it happier, or at peace with themselves, or pleasing in the eyes of the gods/God. The emphasis will lie on texts on the care of the soul, but since humans are body and soul, we need to investigate the ancients' thoughts on the body as well. Moreover, this topic is especially engaged with in philosophical and religious texts. Therefore, we will also need to explore thoughts on the (im-)mortality of the soul. The course runs through the most influential texts written in the period 1000BCE-600CE and aims at analyzing cultural transformations regarding

perceptions of the soul and methods to direct it. After a first general acquaintance with portrayals of the human in the eastern Mediterranean in first millennium BCE, the course gravitates toward Greek and Roman schools of thought (Platonic, Stoic, Epicurean). The third and last part of the course engages with Late Antique discussions about the soul and its destiny, both on the basis of Christian and of non-Christian ('pagan') texts.

REL/JSP/LIT 335 **Israeli Literature and Culture**
TTh 3:30-4:50 **Professor Erella Brown-Sofer**

Literary and cultural approach to the modern history of Israel, with special attention to conflicts that have arisen during the Zionist project.

REL/JSP 337 **Shoah: Responding to the Holocaust**
TTh 12:30-1:50 **Dr. Zachary Braiterman**

Students explore the relation between culture and religion across a diverse range of American Jews and Jewish communities. Particular attention is paid to the process of acculturation and assimilation and to the reinvention of Judaism.

REL 342/PSC/JSP **Religion and Politics in the Israeli Palestinian Conflict**
TTh 2:00-3:20 **Dr. Miriam Elman**

Considers the extent to which religion matters in an enduring ethno-nationalist conflict. Approaches the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from an interdisciplinary perspective that explores the intersection of religion and politics.

REL 359 **Stem Cells and Society (cross-listed with BIO/PHI 396)**
MWF 10:35-11:30 **Prof. Gustav Niebuhr, Dr. Hille Paakkunainen, Dr. Scott Erdman**

The science of stem cells and the philosophical, religious and legal complexities surrounding the research and use of stem cell technologies.

REL/MES/SAS 364 **Enchanting Words: Muslim Poets, Singers, Storytellers**
On-line **Dr. Tazim Kassam**

Understand the power of words and language in Muslim cultures expressed in oral and literary genres including poetry, humor, fables, folksongs and travel journals. Explore key themes such as virtue, reality, divine and human nature.

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REL 371
TTh 2:00-3:20

God in Political Theory (cross-listed with PHI 319/PSC 399)
Dr. Ahmed Abdel-Meguid

To what extent has religion or more generally metaphysics and theology affected the political sphere and the civil order of society? What intermediary domains allow for such influence? Is it ethics and morality, aesthetics or the systems of knowledge (epistemology)? We will address these questions both historically and thematically.

Historically we will start with a brief overview of Greek antiquity looking closely at the relation between metaphysics or theology and politics in the Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics*. We will then turn to the theistic appropriation of the classical view of the relation between theology and politics in the medieval period by Muslim and Christian thinkers. . In this respect, we will focus on the political thought of two towering figures of medieval Muslim and Christian thought: Abu Nasr al-Farabi (d. 950 C.E.) and St. Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274 C.E.). Subsequently we will move to early modern philosophy, its critique of the classical and scholastic views and the foundation of its call for secularism, examining Spinoza's *Theological Political Treatise*. Following early modern thought, we will explore the development of the conception of the relation between religion and politics in the Enlightenment movement through the work of Immanuel Kant. Turning to the 20th century, we will examine Carl Schmitt's critique of the modern state in general and how it appropriated the main characteristics medieval European theocracies in particular. Finally, we will investigate contemporary post World-War II critiques of the modern and enlightenment discourse and the re-assessment of the relation between religion and politics in the work of Talal Asad, Jürgen Habermas, Badiou, Agamben.

Thematically, we will trace the paradigmatic shifts in the formulation and the responses to key questions at the heart of the problematic relation between religion and politics. Among these questions is that concerning the concepts of power and the access to power and how the relation between religion and politics colored them? To what extent is the call for secularism and the form it assumed in the modern theory of state specific to the Western condition? Further we will examine the problem of normativity in politics and society and the degree to which the presence/absence of religion and religious sentiments play in shaping it. We will also place special emphasis on the effect religion may have on the conception of the relation between

REL/JSP 439
M,12:45-3:30

**Jewish Studies Seminar: Topic-Jewish Mysticism, Music
Meditation**
Dr. Ken Frieden

An exploration of different approaches to Jewish mysticism, focusing on Lurianic Kabbalah and Hasidism. We will also consider some hasidic music and meditation. A central textbook will be Gershom Scholem's classic, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*. Several of our sessions will be devoted to the analysis of *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov*

and Rabbi Nahman's *Tales*. In the final weeks of the course, students will present materials from their term papers.