

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES DEPARTMENT

## FIRST YEAR SEMINAR WHEN DID PEOPLE FIRST BECOME CHRISTIAN?

REL 101

Matthew Chalmers

Monday/Wednesday  
2-3:20pm

We take the existence of Christianity for granted, but it hasn't always been there. And, for that matter, many people who we might describe as Christian didn't call themselves "Christian" at all. In this seminar, we explore one of the most pivotal moments in world history: the generation of a religious identity that would grow into the world's largest religion. When did people first start calling themselves Christian, and what alternative history of Christianity does that help us to write?

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# RELIGIOUS STUDIES DEPARTMENT

## INTRO TO RELIGION, MEDIA, AND CULTURE

REL 172

Sarah Taylor

Tuesday/Thursday

2-3:20 pm



Dive into one of today's most exciting and rapidly growing areas of scholarship – the intriguing entanglements of religion and media in society and culture. This course draws from an array of sources, such as television, film, and radio, digital gaming worlds, billboards, advertisements and media campaigns, popular music, streaming video, social media, and even tattoos, body art, and graffiti. Study media while getting to make your own media for course projects!

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# RELIGIOUS STUDIES DEPARTMENT

## INTRO TO THE HEBREW BIBLE

REL 220

Barry Wimpfheimer

Tuesday/Thursday

9:30-10:50 am



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. This course introduces students to the Hebrew Bible by reading sections of most of the Bible's books. 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.

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# RELIGIOUS STUDIES DEPARTMENT

## INTRO TO JUDAISM

REL 230

Claire Sufrin

Monday/Wednesday

9:30-10:50 am



This course will examine core aspects of Judaism and their development from the religion's biblical beginnings through today. Against the background of Jewish and world history, we will seek to understand the roots and evolution of Jewish rituals, literature, traditions, and beliefs in different places around the world. Judaism and Jewishness have changed so much over the centuries that sometimes this might seem like a course in comparative religion. Our challenge will be to understand why these changes occurred while also identifying the continuities that connect Jews across time and space.

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# RELIGIOUS STUDIES DEPARTMENT

## ***BUDDHIST LITERATURE***

REL 318-21/ ASIAN\_LG  
390-20

Matthew Chalmers

Tuesday/Thursday

3:30-4:50 pm

In this course, students will read writings from Buddhist canonical and non-canonical literature on a variety of subjects to gain an introduction to the variety of literary genres used in Buddhist works, as well as to consider the central tenets of the Buddhist literary tradition these works convey. Who was the Buddha? What did he preach? Why do we suffer and how do we realize enlightenment? How should one follow the Buddhist path? What metaphors and parables have Buddhists used to convey these insights over the centuries? Students will be able to explore these and other questions through a selection of English translations of original texts in Sanskrit, Pali, Chinese, and Tibetan including the life of the Buddha, his sayings, Buddhist sutras, and Buddhist autobiographies. As this course is an introduction to Buddhist literature, there are no prerequisites, and students will gain familiarity with Buddhist teachings through engaging directly with primary sources in translation.

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# RELIGIOUS STUDIES DEPARTMENT

## EAST ASIAN RELIGIOUS CLASSICS

REL 318-20 / ASIAN\_LG  
290

Antonio Terrone

Monday/Wednesday  
2:00-3:20 pm

This course explores some of the most influential texts of the major East Asian religious and philosophical traditions including Confucianism, Daoism, Chan/Zen Buddhism, and Tibetan Buddhism still prominent in China, Japan, Tibet, and several other Asian societies today. The goal is to understand their significance in East Asian cultures, as well as consider what we can learn from these texts today. This course will probe the following questions: What are the major themes, dilemmas, and issues these texts address? How can humans achieve contentment in the world? What are the moral values these texts instill? Beyond this historical focus, this course will also reflect on ways that these literary and religious texts have been appropriated and adapted in the modern context. Each period dedicated to a specific text will be preceded by an introduction to the tradition it represents offering a historical background together with biographical and/or content outlines. Format The course format will include a combination of lecture and discussion. Students will be encouraged to exercise critical thinking and to participate in class discussions. Students will analyze primary source material in translation, critically evaluate content and concepts, and will be encouraged to synthesize the information and communicate it effectively and thoroughly.

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# RELIGIOUS STUDIES DEPARTMENT

## BLASPHEMY

REL 349

Matthew Chalmers

Monday/Wednesday

11:00-12:20 pm



Can a divine being be offended? If so, what sort of god is that? If not, who does blasphemy hurt? This course explores blasphemy as a concept, a fear, and a practice. We examine its cultural history, its social functions, as well as some key instances of blasphemy, law, and violence in (allegedly) “secular” societies. Far from being a relic of the premodern world, blasphemy takes on its sharpest and most coercive forms in modernity. And through modern ideas about blasphemy, we’ll grapple with the place of religious speech in society and the limits of our ideas about secularization.

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## RELIGION IN THE BLACK ATLANTIC

REL 360 / AF\_AM 315  
Ahmad Greene-Hayes

Tuesday/Thursday  
11:00-12:20 pm



This course provides a broad introduction to major themes in the study of religion in the Black Atlantic. We will consider the stakes of defining and characterizing Black religions across time, space, and geographies throughout the Black Atlantic World, historically, contemporaneously, and in recent scholarship. The course's scope covers over five centuries of Black Atlantic religious history—from the 1400s up to the present day, with an eye towards traditions of Orisha devotion and monotheisms; religion and revolution in African indigenous slave religions; racialization, Christianization, and empire; theories of religion, Africanisms, and diaspora; gender, sexuality and queerness; and embodiment and spirit possession. Indeed, how did the formation of the Black Atlantic shape religion and how did religion shape the Black Atlantic World?



## Foundations of Christian Thought

REL 375

Richard Kieckhefer

Mon/Wed/Fri

1-1:50 pm



This course will begin with St. Augustine's Confessions and Julian of Norwich's Showings, showing how theology arises from life. Then we will examine interpretations of God and Christ from Eastern and Western theologians.

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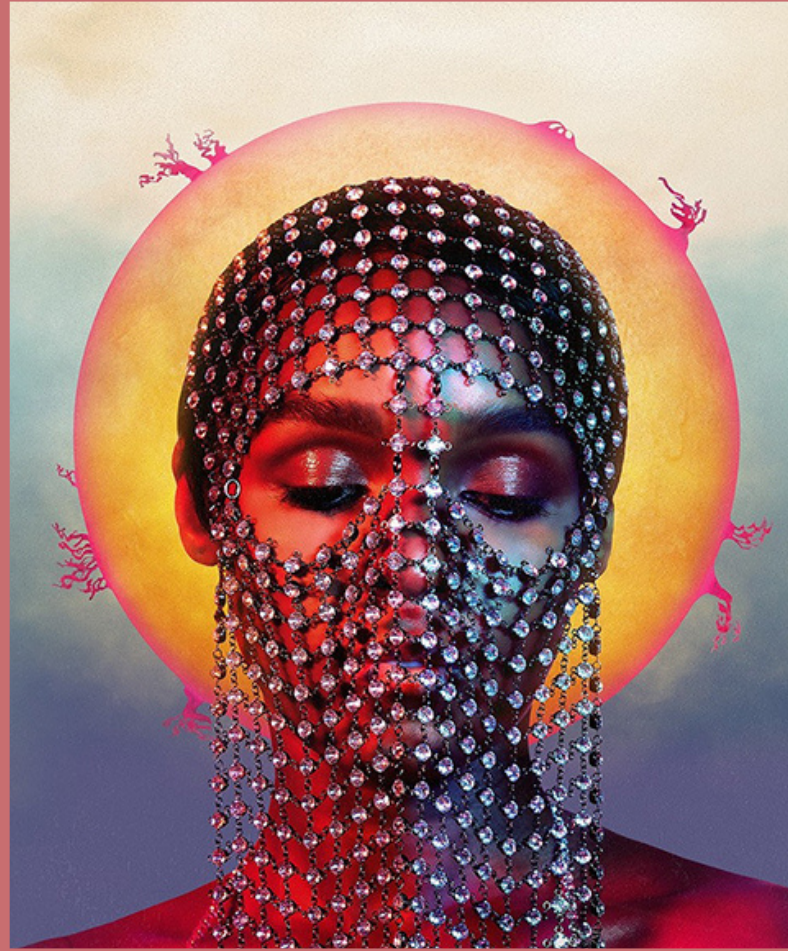
## SCIENCE FICTION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

REL 379

Ashley King

Monday/Wednesday

12:30-1:50 pm



This course will examine major utopian and dystopian texts and films in relation to social justice issues in the twentieth century and beyond, while following the stories of artists, organizers, and communities that have used speculative world-building to imagine livable, sustainable futures. We will focus on how feminist, anarchist, LGBTQ, and Afrofuturist art and activism have contributed to a substantial critical discourse on the intersections of science, technology, ecology, war, race, gender, sexuality, health, and ability. We will further examine how artists and activists have understood religion as both impediment and partner to social justice work, while alternatively embracing, subverting, and defying religious authority. We will attend to how religious myths and imagery are sampled and remixed by science fiction authors to plot an alternative course for history.

Counts toward Religion, Law, and Politics (RLP) and Religion, Sexuality, and Gender (RSG) major concentrations.

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# RELIGIOUS STUDIES DEPARTMENT

## WITCHES, HERETICS, AND DEMONS: THE INQUISITION IN THE NEW WORLD

REL 386 / HIST 292

Paul Ramírez

Tuesday/Thursday

3:30-4:50 pm



The Inquisition is one of the most infamous and misunderstood institutions in the early modern world. This seminar examines some of the myths and debates surrounding the working of its tribunals and their impact on society, with special emphasis on the practices, experiences, and worldviews of ordinary subjects. How have the records of the Inquisition been used to reconstruct the histories of Jews, African healers, bigamists, homosexuals, and “witches,” among others? Participants will pursue their own answers and even construct an alternate archive by which to tell the stories of persecuted figures. Topics include religious tolerance and intolerance; healing and love magic in the Americas; the policing and politics of gender and sexuality; and the lives of Jewish conversos.

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# RELIGIOUS STUDIES DEPARTMENT

## **BUDDHISM IN SOUTH ASIA**

REL 473

Mark McClish

Tuesday

2:00-4:50 pm



A survey of Buddhism in South Asia from the time of the Buddha to the 12th century CE. This course will explore the cultural and social history of the Buddhist traditions as well Buddhist doctrine and practice from the time of the Buddha until the decline of Buddhism in India. We will also look at the transmission of Buddhism to Sri Lanka, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia.

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