**Graduate Division of Religion  
Spring 2024 Course Atlas**  
**(Please check back for changes and updates - last update 11.29.2023)**

**RLR 700 / ICIVS 710 - Historiography of Islam  
Vincent Cornell  
Wednesday, 2:30-5:15**This course is an advanced graduate-level introduction to historiography as applied to Islamic Civilizations Studies. It is divided into two parts. The first part of the course is an introduction to major theoretical approaches in historiography, particularly as they can be applied to Middle Eastern and South Asian Muslim societies. This section of the course will cover the most prominent theoretical approaches to historiography; however, it will focus in particular on what Hayden White has called the “New Historicism” or what has also been called the “linguistic turn” in contemporary historiography. Students will be introduced to some of the most important historiographical theorists since the middle of the twentieth century. These include R. G. Collingwood; Marc Bloch and the Annales school of historians; Marshall G. S. Hodgson and global civilization history; Jan Vansina and the historiography of oral tradition; theorists of subaltern studies and “area histories” such as Dipesh Chakrabarty; and history-as-narrative theorists such as Hayden White, Michel de Certeau, and Elizabeth Clark. The second part of the course will examine critically a selected topic in the historical study of Islam and/or Islamic civilizations. In this part of the course, students will become familiar with current approaches to the historiography of Islam by Western historians. Special attention will be given to major historiographical problems in the field of Islamic Studies taken broadly. This half of the course may also examine historiographical methods used by selected Muslim historians to study their own history. Selected studies of major Muslim historians of the premodern period may also be examined as case studies in historiographical methodology.

**RLR 700 - Experiments in Crafting Religion: Toward New Epistemologies  
Jim Hoesterey  
Wednesday, 9:30-12:00**This new seminar is designed to provide doctoral scholars the opportunity to experiment with multiple epistemologies, forms, representations, practices, and audiences in religious studies writ large, public, and political. Building on core academic readings in experimental writing and artistic representation, students will work throughout the semester on their own experimental projects. Intellectually, this seminar is less a space of critique and deconstruction than an atmosphere for articulation and reconstruction, mending and weaving, styling and rhyming. As a learning community, we will emphasize intellectual support and generosity while in group conversations, while also providing the space for individual exploration and articulation. This seminar is best suited for second year doctoral students, however first year students may also enroll.

**RLR 700 / ICIVS 714 - Sufism: Foundations and South Asian Expressions**  
**Scott Kugle**  
**Monday, 2:30-5:15**

This seminar is about Sufism in its formative period (8th-10th centuries) and its expression in South Asia (11th-16th centuries). It is an inter-disciplinary exploration of Sufism (Islamic Mysticism) in the Persianate world of which South Asia was a part, following trade contacts, conquests and cultural diffusion during the Ghaznavid and Delhi Sultanate periods. It teaches students how to interpret Sufi phenomena, including mystical theories, theological concepts, ritual practices, political involvements. Central to the seminar will be reading Sufi classic texts in English translation.

**RLR 700 - Postcolonial Theory and Theology**  
**Kwok Pui Lan**  
**Tuesday, 1:00-4:00**

*\*This course satisfies one of the Theories & Methods requirements.*  
  
This seminar explores the development and major concepts of postcolonial theory by studying the works of representative figures such as Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. The emphasis will be on the implications of postcolonial theory for biblical interpretation, theological method, and critique and reformulation of Christian doctrines.

**RLR 700 - Methods in Biblical Scholarship**  
**Joel LeMon**  
**Wednesday, 1:00-4:00**  
  
This course surveys the landscape of methods currently in use throughout biblical scholarship. We will keep the larger landscape of the interpretation of sacred texts in view, but the focus will remain on biblical material and the modes of reading these texts. Each class session will highlight a different method and include a Hebrew or Greek text to be prepared for translation and discussion.

**RLR 700 - The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann: An Ecumenical and Global Reception**  
**Joy McDougall**  
**Wednesday, 9:00-12:00**

No living Protestant theologian has received a wider ecumenical and global reception than Jürgen Moltmann. This seminar engages this global theological conversation, by examining Moltmann’s major works and highlighting contested themes in his writings, in particular, eschatology, theology of the cross and divine suffering, the social doctrine of the Trinity, post-Holocaust Jewish-Christian dialogue and the tasks of political theology. Moltmann has received a spirited response on these questions from theologians across the globe--from Europe, China, Hong Kong, Korea, Latin America, and North America. In tandem with considering Moltmann’s works, seminar members will read shorter selections from his ecumenical and international interlocuters, e.g., James Cone, Nancy Eiesland, Jason Lam, Karl Rahner, Jon Sobrino, Kathryn Tanner, Miroslav Volf, and John Zizioulas. In their final research papers, students will engage one of these theological exchanges on a topic of their own choice.

**RLR 700 - Gandhi & Ambedkar**  
**Gyanendra  Pandey  
Thursday, 2:30-5:30**

**RLR 700 - Religion of Ancient Israel in the Hebrew Bible**  
**Jacob Wright**  
**Wednesday, 9:00-12:00**

**RLR 725 - The Role of the Reader  
Sara McClintock & Shiv Subramaniam  
Tuesdays, 2:00-5:00**

*\*This course satisfies one of the Theories & Methods requirements.*

The act of reading is arguably central to numerous religious   
traditions and also to the scholarly life of those who study religions. Frequently, however, we neglect to ask about the role of the reader in both the traditions we study and in our own scholarship. By placing the reader at the center of our inquiry, this seminar prompts us to consider how reading practices shape   
understanding both for practitioners and for scholars of religion. Deeply interdisciplinary, the course draws on works of hermeneutics, ethnography, the history of reading, scriptural studies, womanist theology, reader response theory, rabbinic practices, ordinary language philosophy, post-structuralism, and   
deconstruction. Throughout the course, we continually return to the difficult questions of how we can approach religious texts if we remain outside of the traditional interpretive community of religious readers, and also what it means to be part of the interpretive community of scholars of religion who study religious   
texts and religious reading.

Books (at bookstore)  
Coleman, Daniel. In Bed With the Word.  
Griffiths, Paul. Religious Reading.  
Williams, Delores S. Sisters in the Wilderness  
Holzer, Elie with Orit Kent. A Philosopy of Havruta.  
Cavell, Stanley. Must We Mean What We Say  
Barthes, Roland. S/Z.

\*All other readings will be available on Canvas.  
  
Particulars: Close reading of the assigned texts is critical for the success of any seminar, and students should come to class prepared to engage in an in-depth discussion of the readings. Weekly reflection papers and discussion question posts will help students to prepare for the seminar. The final project will consist of a   
term paper and class presentation in which the student applies the materials and theories we have studied in the seminar to their own particular area of research.