

Religious Studies

Spring 2024 Courses



Symbol, Myth, and Ritual (FSSA)

Body/Sex in World Religious Literature (FSLT, WGSS)

Satan (FSLT)

Sex and the Hebrew Bible (FSLT, WGSS)

Heretics, Liars, and Deviants (FSHT)

Varieties of Christian Ethics (FSSA)

Women, Gender, Sexuality, and Islam (WGSS)

Hebrew Prophets

Ethics, Religion, & War

Psychology of Religion: Love, Shame, & Hate

Dreams & Islam (FYS)



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Electives & General Education

Symbol, Myth, and Ritual (RELG 200, FSSA)

MW 10:30-11:45

Scott Davis

Introduction to study of religion including, but not limited to, social scientific approaches, focusing on symbols, myths and rituals as constitutive features of individual and communal religious thought and practice.

Body/Sex in World Religious Literature (RELG 205, FSLT, WGSS)

TR 12:00-1:15 (01); 1:30-2:45 (02)

Jane Geaney

This course explores theoretical ideas about sexuality. We use modern sexual theories to examine primary sources like the *Kama Sutra* and early Chinese "sex manuals," in which religion and sexuality intersect. The primary texts for this class are predominantly from non-Western cultures. (In other words, this is not a course in the Abrahamic traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). The course is cross-listed with Asian Studies and Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies.

Satan (RELG 205, FSLT)

TR 10:30-11:45 (03)

Stephanie Cobb

This course investigates the origins, development, and significance of personified evil—Satan—in Judaism and Christianity. Through studying some of the most important literary developments of this figure, we will shed light not only on how ancient authors thought of him, but also on the ways that Satan came to play an important role in popular culture in the modern era.

Sex and the Hebrew Bible (RELG 205, FSLT, WGSS)

MW 1:30-2:45 (04); 3:00-4:15 (05)

Rhiannon Graybill

What does the Hebrew Bible say about sex and sexual desire? Gender and gender identity? Bodies and bodily pleasure? This class explores a range of biblical texts and perspectives on sex, sexual desire, rape and sexual violence, sex work, homoeroticism and homosexuality, gender and gender identity, and laws regulating bodies. We will also explore how key biblical passages about sex, sexuality, and gender have been interpreted over time.

Heretics, Liars, & Deviants: Being Wrong in the Early Church

(RELG 210, FSHT)

TR 12:00-1:15 (01); 1:30-2:45 (02)

Stephanie Cobb

"Heretics, Liars, & Deviants" explores the history of being wrong in the early Church. Who decided what Christian belief should be? How did Christians construct a religious identity that could conquer diversity in its ranks? What role did politics and culture play in determining Christian belief? In the second part of the course students will engage in an immersive role play game that explores the theology, power, and politics involved in the first church council: the Council of Nicaea (325 CE).

Varieties of Christian Ethics (RELG 267, FSSA)

MW 12:00-1:15

Scott Davis

This course examines the forms that Christian ethics has taken in select times and places. It emphasizes the differing approaches Christian thinkers have taken to issues such as war, abortion, and bioethics. Readings will be drawn from such classic authors as Augustine of Hippo, Thomas Aquinas, and Martin Luther, as well as such 20th- and 21st-century thinkers as Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Ramsey, Lisa Cahill, and Gilbert Meilaender. In addition, we will draw on classic texts in history, psychology, and sociology to illustrate the approaches and methods available for social analysis

Religious Studies Seminars

Women, Gender, Sexuality, and Islam (RELG 303, GSCP, WGSS)

MW 12:00-1:15

Mimi Hanaoka

This course explores Islam and Muslim traditions through the prisms of women, gender, and sexuality, exploring how authority and power interact with these phenomena. We will ask these types of questions: How is authority gendered in Islam in its social, religious, and domestic dimensions? Where do the utopian ideals of equality create dissonance with the lived reality of gendered societies and communities? Are these issues of women, gender, sexuality, and authority unique to Islam, or do they manifest across a variety of religions and communities across time and place?

Hebrew Prophets (RELG 331)

R 1:30-4:00

Rhiannon Graybill

The prophet Jeremiah described prophecy as "like a fire in my bones." What does it mean to be a prophet in the Hebrew Bible? Why do the prophets consistently fail at prophecy? Is the prophetic tradition a resource for social justice, a collection of beautiful poetry, or a peculiar artifact of an ancient world very different from our own? This class will explore these and other questions in the context of biblical prophecy. Our topics include prophecy in the ancient Near East, prophecy as a mode of performance, the relationship between prophetic speech and actions, gender and prophecy, questions of social justice, and contemporary re-imaginings of biblical prophecy.

Ethics, Religion, & War (RELG 369)

MW 1:30-2:45

Scott Davis

This course introduces the central issues and arguments surrounding war and peace in the 21st Century, focusing on Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam. The goal is to foster systematic critical thought about justice, religion and war in a global perspective. Topics will include just war criteria, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and martyrdom.

Psychology of Religion: Shame, Love, & Hate (RELG 393)

M 3:00-5:40

Jane Geaney

Curious about the dynamics of shame, love, and hate? In this introduction to the psychology of religion, we explore the many roles these feelings play in religious behavior and emotional growth. Drawing from a diverse array of texts from Early China, the Abrahamic traditions, and Greco-Roman antiquity, we apply classical theories from Psychology and Religious Studies to illuminate the many facets and felt-experiences of shame, love, and hate. Throughout the course, we also consider questions about the value of comparison itself. No prerequisites

Courses for First Year Students

Dreams & Islam (FYS)

Mimi Hanaoka

MW 9:30-10:15 (01); 10:30-11:45 (02)

This course explores how Islam makes sense of dreams and waking visions. We consider how dreams and visions relate to God, prophecy, truth, the future, the afterlife, and the end of time. We examine what roles visions and dreams play in the political, social, and devotional dimensions of Islamic societies.



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