ICIVS 505 - Islamic Civilizations Pedagogy
Vincent Cornell
Tuesday/Thursday, 4:20-5:35

Introduction to Islamic Civilizations using Marshall Hodgson's The Venture of Islam series. Seminar in Islamic Studies pedagogical methods culminating in development of course syllabus.

RLE 733 - Love and Justice
Timothy Jackson
Wednesday, 2:30-4:30

This course seeks to clarify several philosophical and theological 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 adoption, the right to death, and gay and lesbian marriage?

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 and Emory Law students, with permission of the professor.

RLL 720 - Akkadian
Roger Nam
Wednesday, 10:00-11:00

The course is the continuation of the basic study of the Akkadian language spanning two semesters.

RLNT 745 - Social History of the New Testament
Susan Hylen
Tuesday/Thursday 10:30-12:00

This course surveys the social history of the Greco-Roman world in the first and second centuries. It familiarizes students with the social, philosophical, and religious 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.
RLR 700 - Bhakti
Harshita Mruthinti Kamath
Wednesday, 9:40-12:35

*Bhakti* poets and their poetry have long played a powerful role in shaping the religious landscape of India. Beginning with Sheldon Pollock's (2006) seminal discussion of the cosmopolitan vernacular and John Stratton Hawley's (2015) reformulation of the idea of the *bhakti* movement, this graduate seminar examines the role of *bhakti* in shaping the literary, political, and cultural histories of South Asia. The course material spans from the Tamil poetry of Nammalvar in the mid first millennium C.E. to the sexually explicit verses of courtesan women of seventeenth-century Tanjavur. We will read translations of poetry in a variety of vernacular Indian languages, including Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Marathi. Critical historical studies of the political, cultural, and religious landscape of India will further support our analysis. We will also engage with a range of leading scholars in the field of regional *bhakti* traditions in South Asia.

RLR 700 - Hindu Traditions Through Ethnography
Joyce Flueckiger
Monday, 10:00-1:00

This seminar will focus on what ethnography can teach us about central themes in the study of Hindu traditions, including: dharma, karma, the nature of deity, personhood, body, gender, caste, regional differences, class, ritual, possession and healing, materiality, and narrative. We will also address the impact of ethnography and performance studies on the study of Hinduism and religious studies more broadly. The seminar may be helpful to students not familiar with Hindu traditions for comparative purposes.

RLR 700 - LGBTQ Scripture Interpretation
William K. Gilders
Thursday, 3:00-6:00

In this seminar, we will explore the diverse ways in which LGBTQ-identified people and recognized “allies” have engaged with texts identified as “scripture” from the perspective of their identity positions. In broad theoretical terms, this will be a seminar about hermeneutics. Giving primary attention to Jewish and Christian scriptures, we will study the interpretive work of professional biblical scholars (such as Deryn Guest, Dale B. Martin, Erin Runions, and Ken Stone) as well as the varied cultural work of “non-academic” interpreters. In addition to our focus on Jewish and Christian scriptures, there will be some general attention to scriptural interpretation in multiple traditions and one session of specialized work on the interpretation of the Qur’an. Our focused engagement with scriptural interpretation will be situated within the larger context of the growing field of queer and transgender studies in religion. (Some basic knowledge of Hebrew and Greek will be helpful, but is not a prerequisite.)

RLR 700 - Reception History and Reception Theory
Joel LeMon
Wednesday, 2:00-5:00
*This seminar will fulfill one of the required Theories & Methods seminars*

This course explores theories of reception of religious texts and the ways that current reception historical projects are framed particularly within biblical studies but also in religious studies and hermeneutics more broadly. The course will begin by engaging classic readings from reception theorists such as Gadamer and Jauss. After an orientation to reception theory, the students will encounter a number of case studies in the practice of reception history, e.g., analyses of religious texts and themes in music, visual art, and literature. Over the course of the semester, students will lead discussions on theories of reception as well as produce research projects that put reception theory into practice within their specific areas of interests.

The course readings will include the following, among others:


Furey, Constance, et al, eds. The Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception, Berlin: DeGruyter: 2010-


Seow, Choon-Leong, Job 1-21: Interpretation and Commentary. Illuminations. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,
The academic study of religion is built largely on the denigration of indigenous religious traditions, if not on their exclusion altogether. By exploring factors—political, racial, and epistemic—behind the marginalization of indigenous religions, we uncover biases built into religious studies and the modern Western academy at large. Recently, the Eurocentric foundations of dominant epistemologies have come under scrutiny, as has the mutual imbrication of colonialism and academic knowledge practices. In what ways has religious studies advanced such work toward decolonizing the academy, and in what ways has it perpetuated the problem? This course does not purport to survey the enormous variety of indigenous religious traditions—those once labeled primitive, primal, or savage. Case studies will, however, be used to illuminate theoretical debates around the limits of the world religions paradigm and of the category of religion itself, the construction and the politics of indigeneity in response to religious and secular pressures, and the roots of religious studies in Western colonialism and assumptions about Christian normativity. A primary objective of the course is to center what has historically been cast to the margins—alternative ways of knowing and alternative ways of being—for the end of imagining alternative ways of carrying out teaching and research in an academy yet to be decolonized.

This iteration of Themes and Approaches in Latin American History will take as a point of departure Ann Stoler's characterization of archives as epistemological experiments rather than as repositories of sources in order to examine the role played by archival practices in the articulation and negotiation of state-imposed identities and individual and collective strategies of identity formation in Latin America. We will examine the relationship between regimes of classification, memory, and power from the early modern imperialist expansion to the postcolonial condition. Among the themes to be explored are: the relationship between states and archives, governmentality and state intelligence, legal administration and the rule system of law, the access to archives and the democratization of the past, and finally, the role of archives in contemporary utopias and dystopias.
The act of reading is arguably central to numerous religious traditions and also to the scholarly life of those who study religion. 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. Our first task is to come to terms with how we read the texts that we study, and we do this through engagement with theoretical writings in reader response theory, semiotics, and literary criticism. Turning then to specific examples from religious traditions, we next draw on the history of reading, as well as ethnography and theology, to ask about the intertextual, performative and embodied aspects of the act of reading and to problematize our assumptions about what may be at stake in religious reading. Finally, we end the course with a consideration of the political dimensions of reading, examining works of history as well as womanist, feminist, and Black theology. Throughout the course, we will continually revisit the difficult questions of how we as readers 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.

This course invites students to think boldly and courageously about the religious histories, cultures and thought of African descendants in the United States, the Caribbean and the wider Atlantic World. In seeking to encourage more nuanced treatments of the experiences and expressions that constitute varieties of Africana religious cultures across the centuries, we will examine new and expansive studies that use transdisciplinary or unconventional tools and methods to map a terrain of African Atlantic/diasporic religions and the encounters and exchanges that influenced their appearance in the Americas and the Caribbean. In pursuit of these course objectives, we will interrogate how a type of religious and cultural ‘identity politics’ imposed limits on the field of Black religious studies as the scholarship that defined it developed in the United States context in response to social constraints and dilemmas facing African American intellectuals during the early twentieth century. Since its emergence, the direction of the field of Black religious studies has confined us to discussions that often situate U.S. African American religions within arenas of North American Protestantism, viz. far from the borders of the Caribbean, South American and Central American landscapes suggested by the categories “African
diaspora religions,” “African Atlantic religions” and “Africana religions.” By engaging new conceptual, epistemological and methodological directions in Africana religious studies, we will encounter and develop innovative perspectives on pivotal topics such as (1) the role of religion in the social and sacred production of identity, citizenship and caste, (2) the implications of African-descended women’s involuntary presence in the Caribbean and the Americas for Africana religiosity, (3) religion, the body and the senses, (4) the politics of liberation, the politics of refusal and the politics of hope, (5) the boundaries of religious knowledge and its modes of transmission in Africana contexts, and (6) the limits and purchase of the academic concept of “religion” in studies of Africana spiritual cultures and epistemological orientations.

**COURSE TEXTS:**

Curtis Evans, *The Burden of Black Religion*

Walter Rucker, *Gold Coast Diasporas: Identity, Culture, and Power*

Pablo Gómez, *The Experiential Caribbean: Creating Knowledge and Healing in the Early Modern Atlantic*

Sasha Turner, *Contested Bodies: Pregnancy, Childrearing, and Slavery in Jamaica*

Katharine Gerbner, *Christian Slavery: Conversion and Race in the Protestant Atlantic World*

Todne Thomas, *Kincraft: The Making of Black Evangelical Sociality*

James Cone, *Said I Wasn’t Gonna Tell Nobody: The Making of a Black Theologian*

Daniel Fountain, *Slavery, Civil War, and Salvation: African American Slaves and Christianity*

Ras Michael Brown, *African-Atlantic Cultures and the South Carolina Lowcountry*

Bruce Haynes, *The Soul of Judaism: Jews of African Descent in America*

Judith Weisenfeld, *New World A-Coming: Black Religion and Racial Identity During the Great Migration*

Ashon Crawley, *Blackpentecostal Breath: The Aesthetics of Possibility*

Grey Gundaker, *Signs of Diaspora/Diaspora of Signs: Literacies, Creolization, and Vernacular Practice in African America*

**COURSE ARTICLES:**


