Like all philosophy, Buddhist philosophy is presented in specific literary forms or genres, and so it is surprising how infrequently the impact of such forms is discussed in the study of Buddhist thought. This course will consider both theoretical and practical aspects of genre in the interpretation of Buddhist philosophy, focusing on textual traditions from India and Tibet. The purposes of the course include (1) to introduce doctoral students in religion and philosophy to fundamental philosophical ideas of Indian and Tibetan Buddhism; (2) to consider how literary forms impact the interpretation of such ideas, including their primary philosophical meaning; (3) to recognize some of the major genres of philosophical texts in ancient India and in Tibet, and to learn specific techniques for reading and writing about such texts; and (4) to consider the question of form in terms of our own writing about Indian and Tibetan Buddhism philosophy.

The course will be divided into three main units, each focusing on a distinct literary genre or style of discourse. In part 1, we will examine the use of narrative in Buddhist philosophy, focusing in particular on the dialogical and narrative frames of early Pali suttas and their development in Mahāyāna sūtra literature, and considering the ethical teachings embedded in the Buddhist narrative traditions of ancient India. In part 2, we will examine the development of philosophical verse compositions and commentarial literature in Sanskrit, exploring common hermeneutical tropes as well as the dialogical structures of Buddhist argumentation. In part 3, we will look at the use of poetry and slogans to both express and produced philosophical insight, examining tantric songs of experience as well as the Tibetan mind training aphorisms. In each unit, we will pair primary texts in translation with theoretical writings to help us interrogate and understand the literary forms we encounter.

Theoretical interlocutors include modern philosophers and scholars of Buddhism such as Mikhail Bakhtin, Charles Hallisey, Donald Lopez, John Lysaker, Andrew Nicholson, and Martha Nussbaum. Primary texts include Buddhist scriptural sources conceived as buddhavacana (“word of the Buddha”), as well as authored works by figures like Nāgārjuna, Candrakīrti, Kamalaśīla, Atiśa, Saraha, Milarepa, and Geshe Chekawa. All required readings will be provided in electronic form by the instructor.

Course requirements: weekly reflections papers (40% of course grade), preparation and participation (10%), and a final term paper (50%).
“It is in the Puranas” “Puranas say this.” Such answers are most often given when you ask a traditional Hindu pundit about a particular mythological narrative or ritual or rules of religious living.

Puranas are invoked more often than the Veda and Sastras. What are these Puranas, and where are they? The answers appear vague. By definition all Puranas are written by Vyasa and if you ask further you will be told there are eighteen of them, and you are given a verse, which lists the first letters of the names of eighteen Puranas –as a mnemonic device.

Yes, many of these Puranas are available in manuscript form or print and even in a number regional language “translations.” However, the name of the Purana might remain the same, but the text significantly varies from one to the other. The first European scholars who wanted to make sense of this bewildering array of texts, wanted to create Purana indexes, summaries, and even tried to make critical editions.

As a result of a couple of hundred years of scholarly work by both European and Indian scholars, we now can make sense of these texts and read them for what they say, even though there are irreconcilable problems in text editing and interpreting.

And a large number of them are now available in translation.

The modern bewilderment with these texts is due to their flexibility and fluidity. Puranas include very ancient material but also incorporate new material and make it look old. Dating a particular Purana, therefore, creates problems. The popularity and the authority of the Puranas in Hinduism are unquestionable, while their fluidity makes them baffling.

This course introduces you to the Puranic text tradition and orients you to research the Puranas for what they say and how they say it.

Students will read texts and related secondary materials by modern and traditional scholars, and choose for their own research a text or a cluster of texts for a specific narrative or a ritual popular in contemporary Hinduism.

Issues related to the orality and textuality of the Puranas and the role of the Pauranika, the Purana teller, in communicating and interpreting the texts will be discussed to arrive at a theory of Puranic text culture. We will try to grasp the enormity of the corpus and the encyclopedic nature of the texts, so you can say at the end of the course, in answer to the question you might be asked: It is in the Puranas.

Books prescribed:


Papers from journals and other sources given at the seminar as we progress.

RLAR 752R - Advanced Readings in Literary Tibetan
Friday, 1:00-3:00
Sara McClintock

**RLE 733 – Love and Justice**
Wednesday, 2:30-5:30
Timothy P. Jackson

Few concepts are more central to ethics than love and justice, but none is more subject to varying interpretation than these two. This course seeks to clarify several philosophical, theological, and literary accounts of love and justice, with emphasis on how they interrelate. Is love ideally indiscriminate and/or self-sacrificial and therefore antithetical to justice? Is justice a single virtue equally binding on all human beings, regardless of sex, race, creed, or ethnicity? Does God possess either moral attribute? Does the practice of charity or the upholding of justice require the denial of hard dilemmas or belief in an afterlife? How are we to conceive (and act on) such related values as eudaimonia, human equality, and civil liberty? How, more specifically, do love and justice bear on such issues as racism, women’s liberation, and gay and lesbian rights?

Readings are selected from a broad range of perspectives, displaying both temporal and ideological diversity. Texts include works by Plato, St. Augustine, Søren Kierkegaard, John Rawls, Martha Nussbaum, and the instructor. This course is designed for doctoral students and presupposes some knowledge of ethical theory; it is, however, open to advanced Candler students, with permission of the professor.

**RLE 736 - Contemporary Christian Ethics**
Tuesday, 2:30-5:30
Ellen Ott-Marshall

Drawing on the approach of Ernst Troeltsch and H. Richard Niebuhr, this seminar studies Christian ethics by exploring the relationship between faith and history. After an introduction to this triadic framework, we will use it as a lens to study the work of contemporary scholars in Christian ethics. (Figures may include: Walter Rauschenbusch, Reinhold Niebuhr, Jürgen Moltmann, James Gustafson, Wendy Farley, Anthony Pinn, Jennifer Harvey, Sallie McFague, Shawn Copeland, and Grace Kao.) As we work through this material, we will focus on the ways in which the authors construe the relationship between faith and history in order to foster a particular ethical disposition. Thus, the central question of the course becomes: How should one negotiate between faith and history?

In addition to exploring this central question in relationship to the work of some formative figures, students in this course will also pursue a three-step writing project in constructive theological ethics. Like the texts we are reading (though on a smaller scale), students’ papers will (1) describe an ethical problem, (2) identify and critique theological matter related to this ethical problem, and (3) put forth a constructive theo-ethical response to the problem.
Requirements: preparation for and participation in class discussion, discussion leadership, 2-3 page essays responding to assigned readings, one 6-page essay, two 15-page papers.

**RLHB 720T - The Psalms**  
Wednesday, 9:00-12:00  
Joel LeMon

This course will explore the historical context of the Psalter, its constituent literary forms, its poetic shape, and especially its imagery. Special attention will also be paid to the processes of the Psalter’s formation and its reception history. Students will read the Psalms in Hebrew and present seminar papers on significant topics in Psalms scholarship. Each student will also work throughout the semester on a final paper that takes up a key interpretive question regarding the Psalter.

Texts will include the following:


**RLL 707 - Sanskrit**  
Wednesday, 1:00-3:00  
Sara McClintock

**RLNT 745 – Greco-Roman Context of the New Testament**  
Wednesday, 1:00-4:00  
Susan Hylen

This course surveys the social, philosophical, and religious character of the Greco-Roman world in the first and second centuries. It is meant to familiarize students with the environment in which early Christianity emerged and within which the language of the NT may be interpreted. Although the subject of the course is the Greco-Roman world itself, the categories and questions studied are formulated with an eye to what is useful or important for the interpretation of the NT.

**RLPC 710K / PSYC 770R – William James Seminar**  
Tuesday, 2:30-5:30  
John Snarey
William James (1842-1910), a giant in American intellectual history, is variously considered to be the founding father of American psychology, the foremost and most American philosopher, and a pioneer in the psychological study of religion in America. This course embraces all three faces of James. The seminar begins with a psychological biography; then seminar members will become familiar first-hand with James’s psychology by studying selected chapters from his classic volumes, Psychology: The Briefer Course (1892) and Talks to Teachers on Psychology (1899). Similar attention will be given to James’s philosophical pragmatism by reading essays from his classic volumes, especially Pragmatism (1907) and A Pluralistic Universe (1909). Building on this biographical-psychological-philosophical foundation, the primary section of the seminar involves a close reading of James’s The Varieties of Religious Experience (1902), which is often regarded as the greatest classic in the psychological study of religion. Critiques of James will be introduced throughout the course, but we will conclude the semester with an overview of critical essays written by James’s detractors and assess what we may have missed, and what they may have missed.

RLR 700 – Appropriating Romans: From Barth/Bultmann to Agamben
Friday, 9:00-12:00
Steven Kraftchick & David Pacini

At the beginning of the 20th Century there was a major debate between Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann began over the exewgetical and theological appropriation of Paul’s letter to the Romans. This debate was not limited to these two scholars, but shaped subsequent scholarship in biblical studies, history, and theology for the next 60-70 years. In fact, it still affects those endeavors. In the last 25 years the apostle Paul has again become a focus point only now for Continental Philosopher such as Jacob Taubes, Giorgio Agamben, Alain Badiou, etc. And, again, the debates between these philosophers are influencing contemporary exegetical, historical and theological work. In this seminar we will look at the history of the debates about Romans, its exegetical challenges, and the the philosophical and theological avenues for appropriating Paul’s Letter to the Romans. The seminar is jointly conducted in order to explore the interpretive issues involved in doing this. In other words, a seminar that combines exegesis, history, and hermeneutics. Given its multiple entry points, the seminar we believe that the seminar would be of interest to students in biblical studies, history, theology, and from students outside the GDR.

RLR 700 - Ritual Studies
Tuesday 1:00-4:00
Marko Geslani

This course offers a survey of contemporary theories of ritual as they have developed in relation to the Study of Religion. The course aims to orient students to the basic terrain of this discourse, which has alternatively placed ritual in some conceptual relation to such terms as origin, myth, magic, society, culture, symbol, language, performance, practice, discipline, and cognition. This semester, special emphasis will be placed on early to mid 20th century discussions of society, language ("structure"), and performance. Each week we will sample one book-length text (along with supporting materials) representative of one theme or approach in the field. The readings follow a relatively canonical chronology (see Bell 1997), which begins in the late 19th century. This is not an endorsement of ritual theory as a strictly “modern-western” discourse, but a
reflection of the limits of our intellectual history (no earlier genealogy is yet available). To that
end the course invites students to bring non-canonical material from their research areas (specific
ritual exemplars, but especially ritual theories) into conversation with our primary texts. Indeed,
a primary dynamic of our work in seminar (and in student papers) will be to consider what
constitutes useful and appropriate engagement with this canon.

RLR 700 / ICIVS 770 - Oneness of Being-Ibn Arabi
Wednesdays 10am-1pm
Scott Kugle

This seminar explores the mystical tradition known as The Oneness of Being (wahdat al-
wujud). It is associated with the Sufi theologian Ibn al-`Arabi. This seminar will investigate his
personality and philosophy, and also trace his influence and opposition to it in the late medieval
and early modern periods. The heart of the seminar will be reading Ibn Arabi’s masterpiece, The
Bezels of Wisdom (Fusus al-Hikam). The seminar explores how Ibn Arabi’s ideas were spread
through Persian poetry, focusing on Fakhr al-Din `Iraqi’s Divine Flashes (Lama`at). The seminar
will conclude by examining how Ibn Arabi’s ideas inform controversial debates in Islamic
civilization, such as medieval social ethics and modern religious pluralism.

The seminar includes an optional session for reading texts in Arabic and Persian. Students with
ability in either of these languages can join this optional session to read selections of Ibn Arabi’s
Bezels of Wisdom in Arabic and selections of Fakhr al-Din Iraqi’s Divine Flashes in Persian.

RLR 700 – Ethnography of Religious Experiences
Wednesday, 12:00-3:00
Don Seeman

This seminar is a critical introduction to theory and methodology in the
ethnography/anthropology of religion. We will read full-length ethnographies that focus on a
variety of religious settings—Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish— as well as some classics in
religious studies, such as William James. How does ethnography ask and answer questions
differently than other methodologies in religious studies? What are its strengths and limitations?
And how do recent trends in the anthropology of religious experience/phenomenological
anthropology promise to transform both anthropology and the study of religion as academic
disciplines? This course will also be of special interest to students of religion in Africa, the
Middle East and the United States. Both advanced and beginner students in the anthropology of
religion welcome!

RLHB 780 - Ancient Near Eastern Iconography & the Study of the Hebrew Bible
Tuesday, 9:30-12:30
Brent Strawn

Content: The course introduces the study of ancient Near Eastern iconography, especially as that
has been developed with reference to the study of the Hebrew Bible and ancient Israelite
religion. We will begin with discussion of literacy in the ancient Near Eastern world and move
toward theories of meaning-making in non-textual venues, focusing on art and material culture of
both high and low varieties. We will then move to the use of images in standard handbooks in Hebrew Bible studies (Gressmann and Pritchard) before spending extended time analyzing the work of Othmar Keel and the “Fribourg School” of Iconography. After that, we will consider related and pertinent iconographical studies outside biblical studies proper (e.g., I. Winter, Z. Bahrani, J. M. Russell, H. Frankfort, etc.) before practicing iconographical study on/with/in light of the biblical text for the duration of the semester.


Particulars: In addition to regular participation in class discussion, students will have five main responsibilities during the course of the semester meetings: (1) selected reading reports (1-2); (2) one seminar paper (10-15 pages); (3) serving as moderator for one seminar; and (4) serving as a respondent to a seminar paper (3-5 pages). Finally (5), at the end of the semester, the student will be responsible for a final paper, which may, but need not, be directly related to the seminar paper. This final paper should be 20-25 pages and of publishable quality. Research knowledge of German (especially) and French are strongly recommended.

**RLR 700/ICIVS 770 - Neoplatonism and Early Medieval Thoughts**  
Tuesday, 1:00-4:00  
Kevin Corrigan

This class will trace significant lines of thought from earlier antiquity through the thought of Plotinus in the third century CE and the subsequent Neoplatonists, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Proclus and others into the early Medieval world and its heritage in Jewish, Christian and Islamic forms of thought and practice.

Neoplatonism is a modern term that indicates what modernity saw as a “new” form of Platonic thought. Ever since the separation of an earlier “Plato” (424/423-348/347 BCE) and his immediate heritage from the later reinvention of Platonic tradition that occurred in the 19th century, Neoplatonism can be traced back to Plotinus (204-270CE), an Egyptian who wrote in Greek and lived in Rome, and whose works, known as the *Enneads* (or six groups of nine treatises), were collected by his pupil and colleague, Porphyry (234—305CE). The term is then extended to cover subsequent thinkers such as Iamblichus (c. 245–325CE), Syrianus (d. 437CE), Proclus (412-485CE), Damascius (c. 458-538CE), and some of the Aristotelian commentators such as Simplicius (c. 490-560CE), as well as many later figures in different traditions—Christian, Jewish, and Muslim—who were influenced to greater or lesser degrees by Plotinus’
thought, figures ranging from Pseudo-Dionysius (late 5th to early 6th century CE), Augustine (354-430CE), Avicenna (c. 980 –1037CE), Ibn Gabirol (1021-1058CE), and Moses Maimonides (1135-1204CE) to Bonaventure (1221-1274CE), Aquinas (1225-1274CE), Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499CE), Giordano Bruno (1548-1600CE), and others in the Italian Renaissance.

RLR 700 – Rabbinic Judaism & Literature
Monday, 1:00-4:00
Michael Berger

Rabbinic Judaism flourished in the waning years of the Second Jewish Commonwealth and the first five centuries of the Common Era. Its rulings, practices, and ideology largely shaped Jewish religious life until the 19th century. However, the only record of that period is the literary legacy of the Rabbis themselves. In this seminar, we will examine the Babylonian Talmud, reading it closely to understand the mind of the people mentioned in it and of those who edited it. The rabbinic conversation embodied in the Talmud will serve as a springboard for a general examination of the various literary genres and texts of Rabbinic Judaism, as well as its history. We will also choose several topics based on student interest.

Texts include the following:

1) Hermann L. Strack and Gunter Stemberger, "Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash" (ppbk, Fortress Press)
   - ISBN-10: 0800625242

   - ISBN-10: 1883053935

   - ISBN-10: 0521605083

RLR 700 – Religion and Media
Monday, 1:00-4:00
James Hoesterey

This seminar explores how religion is both constituted and contested through various forms of media (print media, radio, music, cassette sermons, television sermons, broadcast news, art, Internet, and social media). The course covers a diverse range of media practices across a broad range of country-based case studies. The course material will focus primarily on Islam,
Christianity, and Hinduism, however students may write about other religious traditions for the final paper. Of special interest will be the networks of people and media that create new religious publics, produce new forms of religious knowledge, promote new kinds of religious practice, and garner new forms of religious authority. We will also examine how engagement with different media engenders particular kinds of ritual bodily practices, aesthetic sensibilities, and religious subjectivities. Further, we will explore transnational media flows, regional Arabic-language markets, and global religious movements. The course also considers different methodological approaches to the study of religion and media.

**RLR 700 - Theories of Religion**
Wednesday, 1:00-4:00
Jill Robbins

In this seminar, we will read closely major texts in the sociology and anthropology of religion by Emile Durkheim, Marcel Mauss, Claude Levi-Strauss, Mary Douglas, Max Weber and Pierre Bourdieu. We will discuss category formation, the role of presuppositions and meaning-structures, and the problem of comparison, as well as critically investigating key terms in the contemporary study of religion, such as "experience," "performance," "culture." Approaches to be considered, in addition to the structuralist-functionalist, include phenomenological, hermeneutic, and History of Religions.


**RLR 710 – History of the History of Religions**
Thursday, 1:00-4:00
Vincent Cornell

This course critically examines the field of Religious Studies (Religionsgeschichte or Religionswissenschaft) as a product of Western intellectual history. Two key questions that will be asked in this course are: How was the study of religions conceived as a science? And why did Religious Studies first develop in the West? Topics to be covered in our attempt to answer these questions will include: historicism and the philosophy of religion; linguistics, philology, and the History of Religions; imperialism, orientalism and Religious Studies; ideologies of origin and race; primitivism and the quest for authenticity; nationalism and the History of Religions; phenomenology and the problem of comparison; the “mystery” of the academic study of mysticism; traditionalism and perennialism; the influence of the History of Religions on religious movements in the Non-Western world.
Course Requirements • Regular class attendance • In-class presentations on assigned topics (30%) • A written critical review of a theoretical work in Religious Studies (15 pages, 30%) • A 20 to 25-page research paper on a theoretical problem in the History of Religions (40%)


RLTS 710J - Theological Problems: The Trinity
Tuesday, 8:30-11:30
Kendall Soulen

A striking feature of modern Christian theology has been dramatic resurgence of interest in the doctrine of the Trinity. This course explores the literature of the modern trinitarian revival in a way that emphasizes its relevance to a number of disciplinary fields, including scripture, historical theology, society and ethics, and constructive theology. Overarching organization for the course flows from Sarah Coakley’s observation that the trinitarian revival has unfolded in three “waves,” which we can characterize as that of the founders (1935-1970), the radicalizers (1970-2000), and the chasteners (2000-present). We will study figures who represent each wave, as well as corresponding methodological approaches of special interest or relevance to their approaches. In practice, this will mean pairing our study of the “founders” with biblical studies, the “radicalizers” with ethics and social practice, and the “chasteners” with patristics.