

## **Graduate Division of Religion**

### **Fall 2020 Course Atlas**

**(Please check back for changes and updates - last update 8.13.2020)**

#### **ICIVS 713 - Islamic Theology and Philosophy**

**Tuesday/Thursday, 4:20PM - 5:35PM**

**Vincent Cornell**

The purpose of this seminar is to introduce graduate students in Islamic Civilizations Studies, Religion, and related fields to the major schools and problems of Islamic religious thought. A major premise of the course is that contemporary trends in Islamic thought have historical antecedents in early and medieval Islamic theology and philosophy. This class is designed to provide a knowledge base from which graduate students can better contextualize contemporary Islamic theology in their research. The seminar invites graduate students and advanced undergraduates in a variety of disciplines to read and discuss Islamic texts, and to become acquainted with the rich and diverse universe of Islamic Intellectual life. A term paper and brief weekly responses to assigned texts will be required of all students. Papers linking classical Islamic theology and philosophy to contemporary theological trends are especially encouraged, but students will be free to choose topics that best suit their own interests.

#### **RLHT 710 - Early Christian Worship**

**Wednesday/Friday, 1:00PM-2:30PM**

**L. Edward Phillips**

This seminar considers the origins Christian worship and sacrament from the New Testament into the late patristic period, including, but not limited to, the development of eucharistic prayers, the rites of initiation, the liturgical year, and daily prayer. The seminar will examine 1) the documents, monuments, and other evidence for establishing our knowledge of early Christian liturgical practice; 2) the evolving critical problems surrounding this evidence; 3) and the methods for evaluating ancient sources. Special consideration will be given to the so-called "Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus" and other ancient church orders.

Particulars :

1. Students will make class presentations on prescribed texts (possible examples: The "Didache"; Tertullian, "On Baptism"; daily prayer material in the "Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus") and topics (examples: origins of Holy Week; the development of eucharistic prayers; arrangement of liturgical space), and lead the class in discussion of these texts. Presentations should contain a survey of scholarship and an analysis of what can and cannot be learned from the text. Presentations of a topic will follow a similar format. Students will prepare outlines of their presentations, with a bibliography of relevant secondary literature, to distribute to the class at the time of the presentation.

2. Each student will produce a final research paper in consultation with the instructor and make a presentation of the work for the class.

**RLHT 735 - Histories of Religions in the United States**

**Friday, 11:20-2:15**

**Alison Collis Greene**

This course introduces the religious history of the region that is now the United States from its indigenous roots to the present. The course blends the methods of history and religious studies, focusing on conversations across the two disciplines, with readings drawn from both. The course structure is chronological and thematic, considering the ways we define religion and the secular/Christian tensions that structure United States political and social systems. We begin with a reflection on the meaning of “religion,” followed by a textbook that offers a broad survey of United States history from an indigenous perspective. Students in the course can expect to learn the broad contours of United States religious history through the core weekly readings, divided into four units. Each unit begins with both an assigned monograph, memoir, or textbook alongside an article that frames some of the questions we will ask of those texts.

**RLR 700 - Engaging Moral Lifeworlds: A Cross Disciplinary Exploration**

**Monday, 3:00PM-6:00PM**

**Liz Bounds**

This course engages recent scholarship across several disciplinary areas (including anthropology of ethics, study of lived religion, moral philosophy, and theology/Christian ethics) exploring ordinary human meaning-making or moral work, asking a set of crosscutting questions of the texts:

--What are the assumptions about the nature of morality and/or ethics?

And is there attention to religion, subjectivity, narrative/discourse/story, experience and/or agency?

--What are the genealogies shaping the approach? How are institutional formations engaged?

--What conceptual framework and method is used to engaged “lived-ness”—e.g., experience, story, practice, performance, etc.

--What are the relations of power and accountability at work, both acknowledged and unacknowledged (including the relations among scholar, audience, and subject)?

The questions posed to the texts point to further questions of the nature and transmission of morality, particularly in relation to religious practices. Authors read may include: Pierre Bourdieu, Didier Fassin, Marla Frederick, Webb Keane, G. Derrick Lemons, Saba Mahmood, Cheryl Mattingly, Andrew Sayer, Margaret Urban Walker, Todd Whitmore

**RLR 700 - Caste in Indian Traditions**

**Thursday, 9:00-12:00**

**Joyce Flueckiger**

**RLR 700 - THE PURĀṆAS**

**Wednesday, 10:00-1:00**

**Ellen Gough**

This course will examine the histories and present-day uses of perhaps the most important texts for the

study of South Asian religions: the Purāṇas. We will read, in translation, selections from various Sanskrit, Prakrit, and vernacular Purāṇas along with foundational secondary scholarship on these texts. Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain Purāṇas will be examined, along with scholarship that uses text-historical, art-historical, and ethnographic methods. This will allow us to understand and critique existing methods of study and develop new ways into these texts. Topics we will address include the history of temple worship on the subcontinent, the development of certain sectarian and caste identities, the relationship between ritual and philosophy, and the identification of sacred times and places.

#### SELECTED READINGS:

- Coburn, Thomas B. *Devī-Māhātmya. The Crystallization of the Goddess Tradition*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1984.
- Das, Veena. *Structure and Cognition: Aspects of Hindu Caste and Ritual*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- Dimmitt, Cornelia, and J. A. B. van Buitenen. *Classical Hindu Mythology: A Reader in the Sanskrit Purāṇas*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978.
- Doniger, Wendy, ed. *Purāṇa Perennis: Reciprocity and Transformation in Hindu and Jaina Texts*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993.
- Hardy, Friedheim. *Viraha-Bhakti: The Early History of Kṛṣṇa Devotion in South India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Hazra, Rajendra Charma. *Studies in the Purāṇic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975.
- Narayana Rao, Velcheru. "Purāṇa." In *The Hindu World*. Edited by Sushil Mittal and Gene Thursby, 97–115. New York and London: Routledge, 2004.
- Rocher, Ludo. *A History of Indian Literature*. Vol. 2, *Epics and Sanskrit Religious Literature*, Fasc. 3, *The Purāṇas*. Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz, 1986.
- Shulman, David. *Tamil Temple Myths: Sacrifice and Divine Marriage in the South Indian Śaiva Tradition*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980.
- Taylor, McComas. *Seven days of Nectar: Contemporary Oral Performance of the Bhāgavatapurāṇa*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Wilson, Horace Hayman. *The Viṣṇu Purāṇa: A System of Hindu Mythology and Tradition*. Calcutta, India: Punthi Pustak, 1961.
- Selections of various Hindu Purāṇas, including the *Viṣṇu*, *Bhāgavata*, *Skanda*, and *Mārkaṇḍeya*
- Selections from some Jain and Buddhist Purāṇas

**RLR 700 - Ethics and Narrative**  
**Thursday, 9:00AM-12:00PM**  
**Pam Hall**

*\*This seminar will fulfill one of the required Theories and Methods seminars*

This seminar will ask how narrative helps us to imagine and to represent human experience, human vulnerabilities, and human connection to value. How does narrative work help to expand our sense of what it means to be human? How too can it fail or fall short in the face of certain experiences and certain challenges to selfhood and human community?

We will read both philosophical and theological reflections on narrative in asking these questions, but we will not stop with “theory.” The seminar will also consider together a range of different sorts of narrative, across genres, in order to explore the challenges and dimensions of narrative work. We will read fiction, memoir, ethnography, history, and film in thinking about stories and human lives. We will consider how each genre deploys the resources of narrative and how each may amplify its efficacies.

We will draw on the insights of recent virtue ethics for ways to connect narrative to ethical life; this area of ethics has drawn repeatedly on narrative for its arguments and expressions. In particular, we will discuss the concepts of moral formation, moral imagination, human vulnerability, tragedy, and flourishing within virtue ethics. It is no accident that narrative art is deployed to imagine, and to understand more fully, such central human experiences.

A primary goal of the seminar will be to build a “toolkit” of analytical and interpretive skills for approaching narrative in a range of contexts and disciplines.

**Texts:**

- Selected essays by Susan Sontag, Barbara Hardy, Iris Murdoch, Alasdair MacIntyre on narrative and the moral life.
- Richard Kearney, *On Stories*, Routledge, 9 780415 247986
- Rita Charon, *Narrative Medicine*, Oxford, 978 019 534022 8
- Cheryl Mattingly, *Moral Laboratories*, U California Press 978 0520 28120 2. (ethnography)
- Toni Morrison, *Beloved*, Vintage 978 1 4000 3341 6
- Janisse Ray, *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood*, Milkweed 1 57131 247 1 (memoir)
- Essay, Jill Lepore, “Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography”
- *History Lessons: A Memoir of Madness, Memory, and the Brain* by Clifton Crais
- Films: *Wit* (2010); *Trouble the Water* (2008); *Winter’s Bone* (2010); *Infamous* (2006).

(Please note, there may be some revision of this list of texts.)

**RLR 700 - Ethnographies of Islam**

**Monday, 10:00-1:00**

**Jim Hoesterey**

In this seminar, we will learn about the development of “an idea of the anthropology of Islam” (cf. Asad 1984) through a careful reading of recent ethnographies about Islam as a *lived* religion. Beginning with Geertz and Gellner, and moving through Asad, Mahmood and their recent critics (Schielke et al), we will examine the theoretical and epistemological fault lines within the study of Islam more broadly, thinking about where ethnography and anthropological theory fit within the wider field of Islamic studies (if at all). Through a careful reading of several recent ethnographies, we will think through issues such as religious authority, texts and traditions, contested practices, and embodied affects. We will discuss themes of ethical discipline and moral cultivation, while also attending to the roles of anxiety, doubt, and ambivalence – the pious as well as those who have “strayed from the straight path” (cf Beekers and Kloos).

**RLR 700 / ICIVS 716 -Islamic Society in South Asia**

**Monday/Wednesday, 4:20-5:35**

**Scott Kugle**

This seminar offers an exploration of concepts and controversies related to the Muslim presence in South Asia. The seminar will cover a geographic spread including India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, and it will address a chronological span covering Sultanate (11th to 15th centuries) and Mughal periods (16th to 18th centuries). Of particular importance are questions of imperial conquest, role of religion in governance, role of Sufism in social formations, Hindu-Muslim encounter and literary production.

**RLR 700 - Postcolonial Trajectories in Practical Theology**

**Wednesday, 1:00PM-4:00PM**

**Emmanuel Lartey**

*\*This seminar will fulfill one of the required Theories and Methods seminars*

A critical study of historic and contemporary models and methods of Practical Theology with particular attention to postcolonial and critical social studies. Discussions will include (i) the changing historical identity of the disciplines of Practical Theology; (ii) the interdisciplinary nature of practical theology including its relations with the human sciences and contemporary understandings of the human condition; (iii) interactions between theology and practice; (iv) methods and logic of theological reflection; (v) Inter-religious theological practice. Authors to be studied include Fanon; Mbembe; Sugirtharajah; and Althaus-Reed.

**RLR 700 - The Gospel of Matthew**

**Wednesday, 3:00PM-4:30PM**

**Walter Wilson**

An exegetically-guided investigation of the first gospel with particular attention to: [1] the content, forms, sources, background, and construction of the gospel itself, [2] the evangelist’s distinctive presentation of Jesus, [3] comparison of the text with various modalities and rhetorics of ancient

discourse, [4] ways in which the text reflects the socio-ethical dynamics of the evangelist's community, including its relationship with formative Judaism. Our focus throughout is on the gospel in its originating context, as opposed to, say, its relationship to the historical Jesus or its reception history.

**RLR 700 - Methods of Biblical Interpretation**

**Wednesday, 9:00-12:00**

**Jacob Wright**

In this course, we will work through a wide selection of texts from the Hebrew Bible. The selection is based on suggestions from participants in the course,. In our engagement with each text, we will explore different methods of interpretation as well as the major issues and questions that these texts have posed for biblical studies, both past and present. We will also think together about best practices in academic writing and publishing.