

## **GDR – Spring 2014 Course Atlas**

### **RLR700/BIOETH 505 – Bioethics & Religion, Cory Labrecque**

This course examines Jewish, Christian, and Islamic perspectives on several bioethical issues and aspects of health care. After a constructive exploration of fundamental themes and principles at the intersection of religion and medicine, the course will focus on religious debates that engage the practical dimension of ethics. Some of the topics that we will study include: the meaning of suffering and healing in the religious traditions, personhood, assisted reproductive technologies, enhancement, persistent vegetative state, and organ donation.

### **RLR 700/ATA 481 - Research Seminar in Practical Theology, Greg Ellison**

#### **A. Course Description**

Many researchers begin their studies with more than a hypothesis. Some actually believe that words on a page can build communities, heal wounds, and ultimately change lives. While this course will chart the methodological shifts that have led to this action-oriented epistemology, primary attention will be given to examining qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches in practical theology and social scientific research. Consistent with the course focus of research as a vehicle of social and/or intrapsychic change, students will examine assess the motivation and telos driving their research interests.

#### **B. Objectives**

As the dissertation is the centerpiece of doctoral study, this course will prepare students to propose their research thoroughly and succinctly and provide the basic skills to conduct empirical research. Students will have a grasp of the following concepts by the end of the semester:

- 1) The basic mechanics of thesis writing and bibliographic research/lit review.
- 2) The epistemological/philosophical underpinnings of quantitative, mixed, and qualitative methods of research.
- 3) The Relationship between Theological Reflection and Social Research
- 4) The basic principles, methods and appropriate applications of quantitative research, including appropriate uses of statistical tests, software for data analysis, and criteria for evaluation.
- 5) The basic principles, methods and appropriate applications of qualitative research, including a variety of interview-based, case study, and ethnographic approaches, software for data analysis, and criteria for evaluation.

### **RLL 701 – Akkadian, Friday 11-12:30, 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.

### **RLR 700 – The Gospel of John, Monday, 2:00-5:00, Susan Hylan**

Translation and interpretation of the Gospel of John

**RLE 701R – Social Justice, Wednesday, 1:00-4:00, Liz Bounds**

Content: This course examines contemporary critical theories of justice, evaluating these theories on their own merits and in light of contemporary social problems and contexts. Themes include: definitions of justice, relation of economic and social/cultural justice, role of religion, understanding of race, gender, and sexuality, attention to punishment.

Possible Texts:

John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*; Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice*; Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*; Iris Marion Young, *Responsibility for Justice*; Nancy Fraser, *Scales of Justice*; Judith Butler et al. *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere*; Jürgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*; Seyla Benhabib, *Situating the Self*; Patricia Hill Collins, *Fighting Words*; Kathryn Tanner, *Politics of God*; Martha Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*

Particulars: In addition to weekly seminar preparation and participation, students will lead discussion, write 2 op-ed pieces, and choose from other assignment options including: designing and answering an examination question, applying a theory to a specific situation, and preparing a research/analytic paper.

**RLAR 738B/MESAS 570-Debating Sexuality in the Middle East and South Asia, TBA, Scott Kugle**

This graduate seminar will explore the veritable explosion of new studies that emerged 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, through the Middle East widely construed to include Turkey and Central Asia, and across South Asia). 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 prose literature.

**RLR 700R - Ritual Wins-From Pythagoreans to Therapy & Process Theology, Thursday, 2:00-5:00 Thee Smith**

Consider these iconic titles in religious studies: *From Medicine Men to Muhammad* (1967), and *From Primitives to Zen* (1974). Coined by the eminent religion scholar, Mircea Eliade, they are NOT among the books assigned for this doctoral seminar. But the titles are suggestive for indicating the span of this course from ritual studies to narrative therapy/theology and reaching beyond current developments in process philosophy and theology. Thus the course subheading borrows Eliade's framework invoked above to envision a lineage or genealogy of philosophical and religious thought that extends, we might say, 'From Pythagoreans to Psychotherapists & Process Theologians.' Who was Pythagoras?

“A peculiar kind of splendor surrounds the name of Pythagoras of Samos [570-480 BCE] . . . Pythagoras has a guaranteed place not only in musicology [and music as therapy], mathematics, and the history of science but also in the history of philosophy and religion; in addition, he has proved attractive to esoteric movements down to the present day . . . making him seem closer to holy men and mystics of the Eastern and Western traditions. (Christoph Riedweg, *Pythagoras: His Life, Teaching, and Influence* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 2002/2005, pp. ix, 1) Pythagoras is even credited by ancient sources with coining the word “philosophy.” His modern successors in philosophical thought however might well be found among process theologians. The Pythagorean influence on religious thought however might best be related to the word *theurgy* rather than *theology*, meaning the practice of rituals, whether regarded as magical, mystical, or sacramental, for the purpose of invoking or inducing the action or presence of God or the gods, particularly with a goal of divine union or human perfection (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theurgy> ).

This emphasis reflects our course interest in ritual theory and practices, as iconically conveyed by the subheading of Catherine Pickstock’s *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* (Wiley-Blackwell, 1997). Her thematic idea, that philosophies and theologies can be ‘consummated’ in ritual or substantiated by liturgical practices, either focused or expansive, will itself be consummated by attention to the cognitive and moral development perspectives of Robert Kegan. “If contemporary culture were a school, with all the tasks and expectations meted out by modern life as its curriculum, would anyone graduate? In the spirit of a sympathetic teacher, Robert Kegan guides us through this tricky curriculum, assessing the fit between its complex demands and our mental capacities, and showing what happens when we find ourselves, as we so often do, in over our heads.” In that vein the seminar culminates in Kegan’s illuminating work on modernity and postmodernity, *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life* (Harvard: 1998; Amazon.com "Book Description" above) and its therapeutic, theological, and social constructivist implications for contemporary religion and ethics.

**RLAR 752R – Advanced Readings in Literary Tibetan, TBA, John Dunne**

**RLHS 735 – Topics in American Religious History: Popular Cultures, Friday, 10:00-1:00, Gary Laderman, Callaway S221**

This seminar follows three interrelated pursuits: inquiry into historical method; defining religion; and reframing American identity. They intersect, for this particular course, in "popular culture," a nebulous, suspicious, disruptive category that will provide us with conceptual and material boundaries for our inquiries over the course of the term. We will have a decidedly historical lens, and examine popular cultures and their religious elements. For this, our attention will be fixed on violence and sex; monsters and criminals; scandals and the apocalypse—as well as reform of society and moral instruction; patriotism and national celebration; satire and melodrama. This historical study of religion and popular cultures in America encompasses media and communication technologies along with print and visual cultures, and explores how religious sensibilities figure in to entertainment and consumer cultures in the 19th and 20th centuries.

**RLHB 720N – Leviticus (exegetical seminar), Monday, 1:00-4:00, William Gilders**

**RLR 700R – Intro to the Study of Religious Practices, Thursday, 9:00-12:00, Ted Smith & L. Edward Phillips**

**RLR 700R/GRAD 700 - Partnering Communities and Universities:  
The Transformative Power of Community-Engaged Research, Scholarship, and Teaching, Monday,  
2:30-5:30, Bobbi Patterson & Violla Hartfield-Mendez**

Community-engaged research, scholarship, and teaching describe a constellation of activities emerging from partnerships between university faculty and students and community members beyond the academy. This work attempts to leverage the expertise of universities in partnership with local groups for community-identified concerns and projects. Much of this scholarship and teaching intends to be action-oriented. Welcoming students from all disciplines, this course design will contribute to positive change in complex university-community partnerships by better preparing young scholars for this intellectual work, reaching beyond simple technical explanations and solutions. Designed to develop researchers able to choose flexible means and appropriate theories for ethical, partnered, and evidence-based inquiry, this course prepares graduate students for excellent contributions to community-driven change.

**RLHT 712R – Theology of Augustine, Tuesday 9:00-12:00, 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, his Christology and response to Arianism.

**RLNT 770 – History of NT Interpretation II, Monday 1:30-4:30, Vernon Robbins**

This seminar covers interpretation of the New Testament from the sixteenth century to the present. It will begin with an exploration of forces at work in New Testament interpretation during the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic Counter Reformation, and new developments during the eighteenth century. After this, it will investigate the nineteenth and twentieth century contexts of analysis and interpretation of history, myth, philosophical truth, and biblical theology in which the literary-historical methods of text, source, form, tradition, and redaction criticism emerged. Then the seminar will turn to late twentieth century and current twenty-first century modes and methods for interpreting the New Testament. An overall goal of the seminar is to gain an understanding of the contexts that gave rise to literary-historical approaches and to assess their relation to additional approaches that have emerged during the last four decades of analysis and interpretation

Participants in the seminar will read secondary sources as guides to primary interpretive literature. The emphasis, however, will be on primary interpretive sources. Specific examples of interpretation will be especially important.

### **RLAR 738/ICIVS 720 – Islamic Civilizations Studies, Monday, 3:00-6:00, Vincent Cornell**

Of interest and relevance to all GDR students in Islam and those interested in the concept of Islamic Civilizations.

Content: This course is an advanced graduate-level introduction to the field of Islamic Civilizations Studies. The course is divided into two parts. The first part is an introduction to the concept of civilization, using Bruce Mazlish's recent work, *Civilization and Its Contents* (2005). Students will learn that civilization is not a neutral or innocent concept, but rather was conceived ideologically and has profound political, cultural, and theoretical implications. This part of the course will conclude with a critique of Samuel P. Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (1996). Students will write a conference-length paper comparing Mazlish's and Huntington's approaches to civilization and critically assessing their value for the field of Islamic Civilizations Studies. Later they will write a conference-length paper arguing for or against the concept of early Islam as a world civilization. The second part of the course will consist of a critical examination of major issues in Islamic Civilizations Studies, based on Marshall G. S. Hodgson's three-volume classic, *The Venture of Islam* (1974). Issues to be discussed will include the relation of early Islam to the civilizations of late antiquity, intercultural and interreligious relations in the caliphate period, the concept of the "classical" in Islamic civilization, the problem of sources of knowledge in Islamic thought, minority communities in Islam, women in Islamic society, and cultural patterning in civilizational worldviews. The readings assigned for this part of the course challenge long-held paradigms and perspectives in the field. Students are expected to challenge what they read in order to develop their own approach to the study of Islamic civilizations. This portion of the course also includes a PSI section on the ethics of teaching and public scholarship in Islamic Civilizations Studies. The PSI session is taught by a separate instructor. This will usually be the ICIVS DGS unless the DGS is the course instructor. The course will conclude with an article-length research paper on one of the theoretical issues discussed in the class.

#### Objectives:

- ? To gain a detailed understanding of the field of Islamic Civilizations Studies.
- ? To gain a critical understanding of the concept of civilization.
- ? To gain a critical understanding of the main theoretical issues in Islamic Civilizations Studies.
- ? To learn about the ethics of teaching and public scholarship in Islamic Studies and ICIVS.
- ? To learn to present one's ideas orally before an audience.
- ? To learn to write papers for presentation at conferences.
- ? To learn to write an article-length research paper on a theoretical issue in Islamic Civilizations Studies.

### **RLHB 792A – Religious Poetry in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Wednesday, 1:00-4:00, Carol Newsom**

This seminar explores the nature of religious poetry in the Dead Sea Scrolls with a particular focus on the Hodayot. Considerable attention will be given to reading and analyzing the Hebrew text, so that the course can serve as an advanced Hebrew offering. By way of orientation, the course will begin with an overview of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the place of the Qumran community within Second Temple Judaism. Topical issues to be pursued in relation to the Hodayot include (a) analysis of poetic devices and forms; (b) intertextuality and its functions; (c) theological topoi; (d) performativity, religious experience, and mysticism; (e) formation of subjectivity, sectarian identity, and religious leadership through rhetorical positioning. Seminar papers may be exegetical or topical.

#### Possible Readings:

Schuller, Eileen, and Carol Newsom, *The Hodayot (Thanksgiving Psalms): A Study Edition of IQH<sup>a</sup>*

Hughes, Julie A. *Scriptural Allusions and Exegesis in the Hodayot*  
 Harkins, Angela Kim, *Reading with an "I" to the Heavens: Looking at the Qumran Hodayot Through the Lens of Visionary Traditions*  
 Newsom, Carol A. *The Self as Symbolic Space: Constructing Identity and Community at Qumran*  
 Davila, James. "The Hodayot Hymnist and the Four who Entered Paradise," *RevQ* 17 (1996): 457-78  
 Daise, Michael. "Creation Motifs in the Qumran Hodayot." Pp. 293-305 in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Fifty Years after Their Discovery*, 2000.  
 Chazon, Esther G. "Liturgical Function in the Cave 1 Hodayot Collection." Pp. 135-49 in *Qumran Cave 1 Revisited*  
 Alexander Philip S. "Qumran and the Genealogy of Western Mysticism." Pp. 215-35 in *New Perspectives on Old Texts*  
 Wolfson, Elliot R. "Seven Mysteries of Knowledge: Qumran E/Sotericism Recovered," Pp. 177-213 in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation*  
 Schuller, Eileen. "Recent Scholarship on the Hodayot 1993-2010," *CBR* 10 (2011): 119-62

**RLR 700R – Contemplative Theology, Thursday, 12:30-3:30, Wendy Farley**

Primary texts from the Christian contemplative tradition offer distinctive accounts of the nature of reality, of philosophical anthropology, the nature of the church and its authority, and the interlocking roles of contemplative practice, theology, and watching the mind. Since contemplative practice and theology tended to exist on the border of authoritative institutions, many of these texts, especially those written by women, were written in situations of difficulty and danger. Many were implicitly, sometimes explicitly, engaged with social and political issues. Both the distinctiveness of these writers' thought and its significance for considering the relationships between politics and religion will be explored. The class will focus on primary texts but will also attend to contemplative practice as part of the class.

Examples of Texts:

Marguerite Porete, *Mirror of Simple Souls*  
 Julian of Norwich, *Showings*  
 John of the Cross, *Collected Writings*  
 Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle*  
 Pseudo Dionysius, *Divine Names and Mystical Theology*  
 Evagrius Ponticus, *Praktikos*

Students will write two shorter (2-4 page) and one longer (12-15 page) term paper. In addition, students may be invited to do one presentation on secondary material related to the class.