FALL 2013

RELIGION 170-0-20: Religion in Human Experience
Richard Kieckhefer
MoWeFr 1-1:50pm
Fisk Hall 217

This course will introduce basic questions about religion, focusing on five specific religious traditions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Among the questions we will examine are these: how traditions arise and define certain texts and ideas as authoritative; how differences of perception lead to alternative branches within a religious tradition; how religion is manifested in the lives of contemporary individuals and communities; how sacred narratives or myths function within religions; how ideas about sacrifice become transformed; how meditation and contemplation become represented as ways to intensify religious awareness and achieve sainthood; how monotheist traditions relate to other forms of religion; how fundamentalisms arise and function in various religions; how theorists have imagined the origins of religion; how people have argued for a common set of moral norms, or shared mystical experience, as a core that underlies all religion.

RELIGION 210-0-20: Introduction to Buddhism
Antonio Terrone
MoWe 3:30-4:50pm
Harris Hall L06

This course provides an introduction to key aspects of the Buddhist religious traditions in South and East Asian societies. Through careful examination of a variety of literature produced by these traditions, we will consider the many ways in which Buddhists have understood human suffering, life after death, karma, the nature of the world and human’s place within it, and the path to enlightenment. Our emphasis will be on attempting to understand the moral values, philosophical insights, ritual practices, and social concerns that have shaped Buddhism over centuries of dynamic change in diverse cultural contexts. We will examine not only the history of Buddhism and its three-fold division into Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana/Tantrayana, but also facets of the contemporary practice of Buddhism in the United States and the role of socially engaged Buddhism.
RELIGION 230-0-20: Introduction to Judaism
Barry Wimpfheimer
MoWeFr 12-12:50pm
Fisk Hall 217

This course provides an introduction to key aspects of the Buddhist religious traditions in South and East Asian societies. Through careful examination of a variety of literature produced by these traditions, we will consider the many ways in which Buddhists have understood human suffering, life after death, karma, the nature of the world and human’s place within it, and the path to enlightenment. Our emphasis will be on attempting to understand the moral values, philosophical insights, ritual practices, and social concerns that have shaped Buddhism over centuries of dynamic change in diverse cultural contexts. We will examine not only the history of Buddhism and its three-fold division into Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana/Tantrayana, but also facets of the contemporary practice of Buddhism in the United States and the role of socially engaged Buddhism.

RELIGION 250-0-20: Introduction to Islam
Brannon Ingram
MoWeFr 11-11:50am
Leverone Auditorium Owen Coon

This course introduces Islam, one of the major monotheistic religious traditions of world history. We will develop a framework for understanding how Muslims in varying times and places have engaged with the prophetic message of the Prophet Muhammad through diverse sources: theological, philosophical, legal, political, mystical, literary and artistic. While we aim to grasp broad currents and narratives of Islamic history, we will especially concentrate on the origins and development of the religion in its formative period (the prophetic career of the Prophet Muhammad, the Qur'an, Islamic belief and ritual, Islamic law, and popular spirituality) and debates surrounding Islam in the contemporary world (the impact of European colonialism on the Muslim world, the rise of the modern Muslim state, and discourses on gender, politics and violence).
RELIGION 318-0-20: Topics in East Asian Religions: Religion in the People's Republic of China
Antonio Terrone
MoWe 12:30-1:50pm
Annenberg Hall G31

This course examines the role, current revival, and the socio-political implications of the practice of religion in the People's Republic of China (PRC) both from a legal and socio-historical perspective. Students will read and discuss primary Chinese documents in translation and secondary works about the five officially recognized religions in China (Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Daoism, and Islam) and explore the controversy around popular religions and illegal congregations. Furthermore, this course will look at the way religion, ethnicity, and politics intersect in China through an analysis of the case the Muslim Uyghurs of Xinjiang and Tibetan Buddhists of Western China.

RELIGION 333-0-20: Judaism in the Modern World
Yakir Englander
TuTh 3:30-4:50pm
Harris Hall L28

Judaism as a religion tries to establish a covenant between the believer (the Jewish person) and God. The type of covenant which is established depends on the personality of the human being and the specific way that God is revealed in the world. Judaism is unique compared to other monotheist religions in two elements: One, for generations the Jewish covenant was established mostly by Halakha – the Jewish Law. Second, the quality of the covenant between the Jews and God was expressed prominent within Judaism by a struggle between Jews and God: The believer expressed his/her love to God by not agreeing with God.

In the course we will focus on the different kind of covenants Jews created with God, mostly by struggling with God. In the first part of the course we will focus on some classical Jewish texts, those texts which established the foundations for the Jewish covenants with God. In the second and the central part of the course we will read from the writings of Jewish Theologians, philosophers and writers in the 20th. We will focus on the God who searches for human relationship with it; on the covenant with God who let the Holocaust to happen and on the existential loneliness in the modern life.
**RELIGION 340-1-20: Foundations of Christian Thought I**  
Richard Kieckhefer  
TuTh 9:30-10:50am  
Parkes Hall 224

This course will examine the central issues in early and medieval Christian thought. We will begin with two works that show Christian thinkers struggling with theological issues that arise largely from their own experience: St. Augustine’s Confessions and Julian of Norwich’s Showings. Then we will examine the teachings on God, Christ, and justification. We will also to some extent ask how modern and contemporary Christian theology has criticized and reinterpreted traditional notions.

**RELIGION 342-0-20: Christian Mystical Theology**  
Barbara Newman  
MoWeFr 2-2:50pm  
University Hall 101

The word "mysticism" is one of the most slippery terms in religious studies, but within the Christian tradition it can be defined as the experiential knowledge of God, together with the practices that prepare for such experience and the transformations that flow from it. Christian mystical theology answers such questions as: What does "mystical experience" reveal about the nature of God? How does it transform the devotee? How does it relate to the ordinary Christian practices of prayer, worship, and Bible study? What are its ethical consequences? How can genuine mystical experience be distinguished from delusion? In this course we will approach such questions by reading a wide variety of mystics, but we will concentrate on four figures from the golden age of Christian mysticism: St. Bernard of Clairvaux (twelfth century), Mechthild of Magdeburg (thirteenth), Henry Suso (fourteenth), and St. John of the Cross (sixteenth). We will pay special attention to mystical texts that represent a convergence of the ascetic and the erotic elements in religion.

**RELIGION 344-0 – 20: Christian Ethics**  
Cristina Traina  
TuTh 3:30-4:50pm  
Harris Hall L06

We will begin with an overview of contemporary approaches to Christian ethics, with some attention to their historical background, and then move to discussions of guidelines for ethical analysis and action that have been proposed by representative Roman Catholic, mainline Protestant, and conservative evangelical moralists. Topics to be discussed include war, capital punishment, sexuality, and economy.
In the previous two centuries, Muslim societies from Morocco to Indonesia contended with new conditions of modernity and the global dominance of the West. As many of these societies transitioned from empire to colony to postcolony, Muslim thinkers, scholars, activists and political leaders grappled with these momentous shifts through vocabularies of ‘reform’ and ‘revival’. But what did it mean to ‘reform’ or ‘revive’ Islam? While some conceived the revivalist project as an embrace of modernity, others saw it as a return to Islam’s ‘origins’, even as that very notion was informed by the modernity these revivalists sought to circumvent. After reviewing some approaches to what we mean by ‘the modern’ and ‘modernity’, we will explore these debates via a number of intersecting problematics: new discourses on Shari’a and the Islamic state, challenges to ‘traditional’ structures of religious authority, the impact of print and the emergence of lay Muslim reading publics, critiques of Sufism and its defense, and the rise of Islamist thought. While these changes were felt throughout Muslim societies, we will draw our examples principally from three locales: Egypt, Iran and the Indian subcontinent.

An examination of the major social and religious transformations in American Catholicism during and after the Second Vatican Council. Topics include: changing roles of priests and nuns; innovations in Catholic ritual and devotion; radical Catholicism; and the making of a new ways of being Catholic.
RELIGION 385-0-20: Topics in United States Catholicism: Contemporary American Catholicism
Katherine Dugan
We 1-3:30pm
Crowe 4-138

In this course, we will study contemporary culture and practice of American Catholics through a series of major themes—for example: Catholics in pop culture, the sex abuse crisis, Catholic forms of prayer, American Catholics and birth control, and American Catholics and gender. The course will begin with a brief history of American Catholicism and then focus primarily on Catholicism in the later half of the 20th and early 21st centuries. We will use a wide variety of scholarship to explore how Catholics in America pray, are involved in politics, and we will try to understand their attitudes toward gender roles, sexuality, and social justice. The course is organized as series of case studies—each we delve into a different topic in American Catholicism. The assessment for this course will be through discussion in seminars, two short reaction papers, and a final, longer, paper. The final paper is not a large research project, but a synthesis paper that reflects your learning in the course and your thinking about the course readings.

RELIGION 395-0: Theories of Religion
J Michelle Molina
Th 11-1:50pm
University Library 3370

What is "theory"? What does it mean to have a theory about something? How are theories helpful? What do theories do? What is "religion"? How do things get excluded or included in this category? What counts as "religious" and why? Who gets to decide? This course is an introduction to foundational theories of religion and to the history of the construction of the category of "religion" over time. Throughout the term, you will be working on formulating your own theory of religion, which you will articulate and defend in your final seminar paper. In this course, you will gain (as ritual theorist Catherine Bell says) "the skills and tools to make sure that very complicated situations and ideas can be put into words, thereby making it possible to have discussions about issues that can only be discussed if there is language for reflexivity, nuance, counter-evidence, and doubt." In the process, you will be asked to make theory translatable to your peers by actively engaging theoretical concept in creative ways.
RELIGION 396-1-20: Senior Seminar
Sarah Taylor
Mo 3-5:00pm
University Hall 112

This seminar is for advanced senior majors only who meet our stated department requirements for honors consideration. In this seminar, students are guided through the honors thesis writing process while engaging with seminar mates in a workshop environment. We explore pieces of exemplary expository writing, discuss approaches to working with primary sources, learn advanced research strategies, and become skilled at editing and revising. More broadly, this seminar teaches project management skills applicable to most any career path (applying to graduate school, searching for a job, writing a grant, completing a project assigned by one's employer, starting a business, etc.). We will learn how to schedule a large project, how to break it down into smaller steps, and then how to make steady progress toward completion. Life/work balance skills will also be discussed, and students will learn strategies for prioritizing. Students will be encouraged to think about their life goals as they head toward graduation and what sorts of steps they can take toward achieving those goals. Attendance and active workshop participation is required. Instructor approval code is needed to register.

Registration Requirements:
Advanced senior Religious Studies majors, who meet department requirements for honors consideration and with the permission of the instructor.
FALL 2013 GRADUATE COURSES

RELIGION 471-0-20 / POLI_SCI 490-0-22 / LEGAL_ST 376-0-21:
Studies in History of Religions: Law, Religion and Global Politics
Elizabeth Hurd
Fr 9-11:50pm
Scott Hall 201 Ripton Room

This seminar examines critical themes at the intersection of politics, law and religion in international and cross-cultural perspective. We begin by analyzing several broad concepts that organize and inform contemporary international political thought and practice in this area including religion, law, pluralism, rights and toleration. We then examine the specific histories and political logics of several modern attempts to institutionalize and manage social and religious difference. These include international religious freedom, international human rights and the rule of law, the creation and protection of religious minorities, and the politics of counter-radicalization. The seminar will move back and forth across disciplinary boundaries to explore these questions, drawing on literatures in political science, law, religious studies, anthropology, history and the sociology of religion.

RELIGION 481-1-20: Classical Theories of Religion
Robert Orsi
Tu 3-5:00pm
Crowe 4-138

An examination of the making of ”religion” as the object of critical inquiry, from early modernity to present day religious theory. What is the past of religious studies and how does this past inform (perhaps constrain) the present? Readings include classic texts in the study of religion as well as decidedly non-classical texts to trace the fate of ”religion” in popular and political as well as scholarly languages and fantasies.
Is there a way to employ a comparative perspective in religion without falling into traps of overarching claims about "human nature," "spiritual experience," or "psychic structures?" Can we derive important insights on the traditions in which we specialize from exposure to other traditions? How can we maintain a highly historical and contextual view of religious phenomena while still noting commonalities across times and cultures? These questions will stand at the center of this seminar, and will be explored through one particular theme - the sacrificial imagination in religious traditions. The centrality of sacrifice in almost every form of religious culture - whether in lived or remembered practices, in rhetorical tropes of martyrdom and suffering, in ideals of self-devotion, or in symbolic verbal or visual expressions - makes this theme a particularly fecund site through which to consider the potential value, as well as pitfalls, of a comparative perspective in the study of religion. Throughout the class we will read eminent studies on various sacrifice-related phenomena, from self-immolation in Chinese Buddhism to uses of the Eucharist in medieval Christianity, from burning of widows in India to sacrificial themes in American Puritanism, and venture to see how different studies of different religious cultures can illuminate each other, and edify our own engagement with the tradition in which each of us specialize.