

Spiritual but not Religious

REL 101-6-22 | Larry Perry

Monday/
Wednesday

11:00-12:20 pm



What does “spiritual but not religious” mean, and why has it become such a pervasive self-description in contemporary America? This course lends a lens to the relationship between spirituality and formal religion, on the one hand, and secular modes of understanding the self, such as psychology, on the other. Close attention will be paid to the writings of 19th Century Transcendentalist Thinkers, Pragmatic Philosophy, the Positive Thinkers Movement, Quaker Mysticism, the Spirituality of the Harlem Renaissance, the emergence of Yoga and Meditation in the American popular culture, and the Religion of Black Lives Matter.

Intro to Buddhism

REL 210-21 | Kevin Buckelew



12:30-1:50 pm

Monday/Wednesday

This course offers an introduction to Buddhist history, culture, philosophy, and practice. We explore the major doctrinal varieties of Buddhism, from its inception through the rise of the Mahayana and Tantric or Vajrayana traditions. At the same time, we also investigate Buddhist visual, material, and ritual cultures—which offer windows onto aspects of Buddhism as a lived religion not always visible in scriptural sources. In the process we engage themes like the meaning of suffering, the cosmology of cyclical rebirth, the social role of monasticism and its intervention in traditional family structures, the place of women and gender in Buddhism, the relationship between religious ideals and everyday life, the question of self-reliance versus divine assistance, and the power of images and icons.

Intro to Hebrew Bible



REL 220-20

Barry Wimpfheimer

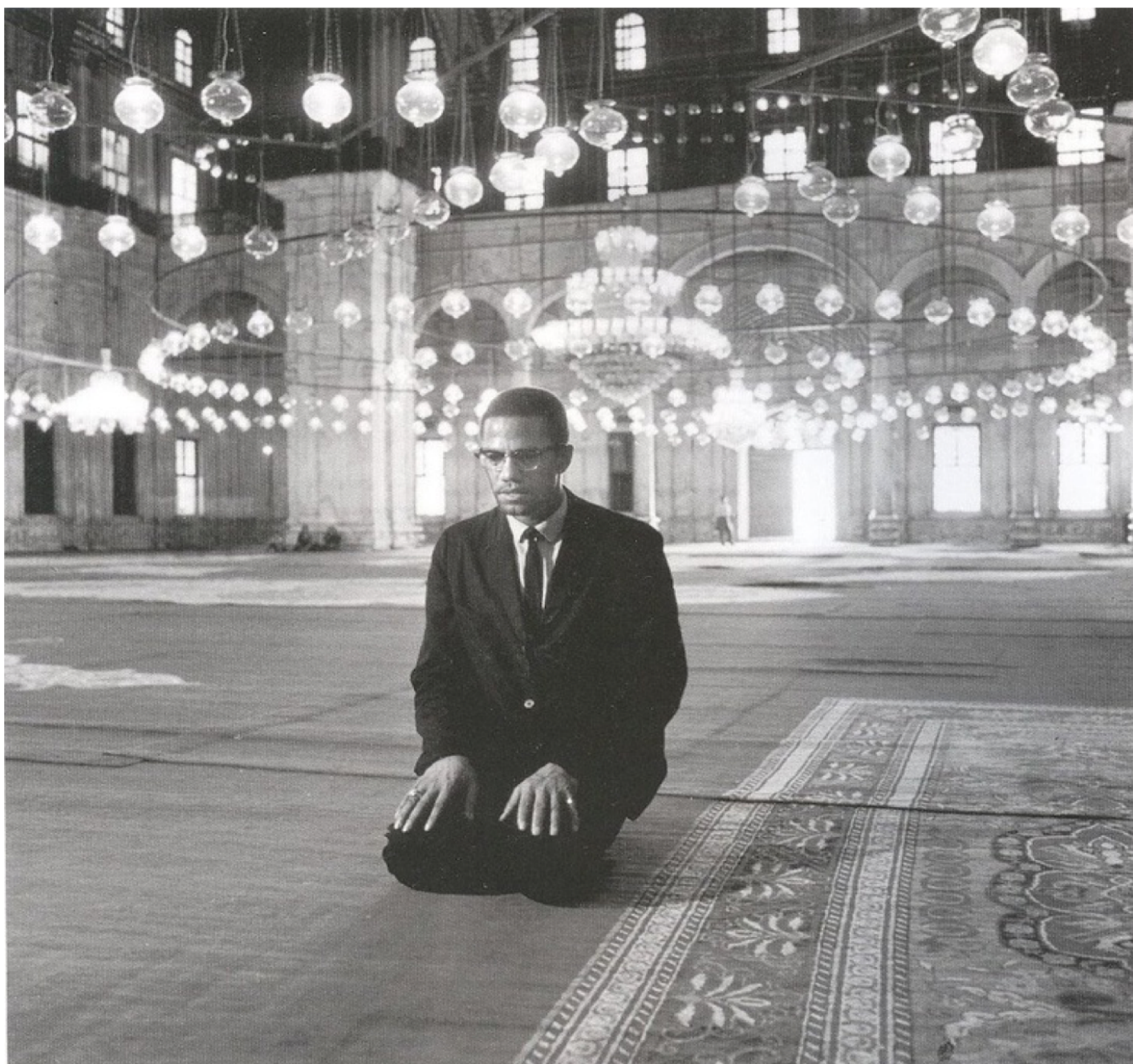
Mon/Wed/Fri

9:00-9:50 am

There is no understating the significance of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament in Western Culture. The Bible is a text that has been repeatedly turned to for spiritual guidance, for explanations of mankind's origins and as the basis of both classical art and contemporary cinema. English idiom is peppered with phrases that originate in the Hebrew Bible and many a modern political clash can be understood as a conflict over what the Bible's messages and their implications. This course introduces students to the Hebrew Bible by reading sections of most of the Bible's books. But reading is itself a complicated enterprise. The Bible has been put to many different uses; even within the world of academic scholarship, the Bible is sometimes a source of history, sometimes a religious manual, sometimes a primitive legal code and sometimes a work of classical literature. This course will introduce students to the various challenges that present themselves within the study of the Hebrew Bible and the varied approaches scholars take when reading the Hebrew Bible. This course is a critical introduction to the Hebrew Bible.

Intro to Islam

REL 250-20 | Brannon Ingram



**Tuesday/
Thursday**

11:00-12:20 pm

This course introduces Islam, one of the major religious traditions of world history, developing a framework for understanding how Muslims in varying times and places have engaged with Islamic scripture and the prophetic message of the Prophet Muhammad through diverse sources: theological, philosophical, legal, political, mystical, literary and artistic. While we aim to grasp broad currents and narrative of Islamic history, we will especially concentrate on the origins and development of the religion in its formative period (the prophetic career of the Prophet Muhammad, the Qur'an, Islamic belief and ritual, Islamic law, and popular spirituality) and debates surrounding Islam in the contemporary world (the impact of European colonialism on the Muslim world, the rise of the modern Muslim state, and discourses on gender, politics and violence).

Ahimsa

Nonviolence in South Asia
& Beyond

REL 295-21/ASIAN_LG 260-21 | McClish



Tuesday/ Thursday

11:00-12:20 pm

Nonviolence refers to any spiritual, ethical, or political disposition that refuses to use violence in the navigation of daily life and/or in the resolution of conflict. It is found in cultures around the globe and throughout history. Some people and communities feel a strong ethical or spiritual impulse toward nonviolence. For them, nonviolence is a matter of principle and may or may not also be seen as a tool for political change. For others, nonviolent strategies are ways to resolve social conflict at all levels. In the 20th century nonviolence came to be seen as a powerful force against repressive regimes. This course will examine critically the theory and practice of nonviolence and assess its limitations and potential. We will begin look at the feasibility of nonviolence for our species through an inquiry into the interconnection between violence, nonviolence, and human nature. We will look at the role of spiritual and ethical conviction in the establishment of nonviolent dispositions and explore the uses and limits of nonviolence toward contemporary political ends. Counts towards RLP.

Buddhist

Auto/biography

REL 315-21/ASIAN_LG 390-21



Sarah Jacoby

Tuesday/Thursday

9:30-10:50 am

In the middle of the twentieth century, cutting-edge literary theorists concluded that autobiography was exclusively a product of “Western” individualistic culture, thereby ignoring the literary output of large parts of the globe, including Buddhist religious literature. The goal of this course is to explore Buddhist biography and autobiography as literary genres and as lenses through which we can examine the various meanings of living an exemplary Buddhist life, focusing on religious literature from India and Tibet. Questions the course will probe include: How did a religious doctrine such as Buddhism, which denies the ultimate existence of the self, become a major locus of auto/biographical writing? What is the nature of the self as it is expressed in Buddhist religious auto/biography, and what were the aims of this literature? What can we learn from reading biographies and autobiographies about Buddhist selves, societies, and histories? How do differences of gender, nationality, and religious lineage inform auto/biographical representations of the self?

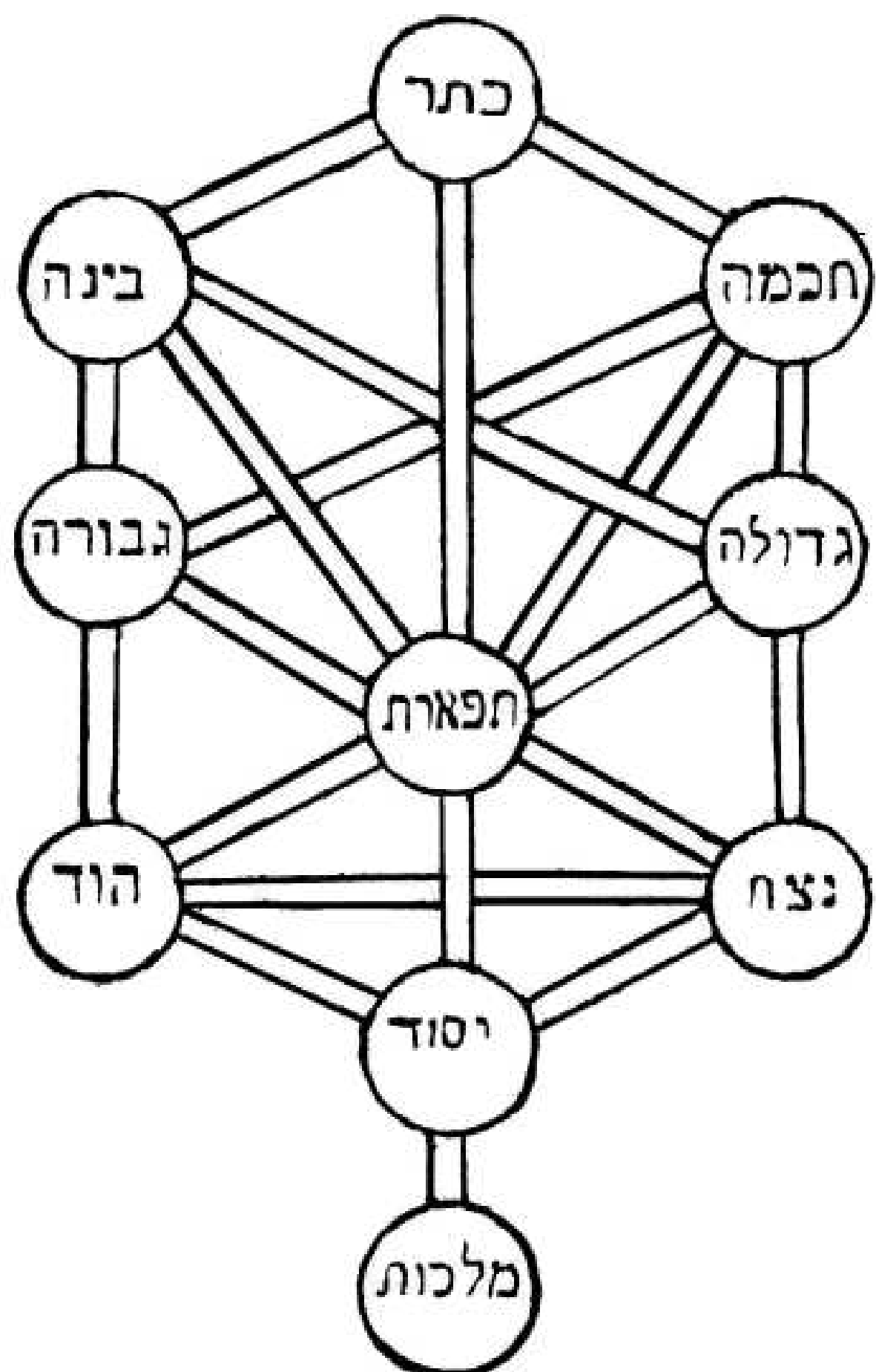
Kabbalah

REL 339-22 | Barry Wimpfheimer

Kabbalah, or Jewish mysticism, is an esoteric (secret) tradition of deliberating about and experiencing the mysteries of those spaces that are inaccessible to the five senses. Though for much of its history Jewish mysticism has been the province of a select few devotees, at times Kabbalah has flourished as a popular religious movement. Recent years have seen a rise in the popularity of Kabbalah as various celebrities (including Madonna and Kanye West) have become affiliated with The Kabbalah Center. This course will introduce the discourse of Kabbalah, think about mysticism as both an experiential and an intellectual tradition and consider why Kabbalah has become so popular today.

Monday/
Wednesday

11:00-12:20 pm



Islamic Law

Brannon Ingram



**REL 351-20/
MENA 301-3-20/
LEGAL_ST 376-21**

3:00-5:50 pm

Wednesday

Islamic law – the sacred law of Islam grounded in the Qur’an, the practice of the Prophet Muhammad, and the writings of Muslim scholars and jurists – stretches back nearly 1400 years. This course offers, first, an overview of the origins and evolution of Islamic law from the life of Muhammad to end of the classical era. We then seek, secondly, to understand how colonialism and the modern nation-state affected the conceptualization and implementation of Islamic law in the modern period. To these ends, we look in-depth at two specific areas of law – marriage and divorce, and criminal law – in two specific regions: the Ottoman empire and contemporary Iran. *Counts towards Religion, Law and Politics (RLP) major concentration. *Prerequisite: 250 or consent of instructor.

African American Religions

REL 369-22/AF_AM 380-22 | Larry Perry



**Monday/
Wednesday**

3:30-4:50 pm

A study of Black religions, from the time of slavery to the present, in the context of American social, political, and religious history. The course pushes students to take a panoramic view of Black Religions in America. Consideration will be given to debates concerning the roots of Black American Religion, the Black Social Gospel, the Centrality (or lack there of) of Black Churches, Black Islam, Black Catholicism, African Indigenous Religions, Black Atheism, the Religiosity of the Civil Rights Movement, Black Theology, Womanist Theology, Black Televangelism, and the present battle for Black Rights.

Media, Earth, and Making a difference

Sarah Taylor

REL 369-25/EPC 390-25

Tuesday

2:00-4:30 pm

The central question of this course is: What Makes a Difference? Analyzing a variety of works of media addressing environmental themes, including works drawn from advertising and marketing, we will consider different types of environmental messaging and attempts to mobilize public moral engagement. *This course is for undergraduate students only.

