

Graduate Division of Religion

Spring 2020 Course Atlas

ICIVS 710 - Historiography of Islam

Vincent J. Cornell

Tuesday, 4:00-7:00

Introduction to Historiography as it applies to Religious Studies and Islamic Studies. The first part of the course is an introduction to the “New Historiography.” Students will be introduced to the most important figures in this field including R. G. Collingwood, Marc Bloc and the Annales school, Jan Vansina’s work on the historiography of oral tradition, and theorists of historiography as literature, such as Hayden White and Elizabeth Clark. The second part of the course is an introduction to historiographical problematics in the field of Islamic Studies. The research paper will require students to apply one of the Historiographical methods studied in class to a problematic related to their personal research interests.

RLAR 737-Topics In Buddhist Studies: Buddhist Philosophy

Sara McClintock

Lecture: Tuesday/Thursday 2:30-3:45

Discussion: Fridays 12:30pm-2:30pm

The Buddhist tradition is celebrated for its groundbreaking and profound contributions to philosophy in domains such as metaphysics, epistemology, semiotics, and ethics. This course introduces students to these contributions through the study of key primary texts in Buddhist philosophy from the ancient and classical periods. Starting with the dialogues of the Pāli canon, we examine the Buddhist critique of an enduring self and the concomitant theories of momentariness and interdependence. Systematic treatises from the Pāli and Sanskrit traditions invite us to consider the further metaphysical implications of the “no-self” doctrine, including the Madhyamaka theory of the emptiness or naturelessness of all things. Questions concerning whether emptiness further requires a form of idealism arise in our examination of treatises from the Yogācāra school, which also leads the way in elaborating a nominalist understanding of language and a sophisticated pragmatism about truth and reality. We end with reflections on the ethical implications of emptiness and interdependence, through close study of the *Introduction to the Bodhisattva’s Activity* by the 8th-century monk, Śāntideva, whose promotion of compassion as the key to integrating emptiness and ethics inspires Buddhists like the Dalai Lama to this day.

Graduate students in this seminar will attend the twice-weekly lectures associated with Professor McClintock’s concomitant undergraduate course on Buddhist philosophy. Graduate students will also complete additional weekly readings and will participate in a supplemental discussion session on Fridays. Requirements for the course include short weekly reflection papers (ungraded but required) and a final term paper. No prerequisites, but students without prior knowledge of Buddhism should read *The Foundations of Buddhism* by Rupert Gethin prior to the start of the semester.

Required books:

- William Edelglass and Jay L. Garfield, eds. 2009. *Buddhist Philosophy: Essential Readings*. Oxford. ISBN-10:0195328175 ; ISBN-13: 978-0195328172
- Jay Garfield. 1995. *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way: Nāgārjuna's Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. Oxford. ISBN-10:0195093364 ; ISBN-13: 978-0195093360
- John J. Holder. 2006. *Early Buddhist Discourses*. Hackett. ISBN-10:0872207927 ; ISBN-13: 978-0872207929
- Śāntideva. *The Bodhicaryāvatāra*. Translated by Kate Crosby and Andrew Skilton. 2008. ISBN-10:0199540438 ; ISBN-13: 978-0199540433

RLHT 735 - Comparative Africana Womanisms

Dianne Stewart

Tuesday, 1:00-4:00

This course examines the emergence and legacies of womanist scholarship across a range of disciplines in the academy. With emphasis upon the role of spirituality and religion in womanist discourse, we will read texts that account for womanist (and in some cases feminist) thought and practice in the Americas and the Caribbean as well as Africa. Among a range of critical issues addressed in the course are the particular role that the Christian theological school of womanism has played in the development of the field and the relationship between womansims and feminisms in broader Africana intellectual traditions.

Mimerose Beaubrun, *Nan Domi: An Initiate's Journey into Haitian Vodou*, City Lights Publishers; First Edition (December 17, 2013), ISBN-10: 0872865746, ISBN-13: 978-087286574

Monica Coleman, *Ain't I a Womanist Too: Third Wave Womanist Religious Thought*, Fortress Press (May 1, 2013), ISBN-10: 0800698762, ISBN-13: 978-0800698768

Cheikh Anta Diop, *The Cultural Unity of Black Africa: The Domains of Matriarchy & of Patriarchy in Classical Antiquity* (Karnak History) (English Edition) Karnak House publishers (January 7, 2000), ISBN-10: 0907015441, ISBN-13: 978-0907015444

Mary Kolawole, *Womanism and African Consciousness*, Africa World Pr (August 1, 1996), ISBN-10: 0865435413, ISBN-13: 978-0865435414

Pamela Lightsey, *Our Lives Matter: A Womanist Queer Theology*, Pickwick Publications (September 18, 2015), ISBN-10: 1498206646, ISBN-13: 978-1498206648

Layli Maparyan, *The Womanist Idea*, Routledge; 1st edition (December 22, 2011), ISBN-10: 041588683X, ISBN-13: 978-0415886833

Jennifer Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined: After Intersectionality*, Duke University Press (February 8, 2019), ISBN-10: 1478000597, ISBN-13: 978-1478000594

Chela Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, Univ Of Minnesota Press; First edition (October 2000), ISBN-10: 0816627371, ISBN-13: 978-0816627370

Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*, Duke University Press Books; Reprint edition (November 14, 2016), ISBN-10: 0822362945 , ISBN-13: 978-0822362944

Clenora Hudson Weems, *Africana Womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves*, Bedford Pub; Revised edition (June 1, 2004), ISBN-10: 0911557245, ISBN-13: 978-0911557244

Delores Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk*, Orbis Books; Anniversary Edition (November 1, 2013), ISBN-10: 1626980381, ISBN-13: 978-1626980389

RLR 700- Reading Religious Texts Comparatively

María M Carrión

Tuesday, 10:00-1:00

This seminar explores theoretical and practical methods to read religious texts comparatively. The course weaves analyses of narrative and performative elements, units, structure, forms, and formats of meaning and reference in religious texts with readings in comparative theology, intercultural and transnational studies, textuality, and narrative and performance theories. Readings, class discussion, and exercises in comparative readings are designed for students to become more cognizant of the units, structures, and superstructures that support the design, creation, publication, dissemination, and canonization of religious texts, as well as their relationality with texts from other religious traditions. Class discussions and comparative reading exercises will be informed by readings by Francis Clooney, Walter Benjamin, Georges Bataille, Jean-Luc Nancy, José Muñoz, Paulo Freire, Jacques Derrida, Gille Deleuze & Félix Guattari, Franz Fanon, Édouard Glissant, Mayra Rivera Rivera, and Calvin Warren, among others.

RLR 700 - Ethnographic Methods and Writing

Joyce Flueckiger & Jim Hoesterey

Wednesday, 10:00-1:00

This seminar will introduce students to a range of ethnographic fieldwork methodologies and analyze modes of ethnographic writing--with the assumption that modes of writing are, in part, dependent on particular fieldwork methods and help to shape theoretical arguments. We will read one ethnography every other week. On alternate weeks, we will we will read several articles and participate in writing exercises.

RLR 700 - Sexuality Theory and Religion--in the Global South
Scott Kugle
Wednesday, 3:00-6:00

This graduate seminar explores recent debates over sexuality and religion from the perspective of “the global south,” the formerly colonized zone of Islamic, Hindu and Buddhist civilizations (ranging from Africa and Arabia to Turkey and Iran through India and Indonesia). The seminar will focus on female sexuality, transgender behavior, homosexuality and masculinity within the context of deeply rooted patriarchy in religious traditions. We ask how religious traditions conceived of sex and gender, and how sexual diversity challenged religious norms, and how sexuality found expression through religious ideals.

The seminar will examine how recent theoretical debates have affected and been affected by new research into the classical and early-modern past, including the archives of theological dispute, poetic expression, and mythic literature. The seminar will also draw upon contemporary ethnographic studies about sexuality, morality and national law. The context is to understand more deeply how post-colonial global modernity and its regimes of sexual identity fuel or curtail the creative interaction between sexuality and religion. The seminar is open to graduate students and qualified undergraduates (with prior permission from the professor).

RLR 700 - Kierkegaard
Jill Robbins
Wednesday, 10:00-1:00

How do literary and religious texts pose questions within and to Continental philosophy? In this seminar, we will consider Soren Kierkegaard's phenomenology of mood, his hybrid genre of writing, and the distinctive way in which he deploys biblical texts, such as "the binding of Isaac" (Gn. 22) and the Book of Job, in developing his philosophy of existence. The "trembling" to which the narrator of Fear and Trembling refers is experienced not only by the biblical Abraham, who is in a religious relation to the absolute, and whose orders from God are sealed in secrecy, but also by Kierkegaard's narrator, himself brought to the point of inexpressibility in the face of Abraham's ordeal. In Repetition, the fictional protagonist offers an intensely personal reading of the Book of Job. The book's formulation of the problem of theodicy, the theological justification of suffering, and the example of Job's legendary patience, provide the protagonist with a means of making sense of his broken engagement. The disenchanted and ironic voice of Qoheleth may be heard in Either/Or's first-person description of aesthetic existence and Judge William's ethical diagnosis of it. A sermon appended to William's letters by an unnamed pastor friend supplements Either/Or's account.

We will attend to influential readings of Kierkegaard by Jacques Derrida, Emmanuel Levinas, Maurice Blanchot, Sylviane Agacinski, and others.

Requirements: one term paper (15-20pp.) and one in-class presentation.

Required Texts: Soren Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling/Repetition, trans. Hong and Hong (Princeton); Kierkegaard, Either/Or, Part I, trans. Hong and Hong (Princeton); Kierkegaard, Either/Or, Part II, trans. Hong and Hong (Princeton); The Wisdom Books, trans. Robert Alter (Schocken); E. A. Speiser, ed. Genesis (Anchor) and Kierkegaard: A Critical Reader, eds. Ree and Chamberlain (Blackwell).

**RLR 700 -
Choon-leong Seow
Wednesday, 2:30-5:30**

**RLR 700 - Gender and Christian-Muslim Encounters: West and South Asia
Deanna Womack
Thursday, 12:00-3:00**

This course critically analyzes the influence of gender norms on Christian-Muslim encounters in Muslim-majority contexts of the Middle East/North Africa and South Asia, from the eighteenth century to present. The course centers around the impact of gender constructs on: 1) daily life and religious practices of Muslims and Christians; 2) relationships between Muslims and Christians, historically and today; and 3) western intellectual, religious, and military interventions in these regions. Subjects of discussion related to these three areas include feminism, women's history, masculinity, sexuality, orientalism, western missions, da'wa, world Christianity, colonialism/imperialism, religious hybridity, minority rights discourses, and secularism. Course readings are drawn from history, ethnography, post-colonial theory, and gender studies. Students who work on other regions of the world will be encouraged to incorporate their research into class projects.

**RLR 700 - Judges
Jacob Wright
Monday, 1:00-4:00**

In this course, we will use the book of Judges as a lens from which to explore various and important dimensions of the Hebrew Bible: its composition history, its political theology, the larger themes and emphases that shape the narrative of Israel's history, and the convergence/divergence between history and narrative. We will pay special attention to the way in which the book of Judges communicates its messages in relation to masculinity and women.