Symbol, Myth, and Ritual
The Bible as Literature
Occult America
Jesus in History and Tradition
Religion in the Arts
Chinese Healing Arts
Judaism and Empire
Ethics, Religion, and War
The Book of Isaiah
RELIGIOUS STUDIES

FALL 2019

RELG 200-01/02 Symbol, Myth, and Ritual (Will Kelly)
TR 10:30 – 11:45; 12:00 – 1:15 (FSSA)

Myths are powerful ways cultures transmit their societal values. Creation stories, tales of divine combat, and royal legends are some of the elements through which myths express a people’s beliefs about power, sexuality, and knowledge—in short, myths reflect on what it means to be human. This course introduces students to the study of religion through ancient Near Eastern myths found in texts from the Bible to Babylon and beyond.

RELG 201 The Bible as Literature (Frank Eakin)
TR 3:00 – 4:15 (FSLT)

A non-confessional study of the diverse genres of Biblical literature, viewing passages in historical context to understand the multiple layers of the intended message: period about which written, the time of the writer, and the time of the recipient. Within Biblical exegesis, primary emphasis is given to literary and historical criticism.

RELG 210-01/02 Occult America (Douglas Winiarski)
MW 10:30 – 11:45; MW 12:00 – 1:15 (FSHT, AMST)

This course introduces students to historical methods through an investigation of selected “occult”—meaning “hidden” or “mysterious”—religious traditions in British North America during the long eighteenth century (1690–1815). Topical units explore outsider religious communities, such as the Ephrata Cloister and the United Society of Believers in Christ’s Second Coming (the Shakers), and unusual religious phenomena ranging from witchcraft, hauntings, and spirit possession to dreams, trances, and visions.

RELG 242-01/02 Jesus in History and Tradition (L. Stephanie Cobb)
TR 1:30 – 2:45; 3:00 – 4:15 (FSHT)

Who Jesus was—what he thought, did, and taught—is a significant scholarly question. This course will approach this question by examining the earliest evidence for Jesus’ life; discussing the problems with using these sources to reconstruct the historical Jesus; and assessing some scholarly reconstructions of Jesus’ life. It will also consider the representation of Jesus in film, since this is one of the primary ways the Jesus tradition is “read” in the modern world.

RELG 263-01/02 Religion and the Arts (Miranda Shaw)
TR 12:00 – 1:15; TR 1:30 – 2:45 (FSSA)

Visual and performing arts are vital forms of religious expression, conveying what is revered in a given culture. With a thematic focus on cultural constructions of gender, this course examines how gender is coded in colors, shapes, symbolic motifs, divine figures, and varied performance genres across a range of traditions, past and present. Students will learn to correlate the symbolic order of the sacred realm with gender roles, social patterns, and leadership in the human realm.

RELG 268-01/02 Chinese Healing Arts (Jane Geaney)
TR 10:30 – 11:45; TR 12:00 – 1:15 (FSLT)

This survey of Chinese healing arts introduces students to an important healthcare model in the history of medicine. Starting in antiquity and extending to contemporary controversies, this interdisciplinary course explores the development of Chinese medicine through a study of the standards of treatment and concepts of the body, blockage, and flow, implied in such practices as acupuncture, pulse reading, and breathing techniques. Special attention to lyrical language and aesthetic engagement of the medical canon and related literature.

RELG 268-03 Judaism and Empire (Will Kelly)
TR 3:00 – 4:15 (FSLT)

For much of their history, Jews have lived under foreign powers. The literature they produced as imperial subjects expresses a variety of responses to the cultural, social, and political pressures of empire. This course focuses especially on texts written during a period of rebellions and wars with the Greek and Roman empires and the ways this literature reflects struggles with identity, politics, culture and gender.

RELG 269 Ethics, Religion, and War (Scott Davis)
MW 1:30 – 2:45

This seminar studies the moral analysis of the use of force in a variety of contexts and religious communities. Topics include just war and jihad, humanitarian intervention, terrorism, and the moral and legal status of torture.

RELG 393 The Book of Isaiah (Frank Eakin)
TR 12:00 – 1:15

The Book of Isaiah is perhaps the most influential and enigmatic of the major prophets of the Hebrew Bible. Attributed to a prophet of the 8th century B.C.E., Isaiah reflects the impact of the Babylonian Captivity, with an interpretation of God’s judgment, a hope for the restored Jerusalem, and an account of God’s ultimate plan for Israel. The course will investigate the background, divisions, and unity of Isaiah, along with its legacy in later religious movements.