

**Graduate Division of Religion  
Spring 2021 Course Atlas**

**(Please check back for changes and updates - last update 1.25.2020)**

**ICIVS 505 - Islamic Civilizations Pedagogy**

**Vincent Cornell**

**Tuesday/Thursday, 4:20-5:35**

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

**RLE 733 - Love and Justice**

**Timothy Jackson**

**Wednesday, 2:30-4:30**

This course seeks to clarify several philosophical and theological accounts of love and justice, with emphasis on how they interrelate. Is love ideally indiscriminate and/or self-sacrificial and therefore antithetical to justice? Is justice a single virtue equally binding on all human beings, regardless of sex, race, creed, or ethnicity? Does God possess either moral attribute? Does the practice of charity or the upholding of justice require the denial of hard dilemmas or belief in an afterlife? How are we to conceive (and act on) such related values as eudaimonia, human equality, and civil liberty? How, more specifically, do love and justice bear on such issues as adoption, the right to death, and gay and lesbian marriage?

Readings are selected from a broad range of perspectives, displaying both temporal and ideological diversity. Texts include works by Plato, St. Augustine, Søren Kierkegaard, John Rawls, Martha Nussbaum, and the instructor. This course is designed for doctoral students and presupposes some knowledge of ethical theory; it is, however, open to advanced Candler and Emory Law students, with permission of the professor.

**RLL 720 - Akkadian**

**Roger Nam**

**Wednesday, 10:00-11:00**

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

**RLNT 745 - Social History of the New Testament**

**Susan Hylan**

**Tuesday/Thursday 10:30-12:00**

This course surveys the social history of the Greco-Roman world in the first and second centuries. It familiarizes students with the social, philosophical, and religious environment in which early Christianity emerged and within which the language of the NT may be interpreted. Although the subject of the course is the Greco-Roman world itself, the categories and questions studied are formulated with an eye to what is useful or important for the interpretation of the NT.

**RLR 700 - Bhakti****Harshita Mruthinti Kamath****Wednesday, 9:40-12:35**

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

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

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

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

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

**RLR 700 - Reception History and Reception Theory****Joel LeMon****Wednesday, 2:00-5:00**

*\*This seminar will fulfill one of the required Theories & Methods seminars*

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

The course readings will include the following, among others:

Breed, Brennan W. *Nomadic Text: A Theory of Biblical Reception History*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 2014.

Evans, Robert. *Reception History, Tradition and Biblical Interpretation: Gadamer and Jaus in Current Practice*. London: Bloomsbury, 2014.

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

Gadamer, Hans Georg. *Truth and Method*. Trans. J. Weinsheimer and D. G. Marshall. 2nd ed. London: Continuum, 2004. German orig. 1960.

Gillingham, Susan. *Psalms Through the Centuries: A Reception History Commentary on Psalms 1-72*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2018.

Holub, Robert C. *Reception Theory: A Critical Introduction*. London/New York: Methuen, 1984.

Jaus, Hans Robert. *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*. Trans. T. Bahti. *Theory and History of Literature* 2. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 1982, German orig. 1969.

Junior, Nyasha. *Reimagining Hagar: Blackness and Bible*. New York: Oxford, 2019.

Lieb, Michael et al., eds. *Oxford Handbook of the Reception History of the Bible*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Martindale, Charles and R. F. Thomas, eds., *Classics and the Uses of Reception*. Maldon/Oxford:Blackwell, 2006.

Parris, David P. *Reception Theory and Biblical Hermeneutics*. Princeton Theological Monograph Series 107; Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2009.

Seow, Choon-Leong, *Job 1-21: Interpretation and Commentary*. Illuminations. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,

2013.

Spier, Jeffrey, ed. *Picturing the Bible: The Earliest Christian Art*. New Haven: Yale University, 2007.

Terrien, Samuel L. *The Iconography of Job through the Centuries: Artists as Biblical Interpreters* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University, 1996), 1-133.

### **RLR 700 - Indigenous Religion(s), Indigenous Knowledge(s)**

**Devaka Premawardhana**

**Friday, 9:30-12:30**

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

### **RLR 700 - Memory, Power, and the Archive in Latin America**

**Javier Villa-Flores**

**Wednesday, 9:40-12:35**

This iteration of Themes and Approaches in Latin American History will take as a point of departure Ann Stoler's characterization of archives as epistemological experiments rather than as repositories of sources in order to examine the role played by archival practices in the articulation and negotiation of state-imposed identities and individual and collective strategies of identity formation in Latin America. We will examine the relationship between regimes of classification, memory, and power from the early modern imperialist expansion to the postcolonial condition. Among the themes to be explored are: the relationship between states and archives, governmentality and state intelligence, legal administration and the rule system of law, the access to archives and the democratization of the past, and finally, the role of archives in contemporary utopias and dystopias.

**RLR 725 - The Role of the Reader****Sara McClintock****Tuesday, 1:00-4:00**

*\*This seminar will fulfill one of the required Theories & Methods seminars*

The act of reading is arguably central to numerous religious traditions and also to the scholarly life of those who study religion. Frequently, however, we neglect to ask about the role of the reader in both the traditions we study and in our own scholarship. By placing the reader at the center of our inquiry, this seminar prompts us to consider how reading practices shape understanding both for practitioners and for scholars of religion. Our first task is to come to terms with how we read the texts that we study, and we do this through engagement with theoretical writings in reader response theory, semiotics, and literary criticism. Turning then to specific examples from religious traditions, we next draw on the history of reading, as well as ethnography and theology, to ask about the intertextual, performative and embodied aspects of the act of reading and to problematize our assumptions about what may be at stake in religious reading. Finally, we end the course with a consideration of the political dimensions of reading, examining works of history as well as womanist, feminist, and Black theology. Throughout the course, we will continually revisit the difficult questions of how we as readers can approach religious texts if we remain outside of the traditional interpretive community of religious readers, and also what it means to be part of the interpretive community of scholars of religion who study religious texts and religious reading.

**RLR 700-Ethnography of Religious Experiences****Don Seeman****Thursday, 9:00-12:00**

*\*This seminar will fulfill one of the required Theories & Methods seminars*

**RLR 700 - New Directions in Africana Religious Studies****Dianne Stewart****Monday, 2:30-5:30**

This course invites students to think boldly and courageously about the religious histories, cultures and thought of African descendants in the United States, the Caribbean and the wider Atlantic World. In seeking to encourage more nuanced treatments of the experiences and expressions that constitute varieties of Africana religious cultures across the centuries, we will examine new and expansive studies that use transdisciplinary or unconventional tools and methods to map a terrain of African Atlantic/diasporic religions and the encounters and exchanges that influenced their appearance in the Americas and the Caribbean. In pursuit of these course objectives, we will interrogate how a type of religious and cultural 'identity politics' imposed limits on the field of Black religious studies as the scholarship that defined it developed in the United States context in response to social constraints and dilemmas facing African American intellectuals during the early twentieth century. Since its emergence, the direction of the field of Black religious studies has confined us to discussions that often situate U.S. African American religions within arenas of North American Protestantism, viz. far from the borders of the Caribbean, South American and Central American landscapes suggested by the categories "African

diaspora religions,” “African Atlantic religions” and “Africana religions.” By engaging new conceptual, epistemological and methodological directions in Africana religious studies, we will encounter and develop innovative perspectives on pivotal topics such as (1) the role of religion in the social and sacred production of identity, citizenship and caste, (2) the implications of African-descended women’s involuntary presence in the Caribbean and the Americas for Africana religiosity, (3) religion, the body and the senses, (4) the politics of liberation, the politics of refusal and the politics of hope, (5) the boundaries of religious knowledge and its modes of transmission in Africana contexts, and (6) the limits and purchase of the academic concept of “religion” in studies of Africana spiritual cultures and epistemological orientations.

COURSE TEXTS :

Curtis Evans, *The Burden of Black Religion*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

COURSE ARTICLES:

Dianne Stewart Diakité and Tracey Hucks, “Africana Religious Studies:” Toward a Transdisciplinary Agenda in an Emerging Field,” *Journal of Africana Religions*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 28-77

Katharine Gerbner, “They call me Obea”: German Moravian Missionaries and Afro-Caribbean Religion in Jamaica, 1754–1760, *Atlantic Studies* 12, no. 2 (2015): 160-178

Sylvester Johnson, “The Rise of Black Ethnics: The Ethnic Turn in African American Religions, 1916–1945,” *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 20, no. 2 (July 2010): 125–163

Charles Long, “Perspectives for a Study of Afro-American Religion in the United States,” Chapter 11 in *Significations*, 187-198

Calvin Warren, "Black Nihilism and the Politics of Hope," *The New Centennial Review*, 15, no. 1 (2015): 215–248