

GDR Course Atlas – Fall 2013

RLAR 701 Performance and Ethnography

Joyce Flueckiger

Thur. 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., Emerson E103

Content: The primary purposes of this course are 1) to introduce a certain data field of textual and nontextual performative religious traditions of West and south Asian through recent ethnographic and performative studies and 2) to examine ways in which ethnographic and performance studies contribute to the study of religion. By expanding the kinds of sources we look at in the study of religion, such as oral expressive culture (song, tale, life history) and material culture (ritual art, weaving, dress), as well as the ritual and performative ways in which written texts are used, we also shift the representation of whose voices are heard. Frequently these voices articulate alternative, innovative, protesting, and/or co-existing ideologies to that of the dominant, textual ideology of a particular religious tradition. The course will also introduce theoretical frameworks and analytic tools from performance studies and anthropology with which to analyze both the specific traditions under consideration and the ethnographic enterprise of fieldwork and writing.

We will read each ethnographic study from several perspectives, asking: 1) what does this study contribute to methodologies for the study of religion; how (or does it) expand the boundaries of what "counts" in the study of religion? 2) what and how does performance "create"? what analytic frameworks and tools are used to understand the performative and expressive traditions under consideration? and finally, 3) how are fieldwork and ethnographic writing "performed" (with the implication that performance creates) in each of our texts?

We will consider the different kinds of significance and place of ethnography in the study and teaching of Hinduism and Islam, asking why the two fields have developed differently in this regard (welcoming the comparison to Christianity and other traditions as well).

Texts may include:

Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1993. *Writing Women's Worlds: Bedouin Stories*.
Bowen, John R. 1993. *Muslims Through Discourse: Religion and Ritual in Gayo Society*.
Ewing, Katherine. 1997. *Arguing Sainthood: Modernity, Psychoanalysis, and Islam*.
Flueckiger, Joyce Burkhalter. 2006. In *Amma's Healing Room: Gender & Vernacular Islam in South India*
Flueckiger, Joyce Burkhalter. 1996. *Selections from Gender and Genre in the Folklore of Middle India*.
Gade, Anna. 2006. *Perfection Makes Practice: Learning, Emotion, and the Recited Quran in Indonesia*.
Gold, Ann. 1988. *Fruitful Journeys: The Ways of Rajasthani Pilgrims*.
Mahmood, Saba. 2005. *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*.
Nabakov, Isabelle. 2000. *Religion Against the Self: An Ethnography of Tamil Rituals*.
Narayan, Kirin, in collaboration with Urmila Devi Sood. 1997. *Mondays on the Dark Night of the Moon: Himalayan Foothill Folktales*.
Sax, William. 2002. *Dancing the Self: Personhood and Performance in the Pandav Lila of Garhwal*.

RLAR 738 (ICIVS 710) Historiography of Islam

Vincent Cornell

Mon. 3:00-6:00 p.m., Callaway S319

Course Description: This course is an advanced graduate-level introduction to historiography as applied to the study of Islam and Islamic Civilizations Studies. The course is divided into two parts. The first half of the course is an introduction to major theoretical approaches in historiography, particularly as they can be applied to Middle Eastern and South Asian 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 Elizabeth A. Clark has 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* historians, Marshall G. S. Hodgson and global civilization history, Jan Vansina and the historiography of oral

tradition, theorists of subaltern studies such as Dipesh Chakrabarty, and history-as-narrative theorists such as Hayden White and Michel de Certeau. The second part of the course will examine critically the historical study of Islam and Islamic civilization. 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. This half of the course will also examine historiographical methods used by selected Muslim historians to study their own history. Selected studies of major Muslim historians of the premodern period will be examined as case studies in historiographical methods.

Course Requirements and Grading: Students will be graded on class participation (25%), a critical written review of a major work on historiographical theory or a theoretical approach to Islamic history (25%) and an end-of-term research paper of 20-30 pages (50%). The research paper will require students to apply a current methodology of historiographical theory to a problematical issue in the history of Islam or Islamic civilization.

Required Texts

Bloch, Marc, *The Historian's Craft*
Clark, Elizabeth A., *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn*
Collingwood, R. G., *The Idea of History*
Humphries, R. Stephen, *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry*
Jenkins, Keith, *Re-Thinking History*
Robinson, Chase F., *Islamic Historiography*
Vansina, Jan, *Oral Tradition as History*

RLE 700R Contemporary Virtue Ethics

Pamela Hall

Max: 12 students.

Wed. 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Location Pending

We will explore together significant work within the recent "revival" of ethical reflection on the virtues within Anglo-American philosophy. Within the last 50 years, thinkers in this revival have considered the nature of the virtues, their place in human life, and their connections to human flourishing (if any); they have also asked how persons of virtue are formed through social or political structures (if they are). Virtue ethics has supported finding a language for human emotional life and its needs (i.e. moral psychology), and it has asked how consideration of the inner life is central to ethics.

In this seminar, we will read and discuss together a range of work from recent and contemporary reflection on the virtues bearing on these questions. This will include:

Essays by Elizabeth Anscombe and Simone Weil, who are formative for the project of recent virtue ethics.
Iris Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good* and selections from her *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*.
Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* (in part) and *Dependent Rational Animals*
Martha Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* (sections)
Essays by Bernard Williams, Thomas Nagel, Susan Wolf, Lisa Tessman.

We will also use film to feed our explorations of moral psychology and of the many ways that virtue can be manifested and can be challenged. Films will include *Weapons of the Spirit*, *Trouble the Water*, *Winter's Bone*, and *Of Gods and Men*.

Requirements include several short reflection papers, one 10-12 page paper, and one oral presentation.

Please, no audits.

RLE 733/PHIL 789: LOVE AND JUSTICE

Timothy P. Jackson

Tues. 6:30-9:30 p.m., Candler Library 124

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 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, Soren 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 undergraduates and Candler students, with permission of the professor.

REQUIRED TEXTS, AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE (unless otherwise noted)

Saint Augustine, *City of God*

Timothy P. Jackson, *Love Disconsoled*

--- selections from *Political Agape* (handed out in class)

Soren Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, trans. by Howard and Edna Hong

Martha C. Nussbaum, *Sex and Social Justice*

Plato, *The Republic*, trans. by Allan Bloom

--- *The Symposium*, trans. by Christopher Gill

John Rawls, *Political Liberalism*

REQUIRED ARTICLES, HANDED OUT IN CLASS

Timothy P. Jackson, "To Bedlam and Part Way Back: John Rawls and Christian Justice," in *Faith and Philosophy* (Oct. 1991)

--- "The Return of the Prodigal?: Liberal Theory and Religious Pluralism," in *Religion and Contemporary Liberalism*, ed. by Paul J. Weithman (University of Notre Dame Press, 1992)

RLAR 737 Contemplative Studies and Buddhist Meditation John Dunne and Lobsang Negi

RLHB 750 Israelite Religion in its Ancient Near Eastern Environment - NEW DAY AND TIME

Brent Strawn

Thurs 2:30-5:30 p.m. Location TBA

Course Description: This class will consider Israelite religion(s) both within itself (i.e., as a delimitable discipline and as a geographically and historically discrete area of inquiry) and within the broader horizon of the ancient Near East and the sources and practices of religion that are attested therein. These latter will be treated as legitimate areas of inquiry in and of themselves, however, not solely as access points to Israelite phenomena. The course will therefore move both topically and regionally, considering selected problems (e.g., the sources, locus, and content of Israelite religion; the role of the goddess(es), the history of Yhwh; the "rise" of monotheism; deity identification/syncretism; etc.) and the evidence pertaining thereto both within Israel and within its cultural congeners (with special emphasis on Mesopotamia, Ugarit, the Transjordan, and Egypt, including Elephantine). Artifactual (especially iconographical), archaeological, and epigraphic remains will be assessed. Throughout, the class will be concerned with the nature of "religion," "theology," and "comparison," particularly as these subjects are at work in the primary data and secondary

discussions.

Possible Resources include: D. Pals, *Eight Theories of Religion*, 2nd ed. (Oxford University Press); O. Keel and C. Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddess, and Images of God in Ancient Israel* (Fortress); Z. Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches* (Continuum); W. Dever, *Did God Have a Wife?* (Eerdmans); E. Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt* (Cornell); H. Frankfort and H. A. Frankfort, eds., *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man* (Chicago); T. Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness* (Yale); J. Assmann, *The Search for God in Ancient Egypt* (Cornell); R. D. Hess, *Israelite Religions: An Archaeological and Biblical Survey* (2007); K. Sparks, *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible* (Hendrickson); J. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament* (Baker); Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan* (Sheffield); M. Smith, *The Early History of God*, 2nd ed. (Eerdmans); idem, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism* (Oxford); etc.

Seminar Requirements: one or two reading reports, leadership of one seminar, one seminar presentation paper (10-15pp), one response to a seminar presentation paper; final paper (20-25pp).

RLHB 792: Critical Methods of Hebrew Bible Study

Jacob Wright

Mon. 1:00–4:00 p.m., Callaway N116

Max: 12

Content: Analysis of selected Hebrew Bible texts in order to establish familiarity with and competence in the use of diverse methods and perspectives (e.g., textual criticism, redaction criticism, literary criticism, social scientific perspectives) within the field of biblical studies.

Texts:

Joel M. LeMon and Kent Harold Richards (eds.), *Method Matters*

Thomas B. Dozeman (ed.), *Methods for Exodus*

Other readings will be drawn from monographs, commentaries, and journal articles.

Particulars: The course is a seminar in which students are expected to complete assigned readings prior to each session, to participate actively and productively in class discussions, and to write a research paper focused on two clearly articulated methods or perspectives. Prerequisites: Graduate standing in the Graduate Division of Religion or permission of the instructor, good reading knowledge of biblical Hebrew.

RLHS 738: Special Topics in the History of Religion: Conversion in Early Modern Europe

Jonathan Strom

Wed. 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Description: This seminar will examine religious conversion in early modern Europe from a variety of cultural, theological, and socio-historical perspectives. Beginning with the medieval legacy, we will focus on the various meanings of conversion in early modern Europe with attention given to inter-religious conversion between distinct religions (Jewish – Christian), conversion within religious traditions (Protestant – Catholic), and transformative conversion within a single movement (Puritan and Pietist). The seminar will particularly focus on the construction of conversion narratives within evangelical Protestantism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and their relationship to religious experience, narrative practice, and “modern” religiosity. In addition to selections from classic models of conversion from William James to Lewis Rambo, readings will include cases studies by Elisheva Carlebach (*Divided Souls*) and Bruce Hindmarsh (*Evangelical Conversion*), contemporary conversion narratives (Teresa of Avila, August Hermann Francke, John Wesley) among other readings.

RLHT 735 Global Feminisms and the Study of Women and Religion in America

Dianne Diakite'

Mon. 3:00-6:00 p.m., Callaway S221

This course invites seminar participants to place global feminist and gender studies perspectives (with an emphasis on African contexts) in dialogue with research on women and U.S. North American religion. Our principal goals are to (1) situate our inquiry within conversations that complicate and de-center normative

Western approaches to gender and women's experience; (2) interrogate the conceptual resources such perspectives might yield for scholars engaged in the study of American religion(s) with attention to women's experience in diverse cultural, ethnic, and socio-economic contexts; (3) examine how scholars' ideological, epistemological and disciplinary locations and commitments shape their approaches to interpreting gender, women's experience and, in particular, women's religious experience; and (4) explore the significance of women's and gender studies research for emerging perspectives on American religious cultures and the history of religions in America.

RLHT 736 (ILA 790, MESAS 570) Neo-Platonism

Kevin Corrigan

Wed 4:00-7:00 p.m.

S423 Callaway Center

Particulars: This course will provide an in-depth introduction to the phenomenon known as Neo-Platonism. Neo-Platonism starts with Plotinus in the 3rd century. We shall read a significant number of Plotinus' Treatises. But in order to understand Plotinus, we will have to examine the earlier history of thought starting with the pre-Socratics, Plato, Aristotle, Stoics, Epicureans, Alexander of Aphrodisias and others. We shall also situate Plotinus' Enneads in the complex context of Gnostic thought. The course will conclude with a consideration, first, of later Neo-Platonism, --- Porphyry, Iamblichus, Proclus, Pseudo-Dionysius and Damascius; and, second, of traditions that are in some measure dependent upon Neo-Platonism, namely, Jewish, Arabic (particularly the Sufi tradition) and Christian thought and, and third of the resonances between the Eastern and Western traditions.

RLHT 741G: Kant and the Post-Kantians: The Origins and Development of Critical Categories of Religious Inquiry

David Pacini

Fri. 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Callaway S104

In our formation as scholars in the disciplines of religious inquiry, we learn the rubrics of our field and continuously practice them in pursuit of their mastery. Yet we seldom ask why these rubrics began or when they emerged. To the extent that we do, we are met with the conventional answer that they began in the context of Enlightenment disparagements of religion and achieved currency in the wake of Kant's Critical Philosophy, particularly as it was re-cast by Schleiermacher. The object of this course is to provide a more complex account of the origins and development of modern religious inquiry.

There are good grounds for locating these origins in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, when new systems of classification emerged for interpreting the welter of human experience. Though the categories of Christian theologies remained dominant, other systems of classification—alphabetical (the dictionary of Pierre Bayle and the encyclopedia of the French philosophes), spatial (the mathematization of nature in Isaac Newton), temporal (the critical comparison of diverse systems of chronology of Joseph Scaliger), and mathematical (the geometric reasoning of Descartes)—assumed novel forms and gained ascendance. These systems of classification quickly insinuated themselves into the ways in which theology and religious practices would be understood. Immanuel Kant's various attempts to reconcile the new systems of observational rationality with traditional metaphysics loomed large, precisely because he persuasively recast the limits of rationality in a way that made certain kinds of religious discourse viable. Because of the length of Kant's intellectual shadow and of the particular way of speaking of the hegemony of Kantian influence adopted by his successors, the dynamic of the interplay between religion, politics, and systems of observational rationality is often overlooked

The aim of this seminar is to retrieve this link as a backdrop for interpreting the developing Post-Kantian vocabularies that guided critical religious inquiry and for ascertaining the significance of their categories. Readings in the seminar will be drawn from formative documents for each of the courses of study in the GDR. Recognizing the degree to which our approach to religious questions is informed by a set of concerns that may no longer apply in the 21st century might, in turn, enable us to disengage from unnecessary criticisms or unhelpful formulations of them.

RLL 701: Akkadian

Joel LeMon

Fri. 9:30-11:00 a.m.

Max: 12

Content: The course is a basic study of the Akkadian language spanning two semesters. At the conclusion of the second semester, students will be able to read transliterated literary texts in Standard Babylonian with the help of a dictionary. By way of background, the students will encounter the basic principles of Sumerian grammar. Students will also be equipped to navigate peripheral dialects of Akkadian.

Texts:

- Black, George, and Postgate, A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian
- Huehnergard, A Grammar of Akkadian (3d ed.)
- Huehnergard, A Key to a Grammar of Akkadian
- Miller and Ship, An Akkadian Handbook

Particulars: Students will demonstrate aptitude through regular in-class and take-home quizzes as well as a comprehensive final exam. Prior work with another Semitic language, particularly Classical Hebrew is required.

RLNT 711J Gospel of Matthew (JS 730)**Walter Wilson****Thurs. 2:30-5:30 p.m.****RLNT 740 Jewish Millieu****Carl Holladay****Fri. 9:00 a.m - 12:00 p.m.**

Content: This course, which is designed primarily for doctoral students in New Testament, explores social, historical, and religious aspects of Second Temple Judaism, especially as they relate to Christian origins. It is intended to provide a broad intellectual framework for understanding the complexities of Judaism during the Hellenistic-Roman period and how these affect scholarly research in the New Testament. Topics include Judaism in the Hellenistic Period; Judaism Under Roman Rule; Septuagint; Judaism and Hellenism; Varieties of Judaism in the Hellenistic-Roman Period; Apocalyptic; Rabbinic Judaism; Philo and Josephus. Each student is required to do a seminar presentation on one of the main sections of the syllabus, which includes selecting 50-75 pages of primary texts related to the topic, reviewing relevant primary and secondary bibliography, identifying some of the main issues in the current scholarly debate, especially as they relate to New Testament interpretation.

RLNT 760 New Testament Theology**Steven Kraftchick****Tues. 2:30-5:30 p.m., Schwartz 132**

The construction of a New Testament theology requires both historical and hermeneutical investigation. It is the relationship of these two interpretive activities that determines the shape, scope, and audience of a New Testament theology. In this course we will consider the discipline of "New Testament Theology" from three vantage points: the modern history of the discipline starting in the 18th Century, the different (and differing) uses of the term "New Testament Theology" and the issues that arise in regards to determining or developing a New Testament Theology. In the course we will read representative major NTTs (e.g. Bultmann, Schlatter, Jeremias, Hahn, Caird/Hurst) as well as some more recent attempts (e.g. Matera, Strecker, Schnelle) in conversation with critical reviews of those theologies and the enterprise itself (e.g. Penner/Räisänen, Thiselton, Via, Lampe, Adams).

Course requirements will include class preparation, class presentations, and a final paper that explores fundamental issues in the approaches to New Testament Theology, the definitions of the term, and the development or construction of a New Testament theology.

RLPC 710K (PSYC-770, EDS-771V) WILLIAM JAMES SEMINAR: Psychological Principles, Religious Experience, and Pragmatism

John Snarey

Wed. 2:30-5:30 p.m., PAIS 493

COURSE DESCRIPTION: William James (1842-1910) is variously considered to be the founding father of American psychology, the foremost and most American philosopher, and the most important pioneer in the psychological study of religion. 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 general psychology and educational 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 penultimate 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. Finally we will review a collection of critical essays written by James's detractors and assess what we may have missed and what they may have missed as we all come to terms with this giant in American intellectual history.

Obligations: The course will be conducted as a readings seminar in which we will focus primarily on James's original writings. Course grades will be based on weekly written reflections on the assigned readings or an equivalent assignment (25%), weekly class participation (25%), and a final term paper (50%).

Texts:

1. Feinstein, H. (1984). *Becoming William James*. Cornell University Press. ISBN: 978-0801486425.
2. James, W. (1992). *William James: Writings 1878-1901*. Library of America. ISBN: 978-0940450721.
3. James, W. (1902). *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. Prometheus. ISBN 1573929816
4. James, W. (1987). *William James: Writings 1902-1910*. Library of America. ISBN: 978-0940450387.
5. Collected critical essays by James's detractors (reserves direct)

RLPC 790R Departmental Seminar: Contemporary Worship: Research Methods

L. Edward Phillips

Tues. 2:30-5:30 p.m., Emerson E101

Content: Study of the range of liturgical practices often designated by the term "contemporary worship" among North American churches is in its infancy, though the impact of this expression of Christianity is indisputable. This seminar will examine various emerging methods (historical, theological, sociological, ritual) for describing, explaining, analyzing, and/or evaluating the significance these modern liturgical practices. Examination of a set of methods will alternate with experimental application of these methods in analysis of liturgical practices, including putting various methods into conversation with each other. This seminar will entail both library research and participant observation of worship in various Protestant, Pentecostal and Catholic churches in the metro-Atlanta area.

Proposed course outline (names refer to items in bibliography).

- What is "Contemporary Christian Worship"? Origin of term, range of meaning, problems of description: Spinks.
- Historical methods: Bains, Phillips, Baldwin and White.

- Experiments in historical methods.
- Sociological and ethnographic methods: Ellingson, Chaves , Sanders, Luhmann.
- Experiments in sociological methods.
- Theological methods: Lathrop, Ross, J. Smith, Baldwin, Torevell.
- Experiments in theological methods.
- Ritual studies methods: Mitchel, Bell, Taves, Collins, Wellman.
- Experiments in ritual studies methods.
- Evaluation of various methods in research into contemporary worship practices.
- Presentations of final projects.

Proposed Primary Bibliography

Bains, David Ralph. "The Liturgical Impulse in Mid-Twentieth-Century Mainline Protestantism." 1999.

Baldwin, John. *Reforming the Liturgy*. 2009.

Bell, Catherine. "Ritual, change and changing rituals" and "The authority of ritual experts," In Paul Bradshaw and John Melloh, eds., *Foundations in Ritual Studies*. 2007.

Chaves, Mark. *American Religion: Contemporary Trends*. 2012.

Collins, Randall. *Interaction Ritual Chains*. Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 2004.

Ellingson, Stephen. *Megachurch and the Mainline. Remaking Religious Tradition in the Twenty-first Century*. 2007.

Lathrop, Gordon W. "New Pentecost or Joseph's Britches? Reflections on the History and Meaning of the Worship Ordo in the Megachurches." 1998.

Luhmann, T. M. *When God Talks Back: Understanding the American Evangelical Relationship with God*. 2012.

Marti, Gerardo. *Worship Across the Racial Divide: Religious Music and the Multiracial Congregation*. 2012.

Phillips, L. Edward, "The Character of Christian Worship: pattern and performance in contemporary liturgical practice." Unpublished manuscript.

Ross, Melanie. "Ecumenism After Charles Finney: A Free Church Liturgical Theology." 2010.

Sanders, Cheryl J. *Saints in Exile: The Holiness-Pentecostal Experience in African American Religion and Culture*. 1996.

Smith, James K. A. *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works*. 2013.

Spinks, Bryan D. *Worship Mall: Contemporary Responses to Contemporary Culture*. 2010.

Taves, Ann. "The Camp Meeting and the Paradoxes of Evangelical Protestant Ritual," in Catherine Bell, ed., *Teaching Ritual*. Wellman, James, et al. "God is like a Drug...!": Explaining Interaction Ritual Chains in American Megachurches," 2007.

White, James F. *Protestant Worship: Traditions in Transition*. 1989.

Particulars: course assignments (tentative). In addition to preparing assigned reading, students will contribute: a. one five -page book review; b. two church case presentations applying one of the methods discussed in this course; c. a final paper on topic TBD in consultation with the professor.

Larger Bibliography available upon request.

RLR 725N The Role of the Reader in Religions and in the Interpretation of Religion

Sara McClintock

Thurs. 2:30-5:30 p.m.

Course Description: 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 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. Drawing on reader response theory, semiotics, rhetorical studies, ethnography, theology, and the history of reading, our first task will be to come to terms with how we read the texts that we study—whether these be primary sources, secondary sources, or some other form of text. Turning then to specific examples from religious traditions, we next explore some of the many kinds of religious reading—asking about the theological, social, inter-textual, and embodied aspects of the act of reading. Throughout the course, we will revisit to the difficult questions of how we as readers can approach religious texts if we remain outside of the traditional textual community of readers, and also what it means to be part of the textual community of scholars of religion.

Books (entire or partial): Jane P. Thomkins, ed., *Reader Response Theory: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*; Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading*; Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*; Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in this Class?*; Roland Barthes, *S/Z*; Mikhail Bahktin, *The Dialogic Imagination*; Jonathan Boyarin, ed., *The Ethnography of Reading*; Paul Griffiths, *Religious Reading: The Place of Reading in the Practice of Religion*; William Graham, *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion*; Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*; Vernon Robins, *The Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretations*; Anna Gade, *Perfection Makes Practice*; Justin McDaniel, *Lifting Leaves & Lifting Words: Histories of Buddhist Monastic Education in Laos and Thailand*; Francis X. Clooney, *Beyond Compare: St. Francis de Sales and Sri Vedanta Desika on Loving Surrender to God*. Articles: A variety of supplementary articles will be assigned by authors as diverse as Wayne Booth, Michel Foucault, Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Charles Hallisey, and Paul Harrison.

Particulars: Close reading of the assigned texts is critical for the success of any seminar, and students will be expected to come to class prepared to engage in an in-depth discussion of the readings. Weekly reflection papers will help students to prepare for the seminar, and students will also have the opportunity to work with others to lead the seminar discussion at least twice during the semester. The final project will consist of a term paper that engages the theme of reading and religion, based on the theoretical materials we have studied and/or in relation to the student's particular areas of research. A preliminary term paper proposal and bibliography will be due in the week following spring break, and the final class will be dedicated to presentations of students' work in progress.

Here's a course description for RLR 752R for Fall 2013:

Course Description and Goals

The goal of this course is to further expand the ability to read classical literary Tibetan texts

while also deepening knowledge about Tibetan religion and culture through a sustained encounter with a primary text from one or more Tibetan traditions. Primary objectives include: increasing the vocabulary over which students have internal mastery, solidifying knowledge of grammatical structures, increasing exposure to diverse genres of literary production, deepening comprehension of foundational ideas of Tibetan religious culture, and developing techniques for reading that increase both speed and accuracy. In the Fall 2013 semester, our focus will be on "translation Tibetan," the specialized forms of Tibetan language that were developed to translate Indian Buddhist texts from Sanskrit. For this reason, we will focus on Indian texts in Tibetan translation, comparing them with the original Sanskrit where that is available. The course is limited to those students with at least two years of literary Tibetan study and the equivalent of at least one year of Sanskrit.

RLSR 730 (SOC 725) Sociology of Religion

Steven Tipton

Wed. 6:30-9:30 p.m., Candler Library 124

What do religious phenomena mean to their participants, seen as members of society? We explore answers to this question over successive generations of development in the work of classical social thinkers (e.g. Weber, Durkheim, Du Bois, Marx, Freud) and contemporary theorists (Bellah, Douglas, Geertz, Asad, Bourdieu, Foucault, Ortner). Topics include the culturally constitutive meaning of religion in practice as symbolic action and embodiment, theodicy and soteriology, powerful hegemony and prophetic transformation; the social and moral functions of ritual, myth, and religious experience; religious evolution, social modernization, globalization and nationalism; contemporary religious fundamentalism, politicization, (de)secularization, gender and class differences, and cultural conflict. Particular attention is given to the Black Churches, American Evangelicalism, global Catholicism and Islam, Buddhism in Taiwan, U.S. mainline Protestantism and moral advocacy in public life.

Texts include Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*; Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*; Geertz, *Islam Observed*; Mary Douglas, *How Institutions Think*; Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*; Pierre Bourdieu, "The Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field"; Colin Campbell, *The Romantic Ethic & the Spirit of Consumerism*; Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion*; Christian Smith, *American Evangelicalism*; Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*; Marla Frederick, *Between Sundays: Black Women and Everyday Struggles of Faith*; Stephen Ellingson, *The Megachurch and the Mainline*; Richard Madsen, *Democracy's Dharma*; Robert Bellah, *Religion in Human Evolution*; and Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*.

RLSR 770: Healing, Mind, and Science in American Religious Cultures

Bobbi Patterson

Tues. 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon - Callaway S221

First Year GDR students may leave early to attend the required First Year Colloquy

Course Description: The rise of European interests in healing related to mind-science studies, including heightened and/or blocked sensory and mental experiences filtered into American religious cultures beginning in the 1800's. From this beginning through today, amalgams of mind-science and religious healing have woven pietistic, spirit-led, and contemplative/meditation-based approaches into mainstream movements in the United States.

This class will explore and examine histories of healing rooted in these mind-changing philosophies and spiritualities from nature as sensory-spirit teacher, to extra-sensory forces as revelatory practices and powers of healing, to mind training or awakening for positive transformation and health. We will examine how these rational, psychological, and ecstatic mind-leveraging traditions drew notable cultural, social, and scientific attention. We will explore how and why they successfully and unsuccessfully integrated with spiritual, theological, and religious traditions and communities. The class will study contemporary interests in contemplative traditions and practices of healing, including Emory-based research on health interventions using compassion meditation. Additional traditions and forms from new metaphysics to neuroscience, New Age to New Religious Movements will be considered. Reaching from France, to New England, to African and Atlantic-Diasporic communities, these American religious communities and their forms of healing using mind-science continue to claim transformative power.

Our analyses will address historical, sociological, scientific, and cultural aspects of these phenomena and the traditions arising with/from/around them. We will study the people (scientists, healers, religious leaders) who drew these seemingly separate worlds together and the practices or techniques they used, crafted, and taught. Where were they tried, discussed, held suspect? What particular aspects and elements of American religious cultures well received these innovations and why? How did they/did they change "inherited" and diasporic forms and expectations, including questions of spirit, healing, self-exploration, and nature? We will explore what difference "science" and neuroscience make in discussions of transformation and healing.

Our readings and discussions will focus more theoretical material toward practices and lived religion across a number of American religious communities and traditions from "right or positive thinking", to enlightened self-discovery, to the power of mind in Asian meditation traditions.

Course Goals include:

- Basic understandings of healing through mind-training or mindfulness as "science" and religion in American religious cultures
- Historical and cultural practices contributing to the emergence of mind as source of sacred insight and healing
- Contemplative Traditions in American and their relations to contemporary neuroscience, including current studies
- Roles of nature and place in religious practices of mindfulness

Requirements of the course will be driven by student research interests. Assignments can range from smaller research papers, to annotated bibliographies, spatial mapping projects, grant proposals, and/or various forms of public scholarship.

Texts May Include:

The Cure Within: A History of Mind-Body Medicine, Anne Harrington; The Positive Thinkers: Religion as Pop Psychology from Mary Baker Eddy to Oral Roberts, Donald Meyer; The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature, William James; Hearing Things: Religion, Illusion, and the American Enlightenment and Restless Souls, Leigh Eric Schmidt; Fits, Trances, & Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James, Ann Taves; Ride Out the Wilderness: Geography and Identity in African-American Literature, Melvin Dixon; Heartwood: The First Generation of Theravada Buddhism in America, Wendy Cadge; The Way of Zen, Alan W. Watts; The New Metaphysical: Spirituality and the American Religious Imagination, Courtney Bender;

Selections from Books and Articles: A Secular Age and Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity, Charles Taylor; Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity (Cultural Memory in the Present), Talal Asad; The Politics of Life Itself, Nikolas Rose; Essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson; Nature, Ralph Waldo Emerson; Letters to H.G.O.Blake, Henry David Thoreau; Buddhism in the Modern World, David McMahan; "Toward an Understanding of Non-Dual Mindfulness", John Dunne; "Some Reflections on the Origins of MBSR", Jon Kabat-Zinn; "Historical Consciousness as an Offering to the Trans-historical Buddha" John Makransky; Dark Green Religion: Nature, Spirituality and the Planetary Future, Bron Taylor; The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry, Henri Ellenberger; A Feeling for the Organism: Biography of Barbara McClintock, Evelyn Renee Weber"; Life and Mind in the Universe", George Wald, International Journal of Quantum Chemistry, 1984.

Particulars: Assignments will reflect students' areas of study and interest. Projects ranging from a sequence of pedagogical plans, to a series of public writings/blogs/essay/interviews/podcasts, to research essays, to a major research paper or artistic project are welcome.

RLTS 740 (WGS 588) Womanist Theology
Andrea White
Thursday, 9:00-12:00 p.m., Rich Memorial

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course will explore womanist thought through a study of three decades of scholarship produced by womanist theologians in the United States. Organized systematically to address a range of topics, including biblical hermeneutics, atonement, Christology, soteriology, evil, ethics, theologies of the flesh, theological anthropology, ecclesiology, and eschatology, the study will employ both a deconstructive and a constructive method in an effort to interpret African American women's religious experiences. The deconstructive task will uncover the theological implications of racism, sexism and

classism as forms of social sin and idolatry. It will explore how a tradition of protest, struggle, and determination for freedom informs the development of theological reflection in black religious experience. Readings will support arguments for the complex and multifarious character of womanist theology against treatments that presume a monolithic development of the discipline. The constructive task will explore how a womanist context for theological thinking serves as a productive critique of "traditional," "canonical," or "classical" doctrine, as well as black and feminist theological modes of discourse, and consequently how a self-reflective theological practice can be developed for liberative purposes. The course will end with an applicatio, using womanist methodology to analyze the work of filmmaker Tyler Perry through the lens of womanist theological reflection.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: The course aims to help students (1) develop an understanding of theological method and discourse that is informed by an integrated analysis of race, gender and class; (2) recognize the relevance of sociopolitical, historical and cultural context in the study and practice of theology; (3) contribute to the ethical responsibility of religious practices to be responsive to matters of social justice; and (4) promote an understanding of public theology and the relationship between theology and culture. Given both the deconstructive and constructive tasks of the course, students will be encouraged to offer productive critiques and develop creative and imaginative theological alternatives from a womanist perspective.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: In addition to regular, punctual attendance and active engagement with the material in class discussion, students are required to complete a weekly assignment, lead one seminar session and write a final paper.

Weekly Assignment. Submit a brief two to four-page paper each week except for the first and last (twelve in all) in which you critically engage the reading. You may use the assignment to raise a question, to debate an issue addressed in the text, to discuss why you find or do not find a particular passage compelling or persuasive, etc. Submit your reflection paper on the Discussion Board on Blackboard by 7:00pm on the evening before class. The paper will be made available to the class.

Seminar Leader. Serve as a seminar leader for one class session in which you present the material and facilitate discussion. You may present a summary of the reading assignment(s) and offer definitions of key terms and concepts, but more importantly the seminar leader is expected to identify the relevant theological questions and issues at stake and your own theological position with respect to the thinker in order to invite conversation.

Final Research Paper. Write a final research paper of approximately twenty pages (6,000 words).

COURSE ASSESSMENT: Assessment of learning will take into account the following criteria: accuracy and precision of scholarship, contribution to class process of inquiry and discussion, and creativity and critical judgment. The distribution of assignments for evaluation is as follows:

Weekly Critical Reflection Papers:12%

Seminar Leader:22%

Final Research Paper:66%

REQUIRED TEXTS

M. Shawn Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Being* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009)

Emilie M. Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006)

Additional Required Texts to be Determined.

RLTS 750 Religion and Language: Biblical Alterity

Jill Robbins

Wednesday, 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Throughout his ethical philosophy, Emmanuel Levinas suggests, at first discreetly and later with growing explicitness, that his thinking of the otherness of the other person and the radicality of its demand with regard to selfhood may be derived from biblical and talmudic sources. In this seminar we will ask about the relation between "biblical alterity" and the otherness of text interpretation, an otherness arising, Hans-Georg Gadamer asserts, from the historical distance operative in the interpretation of a text from the past. We will have frequent recourse to the work of Paul Ricoeur, which provides a decisive mediation between phenomenology, philosophical hermeneutics and the biblical tradition. Ricoeur not only offers readings of

Levinas and Gadamer, but proposes reading itself as a constitutive structure of existence. Topics to be considered include: the hermeneutic of revelation, the names of God, understanding and self-understanding, understanding, hearing and receptivity.

Required Texts: Levinas, *Otherwise than Being* (Duquesne), Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers* (Duquesne), Levinas, *Beyond the Verse* (Duquesne); Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (2nd revised edition, revised translation by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall) (Continuum); Ricoeur, *From Text to Action* (Northwestern); Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another* (Chicago), Ricoeur and LaCocque, *Thinking Biblically* (Chicago).

Recommended: Levinas, *Entre Nous* (Columbia), Levinas, *Nine Talmudic Readings* (Indiana); Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred*, Ricoeur, *The Conflict of Interpretations* (Northwestern).

Particulars: one in-class presentation and one 15-20 page paper due at end of term.

Course Content:

This course seeks to investigate a comparative analysis and exposition of Black Churches in the Caribbean and the United States. Scholars as diverse as W.E.B. DuBois, Carter G. Woodson, Gayraud Wilmore, Sylvia R. Frey and Betty Wood attest to the turn to Black churches by Africa's children in the crucible between enculturation and acculturation. There are two points of distinction between the approach of these scholars and the one this seminar will investigate. While these scholars describe the turn to religion by Africa's children in the Caribbean and the United States their analysis is primarily intra-regional highlighting an articulation and exposition of Black churches in each region. This approach does not push beyond the nation/state frame work. This seminar with its comparative-historical emphasis presses beyond nation/state paradigm and raises intercultural and interregional questions with implications for gender, race and class in the understanding of Black churches on either side of the Atlantic. This comparative historical methodology opens up the possibility of rethinking the language and grammar of how Black churches have been understood in the "Americas" and extends the notion of church beyond the United States.

Requirements

Members of the class are required to write a research paper (20 pages) probing the meaning of Black churches when people of African descent are culturally and politically in the majority? And the converse is pertinent. What is the meaning of Black churches when people of African descent are a cultural and political minority? Students are required to share with the class a rough draft of the paper. With the benefit of class discussion the paper must be revised and turned in to the instructor at the end of the semester.

Required Texts

- Albert J. Roboteau, *A Fire in the Bones*
- Sylvia R. Frey and Betty Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion*
- Michelle A. Gonzalez, *Afro-Cuban Theology*
- David Shannon, ed. *George Liele's Life and Legacy*
- Nathaniel Samuel Murrell, *Afro-Caribbean Religions*
- Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*

Recommended: Levinas, *Entre Nous* (Columbia), Levinas, *Nine Talmudic Readings* (Indiana); Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred*, Ricoeur, *The Conflict of Interpretations* (Northwestern).

Particulars: one in-class presentation and one 15-20 page paper due at end of term.

RLTS 752 Cross Cultural Theologies

Noel Erskine

Thursday, 6:00-9:00 p.m. Candler Library 124

Course Content:

This course seeks to investigate a comparative analysis and exposition of Black Churches in the Caribbean and the United States. Scholars as diverse as W.E.B. DuBois, Carter G. Woodson, Gayraud Wilmore, Sylvia R. Frey and Betty Wood attest to the turn to Black churches by Africa's children in the crucible between enculturation and acculturation. There are two points of distinction between the approach of these scholars and the one this seminar will investigate. While these scholars describe the turn to religion by Africa's children in the Caribbean and the United States their analysis is primarily intra-regional highlighting an articulation and exposition of Black churches in each region. This approach does not push beyond the nation/state frame work. This seminar with its comparative-historical emphasis presses beyond nation/state paradigm and raises intercultural and interregional questions with implications for gender, race and class in the understanding of Black churches on either side of the Atlantic. This comparative historical methodology opens up the possibility of rethinking the language and grammar of how Black churches have been understood in the "Americas" and extends the notion of church beyond the United States.

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Required Texts:

Albert J. Roboteau, *A Fire in the Bones*
Sylvia R. Frey and Betty Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion*
Michelle A. Gonzalez, *Afro-Cuban Theology*
David Shannon, ed. *George Liele's Life and Legacy*
Nathaniel Samuel Murrell, *Afro-Caribbean Religions*
Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*