

---

## RELIGIOUS STUDIES

---

Professor: Greta Austin, *James Dolliver National Endowment for the Humanities Distinguished Teaching Professor*; Suzanne Holland, *John B. Magee Professor of Science and Values (on leave Fall 2018)*; Stuart Smithers, *Chair*; Jonathan Stockdale (on leave Spring 2019)

Associate Research Professor: Tanya Erzen

Assistant Professor: Ha Jung Lee, Sam Kigar

Visiting Assistant Professor: Heather White

### About the Department

For students seeking a socially engaged liberal arts education, the Department of Religious Studies explores questions of power, knowledge, and identity as they relate to religious traditions. While developing a deeper understanding of oneself as a situated knower, students also explore individual religious traditions in depth, or broad themes such as the following: myth, ritual, and symbol; mysticism, magic, and medicine; beginning and end times; ethics, law, and moral philosophy; oppression and liberation; pacifism and violence; animals, bodies, and emotions. Courses are conducted with attention to structures and institutions of class, gender, sexuality, and race in their cultural and historical contexts.

For the major and minor in Religious Studies, the faculty provides an introduction to the academic discipline of Religious Studies followed by careful probing of two or more important traditions and a consideration of the methods useful to their study. A major or minor provides opportunities to develop excellent skills in writing, analysis, and argumentation and serves as an exceptional stepping stone to graduate or professional school. Past majors have gone on to excel in the non-profit sector, law school, medical school, doctoral programs, social work, creative writing, marketing and business, among other vocations.

### Learning Objectives in the Religious Studies Major

- To develop an understanding of a range of religious traditions, including Asian and Abrahamic
- To develop an understanding of the roles religions play in political, economic, social, cultural, and moral areas of people's lives
- To gain familiarity with a variety of theories, methods, and issues involved in the academic study of religions.

Religious Studies courses are grouped into the following areas:

#### Area A. Abrahamic Religions

- 201 The History and Literature of the New Testament
- 203 Jesus and the Jesus Tradition
- 204 Religions of the Book: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam
- 210 Comparative Christianities
- 211 Islam in America
- 212 The Religion of Islam
- 303 Sexuality and Religion in Modern America
- 310 Christianity and Law in the West
- 312 The Apocalyptic Imagination
- 321 Sexuality and Christianity: Then and Now
- 342 Sufism
- 350 Mysticism: The Spiritual Search in the Christian Tradition
- 363 Saints, Symbols, and Sacraments: History of Christian Traditions
- CONN 322 Jihad and Islamic Fundamentalism

#### Area B. Asian Religions

- 233 Japanese Religious Traditions
- 234 Chinese Religious Traditions
- 300 Japanimals: Power, Knowledge, and Spirituality at the Intersection of Species
- 328 Religion, the State, and Nationalism in Japan
- 332 Buddhism
- 334 Vedic Religion and Brahmanism
- 335 Classical Hinduism

#### Area C. Cultural and Ethical Studies

- 220 Spirituality and the Self
- 265 Thinking Ethically
- 270 Religion, Social Movements, and (in)Justice in the United States
- 292 Basics of Bioethics
- 302 Ethics and the Other
- 315 Modern Jewish Thinkers
- 320 Reproductive Ethics
- 368 Gender Matters
- CONN 318 Crime and Punishment

#### Area D. Advanced Seminars in Religious Studies

- 410 Religion and Violence
- 420 Law and Religion
- 440 The Body in Comparative Religions
- 450 Modernity and its Discontents
- 456 Ethics and Postmodernity
- 460 Religious Technologies 494 Special Topics

#### Area E. Additional Courses

- 202 Introduction to the Study of World Religions
- 208 Yoga, Psychedelics, and the Ascetic Imperative
- 215 Religion and Queer Politics
- 305 Marxism and the Messianic
- 307 Prisons, Gender and Education
- 330 Religious Freedom in the United States
- 340 Imagining Religion: Scholars, Theories, and Cases in the Study of Religion
- 495/496 Independent Study
- CONN 344 Magic and Religion

### General Requirements for the Major or Minor

General university degree requirements stipulate that 1) at least four units of the major or three units of the minor be taken in residence at Puget Sound; 2) students earn a GPA of 2.0 in courses taken for the major or the minor; and 3) all courses taken for a major or minor must be taken for graded credit. Any exceptions to these stipulations are indicated in the major and minor degree requirements listed below.

### Requirements for the Major

The major in Religious Studies is nine courses, one of which is the required REL 340 Imagining Religion.

From Area A: 1 course

From Area B: 1 course

From Area C: 1 course

From Area D: 2 courses

From Area E: REL 340, Imagining Religion (usually taken sophomore or junior year)

From Areas A through E: 3 additional elective courses in Religious Studies, at least one at the 300 level or above

### Notes

1. REL 495/496 counts as an elective toward the major, and not as an advanced seminar.
2. One approved ancillary course may be applied toward the major as an elective. Approved ancillary courses include: CLSC 210, CLSC 318, CONN 332, ENGL 353, HIST 350, HIST 393, STS 370.
3. Only grades of C (2.00) or higher count toward the major or minor.

### Requirements for the Minor

The minor in Religious Studies is five courses:

One course each from Area A, B, and C; and two additional Religious Studies courses, at least one of which is above the 200 level.

### Note

Only grades of C (2.00) or higher count towards the major or minor.

### Course Offerings

Unless otherwise specified, each course carries 1 unit of credit and is offered at least once each academic year. Please see "Frequency of Course Offerings" on page 10.

**Seminars in Scholarly Inquiry.** See *Seminars in Scholarly Inquiry in the Core Curriculum* section of this Bulletin for course descriptions.

**SSI1/SSI2 102 Rhetoric and Religion**

**SSI1/SSI2 150 Exploring Bioethics Today**

**SSI2 162, Mary and 'Aisha: Feminism and Religion**

**SSI2 168 Zen Insights and Oversights**

### Other courses offered by Religious Studies Department faculty.

See Connections in the Core Curriculum section of this Bulletin for course descriptions (page 24).

**CONN 318 Crime and Punishment**

Satisfies the Connections core requirement.

**CONN 322 Jihad and Islamic Fundamentalism**

Satisfies the Connections core requirement.

**CONN 344 Magic and Religion**

Satisfies the Connections core requirement.

**HUM 368 A Precious Barbarism: Enlightenment, Ideology, and Colonialism**

Satisfies the Connections core requirement.

**201 The History and Literature of the New Testament** All the writings of the New Testament are studied, in order to understand both the critical scholarly questions of date, authorship, purpose, and the impact of these writings and their authors on the emerging Christian community. *Offered frequently.*

**202 Introduction to the Study of World Religions** This course provides an introduction to the vocabulary, methods, and theoretical assumptions of the academic study of religion. By examining several diverse religious communities and traditions—including Lakota Sioux, Southern Pentecostal, Nation of Islam, and Zen Buddhist—we will examine patterns, themes, and issues that scholars commonly encounter across world religions. We will also examine how specific communities give voice to themes found within the larger world religion from which they emerge. In each case, particular attention will be paid to the role of religion in social justice and salvation movements, and in the formation

of individual and group identities. *Satisfies the Humanistic Approaches core requirement. Offered frequently.*

**203 Jesus and the Jesus Traditions** The figure of Jesus has sparked theological debates, artistic expressions, government decrees, religious persecutions, pietistic revivals, and social and moral attitudes, affecting the lives of countless generations. This course addresses an overarching question throughout the semester: How does an educated person in today's society evaluate such conflicting responses? The course draws on current historical and narrative approaches to understand the 'images' of Jesus in their respective literary, social, and historical contexts. It addresses some of the following questions. What did Jesus mean to the first interpreters? How did the early Christian communities view Jesus? What do the texts reveal about early Christian attitudes towards outsiders (government, different religious groups, social/moral attitudes)? How has Jesus been perceived in Christian tradition (art, literature, theology, ecclesiology) and in the development of western civilization (e.g., literature, the arts, politics, public schools)? The goal is not to give final and definitive answers. Rather, the course seeks 1) to encourage questions regarding the themes, purpose, and significance of the texts; 2) to provide methodological tools to aid such questions; 3) to place these questions and answers amidst the questions and answers of others; and 4) to understand the Jesus traditions both ancient and contemporary in light of their own social, cultural, and literary contexts. *Satisfies the Humanistic Approaches core requirement. Offered occasionally.*

**204 Religions of the Book: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam** This course surveys the major monotheistic traditions of the world—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—from their origins to the present day. The course fosters an appreciation of the distinctiveness and inner coherence of each of these traditions as well as to discern facets of unity among the three. Religious expression assumes many forms and is considered in traditional theological and philosophical texts as well as in political systems and the arts. The class is conducted as a combination of lecture and discussion. *Satisfies the Humanistic Approaches core requirement. Offered every semester.*

**208 Yoga, Psychedelics and the Ascetic Imperative** This course investigates and attempts to distinguish, identify, and understand the different modes and aspects of yoga, meditation, and ascetic disciplines in a variety of cultural contexts. The class examines the broad influence of the ascetic imperative in culture and criticism—in myth, literature, philosophy, religion, and psychology. Primary texts include Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, Plato's *Symposium*, and Athanasius's *Life of Anthony*. Major interpretive authors studied include Nietzsche, Weber, Freud, and Foucault. *Satisfies the Humanistic Approaches core requirement. Offered frequently.*

**210 Comparative Christianities** This course provides an introduction to Christianity, or rather, 'Christianities.' To understand the diversity within Christianity, the course compares and contrasts various historical and contemporary traditions in Christianity: Gnosticism, the Eastern Orthodox Church, medieval Western Latin Christianity, Protestantism in the sixteenth century, African-American Christianities, Pentecostalism, liberation theology, and Christian fundamentalism in the United States. Students come to realize that there is no one single, monolithic 'Christianity,' but instead a variety of Christianities which vary geographically, historically, and culturally. The course also examines the way in which gender, race, and class affect religious perspectives upon the human experience. It concludes by examining two social issues which Christians today debate, homosexuality and the ordination of women. *Satisfies the Humanistic Approaches core requirement. Offered occasionally.*

**211 Islam in America** This course surveys Muslim life and religious movements connected to Islam in North America, tracing the history of Islam on the continent from the Atlantic slave trade to the post-9/11 era. It investigates the many ways in which Islam, as both a religion and an idea, has appeared on the American horizon and in the American imagination. Through course exams, assignments, and papers, students are able to appreciate and reflect concretely in their writing on the cultural and socio-economic differences that have shaped American Muslim views on religion and identity. They do so by citing historic cases, autobiographical testimonies, and current observable practices. Through the briefs and presentations they produce, they also take part in a major semester-long group project in which issues of belonging and community are mapped out in real spaces. *Satisfies the Humanistic Approaches core requirement. Offered occasionally.*

**212 The Religion of Islam** With approximately 6 billion adherents today, Islam is a world religion that has inspired a vibrant civilization, massive empires, and abiding social institutions throughout the fifteen centuries since its inception. This course is an introduction to the religion of Islam and its development in history. Topics covered include: pre-Islamic Arabia and the rise of Islam, Muhammad and the Qur'an, the development and criticism of hadith, Islamic law (Sharia) and jurisprudence, Islamic theology and philosophy, Sufism, colonialism and modernity, Islamic political thought and jihad, and themes in contemporary Muslim societies (i.e. "lived Islam"). Although the syllabus is designed for students with no prior knowledge of Islam, it is also engaging for students with a Muslim background. *Satisfies the Humanistic Approaches core requirement. Offered occasionally.*

**215 Religion and Queer Politics** What has been the role of religion in gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) politics? This course challenges the dominant picture of entrenched opposition between queer lives and religious traditions, and it investigates the complexity and variety of queer and religious engagement during the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries. This course covers the historical emergence of sexual and gender identity communities in the United States and the attendant formations of established religious teachings as backdrop and critical context for both opposing and supportive religious involvement LGBT politics. The course examines anti-queer religious responses but also spends significant time covering queer-inclusive religious advocacy, including liberal religious involvement in gay liberation, the formation of queer inclusive churches and synagogues and new spiritual communities such as the Radical Faeries, and religious involvement in political causes from AIDS/HIV activism, hate crimes legislation, and same-sex marriage. *Offered occasionally.*

**220 Spirituality and the Self** What does Beyoncé's Lemonade share in common with St. Augustine's Confessions? What does Harry Potter teach about spiritual self-mastery? This class investigates contemporary narratives and practices of personal transformation in conversation with themes from classical writings about spiritual experience, highlighting how today's efforts to transform the self borrow from longstanding religious themes. This course helps students develop critical perspectives for analyzing religious and spiritual influences within contemporary culture, including cultural products and practices that seem not to be religious. At the same time, students also reflect personally on how their own routines and aspirations—from media consumption practices to working out—might be seen and analyzed with those same critical tools from the study of religion. Texts include selections from J.K. Rowling; Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, Julian of Norwich's Revelations of Divine Love; Martin Buber, I and Thou; The Autobiography of Malcolm X; B.K.S. Iyengar, Light on Life,

James Baldwin, The Fire Next Time, and others. *Satisfies the Humanistic Approaches core requirement. Offered occasionally.*

**233 Japanese Religious Traditions** This course explores the major expressions of religion in Japanese culture and history, including both popular and elite forms of religious practice and thought. Because Japan is home to a range of religious traditions, the course explores the various forms that have appeared there not only of Buddhism and Shinto, but also of Taoism, Confucianism, and even Christianity. A primary goal of this course is to develop both an empathetic understanding of Japanese religion and a critical appraisal of its expression in particular historical and cultural contexts. Throughout the course ample time is devoted to the role of aesthetics in Japanese religion (in film, literature, art, and ritual) as well as to the various ways that religion and the Japanese state have interacted over time. *Satisfies the Humanistic Approaches core requirement. Offered frequently.*

**234 Chinese Religious Traditions** This course provides an introduction to the wide range of religious beliefs and practices that have emerged over the course of Chinese history. Topics covered include not only the classic traditions Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, but also such broader examples of religious expression as oracle bone inscriptions, medieval ghost stories, and contemporary practices in longevity. Throughout the course students explore how those in China have understood the world religiously, and how scholars have interpreted the diverse world of Chinese religion. Some of the questions include: What has it meant to be a human in China? What other spirits, ghosts, and divinities inhabit the Chinese religious world? What is included and what is excluded when we use the term "religion," or even "China"? How do cultural, historical, and political changes affect religious experience, or a person's understanding of "ultimate reality"? A primary goal of the course is to develop a broad understanding both of Chinese religious history and of contemporary issues involving religion in China. *Satisfies the Humanistic Approaches core requirement. Offered frequently.*

**265 Thinking Ethically: What is Justice?** This course provides students with tools of ethical analysis so that they can think critically about pressing contemporary moral issues through the lens of justice. The course focuses on ethical methods from world Christianity and western philosophy. The course introduces both ethical theories and modern justice theories, and examines multicultural perspectives of the long-standing religious and philosophical understanding of justice. It analyzes how social justice concepts have been applied in different cultural contexts, including non-western communities. Students examine different models of justice and their implications for contemporary moral issues (e.g. healthcare, social welfare, racism, war, capital punishment, human rights, immigration, refugees, property rights, and the environment). The class includes interactive lectures on justice theories and students actively participate in discussions on selected case studies. Course readings include excerpts from Aristotle, Aquinas, Mill, Pope, Locke, Calvin, Kant, Rawls, Sandel, Nussbaum, Singer, and Hauerwas. Crosslisted with AFAM 265. *Satisfies the Knowledge, Identity, and Power graduation requirement.*

**270 Religion, Social Movements and (in)Justice in the United States** How do collective groups of people resist, challenge and radically change the status quo? What is a social movement, and what role does religious belief, practice and identity play in social and political change? This class focuses on how religion intersects with questions of power, resistance, and identity in American social movements. Polls tell us America is, by far, the most religious of the industrial democracies, and our often contentious politics reflect that: the debates over women's reproductive rights, the 1980s rise of the Christian Right, and

our still-heated clashes over “moral values” are only its more obvious manifestations. Similar claims have suffused American history: the abolition, suffrage, and temperance movements all had deeply religious dimensions; the Progressive Era was powerfully shaped by the Social Gospel movement; many in the civil rights and anti-war efforts of the 1960s drew on deeply-held religious imperatives to challenge existing structures of power and enact social change. This course examines how religion has been central to historical and contemporary social movements like Immigrant rights, Black Lives Matter and Occupy. *Offered occasionally.*

**292 Basics of Bioethics** This course is an examination of Western philosophical and religious understandings of moral issues brought on by advances in health care, science and technology. In this course, students will learn the “Principles approach” to bioethics, as well as other ethical approaches to the difficult moral issues raised by contemporary medical science and its clinical applications. To that end, case analysis will be used extensively in this course. The course is designed to help facilitate connections for students between medical/scientific advances, ethics, religious values, and American public policy about technology and health care. Each class session will alternate between theoretical and medical/scientific considerations, and the concreteness of bioethical case analyses. *Students who have credit for SS11/SS12 150 and are considering this course should consult with the instructor. Cross-listed as BIOE 292. Offered frequently.*

**300 Japanimals: Power, Knowledge, and Spirituality at the Intersection of Species** What do the lamb of God and White Buffalo Woman have in common? For one thing, they illustrate the sometimes-blurry intersection of humans, animals, and the divine; for another, they illustrate the powerful role played by animals in the religious imagination. As the French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss once remarked, “animals are good to think.” As others have pointed out, they’re also good to eat, ride, look at, hunt, train for battle, make things out of, and keep as companions. In religion, animals have additionally served as sacrificial offerings, totems, signifiers of purity and pollution, and foreshadowers of the apocalypse. In this class students begin to trace the vast interplay between human and non-human animals in the history of religion. Drawing from the emerging field of Critical Animal Studies, Japanimals weaves together rigorous critical theoretical inquiry with case studies drawn broadly from the history of religions, with a particular focus on case studies from Japan. Students emerge from this course able to articulate how different religious traditions have viewed animals, how religions have influenced modern conceptions of animals, and how religious traditions may (or may not) provide resources for addressing contemporary challenges facing human and non-human animals. *Offered every other year. Crosslisted with ASIA 300. Prerequisite: one course in Religious Studies or permission of instructor.*

**301 Consciousness and the Bourgeoisie** “Know thyself” is a maxim central to the religious quest, but individuals who are intensely and urgently driven to know themselves often occupy the outskirts of ordinary society. Although these “outsiders” are a part of their culture and contribute to their culture, they no longer share the common values of their society. The course seeks to explore the role of outsiders (those who desire inner freedom and transformation) in the context of bourgeois society. The first half of the course draws on ancient materials (Epic of Gilgamesh, The Oresteia, and Plato’s Republic) in discussing ideas of ontology, psychology, consciousness, and transformation. The second half of the course relies on novels and novellas by Dostoevsky, Hesse, and Mann for a discussion of bourgeois attitudes toward the outsider and toward the outsider’s struggle to become an individual who con-

fronts the habitual, unconscious, and mechanical patterns of existence. *Satisfies the Connections core requirement. Offered occasionally.*

**302 Ethics and the Other** This course provides an opportunity for students to examine the contours of an ethical framework of responsibility by exploring contemporary moral and religious narratives about the “other” from a multicultural and interdisciplinary perspective. Students learn to apply various ethical theories to particular issues and dilemmas, such as incarceration, immigration, sexuality, disability, race, and other issues of “difference.” *Offered occasionally.*

**303 Sexuality and Religion** This course explores the intertwined histories of religion and sexuality in the twentieth- and twenty-first century United States, with attention to transnational contexts and global politics. These two categories—religion and sexuality—are often portrayed as oppositional forces, with sexual progress pitted against religious resistance. This course reappraises this relationship of opposition through a series of historical case studies, which highlight the plurality of religious investments in changing constructions and practices of sexuality. *Offered occasionally.*

**305 Marxism and the Messianic** The seminar focuses on the thought of Walter Benjamin, including a selection of texts commonly referred to as Benjamin’s “messianic” or “theological” writings. Benjamin’s life, work, and influence represent a remarkable nexus of aesthetic theory, cultural critique, Western Marxism, and Jewish mysticism. The course is especially aimed at laying bare the messianic structure of his thought as most clearly demonstrated in his early essays “Critique of Violence” and “The Task of the Translator,” both published during his lifetime in 1921 and 1923. Themes include: a-theology, messianic time, utopia, apocalypse, redemption, political-theology, dialectical image, profane life, “bare life,” nihilism, violence, transcendence, and the destructive character. *Offered occasionally.*

**307 Prisons, Gender and Education** What is the relationship between the university and the prison? How does college in prison raise questions of authority, power, and privilege? Students participate in an experiential learning class that combines academic content and weekly participation in a college program at the Washington Center for Women. Students spend 3 hours per week in study halls as part of the Freedom Education Project Puget Sound (FEPPS), a signature initiative of the University of Puget Sound and a non-profit that offers a rigorous college program leading to an Associate of Arts and Science degree for 148 incarcerated women. Weekly class time includes discussion and analysis of topics such as prison pedagogy, the ethical and political dimensions of higher education in prison, the racialized dimensions of mass incarceration, gender, sexuality in the prison, and the history and theory of punishment in the United States. *Satisfies Knowledge, Identity, and Power graduation requirement. Offered frequently.*

**310 Christianity and Law in the West** Many of the distinctive features of the modern Western legal tradition can be traced to medieval Europe and its religious beliefs and practices. International law, law on the European continent, and law in nations following the Anglo-American tradition have been deeply colored by the assumptions and arguments of medieval canon law, the law regulating the Latin Catholic Church. This course discusses legal developments in Europe during the medieval period. Topics covered include sin and crime, natural law, and law governing marriage and sexual norms. The course examines how canonical norms and ideas influenced secular law in the Middle Ages and how they have continued to shape Western law and legal theory up to the present. *Prerequisite: none; however, REL 204, 210, or 363 or HIST 102, 302, or 303 would be helpful preparation. Offered occasionally.*

**312 The Apocalyptic Imagination** Apocalyptic visions of heaven, hell, judgment, cosmic battles, and a faithful, persecuted remnant have stimulated literary and religious imaginations for over 2000 years. The course explores the apocalyptic imagination within its historical and cultural context, acquaints students with the value systems and presuppositions embedded in an apocalyptic perspective, and discerns the social structure and symbol system of an apocalyptic world-view. *Offered occasionally.*

**315 Modern Jewish Thinkers** This course acquaints students with major Jewish thinkers in the modern and contemporary periods. The course begins by asking what makes a thinker Jewish? What makes a Jewish thinker modern? After a brief overview of major themes in Jewish ethics, students begin their exploration with a study of Baruch Spinoza's rationalist challenge to Judaism that results in the quintessential modern question, who is a Jew? Students then turn to Jewish responses to the Enlightenment, emancipation, nationalism, and new forms of antisemitism. These responses include a variety of Zionists, socialist Jews, existentialists such as Martin Buber, and mystics and social activists such as Abraham Joshua Heschel. The course then studies post-Holocaust Jewish ethicists, Jewish feminists, and contending views on Jewish liberation. *Offered occasionally.*

**320 Reproductive Ethics** This course examines various religious, legal, and moral issues surrounding reproduction and assisted reproductive technologies. It surveys how religious beliefs, doctrines, and practices have influenced patients' reproductive decisions, clinicians' medical decisions, and the reproductive healthcare system. The course analyzes tensions related to curtailing or enhancing fertility in the United States. Moral issues surveyed in this course include reproductive rights, contraception, abortion, prenatal diagnosis, assisted reproduction, surrogacy, genetic engineering in assisted reproduction, and the delivery of reproductive healthcare. It also covers legal aspects of reproductive medicine. Students actively participate in discussion, debate, and role-playing based on assigned readings. Readings include religious texts, bioethics literature, feminist literature, and legal cases. *Offered occasionally.*

**321 Sexuality and Christianity: Then and Now** This course approaches the subject of sexuality in the Christian tradition by focusing on three broad periods—early Christianity, the Middle Ages, and today. Within each era, students investigate questions of virginity, chastity, marriage, and non-normative sexualities (such as homosexuality). Students enlist a diverse selection of primary and secondary sources—theoretical and historical. Through this fascinating exploration of Christianity and sexuality, students witness a dizzying variety of ways that sexualities have been lived, accepted, utilized, and interpreted. Furthermore, students develop a richer understanding of what sexuality has meant to Christianity over the ages and why it matters so much. *Offered occasionally.*

**328 Religion, the State, and Nationalism in Japan** This course examines relationships between religious traditions, the “state,” and nationalism in Japanese history. Through careful study of primary and secondary sources, the course explores early symbiosis between religious rites and governance; the role of Shinto and Buddhism in legitimating systems of government centered on the emperor or warrior elites; religious components in modern Japanese imperialism; challenges to the separation of religion and the state in postwar Japan; civil religion; and cultural nationalism. *Offered occasionally.*

**330 Religious Freedom in the United States** Should American religious history be told as story of increasing diversity and freedom?

This course surveys the changing meanings of religious freedom in the United States from the early nation to the present day. Students consider key primary sources—founding documents, court cases, political cartoons, accusations, and apologetics-- and weigh these alongside the arguments of scholars in religious studies. These include historian William Hutchinson, who argues that pluralism in the United States is an ongoing legacy of the nation's founders, as well as law professor Winifred Fallers Sullivan, who contends that the structures intended to protect religious expression have made religious freedom a practical impossibility. Students develop their own arguments in this debate through a research project that analyzes a historical or contemporary controversy over religious freedom. *Offered occasionally.*

**332 Buddhism** A study of the origin and development of Buddhism. Special emphasis is given to the history of Buddhist thought, the evolution of the primary schools of Buddhism, and the question of cultural influence on Buddhist expansion. Sources for study are drawn from Indian, Tibetan, Chinese, and Japanese texts in translation. *Offered frequently.*

**334 Vedic Religion and Brahmanism** This course examines the origin and development of religion in South Asian antiquity. Study focuses on the mythology and symbology of the Vedic textual corpus, the rise of ritual ideologies, and the meaning and influence of the yogic vision. In addition to Vedic texts, the course may include study of mythic epics (*Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*) and non-Vedic myths that appear in the Puranas. *Students who have received credit for REL 331 cannot receive credit REL 334. Offered occasionally.*

**335 Classical Hinduism** A study of the various systems of myth, ritual, symbol, and thought that have significantly contributed to the development of Hinduism after the Vedic period. The approach of the course is primarily textual, examining a wide range of scriptural sources from the Hindu traditions. *REL 334 recommended prior to REL 335. Students who have received credit for REL 331 cannot receive credit for REL 335. Offered frequently.*

**340 Imagining Religion: Scholars, Theories, and Cases in the Study of Religion** This course examines and engages influential theories and approaches to the study of religion developed by scholars with diverse intellectual views. Through theoretical readings and case studies, students receive a broad grounding in classical and contemporary theories of religion, including comparative psychoanalytic, anthropological, feminist, and postmodern approaches. In addition to locating religious studies within wider intellectual movements, the course is designed to help students articulate the values and assumptions they bring to their own studies of religion. *Offered every fall.*

**342 Sufism** For some Muslims, Sufism (Islamic mysticism) is the defining essence of Islam, without which one is left with only a meaningless shell for a religion. For other Muslims, Sufism stands as the satanic antithesis to God's singular, eternal truth. What then is Sufism? And why does it elicit such fervent reactions from its champions and detractors alike? This course proposes to answer these very questions. After an introductory look at various definitions and manifestations of Sufism today and in the past, students begin with an historical survey of the earliest precedents and intellectual currents in the development of Sufism. Students continue with a study of Sufi poetry, terminology, institutions, and rituals. Additionally, students look at key Sufi personalities, both men and women. The final part of the course examines modern Islamic intellectual trends and their effects on debates and discussions within the study and practice of Sufism in the twentieth century. The course returns in the end to contemporary Sufism and the diverse

forms that it assumes across the globe today. *Offered occasionally.*

### **350 Mysticism: The Spiritual Search in the Christian Tradition**

Mysticism describes a variety of ways in which humans endeavor to encounter the divine directly. The Christian tradition has a long history of mystical encounters, which are founded in the Hebrew Scriptures and in Paul's experience on the road to Damascus. As a text-based religion, Christianity has a complicated relationship with mysticism, since mysticism tends to focus on the directly experiential rather than the textual. And, even as they claimed that such experiences transcended language and expression, mystics often sought to express their experiences. This course examines the ways in which a mystical tradition developed in Christianity, and in which particular metaphors and images came to hold sway. In doing so, it pays attention to the wider social and political context in which the authors wrote and lived, and asks whether these mystics, particularly women, were able to acquire authority and charisma outside of the Church hierarchy. The course thus examines the ways in which mystics occupied an ambivalent space in Western Christianity. The clerical hierarchy has historically sought to limit charisma and prophecy. Mystics thus both threatened the official hierarchy, which sought to limit charisma, but also, sometimes, reinforced the status quo. Questions about power, the body, textuality, charisma, social structures, and authority will be central to our investigation of the Christian mystical tradition. *Offered occasionally.*

### **363 Saints, Symbols and Sacraments: History of Christian Traditions**

This course surveys the major developments in Christian history from its origins up to the current day. In the first half of the course, the focus is on patterns of Christian thought including institutional changes and social context up to 1500 CE. Although this is largely a story of the clerical hierarchy in the Latin West, wherever possible the course emphasizes the role of lay persons, women and Eastern Christianity. In the second half of the course, the focus is on the challenges to Christianity posed by modernity including the Protestant movement, the Enlightenment, the New World, and the liberation movement among women, minorities, and third world peoples. Readings are from both primary and secondary sources. *Offered occasionally.*

**368 Gender Matters** An in-depth study of feminist theory, theology, and ethics, and the role such theories have played in Western social and religious thought. Among the issues explored are justice, violence, the body, sexuality, knowledge, power. The course draws upon one or more of the following theoretical insights: liberationist, post-structuralist, standpoint, virtue, or Marxist theories. Prior work in religion, women studies, sociology and anthropology, philosophy, or feminist political theory is helpful, as well as a facility with writing. *Counts toward the minor in Gender and Queer Studies. Offered frequently.*

**410 Religion and Violence** Do religions originate in myths of violence, and then re-enact them, as in the Eucharist? How do sacred texts enshrine and commemorate violence? How do religions motivate, justify or reinforce violence? What role does ritual play in re-enacting violence? What roles do eschatological expectations play in violence? How has the postcolonial world grappled with the questions of religious violence? This class explores historical case studies in the relationship between religion and violence, such as the Christian doctrine of just war and the Crusades, the history and practice of Islamic ideas of jihad, or Hindu nationalistic violence. We also consider the question of self-inflicted violence and suffering, as performed in religious rituals. Students read theoretical works and examine case studies; students are encouraged to elaborate their own understanding of the nature of religion and violence. *Prerequisite: two courses in Religious Studies and permission of the instructor. Offered occasionally.*

**420 Law and Religion** Notwithstanding the many attempts around the world to separate them, the spheres of law and religion repeatedly overlap in their histories and will continue to intersect into the foreseeable future. Both spheres reflect the deepest of humanistic concerns; both serve as arenas for contesting and projecting the authority of individuals, institutions, and texts within all human contexts. Law and religion chart the contours of our personal, social, and civilizational identities along with the relationships between these identities and their relation to the other, both in its sentient and non-sentient forms. This seminar examines the intersection of law and religion within a broad sampling of historical and contemporary contexts. It does so with the goal of identifying the questions and debates that account for these intersections. The first half of the course surveys the most influential legal systems that are grounded in what is known conventionally as a religious tradition. The second part of the course turns its attention to what is known conventionally as secular models of law to discern how such models define religion and locate themselves in relation to it. *Offered occasionally.*

**440 The Body in Comparative Religions** While the field of religious studies frequently focuses on *belief* and the intellectual development of religious traditions, this course shifts its focus to the *body* and its importance for the study of religion. The class examines the role of the body as a vehicle through which individuals experience "the sacred," and as a site upon which communities inscribe, assert, and contest religious values. Taking a comparative approach toward cases drawn from Buddhism, Christianity, and indigenous traditions, the class explores such themes as the perfectible body, the body in pain, bodily relics, the body in ritual, and transcending the body altogether. Finally, by drawing on classical and contemporary theorists, students work to develop their own frameworks through which to understand and interpret the crucial role of the body in the history of religions. *Prerequisite: two courses in Religious Studies or permission of the instructor. Offered occasionally.*

**450 Modernity and its Discontents** This advanced seminar explores the ideas and values that distinguish modernity from traditional and pre-modern cultures. Students examine the meaning and development of modernity from a variety of perspectives, including the shifting role and relevance of religion in the modern world. Important sources for the cultural critique of modernity include Nietzsche, Freud, Benjamin, Guenon, T.S. Eliot, Heidegger, and Bataille. *Prerequisite: at least two courses in Religious Studies and permission of instructor. Offered frequently.*

**456 Ethics and Postmodernity** This advanced seminar for Religious Studies majors takes up the question of what place (if any) religious and social ethics has in postmodern culture. In other words, what characterizes postmodernity and what has been its effects on the discipline of ethics? Are there any prospects for a common morality given the realities of post-structuralist deconstruction? How will one determine the appropriateness of an ethic for postmodern culture? *Prerequisite: two courses in Religious Studies or permission of instructor. Priority given to upper-level Religious Studies majors; open to other students with permission of instructor. Offered occasionally.*

**460 Religious Technologies** This advanced seminar theorizes the intersections of religion and technology as a critical site for exploring broad topics in religious studies. The course will take various approaches to relations among religion, technique, and knowledge production: we examine rhetorical constructions of the religious and the technological; explore religious influences on invention and scientific progress; analyze spiritual ideals and contemporary machines; and theorize ways that religious practices and traditions operate as techniques and specialized knowledges. Course topics will include steam-propelled engines

and electromagnetism, physical regimens and body modification, cartography and cyberspace, confession and self-help. With attention to interdisciplinary method, students will also work on a specific project throughout the semester that proceeds through topic selection, question formulation, research, analysis, and argumentation to produce a final research paper. *Prerequisite: Two courses in REL and instructor permission. Offered occasionally.*

**494 Special Topics** This seminar is organized around themes and topics that are of special interest to the study of religion. The seminar is offered on an occasional basis and the topic is determined in advance by the instructor. *Prerequisite: at least two courses in Religious Studies or permission of instructor. Offered occasionally.*

**495/496 Independent Study**