

Religion and Literature Spring 2006 Course Descriptions

RLT 20206 Religious Imagination in American Literature

MWF 10:40-11:30 Thomas Werge

Cross listed with ENGL 20607

A consideration of the ways in which selected American writers and works are informed and illuminated—formally and in their ideas and preoccupations—by religious traditions, ideas, and concerns. Readings will be selected from the following: Melville, *Billy Budd, Sailor*; or *Moby Dick*; Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; DeVries, *The Blood of the Lamb*; Hemingway, *The Old Man and the Sea*; Dickinson, *Final Harvest*; Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*; Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*; Hawthorne, *Selected Tales and Sketches*; O'Connor, *Everything That Rises Must Converge*; Maclean, *A River Runs Through It*; Eliot, *Four Quartets*; Agee, *A Death in the Family*; Updike, *Pigeon Feathers*; Salinger, *Franny and Zooey*.

RLT 20208 Music of the Catholic Rite

TR 9:30-10:45 Mary Frandsen

Cross listed with MUS 23565

A study of the music composed for the Mass, the Office hours (primarily Vespers), and the Requiem Mass from the Middle Ages to the present day. The musical repertoire of each era is examined both from a purely musical standpoint and in light of the reactions of various popes, from John XXIII through Pius X, to the sacred music of their day. Documents on sacred music issued after Vatican II also are examined in relation to postconciliar church music for both the choir and the congregation.

RLT 20210 Philosophical Reflections on Christian Belief

MW 11:45 - 1:00 Michael Rea

Cross listed with PHIL 20802

In this course we will take a careful look at some of the hard philosophical problems raised by several important Christian doctrines. For example, Christians believe that there is exactly one God but three divine Persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). We believe that the second Person of the Trinity became a man, that this man—Jesus of Nazareth—suffered and died for our sins so that we might be restored to fellowship with God, that he was raised from the dead on the third day after his crucifixion, and that all Christians will one day undergo a similar bodily resurrection. Many of us also believe that God is sovereign and that in some sense nothing happens apart from his will, but also that we are free creatures who often do things that run directly contrary to the expressed will of God. Each of these doctrines, however, poses serious philosophical difficulties. The goal of this course is to try to get clear about what exactly these problems are and to explore some of the ways in which philosophers and theologians have attempted to solve them.

RLT 20212 Reading the Qur'an

Gabriel Reynolds

Cross listed with THEO 30217

To Muslims the Qur'an is the uncreated, eternal Word of God. As Jesus Christ is to Christians, the Qur'an to Muslims is the fullest expression of God's mercy and concern for humanity. It is both the source of complete spiritual wisdom and the constitution for a more perfect society.

In the present course we will encounter this revered text with the following goals: To examine the history of the Qur'an's composition and reception; to explore the major themes of the Qur'an; to discuss new theories on and debates over the Qur'an, and, finally, to research the Qur'an's statements on issues of contemporary interest, especially sex, politics and war.

RLT 20214 Pilgrimage

TR 3:30-4:45 Blake Leyerle

Cross listed with THEO 20227

From its beginning, Christianity was a religion of pilgrimage, first to holy people and then to holy places. This course will examine the literary record and lived experience of pilgrimage throughout Christian history by focusing on particular texts, persons, and sites. To enrich our understanding of this phenomenon, we will deliberately adopt a variety of perspectives (archeological, sociological, anthropological, liturgical, and art historical). We will necessarily also consider relics and the cult of the saints.

RLT 20216 One Jesus and His Many Portraits

TR 9:30-10:45 John Meier

Cross listed with THEO 20103

This course explores the many different faith-portraits of Jesus painted by the various books of the New Testament, in other words, the many ways in which and the many emphases with which the story of Jesus is told by different New Testament authors. The class lectures will focus on the formulas of faith composed prior to Paul (A.D. 30-50), the story of Jesus underlying Paul's epistles (A.D. 50-58) and the epistles written later in Paul's name (A.D. 70-90). The various ways in which the story of Jesus is told by the four Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John (A.D. 70-100) and by other key books of the New Testament will be covered by assigned readings. The course will combine a lecture format with discussions, readings, and reflections on the readings. Requirements: (1) to read section by section Frank Matera's *New Testament Christology* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1999) and to take short index-card quizzes on the assigned sections; (2) to take a final examination on the class lectures delivered throughout the semester.

RLT 30222 The Greeks and Their Gods

TR 11:00-12:15 Andrew Faulkner

Cross listed with CLAS 30120

An introduction to the varied and unique religious beliefs and practices of the ancient Greeks. With the aid of anthropological and comparative material on religion from other cultures and societies, the course stresses the intersection of religious conventions with politics, gender, and class in the Greek city-states, and gives special attention to the religious life of the best documented Greek community of all, ancient Athens.

RLT 30224 Faith and the African American Experience

W 6:00-8:00 Hugh Page

[Meets 1/18/06-3/1/06; 1 credit] Cross listed with AFAM 33302

This course will introduce students to the African American faith experience, with particular attention being given to the historical development of spiritualities of liberation in the American Diaspora. Guest lecturers and seminar leaders will offer "perspectives" on this rich and heterogeneous tradition from

several vantage points within the humanities, social sciences, and theological disciplines. In addition to a course pack of selected readings, the PBS series, *This Far by Faith: African American Spiritual Journeys*, and its companion volume will constitute the required "texts" for the course. There will be seven class meetings of two hours each. The course will meet on Wednesday evenings from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. The course will begin on 18 January 2006 and conclude on 1 March 2006. Attendance at all class sessions, active participation in seminar discussions, completion of six short (i.e., 2 - 3 pages in length) weekly reflection papers, and a final examination are required.

RLT 30226 Islam and Modernity

MW 1:30-2:45 Asma Afsaruddin

Cross listed with MELC 30070

Islam and its compatibility with modernity is a much-debated issue in the contemporary period. The course will address this timely topic and discuss the most important "hot-button" issues involved: political Islam, democracy, pluralism, rights of women, and secularism. The historical contexts in which these issues have been debated will also receive attention. What internal resources exist within Islamic thought which are being drawn upon by modernists to make a strong case for an essential compatibility between Islam, modernity, and democracy, for example? Is democracy (or Islam, for that matter) a monolithic concept? Students will be expected to actively take part in discussions centered around such questions, the assigned readings, and class lectures. Prior exposure to at least one class on Islam or the Middle East is strongly recommended.

RLT 30228 Russia Confronts the East

TR 12:30-1:45 John Hope

Cross listed with RU 30550

This course will explore the prominent place the Caucasus and the Islamic East hold in the Russian literary imagination. We will take a broad view of the topic, ranging from medieval epic to modern film, from prose to poetry, and from literature's "greatest hits" to the justly and unjustly forgotten. Throughout, we will seek to understand the uses of the East in Russian culture as a whole and in individual literary works in particular, the role it plays in the formation of a Russian national identity, and the literary resources the East provides to Russian authors. Readings will include works by Pushkin, Lermontov, and Tolstoy, among others, as well as contemporary journalism on the war in Chechnya. Class format will be lecture/discussion, and grades will be based on class participation and regular writing assignments.

RLT 30232 Pagans/Peachers/Passions

TR 12:30-1:45 Jonathan Couser

Cross listed with HIST 30204

How did Christianity go from Mediterranean cult to world religion? How did the scattered tribes of ancient Europe become a world civilization? This course will examine the growth of Christianity in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, concentrating particularly on the men and women who actively pursued its expansion--the missionaries. A combination of lectures and discussions of primary sources will consider the conversion of the Roman Empire, the beginnings of missions on the fringes of the Roman world, the growth of an early medieval missionary movement, and the changes in approaches to non-Christians that came with contact with the Islamic and Mongol worlds and the rise of the papacy and new religious orders in the later Middle Ages.

RLT 30234 Religion and Social Movements in Latin American History**MW 8:00-9:15 Susan Fitzpatrick-Behrens**

Cross listed with HIST 30953

The purpose of this course is to give students an understanding of the role religion has played in Latin American history from the colonial period to the present. We will focus specifically on how religion mediates relations between culturally-distinct peoples during points of encounter and the role it plays in social movements. Religion in Latin America served paradoxically as a means of and justification for "conquest" but also at times as a foundation for "subordinate" people's resistance to domination. We will examine this dynamic as it evolved in successive efforts by outsiders to impose control over people of indigenous and African descent. The course will focus on Spanish proselytization and its results during the colonial period, millenarian movements by people of indigenous and African descent during the nineteenth century, and American Catholic and Protestant mission endeavors and their outcomes in the twentieth century.

RLT 40201 Greek Architecture**TR 2:00-3:15 Robin Rhodes**

Cross listed with ARHI 40121

In this course the development of Greek monumental architecture, and the major problems that define it, will be traced from the 8th to the 2nd centuries BC., from the late Geometric through the Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic periods. Among themes to be related are the relationship between landscape and religious architecture, the humanization of temple divinities, the architectural expression of religious tradition and even specific history, architectural procession and hieratic direction, emblem and narration in architectural sculpture, symbolism and allusion through architectural order, religious revival and archaism, and the breaking of architectural and religious canon.

RLT 40209 Religion and Social Life**TR 12:30-1:45 Kevin Christiano**

Cross listed with SOC 30672

How does social life influence religion? How does religion influence society? What is religion's social significance in a complex society like ours? Is religion's significance declining? This course will consider these and other questions by exploring the great variety in social expression of religion. The course examines the social bases of churches, sects, and cults, and if focuses on contemporary religion in the United States.

RLT 40215 Religion, Myth, and Magic**MWF 11:45-12:35 Patrick Gaffney**

Cross listed with ANTH 30330

The study of religious beliefs and practices in tribal and peasant societies emphasizing myths, ritual, symbolism and magic as ways of explaining man's place in the universe. Concepts of purity and pollution, the sacred and the profane, and types of ritual specialists and their relation to social structure will also be examined.

RLT 40218 Chinese Ways of Thought**TR 11:00-12:15 Lionel Jensen**

Cross listed with LLEA 30101

This lecture and discussion course on the religion, philosophy, and intellectual history of China that introduces the student to the world view and life experience of Chinese as they have been drawn from local traditions, as well as worship and sacrifice to heroes, and the cult of the dead. Through a close reading of primary texts in translation, it also surveys China's grand philosophical legacy of Daoism, Buddhism, "Confucianism" and "Neo-Confucianism," and the later religious accommodation of Christianity and Islam.

RLT 40235 Engendering Christianity

TH 5:00-6:15 Mary D'Angelo

Cross listed with THEO 20102

This course is an introduction to feminist and gender-based approaches to Christian origins, history and theology. It addresses major topics of theological thinking (such as sin, salvation, images of God, Christology) relating historical development and contemporary rereadings. These topics will be considered in light of contemporary issues of gender and sexuality (eating disorders, sexual violence, the status of gays and lesbians, ecofeminism etc.). The approach will be both critical (i. e. analytic) and constructive. Course materials will include two novels as well as theological writings and videos on contemporary issues.

Requirements:

Preparation for and participation in class discussions, including short assignments and reports (20%)

Two essays: a position paper of about 1200-1500 (ca 5 pages) words and a research and integration paper about 3000 words (ca 10 pages); you may negotiate with me for a project in an alternative medium for the second paper (15 and 25% each, 40%). Midterm (20%) Final Exam (20%)

RLT 40239 Late Antique and Early Christian Art

MW 11:45-1:00 Charles Barber

Cross listed with ARHI 30210

Art in late antiquity has traditionally been characterized as an art in decline, but this judgment is relative, relying on standards formulated for art of other periods. Challenging this assumption, we will examine the distinct and powerful transformations within the visual culture of the period between the third and the eighth centuries AD. This period witnesses the mutation of the institutions of the Roman Empire into those of the Christian Byzantine Empire. The fundamental change in religious identity that was the basis for this development had a direct impact upon the visual material that survives from this period, such that the eighth century witnesses extensive and elaborate debates about the status and value of religious art in Jewish, Moslem, Byzantine, and Carolingian society. This course will examine the underlying conditions that made images so central to cultural identity at this period.

RLT 40240 Post-Holocaust Literature and Theology

TH 3:0-4:45 Michael Signer

Cross listed with THEO 40225

Between 1933-1945 the actions of the Nazi Government transformed the map of the world politically, aesthetically, and theologically. The ability of the Nazis to gather the cooperation of German citizens and the citizens of other occupied countries to implement their policies against the Jews has raised questions about the claims that European civilization is based on Christianity. How could barbarism flourish in Germany, the land of poets and thinkers?

Both Christians and Jews, for common and different reasons, look upon the Holocaust as an abyss, a dark night of the soul. During this semester we shall attempt to move from horrified silence to insight into the possible frameworks for constructing theology "after the abyss." We shall also read literary works that attempt to describe the undescrivable. Both literature and theology written after the Holocaust present the paradox of how to comprehend the incomprehensible.

No single theologian or faith community has the answer to the problems raised by the Holocaust. No author writing in German, English, Yiddish, French or Hebrew can describe the horrors and fully transmit the fullness of the atrocity. However, we shall attempt to read, evaluate, and--for some of us--appropriate what theologians, poets and story-tellers have written.

RLT 40242 Dante II

TR 9:30-10:45 Christian Moevs

Cross listed with ROIT 40116

Dante's *Comedy* is one of the supreme poetic achievements in Western literature. It is a probing synthesis of the entire Western cultural and philosophical tradition that produced it, a radical experiment in poetics and poetic technique, and a profound exploration of Christian spirituality. Dante I and II are a close study, over two semesters, of the entire *Comedy*, in its cultural (historical, literary, artistic, philosophical) context. Dante I covers the works that precede the *Comedy* (*Vita Nuova*, *Convivio*, *De vulgari eloquentia*) and the *Inferno*, Dante II covers the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*, along with the *Monarchia*. These are separate courses, and can be taken independently, though they do form an integrated sequence. The course and all discussion will be conducted in English. Dante's minor works will be read in English translation; all critical articles will be in English. The *Comedy* will be read in facing-page translation, and we will refer to it in Italian. Acquaintance with Latin or a Romance language is therefore helpful, though not strictly necessary.

RLT 40248 Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective

TR 3:30-4:45 Robert Dowd

Cross listed with POLS 40021

In this course, we examine various hypotheses about the relationship between religion and politics, religious institutions and political institutions, and based on evidence from across time and space (i.e., Africa, Asia, Europe, Middle East, North America and South America). The aim of the course is to think critically about the conventional wisdom concerning the relationship between religion and politics. Special attention will be focused on whether certain types of religious systems (i.e., various types of Christianity and Islam) are more compatible with and conducive to democracy than others. Students will write two short reflection papers that demonstrate familiarity with the readings, one during the first half of the semester and one during the second half of the semester. There will be a "short" mid-semester exam and, a final research paper due at the end of the semester.

RLT 40258 Jesus in America

TR 11:00-12:15 Patrick Mason

Cross listed with AMST 43129

While many modern Americans share a faith in Jesus as Messiah, Son of God, and Redeemer, they have also portrayed him as everything from a socialist to a Ku Klux Klansman, a polygamist to a black woman, and advertising executive to a Buddha-to-be. In the kaleidoscope of opinions about Jesus we can find the very essence, character, and vitality not only of American Christianity, but of American

values and beliefs more broadly speaking. In this course we will study depictions and representations of Jesus in American culture, primarily in the twentieth century, using a variety of texts, including canonical sources, films, novels, visual art, music, scholarly criticism, and popular culture. In addition to readings, film viewings, and a group project, this senior seminar will culminate in a major research paper that will be developed throughout the semester, with extensive comments from other students and the professor.

RLT 40260 Anthropology of Christianity

MW 4:30-5:45 Debra McDougall

Cross listed with ANTH 45835

Christianity is a global religion but it takes radically different local forms. By examining diverse Christian communities past and present, the course aims to de-familiarize a religion that seems very familiar to many Americans. It gives particular attention to case-studies from colonial and post-colonial contexts, including Africa, Latin America, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Islands, but it also asks students to bring an anthropological lens to Christian ideology and practice closer to home.

RLT 40262 Rome, Christians, and Early Europe

MW 11:45-1:00 Sabine MacCormack

Cross listed with CLAS 40342 and HIST 40235

A survey of the political and cultural history of the ancient Mediterranean world from the age of the philosopher-king Marcus Aurelius, the late second century AD, to the rise of Islam in the seventh century. Exploring a variety of sources, the course examines such topics as the 'fall' of the Roman Empire, the emergence of Byzantine rule, and the social, cultural, and artistic impact on the Greco-Roman world of early Christianity. With readings from Ammianus Marcellinus, Julian the Apostate, Ausonius of Bordeaux, Augustine, Jerome, and Zosimus, among others, the course offers a special introduction to the literary splendors of late antiquity.

RLT 40264 Historical Jesus

TH 2:00-3:15 John Meier

Cross listed with THEO 40104

The purpose of this course is to introduce the student to the major historical and exegetical problems involved in the quest for the historical Jesus, especially as pursued today in the so-called Third Quest. The course will move from initial definitions and concepts, through questions of sources and criteria, to consideration of major sayings and deeds of Jesus that may reasonably be considered historical. As time allows, major areas to be treated will include Jesus' relation to John the Baptist, Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom as future yet present, his realization of the kingdom through deeds of power (miracles) and table fellowship, the various levels or circles of followers (the crowds, the disciples, the Twelve), various competing groups (Pharisees, Sadducees), his teaching in relation to the Mosaic Law, the enigma (riddle-speech) of his parables, self-designation, final days, passion, and death. This course will be a lecture course on the historical Jesus, supplemented by readings and discussion.

RLT 40266 The Monastic Way in the History of Christianity

TH 9:30-10:45 Robin Young

Cross listed with THEO 40208

Although often hidden from view, even hidden from view in the church, the monastic way is one of the oldest expressions of Christian devotion to God and neighbor, usually pursued alone communally. The purpose of this course is to explore how Christian men and women have lived this life, from earliest Christianity to the present. To that end, we will read the writings of monks of eastern and western Christianity, paying close attention to monastic voices from antiquity (such as Anthony, Evagrius, Basil and Benedict), medieval Christianity (e.g. Ailred of Rievaulx, Bernard of Clairvaux, Hildegard of Bingen as well as Gregory Palamas and Theodore the Studite) up to the present day (Seraphim of Sarov, Thomas Merton, Mother Maria Skobtsova). The primary format of the class will be discussion, aided by the composition of short essays throughout the course.

RLT 40268 Mary in the Christian Tradition

MW 3:00-4:15 Brian Daley

Cross listed with THEO 40219

The good news of Christianity is first of all about Jesus, the risen Lord, and so about us, as his brothers and sisters - about our future, our world, the Church we constitute. Still, Christian preaching and art have repeatedly singled out Mary, the mother of Jesus, as an object for contemplation and loving, personal attachment, and Christian theology has repeatedly focused on her as a symbol for speculation and a subject of debate. So Mariology, although in itself a secondary area in Christian thought, is central to any study Christian religion through the centuries, as well as a rich testing-ground for the implications of Christian belief concerning the person of Christ, the nature and future of the Church, the reality of sin and redemption, and the importance of male and female images in our experience of and response to God's love.

This course will survey the most important moments in the development of the Church's understanding of and feeling for - Mary's role in the mystery of our salvation. Beginning with the New Testament and ending with our own time.

RLT 40270 The Book of Genesis

TH 3:30-4:45 Gary Anderson

Cross listed with THEO 40110

The Book of Genesis: Literary Artistry and Theological Meaning.

The book of Genesis is arguably the the most commented upon book in the Old Testament. Nearly all of the theological themes most dear to the Bible are the subject of considerable narrative elaboration: Creation, fall, redemption, and election. This course will consider how the various stories in Genesis raise the profoundest of questions and what sort of answers it has provided the theological reader. The focus of the course will be on a close reading of the entirety of the book with the goal of mastering the whole.

RLT 40272 Transfiguration in the Fiction of C.S. Lewis

F 9:35-12:35 David Fagerberg

Cross listed with THEO 40238

Theosis in the Fiction of C. S. Lewis. This course will look at a theme that runs throughout the works of C. S. Lewis: theosis. Christianity's ultimate end is the deification of a person. In Lewis' fiction there is a strong theme of the transfiguration of matter and the human being, and the moral/ascetical prerequisite leading up to it. This course will first use some secondary theological sources to unpack theosis in light

of the Christian doctrines of creation, sin, Trinity, and Christology, and then it will turn to Lewis himself - first to his non-fiction (Mere Christianity, Abolition of Man, Weight of Glory essays), but our main time will be spent in his fiction (Narnia, Screwtape Letters, Great Divorce, The Pilgrim's Regress, Til We Have Faces).

RLT 40274 Religion and Autobiography

MW 3:00-4:15 John Dunne

Cross listed with THEO 40811

A course on the spiritual journey of the individual person, drawing on diaries and autobiographies. The first half is on the story of the life in terms of feeling and imagination and insight and choice, and the second half is on the story of the person in terms of the life project, the boundary situations of life, and conversion of mind, of heart, and of soul. Readings: Saint Augustine, Confessions; Martin Buber, The Way of Man; Carolina Maria de Jesus, Child of the Dark; John Dunne, Reasons of the Heart and Search for God in Time and Memory; Etty Hillesum, An Interrupted Life; C. G. Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections; Rainer Maria Rilke, Letters to a Young Poet and Reading the Gospel. Writings: a spiritual diary (not handed in), a term paper, and a midterm take home and a final take home exam.