

GDR – Fall 2015 Course Atlas

RLAR 701 – Performance & Ethnography in West South Asia

Wednesday, 9:00-12:00

Dr. Joyce Burkhalter Flueckiger

This seminar will:

- 1) Introduce a data field of textual and nontextual performative religious traditions of West and South Asian through recent ethnographic and performative studies;
- 2) Examine ways in which ethnographic and performance studies contribute to the study of religion;
- 3) Focus on ethnographic fieldwork methodologies and performance studies analyses in the ethnographies we read. By expanding the kinds of sources we look at in the study of religion, such as material and oral expressive culture (song, tale, life history) and material culture (ritual art, weaving, dress), as well as the ritual and performative ways in which written texts are used, we also shift the representation of whose voices are heard. The course is relevant to anyone who plans to conduct ethnographic fieldwork and who is interested in performance studies, even if not focusing on West and South Asian religions; the final paper may be written on any religious tradition.

RLHB 790 – Frameworks of the Moral Self in Ancient Israel and Early Judaism

Thursday, 1:00-4:00

Dr. Carol Newsom

Ancient Israelite moral culture generally assumed the existence of free moral agency—yet was perplexed by the problem of persistent bad choices. These issues were of particular salience since much of the religio-political discourse was framed in terms of the metaphor of the nation as moral agent. The defeat of the kingdom of Judah in 587 BCE was, not surprisingly, cast largely in terms of a crisis of moral agency. Inheriting this complex legacy and engaging other cultures' representations of moral anthropology, Second Temple Judaism explored radical alternatives to free moral agency, including predestination, inherently impaired agency, and demonic interference with human agency. Though speculative curiosity may explain part of the interest in these models of the moral self, such ideas were often developed as part of strategies that constructed social identity and difference. This seminar will examine aspects of these dynamics.

RLHB 792 – Issues in Hebrew Bible Studies-Methods in Hebrew Bible

Monday, 1:00-4:00

Dr. William K. Gilders

This seminar will provide an opportunity for students to establish familiarity with and competence in the application of diverse theoretical perspectives and methods within the field of biblical studies (e.g., textual criticism, redaction criticism, literary criticism, social scientific perspectives, gender criticism). The book of Leviticus will serve as the primary (but not exclusive) textual focus for the work of the seminar.

Required Texts:

-Mary Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature* (Oxford, 1999)

-James W. Watts, *Leviticus 1-10* (Historical Commentary on the Old Testament; Peeters, 2013)

RLHT 712 – Theology of Augustine

Thursday, 12:30-3:30

Dr. Anthony Briggman

This seminar will consider the life and thought of Augustine of Hippo. Our aim will be to grasp the fundamentals of Augustine's theology by examining his writings leading up to and following the turn of the fifth century. The working assumption of the seminar is that if you understand the developments that take place in Augustine's thought between 387 and 406, you will be prepared to understand his later thought as well. We shall use *Confessions* as the spine of the course, thereby enabling us to approach Augustine's thought chronologically for as long as a chronological approach works (that is, through *Confessions* 8). Using *Confessions* also permits us to encounter 'organically' many of the key features of his theology. Among the topics we shall explore are the following: the importance of Stoic moral psychology to his conception of the will, Manichaeism, the problem of evil, grace and conversion, the freedom of the will, his response to Pelagianism, his Trinitarian theology, and his Christology & response to Arianism.

Required Texts:

-Augustine: *Earlier Writings*. The Library of Christian Classics: Ichthus Edition. Edited by J.H.S. Burleigh. Westminster Press, 1953.

-Saint Augustine. *Confessions*. Oxford World's Classics. Translated and annotated by Henry Chadwick. Oxford University Press, 2009.

-Peter Brown. *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*. New edition with epilogue. University of California Press, 2000.

-James Wetzel. *Augustine and the limits of virtue*. Cambridge University Press, 2008.

RLHT 741 - Pseudonymous Authorship of Kierkegaard

Friday, 9:00-12:00

Dr. David Pacini

A close reading of Kierkegaard's *Pseudonymous Authorship*, guided by his "Point of View of My Authorship as a Whole" and supplemented by his "Upbuilding Discourses."

RLL 701 – Akkadian

Thursday, 9:30-11:00

Dr. Joel LeMon

The course is a basic study of the Akkadian language spanning two semesters. At the conclusion of the second semester, students will be able to read transliterated literary texts in Standard Babylonian with the help of a dictionary. Through the course of both semesters, the students will encounter the basic principles of Sumerian grammar. Students will also be equipped to navigate peripheral dialects of Akkadian. The students will also be able to grasp the essential elements of the Akkadian orthographic system.

RLNT 711 – The Gospel of Matthew

Friday, 2:30-5:30

Dr. Walter Wilson

An exegetically-guided investigation of Matthew's gospel with particular attention to:

1. The gospel's literary forms, sources, and composition
2. The evangelist's distinctive presentation of Jesus
3. Comparison of Matthew with various modalities and rhetorics of ancient discourse
4. The socio-ethical dynamics of Matthew's community, including its relationship with formative Judaism.

Assignments: Students will be asked to:

1. Translate Matthew's gospel as well as all relevant comparative texts in Aland's synopsis,
2. Give two or more presentations based on material in the relevant commentaries
3. Write a research paper of approximately ten thousand words.

Textbooks:

-Kurt Aland, ed., *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum* (13th rev. ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1986)

-W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison, *Matthew* (ICC; London: T. & T. Clark, 1988 ff.)

-Ulrich Luz, *Matthew* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989 ff.)

-John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew* (NIGNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005)

-Huub van de Sandt and Jürgen K. Zangenberg, *Matthew, James, and the Didache: Three Related Documents in Their Jewish and Christian Settings* (Atlanta: SBL, 2008).

RLNT 740 – Jewish Milieu of the New Testament

Tuesday, 2:30-5:30

Dr. Carl R. Holladay

The seminar introduces NT graduate students to aspects of Judaism in the Greco-Roman world that are relevant to understanding the NT and Christian origins. Besides providing a broad historical framework for understanding Judaism from the time of Alexander the Great to Hadrian, it examines a broad range of topics, e.g., Jewish groups and movements, Jewish apocalyptic, Qumran, Septuagint, Hellenization and Judaism, Rabbinic traditions, Philo, and Josephus. The aim is to read representative primary texts and secondary literature relating to each topic with a view to identifying current issues of scholarly debate, especially as they relate to the NT.

RLPC 710K – William James Seminar

Tuesday, 2:30-5:30

Dr. John Snarey

William James (1842-1910), a giant in American intellectual history, is variously considered to be the founding father of American psychology, the foremost and most American philosopher, and a pioneer in the psychological study of religion. This course embraces all three faces of James. The seminar begins with a psychological biography; then seminar members will become familiar first-hand with James's psychology by studying selected chapters from his classic volumes, *Psychology: The Briefer Course* (1892) and *Talks to Teachers on Psychology* (1899). Similar attention will be given to James's philosophical pragmatism by reading essays from his classic volumes, especially *Pragmatism* (1907) and *A Pluralistic Universe* (1909). Building on this biographical-psychological-philosophical foundation, the primary section of the seminar involves a close reading of James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), which is often regarded as the greatest classic in the psychological study of religion.

RLR 700/ ICIVS 720 – Topics in Religion

(Islamic Civilizations Studies)

Dr. Vincent J. Cornell

Thursday, 1:00-4:00

ICIVS 720 is designed to provide students with an introduction to the field of Islamic Civilizations Studies. The content of the course will cover Middle Eastern, Mediterranean, Central Asian, and South Asian area studies as they pertain to Islam and a critical investigation of the concept of civilization.

Texts:

-Marshall G. S. Hodgson's 3-volume *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*.

-Bruce Mazlish's *Civilization and Its Contents* (2005), which critically examines the development of the concept of civilization in the West.

RLR 700 – Topics in Religion / MESAS 570

(Debating Sexuality in Middle East and South Asia)

Wednesday, 10:00-1:00

Dr. Scott Kugle

This graduate seminar explores the veritable explosion of new studies over the last decade on issues related to sexuality, diversity and identity in the broad zone of Islamic and Hindu civilization (ranging from North Africa and Arabia to Turkey and Iran and across the Indian subcontinent). The seminar will focus on female sexuality, transgender behavior and homosexual orientation within the context of deeply rooted patriarchy in these civilizations. The seminar will examine how recent theoretical debates have affected and been affected by new research into the medieval and early-modern past, including the archives of theological dispute, poetic tradition and mythic literature.

RLR 700 – Topics in Religion

(Transnational Religion)

Tuesday, 10:00-1:00

Dr. Jim Hoesterey

Every religion is a global religion. In this seminar we will explore the religious, political, economic, and social transformations that occur when religious texts, traditions, and people travel across local, national, and regional borders. This seminar will cover multiple religious traditions including Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity. Seminar readings will explore theories of mobility, modernity, mimicry, translation, subjectivity, postcolonial studies, and more.

RLR 700 – Topics in Religion

(Virtues, Selves, and the Good)

Tuesday, 9:30-12:30

Dr. Pam Hall

What does ethics gain when it draws upon the language of the virtues? We will explore together significant work within the recent revival of “virtue ethics.” Thinkers in this revival have considered the nature of the virtues and their connections to human flourishing; how communities shape, or mis-shape, people in relation to the good; how the language of the virtues helps us to name important features of human emotional and ethical life.

In this seminar, we will read and discuss together a range of work from recent and contemporary reflection on the virtues bearing on these questions. This will include:

- Essays by Elizabeth Anscombe and Simone Weil, who were catalysts in the revival of virtue ethics.
- Iris Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good* and selections from her *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*.
- Alasdair MacIntyre’s *After Virtue* (in part) and *Dependent Rational Animals*
- Martha Nussbaum, *Love’s Knowledge* (sections)
- Jonathan Lear, *Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation*
- Essays by Bernard Williams, Thomas Nagel, Susan Wolf, Lisa Tessman
- We will also use film to feed our explorations of moral psychology and of the virtues. Films may include *Weapons of the Spirit*, *Trouble the Water*, *Winter’s Bone*, and *Of Gods and Men*.

Requirements include several short reflection papers, one 10-12 page paper, and one oral presentation.

Please, no audits.

RLR 701 – Social Justice

Thursdays, 2:30-5:30

Dr. Elizabeth Bounds

This course examines a selection of contemporary critical theories of justice and politics, in dialogue with selected work in Christian political discourse. We work comparatively by placing these theorists in conversation with one another; and we work critically by evaluating these theories on their own merits and in light of contemporary social problems and contexts. Beginning with the liberal accounts of justice offered by John Rawls and Reinhold Niebuhr, the course continues through a variety of different forms of critiques of liberal justice, including a cluster of recent works on political theology that primarily engage with Christian theology. Key questions include: the nature of the public sphere in a globalizing world, the limits of the nation state, the role of religion or theology in the public sphere, the violence of the state, the construction/formation of citizens.

Readings will include books or essays by: John Rawls, Reinhold Niebuhr, Charles Mills, Michael Walzer, Amartya Sen, Nancy Fraser, Iris Marion Young, Catholic Social Teachings, Juergen Habermas, Juergen Moltmann, Daniel Philpott, Paul Kahn, Giorgio Agamben, Judith Butler, Slavoj Zizek, Luke Bretherton.

In addition to weekly seminar preparation and participation, all students will lead discussion in one session and prepare 2 blog posts. They will also choose one other assignment from these options: designing and answering an examination question, preparing a research paper or preparing a portfolio of book reviews.

RLR 735 – Religion and Ecology: Transglobal and American Perspectives

Tuesday, 1:00-4:00

Dr. Bobbi Patterson

What do questions of sustainability have to do with ideas and practices of place? And what's religion got to do with it? What do we mean when we say 'place'? What religious, ecological, cultural, and social dynamics constellate 'place' – and how and why do they change? Do our connections and tensions with place reflect, confront, and shape our religious, communal, and ritual practices?

Which American religious traditions provide history, information, and models for noting, interacting with, and transmuting place?

What ethical and spiritual commitments are necessary for attention to, alliance with, and/or rejection of place? Which commitments will we seriously consider for sustainability in our lives and communities?

RLTS 725 - Theologies of Resistance: Martin Luther King, Jr. & Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Thursday, 6:00-9:00

Dr. Noel Leo Erskine

Theologians Martin Luther King, Jr. and Dietrich Bonhoeffer understood that there was an inseparable relationship between political engagement and theological reflection. Both theologians viewed as central Christ's sacrifice for humanity and the importance of action in the public square inspired and motivated by love of God and neighbor. King and Bonhoeffer place before us as a central question: How may we live a Christian life in the modern world? In their own lives they conjoined faith and existence as the modeled Christian discipleship. We will examine the lives and times of King and Bonhoeffer, giving particular attention to the political and ecclesial contexts in which they worked - the formation of their theologies and what they teach us concerning the ethics of responsible action in a world come of age. We will enquire whether or not there is an epistemological shift in the Christologies of King and Bonhoeffer in the latter portion of their lives. The class will investigate Reggie Williams' claim that Bonhoeffer met a

Black Jesus in Harlem during his study at Union Theological Seminary and his worship at Abyssinia Baptist Church. We will also probe Reinhold Niebuhr's influence on King's theology. Textual exposition and analysis will focus both on primary and secondary texts. What then, may we learn from these theologians concerning their confrontation with Nazism and racism in Germany and the United States?

Required Texts:

-Richard Lisher, *The Preacher King*

-Noel Leo Erskine, *King Among the Theologians*

-Martin Luther King, Jr. *Where Do We Go From Here?*

-Martin Luther King, Jr. *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story*

-Martin Luther King, Jr. *A Testament of Freedom: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.*
Edited by James Washington

-Martin Luther King, Jr. *Called to Serve, January 1929- June 1951. Vol.1 of the Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.* edited by Clayborne Carson

-Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*

-Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Christ the Center*

-Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letter & Papers from Prison*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *A Testament of Freedom*, edited by Geoffrey B. Kelly and F. Burton Nelson

Reggie L. Williams, *Bonhoeffer's Black Jesus*

Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Biography*

Charles Marsh, *Strange Glory: A Life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*