

**Graduate Division of Religion**  
**Spring 2013 Course Atlas**

**JS 730: Rabbinic Liturgy and Prayer**

**Blumenthal**

**Wednesday 8:30 – 11:30**

**Content:**

Prayer is one of the main forms of Jewish spiritual and religious identity. Liturgy is the textual form that prayer takes. This course will begin by studying prayer and liturgy in the Bible. Then, substantial time will be devoted to the traditional prayerbook. This will be followed by some time in medieval Hebrew religious liturgical poetry. Finally, we will look closely at modern forms of Jewish prayer and liturgy.

Texts:

*Bible*

*Siddur*

*Mahzor*

David R. Blumenthal, *God at the Center*

Reserve:

David R. Blumenthal, *Facing the Abusing God: A Theology of Protest*

David R. Blumenthal, *Understanding Jewish Mysticism*, 2 vols.

*Wings of Awe*

*The Book of Blessings*

*Otsar ha-Tefillot*

*Siddur Nashim*

*The Authorized Daily and Sabbath Prayerbook*

*Seder Rav Amram*

*Seder Avodat Yisrael*

*Kol Haneshama*

Pre-requisites:

Ability to read and understand Hebrew.

This is a course for graduate students and qualified undergraduates.

Requirements:

Active class participation.

Quizzes and final exam. Possible paper.

**RLAR 710 000/MESAS 570/PHIL 789/ WR 698: Islamic Theology and Philosophy**

**Vince Cornell**

**Mondays 3:00- 6:00**

**Content:** The purpose of this seminar is to introduce graduate students in Middle Eastern Studies, Religion, and related fields to the major schools and problems of premodern Islamic religious thought. A major premise of the course is that contemporary trends in Islamic thought have historical antecedents in early and medieval Islamic theology and philosophy. For example, most Sunni Muslims assume that their theology is Ash'arite, yet very few know the actual doctrines of Ash'arism. Muslim modernists from Iran tend to draw on the philosophical works of Farabi and Avicenna, whereas Muslim reformers in North Africa often draw on the works of Averroes. Other reformist thinkers, especially in the Arab world, seek a revival of Mu'tazilism, whereas Turkish liberal theologians seek precedents for democracy and religious tolerance in the writings of Maturidi. This class is designed to provide a knowledge base from which graduate students can better contextualize contemporary Islamic theology in their research. The seminar invites graduate students and advanced undergraduates in a variety of disciplines to read and discuss Islamic texts, and become acquainted with the rich and diverse universe of Islamic Intellectual life. Arrangements will be made for students with a background in Arabic to read and discuss texts in Arabic through the MESAS Arabic program. A term paper and brief weekly responses to assigned texts will be required of all students. Papers linking classical Islamic theology and philosophy to contemporary trends are especially encouraged, but students will be free to choose topics that best suit their own interests.

(Book list yet to be determined)

**RLAR 710 001: Religion and Media**

**James Hoesterey**

**Fridays, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm**

**Course Description:**

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 and Christianity, 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.

**Possible Readings:**

*Religion in the Media Age*, Stewart M. Hoover

*Covering Islam*, Edward Said

*New Media in the Muslim World*, eds. Eickelman and Anderson

*The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics*, Charles Hirschkind

*Muslims and New Media in West Africa: Pathways to God*, Dorothea Schulz

*Picturing Islam: Art and Ethics in a Muslim Lifeworld*, Kenneth M. George

*The Moral Resonance of Arab Media: Audiocassette Poetry and Culture in Yemen*, Flagg Miller

*Dramas of Nationhood: The Politics of Television in Egypt*, Lila Abu-Lughod

*Muslim Rap, Halal Soaps, and Revolutionary Theater: Artistic Developments in the Muslim World*, ed. Karin van Nieuwkerk

*Muslims and New Media: Historical and Contemporary Debates*, Göran Larsson

*Connected in Cairo: Growing up Cosmopolitan in the Modern Middle East*, Mark Allen Peterson

*Rock the Casbah: Rage and Rebellion Across the Islamic World*, Robin Wright

*Brands of Faith: Marketing Religion in a Commercial Age*, Mara Einstein

*Oprah: The Gospel of an Icon*, Kathryn Lofton

*The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics*, Susan Friend Harding

*The Sacred Gaze: Religious Visual Culture in Theory and Practice*, David Morgan

**RLAR 711/MESAS 570/HIST 585 Sacred Biography: Myth and History in the Hagiographic Biography****Gordon Newby****Thursday, 2:30-5:30****Course Description:**

Sacred biographies, the lives of religious founders, such as Muhammad, and Jesus, and hagiographies, the stories of saints or their equivalents, convey through their narratives and through their symbols the fundamental truths, value systems and teachings of their religious traditions. In these genres, historical facts are blended with mythic elements to make powerful biographical images. These images are often as powerful as explicit theologies, philosophies or creeds in shaping the attitudes of believers toward such fundamental human and religious concerns as morality, the nature of humans, and the way to conduct one's daily life. Sacred biographies portray their subjects as divinely inspired paradigms for human conduct. Using the development of the biography of Muhammad as the primary example, this course will examine the interplay between history and myth in the formation of sacred biography. Comparative examples will be drawn from the Jewish, Hindu and Christian traditions. The examination will use methods of History, History of Religions, Anthropology, Psychology and Literary Criticism.

**Note:** Students with interests in particular religious figures and/or traditions will be able to explore those interests within the context of the course.

## **RLAR 720/MESAS 570 Indian Poetics and Aesthetics**

**V. Narayana Rao**

**Monday, 10:00-1:00**

**Content:** Indian literature after colonialism has been dominated by the novel, the short story, and the prose poem, and it heavily borrows western literary theory to analyze them. Critics use the same literary critical concepts and methods that they would use for Dickens, Faulkner, Keats or Blake to analyze Bankim, Tagore, Gurajada or Premchand with occasional sprinkle of Sanskrit words like rasa for an Indian flavor. New Criticism, structuralism, post-structuralism and now deconstruction are actively employed by scholars in India for Indian literature. Post-colonial critics like Home Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak make new waves in theory but in the same pond. If ever Sanskrit poets like Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti or Bhasa are discussed, the most frequently employed concept is rasa in a rather shallow way. Admittedly there is a degree of internationalization of genres and concepts in an atmosphere of a global modernity, and a common core of international literary criticism is perhaps in order.

However under the juggernaut of global modernity, the classical literary culture of Sanskrit that once held sway over a large area that extended from Afghanistan to Southeast Asia, from Tibet to Sri Lanka, and its literary theoretical concepts that influenced nearly all local languages of these areas remains understudied.

This course addresses that problem and attempts to get students delve into literary and aesthetic theories that Indian literary scholars and critics had developed in the past two thousand years. In addition to literary texts, we will read theories of drama and dance, and the aesthetics of performance.

The seminar reads major Sanskrit literary theoreticians beginning with Bharata (3rd century) to Jagannatha (17th century) and beyond. Most of the texts we use are in Sanskrit, but we will use translations and studies available in English. We will read literary texts by major poets such as Kalidasa, and Bhavabhuti in good translations. No knowledge of Sanskrit or any other Indian language is required.

## **RLAR 737: Topics in Buddhist Studies: Tracing Buddhism from India to Tibet**

**Sara McClintock**

**Time and Place TBD**

### **Course Description and Goals**

This reading course is designed to allow graduate students to increase their familiarization with the field of Buddhist Studies, both through a deepening of their knowledge of fundamental topics in the field and through a consideration of the range of current methodological approaches to the study of these topics. The primary focus will be Buddhist texts and practices as they developed in India and Tibet. Doctoral students interested in taking a doctoral exam in

Buddhism, whether as a primary or a secondary tradition, are strongly encouraged to enroll in this course.

### **Requirements**

Weekly reflection preparation of the reading and three essay papers (3500-6000 words).

### **Books**

The reading for most weeks will consist of one substantive book plus selections of primary sources and/or seminal articles. Students will be responsible for acquiring the books on their own. Students should read the first two titles from the list below *prior to* our first meeting.

Rupert Gethin, *The Foundations of Buddhism* (**read for first class**)

Paul Williams, *Mahayana Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations* (**read for first class**)

Rupert Gethin, *Sayings of the Buddha: New Translations from the Pali Nikayas*

Steven Collins, *Selfless Persons: Imagery and Thought in Theravada Buddhism*

Andy Rotman, *Thus Have I Seen: Visualizing Faith in Early Indian Buddhism*

Daniel Boucher, *Bodhisattvas of the Forest and the Formation of the Mahayana*

Jan Westerhoff, *Nagarjuna's Madhyamaka: A Philosophical Introduction*

Kevin Vose, *Resurrecting Candrakīrti: Disputes in the Tibetan Creation of Prāsaṅgika*

Vesna Wallace, *The Inner Kālacakratantra: A Buddhist Tantric View of the Individual*

Matthew Kapstein, *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism: Conversion, Contestation, & Memory*

Jonathan Gold, *The Dharma's Gatekeepers: Sakya Paṇḍita on Buddhist Scholarship in Tibet*

Klaus-Dieter Mathes, *A Direct Path to the Buddha Within*

Toni Huber, *The Holy Land Reborn: Pilgrimage and the Tibetan Reinvention of India*

Georges Dreyfus, *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping*

Janet Gyatso, *Apparitions of the Self: The Secret Autobiographies of a Tibetan Visionary*

### **RLE 734/PHIL 789: KNOWLEDGE, SKEPTICISM, AND MORALITY**

**Tim Jackson**

**Wednesday, 2:30-5:30**

This is a course in meta-ethics, a general inquiry into the nature and justification of moral claims. We will be concerned with such broad questions as: What, if anything, makes a person virtuous and an action valuable?, Do moral claims have truth value, and if so how do we test them for accuracy?, How are we to understand ethical ambiguity and conflict?, Is religious faith essential for right living, a threat to science and culture? Readings are both classical and contemporary, both philosophical and theological. They represent four evolving but distinctive views of moral truth and justification: foundationalism, skepticism/critical realism, pragmatism, and feminism.

Briefly summarized, foundationalism is the view that some moral apprehensions are indubitable and/or incorrigible bases on which to affirm universal principles and objective values. Critical realism rejects foundationalist certitude and permanence but retains a place for truth as correspondence to extra-linguistic reality and for fallible justification of truth claims. Pragmatism also denies absolute starting points but either defines truth as the practical efficacy of beliefs or so accents the constructedness of historical conventions as to dispense with truth altogether. Feminism represents a range of perspectives, many of which identify all moral understanding as gendered and emphasize giving voice to ways of knowing traditionally disvalued by Western culture. Our task is to clarify and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of these four alternatives. How do they interrelate, and do they exhaust the field?

### **REQUIRED BOOKS, AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE**

*Treatise on Happiness*, by Thomas Aquinas (Notre Dame)

*Gender/Body/Knowledge: Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing*, ed. by Alison Jaggar and Susan Bordo (Rutgers)

*William James: Writings, 1902-1910*, by William James (Library of America)

*Critique of Practical Reason*, by Immanuel Kant, in *Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy*, ed. by Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge)

*Reinventing the Sacred: A New View of Science, Religion, and Reason*, by Stuart Kauffman (Basic Books)

*Philosophy and Social Hope*, by Richard Rorty (Penguin)

*Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, by Sextus Empiricus (Harvard)

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COURSE**

At least one B.A.- or M.A.-level course in ethics is a prerequisite for taking RLE 734, "Knowledge, Skepticism, and Morality." Requirements within the course itself include class participation, a class presentation, and two 12-15-page papers. Papers may be synthetic, critical, or constructive, but they are to be the student's own work and neither collaborations nor mere research projects. There is no mid-term or final examination.

### **RLHB 780 Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Study of the Hebrew Bible**

**Brent Strawn**

**Thursday, 9:30-12:30**

**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.

**Texts (selected):** Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*; Keel, *The Song of Songs*; Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*; Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East in Pictures*; Strawn, *What Is Stronger than a Lion?*; LeMon, *Yahweh's Winged Form in the Psalms*; de Hulster, *Illuminating Images*; idem, *Iconographical Exegesis*; Bahrani, *The Graven Image*; Mitchell, *Iconology*; idem, *Picture Theory*; idem, *What Pictures Want*; Freedberg, *The Power of Images*; Arnheim, *Visual Thinking*; Morgan, *Visual Piety*; idem, *The Sacred Gaze*; McDannell, *Material Christianity*; Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology*; Schroer, *Die Ikonographie Palaestinas/Israels und der Alte Orient: Eine Religionsgeschichte in Bildern*; idem, *In Israel gab es Bilder*; Ornan, *Triumph of the Symbol*; Beck, *Images and Representation*; Davis, *A General Theory of Visual Culture*; Miles, *Images as Insight*; Handel, *The Age of Insight*; Brown, *Seeing the Psalms*; Rose, *Visual Methodologies*; etc.

**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.

**RLHB 790R/JS 730 From Kinship to Cultural Poetics: Anthropology and the Hebrew Bible**  
**Don Seeman**  
**Wednesday 10-1**

**Content:** This course approaches the Hebrew Bible from an anthropological point of view and also investigates the historical connections between biblical studies and anthropology as disciplines. We will consider a variety of topics including the role of kinship studies and recent trends in the study of gender as well as a comparison of anthropological with historical and literary approaches. We will consider whether the reading of contemporary ethnographies can contribute to understanding of the Hebrew Bible and we will also read at least one ethnography of contemporary Bible reading and practice. Throughout the class I will develop (and also interrogate) the idea that anthropology can contribute to a cultural poetics of biblical narrative that builds on the best of both anthropological and literary approaches and which challenges some current approaches to the study of gender. This course is open to all GDR students and beyond, the only prerequisite being an open mind and willingness to read and discuss.

**Prerequisites:** None

**Requirements:** Active class participation and final paper.

**Possible Readings:**

Freud, Moses and Monotheism

Smith, Religion of the Semites  
Levi-Strauss- The Structural Study of Myth  
Julian Pitt-Rivers: The Fate of Shechem  
Marcel Mauss—The Gift and Sacrifice  
Eilburg Schwartz—The Savage in Judaism  
Mieke Bal- Love and Dyssimetry  
Adele Berlin- Poetics of Biblical Interpretation  
Schwartz—Were the Jews a Mediterranean People?  
Engelike: A Problem of Presence: Beyond Scripture in an African Church

## **RLHT 735 Placing American Religions: Geographies, Materials, Powers, and Memories**

**Bobbi Patterson**

**Monday, 10:00-1:00**

**Course Description:** What changes or shifts when histories and cultures of American and Trans-American Religions are examined through the lenses of place and space? From foundational to current theories and methods, this course will explore a range of approaches including: human and regional geography, socially and politically produced space, and topophilia, affective bonds, meaning making between people and place. Placing these approaches in dialogue with historical and contemporary examples of American and Trans-American religious cultures, we will consider place as content of the human condition an evolving way of being in the world, and/or commoditized, material destination. We will consider how and why memory and imagination construct religious practices of place from home-making, to nation-crafting, to sacred searching. Studying forms of resistance to place-making that attempt to modify or deconstruct sacred meaning and power, our analysis will include dynamics of urban/suburban, race, gender, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. What are the ethical consequences of placing American Religions. Finally, we will interrogate current claims that we are living in an increasingly religiously placeless or global world.

**Requirements** of the course will be driven by student research interests in conversation with the professor. 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:**

Basso, Keith. *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press. 1966.  
Bodenhamer, David J., et al. *The Spatial Humanities: GIS and the Future of Humanities Scholarship*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010.  
Carroll, Bret E. "Worlds in Space: American Religious Pluralism in Geographic Perspective". *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. 80, no.2 (june 2012): 304-64.  
Chidester, David and Edward t. Linenthal, eds. *American Sacred Space*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.



Cronon, William. "The Trouble with Wilderness; or Getting Back to the Wrong Nature." In *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking Human Place in Nature*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1995.

de Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984.

Entrikin, J. Nicholas, ed. *Regions: Critical Essays in Human Geography*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008.

Eiesland, Nancy L. *A Particular Place: Urban Restructuring and Religious Ecology in a Southern Exurb*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000.

Foucault, Michel. "Space, Knowledge, and Power." In *The Foucault reader*. Paul Rabinow, ed. New York: Pantheon, 239-56.

Lane, Belden C. *Landscapes of the Sacred: Geography and Narrative in American Spirituality*, Expanded Edition. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001

Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1991.

Orsi, Robert, ed. *Gods of the City: Religion and the American Urban Landscape*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999.

Stier, Oren, J. Shawn Landres. *Religion, Violence, Memory, and Place*. Indiana University Press. 2006.

Tuan, Yi-Fu. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1977 (25<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition)

Tweed, Thomas. *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 2008.

Kilde, Jeanne Halgren. *When Church Became Theatre: The Transformation of Evangelical Architecture and Worship in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

## **RLNT 711: Luke, John, and Emerging Gospels**

**Vernon Robbins**

**Monday 1:30-4:30**

While the Gospel of Matthew was the most frequently cited Gospel in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century Christian literature, distinctive aspects of Luke and John exercise an unusually prominent influence on additional Gospels that emerge during those early centuries. This seminar will focus on the reception history (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) of Luke and John in *Gospel of Thomas*, *Infancy Thomas*, *Protevangelium of James*, *Gospel of Mary*, *Gospel of Judas*, and *Acts of John*. Analysis and interpretation will include attention to Marcion's championing of an edited version of the Gospel of Luke and Tatian's creation of a *Diatessaron*. Comparative exegesis of units in NT and extracanonical Gospels will exhibit special issues of theological focus and debate during the early centuries of emerging Christianity.

Participants in the seminar are required to work with ancient Greek. Facility with Coptic will be highly welcomed but not required. Seminar members will read both the texts of the Gospels themselves and modern analysis and interpretation of the texts.

**Texts:**

Francois Bovon, *Luke 1-2*

D. Moody Smith, *John*

Bart C. Ehrman and Zlatko Pleše, *The Apocryphal Gospels*

Paul Foster (ed.), *The Non-Canonical Gospels*

Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*

Vernon K. Robbins, *Who Do People Say I Am? Rewriting Gospel in Emerging Christianity*

**Particulars:** Weekly analytical-interpretive assignments on the primary texts will be a means of progressing toward the successful production of a major research paper toward the end of the seminar.

**RLNT 770 History of Interpretation**

**Luke Timothy Johnson**

**Friday, 9:00-12:00**

**DESCRIPTION OF COURSE**

The seminar is part of the required sequence for NT students but is open to interested doctoral students in other areas. Knowledge of the primary biblical languages is assumed. The course covers the spectrum of interpretation from canonization to the Reformation, including a small taste of Luther and Calvin. Participants will read certain secondary sources as guides to primary literature, in which as much work as possible will be done. We will consider some theoretical statements concerning interpretation, but even more, specific examples of actual practice. Texts include *The Cambridge History of the Bible*; L.M. McDonald, *The Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon*; R.M. Grant and David Tracy, *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible*; J.A. Kugel and R.A. Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation*, as well as a *Reader*.

Requirements: written reports on readings and a major paper.

**RLPC 710/ILA 790 Religion and Human Rights: A Millennium for Restorative Justice**

**Thee Smith**

**Monday, 2:00-5:00**

**Content:**

The point of departure for this course is a working hypothesis: every religious tradition conveys distinctive resources for fostering and adjudicating human rights and conducting faith-based conflict interventions. Even so, a corollary follows here, we discover repeated instances where each tradition needs other religions as well as secular humanist resources in order sometimes first to recognize and acknowledge, and then interrupt and counteract, its chronic human rights violations.

It appears that no single religious tradition or cultural institution has ever demonstrated adequate competence or proficiency with regard to ameliorating all of its characteristic 'crimes against humanity.' Collectively however these wisdom traditions may convey an invaluable supplement to aid in achieving each religion's own ideals. By the end of this course class members will share an interreligious collation of such resources based on surveys of the world religions and of selected case studies.

**Texts:**

**Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im**, *Islam and the Secular State: Negotiating the Future of Shari'a* (Harvard, 2010)  
ISBN-10: 0674034562; ISBN-13: 978-0674034563

**John Esposito** et al., *World Religions Today* (Oxford, 2008) 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. ISBN-10: 0195365631; ISBN-13: 978-0195365634

**Marc Gopin**, *Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World Religions, Violence, and Peacemaking* (Oxford, 2002) ISBN-10: 0195157257; ISBN-13: 978-0195157253

**Micheline R. Ishay**, ed., *The Human Rights Reader: Major Political Essays, Speeches, and Documents from Ancient Times to the Present* (Routledge, 1997) 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. ISBN-10: 0415918499; ISBN-13: 978-0415918497

**Douglas Johnston**, ed., *Faith-Based Diplomacy Trumping Realpolitik* (Oxford, 2008), ISBN-10: 0195367936; ISBN-13: 978-0195367935

**Particulars:**

- (1) Each class member will conduct 2 seminars on the readings, plus submit:
- (2) a midterm report or presentation on either (a), (b), or (c):
  - (a) a practicum on faith-based human rights interventions;
  - (b) fieldwork on human rights advocacy conducted in religious community
  - (c) a media presentation on any of the above, and finally,
- (3) a term paper incorporating elements above or major themes of the course.

**RLR 700R Introduction to the Study of Religious Practices**

**Tom Long and Joy McDougall**

**Thursday, 9:00-12:00**

This course explores the conversation between two sometimes independent, sometimes overlapping projects: the academic study of religious practices and the activity of doing practical theology. This exploration involves examining such questions as,

- What is a practice? How do religious practices relate to the texts, artifacts, and other materials of religious life and thought?
- How are practices lived? How do communities of faith sustain, extend, and teach the practices of their traditions?
- By what means and methods do communities of faith think about, assess, and seek renewal or transformation of their practices? How do practices relate to the lived theology of communities of faith?
- How are practices most usefully studied? What methods (e.g., sociology, ethnography, performance studies, ritual analysis) best illuminate the content and role of religious practices?
- What is practical theology? How does practical theology, particularly in Christian traditions, proceed in critical reflection on practices in conversation with the heritage of practices and contemporary cultural contexts?
- What are the implications of the study and interpretation of religious practices for the formation of leadership in religious traditions?

The course is a seminar. Students will engage a broad variety of relevant readings, will make presentations on these readings, and are expected to participate fully in discussions. Each student will conduct a limited exercise in field research and will then develop a final presentation and paper comprising the study of a religious practice in a particular context.

This seminar is open to all students and required of all Concentrators in Religious Practices and Practical Theology.

### **RLR 725: The Role of the Reader in Religion and in the Interpretation of Religion**

**Sara McClintock**

**Tuesday, 2:00-5:00**

**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, as scholars 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 for both practitioners and 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 diverse religious traditions, we next explore some of the many kinds of religious reading—asking about the theological, social, intertextual, 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.

**Texts (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*; William Graham, *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion*; Jonathan Boyarin, ed., *The Ethnography of Reading*; Paul Griffiths, *Religious Reading: The Place of Reading in the Practice of Religion*; Dominick LaCapra, *History and Reading*; Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*; Søren Kierkegaard, *For Self-Examination*; Justin McDaniel, *Lifting Leaves & Lifting Words: Histories of Buddhist Monastic Education in Laos and Thailand*.

**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, Vernon Robbins, Paul Harrison, and Mikhail Bakhtin.

**Particulars:** Close preparation of the 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 once or 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 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.

### **RLSR 767/SOC 720 Morality and Society**

**Steve Tipton**

**Tuesday, 7:00-10:00 pm**

**Content:** This seminar explores the relationship between the distinctive moral ideals and practical experience of social life and its varied institutional arrangements, including the moral implications of social modernization for conceiving persons individually and evaluating their globally structured relations. It maps diverse moral logics and constituencies across cultural traditions seen as con-tinuities of conflict over socially shared ways of life, for example, in the Greek *polis* and the early Christian *ekklesia*. It probes the processes of making, sharing, and contesting moral meaning. It weighs their role in inspiring social action and judging social institutions to shape powerful social conflict as well as order. The course charts the sociology of morality as a field by marshaling thematically related works in sociology and social theory, moral and political philosophy, comparative religious ethics and cultural anthropology to span classical theories and recent empirical studies of contemporary American moral life, with a comparative eye to Chinese and Islamic societies today. Topics include racial and gender inequality, public participation, religious conflict, politics and markets, hard work, and romantic love.

**Texts:** Plato's Laws, Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments, Rousseau's Emile; Marx, Weber, Durkheim; Mary Douglas, Nancy Fraser, John Meyer, Bourdieu, Foucault, Walzer, Jennifer Hochschild, Charles Taylor; Geertz, Bellah, Ann Swidler, and Mary Pattillo-McCoy.

Requirements: active participation in seminar discussion; one short paper and presentation; term paper.

### **RLTS 740 Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard**

**Wendy Farley and Don Saliers**

**Wednesday, 9:00 – 12:00**

**Content:** This seminar will examine two great Protestant thinkers who attempted to save Christianity and religion in general from its trivialization by dogmatists on the one hand and cultured despisers on the other. As theorists into the nature of religion they remain lively conversation partners for our own time. Like some contemporary thinkers, they attempt to distinguish an existential or living vitality within the human search for meaning from institutional authority. We will pay particular attention to their use of a variety of genres and

their distinctive understanding of the human predicament and its susceptibility to transformation, not least through the ministrations of art and music. This course could be of interest not only to those interested in Christian thought and theology but also to those engaged in theorizing the nature of religion.

The class will be a seminar in which we engage in close reading of texts and interrogate the role of aesthetic and contemplative practices in interpreting these texts.

**Texts** are likely to include:

Schleiermacher:

*Christmas Eve: a Dialogue*

*On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*

*Christian Faith*

Kierkegaard:

*Training in Christianity*

*Sickness Unto Death*

*Edifying Discourses*

*Works of Love*

*Attack on Christendom*

**Particulars:**

Two short (7-8 pages) analytical papers, providing a close reading and response to a particular text

A term paper (15-20 pages) in which students use material from the course to engage their own research agenda

**RLTS 750J/same as CPLT 751 004 Sacrifice and Gift**

**Jill Robbins**

**Wednesday, 1:00-4:00**

Course Description:

In the tradition of the sociology of religion of Durkheim, Mauss, and Hertz, the conceptual figures of sacrifice and gift received remarkable immanent readings as "total social facts". This course explores the relation between the pre-war French sociological and the post-war French philosophical approaches to sacrifice and gift on the part of Levinas, Derrida, and Nancy. Through intensive close readings of texts, we will consider the specifically ethical significance of generosity and sacrifice, the tension between their economic and aneconomic interpretations, and the "sacrifice" of sacrifice in the philosophical tradition in the West.

Texts:

Mauss and Hubert, Sacrifice

Mauss, The Gift

Derrida, Given Time

Derrida, The Gift of Death

Levinas, Collected Philosophical Papers

Schrift, ed. The Logic of the Gift

Derrida, "At This Very Moment in this Work Here I am" (in Bernasconi and Critchley, ed. Re-reading Levinas)

Nancy, "The Unsacrificeable" (in A Finite Thinking)

Levinas, "The Trace of the Other" (in Taylor, ed. Deconstruction in Context)

Levinas, "Dying-for" (in Entre Nous)

Particulars:

One class presentation and one 15-20 page paper due at end of term.

**Other courses of interest:**

**MESAS 570: Introduction to Islamic Studies**

**Devin Stewart**

**Tuesday 1:00-4:00**

***Revised 11/1/2012***