

Religious Studies

Home

The Major

Courses

Spring 2014

Fall 2013

Summer 2013

Past Courses

Spring 2013

Fall 2012

Summer 2012

** Archived*

People

Resources

Events

Fall 2005

(as of May 19, 2005)

All courses are 4 units unless otherwise noted

RELIGIOUS STUDIES 90A: Introductory Topics in Religious Studies

Topic: The Rg Veda

For centuries, Hinduism has traced its origins back to the sacred texts of the Vedas, of which the Rg Veda is the oldest and most important. The Rg Veda has also been a fundamental text for modern studies of early religion and mythology. What is the Rg Veda and what does it say? What is Vedic religion and what is its connection to Hinduism? We will read substantial portions of this fascinating and sometimes mysterious text in translation, along with scholarship on the nature of early Vedic religion and society, its interpretation and its current importance.

Students who have completed, or are currently enrolled in, Religious Studies 90A or 90B are eligible to declare the Religious Studies major.

Instructor: Luis Gonzalez-Reimann, TuTh 11-12:30

COURSE CONTROL NUMBER: 77603

RELIGIOUS STUDIES C124: The Renaissance and the Reformation

Also cross listed as History C157.

Instructor: Thomas Dandeleit, TuTh 2-3:30

European history from the fourteenth to the middle of the seventeenth century. Political, social, and economic developments during this transitional period will be examined, together with the rise of Renaissance culture, and the religious upheavals of the sixteenth century.

COURSE CONTROL NUMBER: 77635

RELIGIOUS STUDIES C132: Jewish Civilization I: The Biblical Period

Also cross listed as Near Eastern Studies C135 and UGIS C152.

Instructor: Ronald Hendel, TuTh 11-12:30

This is the first course in a four-course sequence in the history of Jewish culture and civilization. It covers the biblical period and the period up to the destruction of the second temple. This course will explore the current state of our knowledge, including the legacy of ancient Near Eastern myth and religion, the history of Israelite religion, the literary features of biblical narrative, and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

COURSE CONTROL NUMBER: 77636

RELIGIOUS STUDIES C161: Religion in Early India

Also cross listed as South Asian C 127.

Literary and religious aspects of Hindu myths. Reading of selected mythological texts in translation.

Instructor: Alexander v. Rospatt, MWF 10-11

COURSE CONTROL NUMBER: 77645

Undergraduate
Student
Learning
Initiative

-GSI-
Job Listing &
Recruitment

RELIGIOUS STUDIES C165: Hindu Mythology

Also cross listed as South Asian C140.

Instructor: the staff, MWF 11-12

Literary and religious aspects of Hindu myths. Reading of selected mythological texts in translation.

COURSE CONTROL NUMBER: 77651

RELIGIOUS STUDIES 171AC: Religious Pluralism in America

Instructor: Luis Leon, TuTh 5-6:30

The premise of this course is the modern idea of e pluribus unum; that is, out of the plurality a unity is formed-the one and the many-or from the many a singularity is formed. However, rather than accept this idea as a doctrine, our goal is to understand it, and to critically interrogate it. Hence, we will pay special attention to those religious discourses that create national unity, as well as conflict. Readings and lectures construct genealogies of American religious culture(s), that lead ultimate to a comparative survey of: Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Asian religions, African-Americans, Latia/os and Indigenous nations. We will also consider the Christian professions of the Ku Klux Klan and the neo-fascist Christian churches. Readings are intended to generate a historicized understanding of religion in the modern nation, past and present. Lecturers and discussions focus on the context for religious expression, treating the nation as a religious or spiritual community itself, what has been called "civil religion," "public theology," or "spiritual politics." Readings are primary sources that come from within each example, or each "case study." They are not intended to exhaustively represent the totality of the group, but to present a central and defining case that demonstrates the unique historical experience of each community, as well as those things they share with others-expectations. Students are encouraged to develop analytical, critical, and constructive perspectives on the American situation. What does it mean to be an American?

COURSE CONTROL NUMBER: 77654

RELIGIOUS STUDIES 190: Topics in Religious Studies

Section 1: Slavery and Christianity in the Roman Empire

This course will focus on recent scholarly debates regarding the practice of slavery in the Roman empire as it relates to the evolution of early Christianity. We will try to gain a sense of slavery as well as what it meant to be poor in the Roman empire, but will pay special attention to the manner in which the relationship between slavery and Christianity was portrayed in the ancient sources and in modern scholarship.

Instructor: Susanna Elm, TuTh 3:30-5

COURSE CONTROL NUMBER: 77657

RELIGIOUS STUDIES 190: Topics in Religious Studies

Section 2: The monastic tradition in late antique and medieval Christianity

This course focuses on the origins and development of monasticism as one of the central institutions of medieval Europe. We will explore some of the essential moments in the monastic tradition and the changing meaning of monastic ideals through close readings of a series of primary sources. Problems to be addressed include the appeal of sexual renunciation and other ascetic practices in late antique society, the role of the monasteries in the collapse and preservation of European civilization, the economic, cultural, and political impact of Benedictine monasticism on the development of western Europe, and the progressive reforms and shifting ideals of reform of the institution from the desert fathers of Syria and Egypt in the third century to Francis of Assisi and his followers in the thirteenth. Although not a course in comparative history, students of the monastic and ascetic practices of other religions may find much to interest them.

Instructor: Samuel Collins, TuTh 9:30-11

COURSE CONTROL NUMBER: 77660

RELIGIOUS STUDIES 190: Topics in Religious Studies

Section 3: Atheism and the Justification of Religious Belief

This course will explore classical and contemporary challenges to the status of religious belief, and different accounts of the moral life. It will raise questions about the rationality, legitimacy, and intelligibility of religious discourse, belief and practice. Among the questions explored will be: Is Nietzsche's Zarathustra right in

proclaiming that the God of metaphysics (the God of philosophy that served as the foundation of knowledge and morality) is dead? What is involved in the gospel tone of Nietzsche's message? Does the recognition that the God of metaphysics is dead leave open a space for faith, for a different experience of religiosity? Is Freud right in reducing religion to the neurosis of the mind and God to the need of a loving father figure? Does it make sense to believe in a God of love in a world dominated by evil and suffering? But if one follows the atheistic critiques of religion, then what happens to morality once the God of philosophy is dead? Are we warranted in embracing other Gods, or substitutes for the Gods? In other words, is religion the only guarantor of morality, justice, and peace?

Another set of questions preoccupying us during the second half of the semester will center around the perilous proximity of religion to violent action. This proximity has been seen by some authors as revealing the paradoxical nature of some religious messages (where the message of peace sometimes legitimates the violence of war, the conflict of identity, of race, of class, of gender, and so on). Is such a vision simply the heritage of the protestant West, one we should abandon in favor of a less compromised form of postmodern religion?

Readings will include the works of Hume, Nietzsche, Freud, Kierkegaard, Tillich, Talal Asad, Pascal, Milbank, Simone Weil and others.

Course requirements include completion of class readings, participation in class, and two take-home exams.

Instructor: Luca D'Isanto, TuTh 3:30-5

COURSE CONTROL NUMBER: 77663

RELIGIOUS STUDIES 190: Topics in Religious Studies

Section 4: Heaven, Pure Land, and Paradise in Asian Religions

This course will explore a variety of Asian religious through a focus on the conceptions of heaven, pure land, and paradise found in their cosmological, literary, artistic, and ritual traditions. The course is designed to both introduce students to the religious traditions of Asia and to offer a thorough grounding in methodological issues central to the study of Asian religions. Specific topics to be addressed include the place of heaven in ancient Indian and Chinese cosmologies, Daoist legends of immortality and earthly paradise, the Buddhist Pure Land scriptures, deathbed rituals for rebirth in a pure land, Pure Land Buddhism in Japanese history, and perfect worlds in Tibet's tantric Buddhism. All of these specific topics will be addressed in relation to broader questions regarding the relationship of doctrine to practice, the concepts of "faith" and "belief" in cross-cultural contexts, approaches to ritual and myth in religious studies, and the historical and political dimensions of religious life. Readings will include Asian religious texts in translation and relevant secondary literature.

Instructor: Benjamin Bogin , TuTh 4-5:30

COURSE CONTROL NUMBER: 77666

Courses approved for the METHODOLOGICAL REQUIREMENT of the Religious Studies Major:

Classics 121: Greek and Roman Religion MWF 1-2 + sec

Anthropology 158: Religion of Anthropology TuTh 12:30-2

Courses approved for the THEMATIC REQUIREMENT of the Religious Studies Major:

Anthro C160: Forms of Folklore TuTh 12:30-2

(Also cross listed with ISF C160.)

Religious Studies 190, Topics in Religious Studies TuTh 9:30-11

Sec. 2: The monastic tradition in late antique and medieval Christianity

Religious Studies 190, Topics in Religious Studies TuTh 3:30-5

Sec. 3: Atheism and the Justification of Religious Belief

South Asian C140: Hindu Mythology MWF 11-12

(Also cross listed as Religious Studies C165.)

Courses approved for the HINDUISM EMPHASIS of the Religious Studies Major:

South Asian C127: Religion in Early India MWF 10-11

(Also cross listed as Religious Studies C161.)

South Asian C140: Hindu Mythology MWF 11-12

(Also cross listed as Religious Studies C165.)

Courses approved for the BUDDHIST EMPHASIS of the Religious Studies Major:

Buddhism 114: Tibetan Buddhism MWF 12-1

Psychology 107: Buddhist Psychology MW 1-2 + sec (3 units)

Religious Studies 190: Topics in Religious Studies, Section 4: Heaven, Pure Land, and Paradise in Asian Religions TuTh 4-5:30

South Asian C127: Religion in Early India MWF 11-12

(Also cross listed as Religious Studies C161.)

South Asian C140: Hindu Mythology MWF 11-12

(Also cross listed as Religious Studies C165.)

Courses approved for the JUDAISM EMPHASIS of the Religious Studies Major:

Hebrew 107A: Biblical Hebrew Texts Wed. 2-5 (3 units)

History 175A: Jewish Civilization: Middle Ages TuTh 3:30-5

Near Eastern Studies C135: Jewish Civilizat. I: Bibl. Prd TuTh 11-12:30

Courses approved for the ISLAM EMPHASIS of the RELIGIOUS STUDIES Major:

Anthropology 181, Middle East & Islam, TuTh 9:30-11

Arabic 108: Islamic Rel. & Phil. Texts in Arabic MW 4-5:30 (3 units)

Near Eastern Studies C121B: Topics in Islamic Art TuTh 11-12:30 (3 units)

(Also cross listed as C121B as History of Art C121B.)

Courses approved for the CHRISTIANITY EMPHASIS of the Religious Studies Major:

History C157: The Renaissance and the Reformation TuTh 2-3:30

(Also cross listed as Religious Studies C124.)

History 185A: History of Christianity: Beginnings to ca. 1250 TuTh 9:30-11

RELIGIOUS STUDIES 190: Topics in Religious Studies

Section 1: Slavery and Christianity in the Roman Empire TuTh 3:30-5

OTHER RELATED COURSES:

African Amer. Studies 124: Pol. Phil. M.L. King MWF 10-11 (3 units)

African Amer. Studies 135, Caribbean Cult. Hist. Mon. 2-5 (3 units)

Anthropology 162: Topics in Folklore TuTh 11-12:30

Nat. Amer. Stds. 155: Native American Medicine MWF 10-11

Near Eastern Studies 106A: Art & Arch. of Ancient Egypt TuTh 12:30-2

Peace and Conflict Studies 164A: Nonviolence TuTh 11-12:30 (3 units)

Philosophy 104: Ethical Theories MWF 10-11 + sec

Philosophy 185: Heidegger TuTh 3:30-5 + sec

THE FOLLOWING LOWER DIVISION COURSES MAY BE OF GENERAL INTEREST TO RELIGIOUS STUDIES MAJORS:

(THEY WILL NOT COUNT AS UNITS THAT CAN BE APPLIED TO THE RELIGIOUS STUDIES

MAJOR OR MINOR.)

Asian Studies 10A: Intro. to Trad. Asian Culture TuTh 3:30-5 + sec???

Buddhism 50: Intro. to Buddhism TuTh 11-12:30 + sec

Near Eastern Studies 10: Intro. to the Near East MWF 9-10 + sec

Website: dmurray@berkeley.edu

[UC Berkeley](#) | [L&S Site Accessibility](#) | [L&S Site Map](#)

Copyright © 2010 | The Regents of the University of California