RELIGIOUS STUDIES

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FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

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Associate Professors Zareena Grewal, Andrew Quintman, Eliyahu Stern

Assistant Professors Eric Greene, Noreen Khawaja

Senior Lecturers John Grim, Stephen Latham, Nancy Levene, Mary Evelyn Tucker

Lecturers Supriya Gandhi, Margaret Olin, George Syrimis

The Religious Studies curriculum approaches the history of human thought and practice while focusing on specific geographical, cultural, and philosophical areas of scholarly interest. Courses explore when, how, and why communities forge systems of value. Faculty guide students to examine institutions, practices, texts, and ideas simultaneously: to see how texts influence institutions, how institutions prescribe habits, and how human beings resist and reiterate the given institutions and practices of their specific geographic and historical contexts. The Religious Studies department is particularly known for its promotion of scholarly research by undergraduates. Undergraduate majors acquire the linguistic, philosophical, and historical acumen necessary for an in-depth research project during their junior year.

Religious Studies course offerings, other than freshman seminars, are arranged in four categories. Group A features general and comparative courses that engage more than one tradition, concept, or text. Group B includes survey courses that provide a broad introduction to a particular religious tradition or scripture in historical context. Group C includes courses on specialized topics in religious studies, both introductory and intermediate. Group D offers advanced courses on specialized topics and typically have specific prerequisites or require the permission of the instructor. Students who want a broad introduction to the study of religions can choose courses listed under Groups A or B, though courses listed under Group C are also open without prerequisite. Religious Studies majors develop specialized concentrations as they plan a major program in consultation with the director of undergraduate studies and other members of the faculty.

The major The department offers two programs for students majoring in Religious Studies: the standard major and a major in which religious studies is combined with another subject closely related to the senior essay. Both programs require a core of courses, a seminar, and a two-term senior essay.

Core requirement A core of six courses in Religious Studies is required of all majors and should be selected in consultation with the director of undergraduate studies. One core course, normally from Group A, involves the comparative study of religions. Three core courses, normally from Groups B and C, concentrate on the historical or textual study of three different religious traditions or regions. Students are encouraged to select religions and regions as widely divergent as possible in order to balance in-depth study with global diversity and connection. One core course focuses on systematic thought (ethics, philosophy of religion, or theology). The final core course is RLST 490, the junior seminar on the academic study of religion.

Seminar requirement Before the end of the junior year, students must complete a seminar (in addition to the junior seminar) that requires a major research paper. In Program I, this seminar must be an elective in Religious Studies. In Program II, it may be a course in Religious Studies, or it may constitute one of the four term courses outside the department.

Program I. The standard major Program I consists of twelve term courses in Religious Studies, including the core of six required courses, the two-term senior essay, and four electives. The electives are usually selected from Groups C and D and form a coherent unit to help the student prepare for the senior essay. Certain cognate courses in other departments that are integral to the student’s area of concentration may count toward the major with permission of the director of undergraduate studies. Normally the maximum number of cognate courses that may be applied is two. Two terms of an ancient language related to the study of religion may, with permission of the director of undergraduate studies, be counted.

Program II. Religious studies with another subject Program II consists of eight term courses in Religious Studies (the core of six required courses and the two-term senior essay) and four term courses outside the department, one of which may fulfill the seminar requirement outlined above. The four courses outside the department need not directly concern religion, but they must form a coherent, focused unit of concentration. Through them students can develop expertise in a methodological approach, cultural area, historical period, or body of literature contributing to the senior essay. Examples of successful combinations might be: four courses in Chinese history, language, and literature with a senior essay topic on Chinese Buddhism; four courses in early American history and literature with a topic on colonial American religion; four courses in a specific area of biology and medical science with a topic on biomedical ethics; four courses in globalization and international relations with a topic on religion and globalization. Each student’s petition to take this program will be judged on its contribution to the student’s senior essay. Normally, introductory courses in other departments may not
count among the outside courses; appropriate language courses at a higher level may. Students electing Program II must, at the end of the junior year and in no case later than the beginning of the senior year, obtain approval for their proposed program from the director of undergraduate studies. Students who think they may elect this program should consult the director of undergraduate studies as early as possible in their studies to begin suitable selection of courses.

**Senior requirement** Students in both programs must write a senior essay under the supervision of a faculty adviser in the student’s area of concentration. In selecting a senior essay topic, students normally choose a subject on which they have completed course work before commencing the senior year. The essay counts as two term courses toward the major and is taken in both terms of the senior year. The student should begin choosing a senior essay topic during the second term of the junior year, and early in the first term of the senior year must submit a Statement of Intention approved by a faculty adviser and the director of undergraduate studies. The senior essay course, RLST 491 and 492, includes research and writing assignments as well as colloquia in which seniors present and discuss their research. The student must submit at least ten pages of the essay to the director of undergraduate studies by the last day of classes in the first term in order to receive a grade of “satisfactory” for that term.

**Courses in the Divinity School** Some Divinity School courses may count toward the major, with permission of the director of undergraduate studies. Divinity School faculty are eligible to advise senior essays. Information about courses and faculty may be found in the Divinity School bulletin (http://www.yale.edu/printer/bulletin/htmlfiles/div).

Students majoring in Religious Studies who plan to do graduate work in the subject are strongly encouraged to study languages of which a reading knowledge will be needed for their graduate program.

**REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR**

**Prerequisites** None

**Number of courses** 12 term courses (incl senior req)

**Specific course required** RLST 490

**Distribution of courses** Both programs – 1 course in comparative religions; 5 courses in historical or textual study of religious traditions, as specified; 1 course in systematic thought, as specified; 1 sem other than junior sem, as specified; Program I – 4 electives; Program II – 4 nonintro courses in another subject linked with senior essay, approved by DUS

**Substitution permitted** Both programs – Divinity School courses, with DUS permission; Program I – 2 related courses in other depts, with DUS permission

**Senior requirement** Senior essay (RLST 491, 492)

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**Freshman Seminars**

* **RLST 012b / HUMS 092b, Divine Law in Historical Perspective**  Staff  
Exploration of the divergent notions of divine law in Greco-Roman antiquity and biblical Israel; the cognitive dissonance their historical encounter engendered and attempts by Jewish, Christian, and contemporary secular thinkers to negotiate competing claims. Topics include: debates over the attributes and nature of divine law versus human law; the grounds of divine law’s authority; law as a religious expression versus law as debasement of the divine-human relationship; the impact of divine law debates on secular legal theory. Enrollment limited to freshmen. Preregistration required; see under Freshman Seminar Program.  HU

* **RLST 015a / SAST 057a, Gods and Heroes in Indian Religions**  Phyllis Granoff  
The basic doctrines and practices of India’s three classical religions, Buddhism, Jainism, and Hinduism, explored through close reading of texts in translation. Lives of the founders, great monks, nuns, and lay followers of Buddhism and Jainism; myths of the major Hindu gods; heroines and goddesses in the three traditions. Enrollment limited to freshmen. Preregistration required; see under Freshman Seminar Program.  HU

* **RLST 017a, Authenticity**  Noreen Khawaja  
The origins of personal authenticity in Western thought and the impact of this idea on modern notions of truth, sincerity, and identity. The “true” self as a historical idea and as a social performance. Readings in philosophy, literature, and religious thought from antiquity to the present. Enrollment limited to freshmen. Preregistration required; see under Freshman Seminar Program.  HU

* **RLST 022a, Religion and Science Fiction**  Maria Doerfler  
Survey of contemporary science fiction with attention to its use and presentation of religious thought and practice. Focus on the ways in which different religious frameworks inform the literary imagination of this genre, and how science fiction in turn creates religious systems in both literature and society. Enrollment limited to freshmen. Preregistration required; see under Freshman Seminar Program.  HU

* **RLST 025a, Scriptures**  Nancy Levene  
Investigation of the idea of scripture through the study of texts that either are deemed scriptural by communities of readers or circulate with the mark or metaphor of scripture. The foci will be on the interpretation of textual significance and the relationship of the sacred and the secular. Enrollment limited to freshmen. Preregistration required; see under Freshman Seminar Program.  HU
General, Comparative, and Thematic Courses (Group A)

* RLST 110b, Apocalyptic Religion in Cross-Cultural Perspective  Staff
An examination of millennial and "end-time" beliefs in a variety of cultures around the world. Attention given to Jewish and Christian texts as well as Native American traditions, African and Asian movements, and modern manifestations such as Jonestown and Heaven's Gate. HU

Surveys of Religious Traditions (Group B)

RLST 125a / SAST 267a, Introduction to Buddhist Thought and Practice  Andrew Quintman
Significant aspects of Buddhism as practiced mainly in India and South Asia, including philosophy and ethics, monastic and ascetic life, meditation and ritual practices, and the material culture of Buddhist societies. The Mahayana tradition that emerged in the first century B.C.E.; later forms of esoteric Buddhism known as tantra; the development of modern Buddhism in Asia and its manifestation in the West. Readings from Buddhist texts in translation. HU

RLST 135a / EAST 335a, Zen Buddhism  Eric Greene
Survey of the history and teachings of Zen Buddhism in China and Japan. Emphasis on reading and interpretation of primary Zen texts in their historical and religious context, along with investigation of modern interpretations and appropriations of Zen in the West. HU

RLST 141a / AFST 112a / ARCG 222a / NELC 112a, Egyptian Religion through the Ages  John Darnell
Diachronic approach to topics in Egyptian religion. Religious architecture, evidence for protodynastic cults, foreigners in Egyptian religious celebrations, music and vocal expression in Egyptian religion, Re and Osiris, the Amarna interlude and the Ramesside solar religion, and the goddess of the eye of the sun. Readings in translation. HU

RLST 145a / JDST 110a, The Bible  Christine Hayes
The writings common to both Jewish and Christian scripture examined as diverse and often conflicting expressions of the religious life and thought of ancient Israel. The works' cultural and historical setting in the ancient Near East; the interpretive history of selected passages influential in Western culture. Introduction to a wide range of critical and literary approaches to biblical studies. Students view course lectures, which survey the entire Bible, on line; class time focuses on specific biblical passages and their subsequent interpretation in Jewish and Christian culture. HU

RLST 147b / JDST 235b / MMES 235b / NELC 231b, Introduction to Judaism in the Ancient World  Steven Fraade
The emergence of classical Judaism in its historical setting. Jews and Hellenization; varieties of early Judaism; apocalyptic and postapocalyptic responses to suffering and catastrophe; worship and atonement without sacrificial cult; interpretations of scriptures; law and life; the rabbi; the synagogue; faith in reason; Sabbath and festivals; history and its redemption. No prior background in Jewish history assumed. HU

RLST 148a / ER&M 219a / HIST 219a / JDST 200a / MMES 149a, Jewish History and Thought to Early Modern Times  Ivan Marcus
A broad introduction to the history of the Jews from biblical beginnings until the European Reformation and the Ottoman Empire. Focus on the formative period of classical rabbinic Judaism and on the symbiotic relationships among Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Jewish society and culture in its biblical, rabbinic, and medieval settings. Counts toward either European or non-Western distributional credit within the History major, upon application to the director of undergraduate studies. HU RP

RLST 149b / HIST 220b / JDST 201b, Introduction to Modern Jewish History  David Sorkin
A broad introduction to the history of Jewish culture from the late Middle Ages until the present. Emphasis on the changing interaction of Jews with the larger society as well as the transformation of Judaism in its encounter with modernity. HU

RLST 155b / HIST 351b / MMES 193b, The Golden Age of Islam  Gerhard Böwering
The development of Islamic civilization in the Middle East, North Africa, Spain, Iran, and India from Muhammad through the Mongol invasions to the rise of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires (600–1500 C.E.). Emphasis on the intellectual and religious history of Islam in the age of the caliphs and during the rule of regional dynasties. HU

RLST 160a / HIST 280a / ITAL 315a, The Catholic Intellectual Tradition  Carlos Eire
Introductory survey of the interaction between Catholicism and Western culture from the first century to the present, with a focus on pivotal moments and crucial developments that defined both traditions. Key beliefs, rites, and customs of the Roman Catholic Church, and the ways in which they have found expression; interaction between Catholics and the institution of the Church; Catholicism in its cultural and sociopolitical matrices. Close reading of primary sources. HU

RLST 165b / MMES 138b, Introduction to the Quran  Staff
Introduction to the study of the Quran. Topics include: the literary, historical, and theological reception of the Quran; its collection and redaction; the scriptural milieu of late antiquity; education and religious authority; ritual performance and calligraphic expression; the diversity of Muslim exegesis. HU

RLST 170a / MMES 192a, The Religion of Islam  Gerhard Böwering
The rise of Islam in Arabia; Muhammad and the Qur'an; Muslim tradition and religious law; crucial issues of Islamic philosophy and theology; basic beliefs and practices of the Muslim community; Sufism and Shi'ism; religious institutions and modern trends; fundamentalism and violence; freedom and democracy. HU
Topics in Religious Studies (Group C)

* RLST 106a / EVST 130a, Introduction to Religion and Ecology  Mary Tucker and John Grim
Introduction to the newly emerging field of religion and ecology and its development over the last several decades. Exploration of human relations to the natural world as differentiated in religious and cultural traditions, in particular the symbolic and lived expressions of these interconnections in diverse religious texts, ethics, and practices. Includes lectures viewed on line. Meets for the first half of the term. ½ Course cr

* RLST 182b / SAST 49b, Buddhist Traditions of Mind and Meditation  Andrew Quintman
Buddhist meditation practices examined in the context of traditional theories of mind, perception, and cognition. Readings both from Buddhist canonical works and from secondary scholarship on cognitive science and ritual practice. Recommended preparation: a course in Asian religions.  HU

* RLST 184b / SAST 38b, The Ramayana  Hugh Flick
Exploration of the religious and ideological interpretations of this epic of ancient India as manifested in performance and in written texts. Emphasis on the religious and historical contexts from which the texts emerged. All readings in translation.  HU TR

RLST 193a / HIST 216a / JDST 332a / MMES 197a, Zionism  Eliyahu Stern
Introduction to the core ideas of the Zionist movement from the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth. Focus on internal Jewish debates and criticism of the movement by European and Middle Eastern intellectuals. Social, political, cultural, and messianic ideological strands within the movement and their interpretations of various historical experiences and ideas located in the Jewish tradition.  HU

* RLST 200a / JDST 261a / MMES 273a, Jews at the Origins of Islam  Liran Yadgar
Investigation of the role of Jews in the formative period of Islam, from the beginning of Muhammad’s call to prophethood around 610 C.E. to the early Abbasid Period (ca. 850 C.E.) in light of contemporary scholarship on the origins of Islam.  HU

* RLST 201a / HIST 232Ja / HUMS 443a / JDST 270a / MMES 342a, Medieval Jews, Christians, and Muslims In Conversation  Ivan Marcus
How members of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities thought of and interacted with members of the other two cultures during the Middle Ages. Cultural grids and expectations each imposed on the other; the rhetoric of otherness — humans or devils, purity or impurity, and animal imagery; and models of religious community and power in dealing with the other when confronted with cultural differences. Counts toward either European or Middle Eastern distributional credit within the History major, upon application to the director of undergraduate studies.  WR, HU RP

RLST 202b / HIST 345b / JDST 265b / MMES 148b, Jews in Muslim Lands from the Seventh to the Sixteenth Centuries  Ivan Marcus
Jewish culture and society in Muslim lands from the time of the Prophet Muhammad to that of Suleiman the Magnificent. Topics include Islam and Judaism; Jerusalem as a holy site; rabbinic leadership and literature in Baghdad; Jewish courtiers, poets, and philosophers in Muslim Spain; and the Jews in the Ottoman Empire.  HU RP

* RLST 203b / JDST 335a / LITR 418a / MMES 418a, Medieval Jews, Christians, and Muslims In Conversation  Hannan Hever
Overview of the Poetics, Culture, History and Political dynamics of Modern Hebrew Literature as a national literature over the last 300 years. The course will trace the literary development of its diasporic condition in Europe through the Hebrew Literature that is created in the Israeli Jewish sovereignty. Readings in translation. No background in Jewish literature, Hebrew literature, or Jewish culture is required.  HU

* RLST 206b, Secularism from the Enlightenment to the Present  Eliyahu Stern
The historical construction of secularism from the eighteenth century to the twentieth. Attention to recent scholarship on the formation of secular ideologies and their effect on conceptions of time, space, and knowledge. Readings include works by Jose Casanova, Reinhart Koselleck, Charles Taylor, and Talal Asad.  HU

RLST 214b / HIST 248b / JDST 293b, Introduction to Modern Jewish Thought  Eliyahu Stern
An overview of Jewish philosophical trends, movements, and thinkers from the seventeenth century to the twenty-first. Topics include enlightenment, historicism, socialism, secularism, religious radicalism, and Zionism.  HU

* RLST 216a / JDST 260a, Medieval and Modern Jewish Biblical Commentaries  Edward Breuer
Survey of classic medieval and modern Jewish Biblical commentaries, from the eleventh to the nineteenth centuries. Exploration of diverging approaches to the Pentateuch in light of the different intellectual and cultural contexts in which Jewish scholarship thrived. Topics include the impact of Arabic learning, attitudes towards rabbinic tradition, the rise of rationalism and mysticism, and the multiple challenges of modernity: reading knowledge of Hebrew.  HU

* RLST 228a / ER&M 218a / JDST 349a / LITR 435a, Ethnicity, Religion, and Nationality in Modern Jewish Culture  Hannan Hever and Eliyahu Stern
Conception and development of cultural identity through the category of “the Jew” in modernity. Investigation of identity politics in modern Europe, the Middle East, and America with consideration of how discourses of colonialism, science, theology, and multiculturalism have determined the perception of self and relation to others.  HU

* RLST 240a / GMAN 254a / JDST 335a / PHIL 274a, Jewish Philosophy  Paul Franks
Introduction to Jewish philosophy, including classical rationalism of Maimonides, classical kabbalah, and Franz Rosenzweig’s inheritance of both traditions. Critical examination of concepts arising in and from Jewish life and experience, in a way that illuminates universal
problems of leading a meaningful human life in a multicultural and increasingly globalized world. No previous knowledge of Judaism is required. WR, HU

* RLST 251b / ARCG 128b / EGYP 128b, Magic and Ritual in Ancient Egypt  John Darnell and Christina Geisen
Introduction to ancient Egyptian magic and rituals with an overview on the use of magic and discussion of the different rituals and festivals attested in Ancient Egypt. none  HU

RLST 252b, Human and Divine in Early Christianity  Staff
Introduction to the first five hundred years of Christianity’s development through the lens of Christians' engagement with God and the spiritual realm. Topics include how to bridge the chasm between divine and human; diverse proposals for structuring communities and communal authority; the roles of both emperors and ascetics as mediators between divinity and humanity; and various practices, both sacramental and mundane, by which ancient Christians sought to reach beyond their present existence into the next life.  HU

* RLST 260a / AMST 451a / HIST 174Ja, Religion, War, and the Meaning of America  Harry Stout
The relationship between religion and war in American history from colonial beginnings through Vietnam. The religious meanings of Americans at war; the mutually reinforcing influences of nationalism and religion; war as the norm of American national life; the concept of civil religion; biblical and messianic contexts of key U.S. conflicts.  HU

RLST 268b / HIST 281b, Christian Mysticism, 1200–1700  Carlos Eire
An introductory survey of the mystical literature of the Christian West, focusing on the late medieval and early modern periods. Close reading of primary texts, analyzed in their historical context.  HU

* RLST 277b / PHIL 202b, Existentialism  Noreen Khawaja
Introduction to key problems in European existentialism. The development of the tradition from its roots in romantic theories of individual autonomy; the sweeping culture critiques of Sartre and Marcuse; the adoption and transformation of religious ideas. Readings from Rousseau, Kierkegaard, Gide, Lukács, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and de Beauvoir.  HU

RLST 287a / MMES 391a, Islamic Theology and Philosophy  Frank Griffel
Historical survey of major themes in Muslim theology and philosophy, from teachings of the Qur’an to contemporary Muslim thought. The systematic character of Muslim thought and of the arguments given by thinkers; reason vs. revelation; the emergence of Sunnism and Shi’ism; the reaction of Muslim theology (from 1800) to the challenges of the West.  HU

* RLST 288a / EP&E 249a / MMES 377a / PLSC 377a, Islam and Democracy in the Modern Middle East  Andrew March
The development of regimes of government in Muslim countries since the nineteenth century. Early constitutional movements, the rise of political Islam, the management of religion in various twentieth-century states, the Iranian revolution, and the growth of Salafi ideas, culminating in the ISIS “caliphate.”  SO

* RLST 292b / MMES 392b, Salafiyya Movement in Islam  Frank Griffel
Close study of the development of the Salafiyya movement, a widely spread modernist reform movement of Muslim intellectuals active since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Further development of the movement during the twentieth century; what "Salafism" means today.  HU

* RLST 298b / MMES 392b, Good and Evil in Islamic Thought  Salimch Maghsoudlou
Close study of major developments in Islamic theodicy, including the most important arguments advanced by different groups and the modality through which this set of problems affected and still affects the Islamic thinking. Exploration of Islamic philosophical tradition, focusing on why there is evil in this world, who is responsible for it, and the meaning of justice.  HU

* RLST 303b / PHIL 311b, The End of Metaphysics  Nancy Levene
Exploration of the end, or aim, of metaphysics in light of the supposition that it is at an end. Readings from classics and critics in the history of philosophy and religion. WR, HU

* RLST 311b / AMST 392b, Religion and Popular Culture  Kathryn Lofton
Study of the religious dimensions of popular culture. Religious institutions’ engagement in economic markets; the deployment of religious imagery in the cultural marketplace; consumer culture as a religious space.  HU

* RLST 314a / PHIL 201a, Kierkegaard  Staff
Study of select works of Søren Kierkegaard, with focus on his conceptions of faith, despair, history, and love. No prerequisites.  HU

* RLST 321b, Hindus and Muslims in South Asia  Supriya Gandhi
Study of engagements between Hindu and Muslim traditions in South Asia from medieval to modern times. Exploration of historical case studies of Hindu-Muslim relations and the formation of religious identities, as well as how memories of the past intersect with modern discourses on religion and politics.  HU

* RLST 326a / JDST 230a, Law and Narrative, Gender and Sexuality in the Talmud  Noah Bickart
Exploration of both legal and narrative sections of the Kiddushin tractate from the Babylonian Talmud. Close reading and literary criticism of the laws of Kiddushin, as well feminist and queer theory. Investigation into the development of Rabbinic attitudes toward marriage, as well as gender and sexuality. Readings in translation. Additional readings in Hebrew available.  HU
RLST 342b / AMST 234b / ER&M 243b / HIST 188b, Spiritual But Not Religious  
Zareena Grewal  
Study of the historical and contemporary “unchurching” trends in American religious life in a comparative perspective and across different scales of analysis in order to think about the relationship between spirituality, formal religion, secular psychology and the self-help industry.  
HU, L5

* RLST 349b, Gospel Music in Modern America  
Josef Sorett  
Introduction to the study of religion, African American culture, and popular music through the engagement of theoretical and historical questions associated with the emergence, evolution, and boundaries of Gospel music from the early twentieth century up to the present moment. Prior course work in American history, black music and popular culture, and religious studies is helpful.  
HU

* RLST 360a / MUSI 346a / SAST 356a, Sacred Musics of South Asia  
Rehanna Kheshgi  
Examination of the relationship between religion and magic as expressed in various historical and geographical contexts, with particular emphasis on their interplay in South Asia. Consideration of various perspectives on the meaning of indigenous sacred music by engaging with scholarship from disciplines ranging from ethnomusicology, anthropology, Asian Studies, and religious studies. Focus on series of monographs and engagement with field recordings, commercial music albums, fiction, and films from various parts of Asia.  
HU

* RLST 362a / MUSI 349b, Sound, Religion, and Colonial Encounter  
James Sykes  
Investigation of the importance of sound and music for the politics and experience of religion in colonized societies. Engagements with theories of sovereignty, violence, the state, migration, slavery, and plantation labor. Broad geographic focus with main examples from South and Southeast Asia.  
HU

* RLST 370b / EP&E 301b / HUMS 325b, Law, Morality, and Religion  
Andrew Forsyth  
The relationship – if any – between law, morality, and religion. Topics include the twentieth-century jurisprudential debate on law and morality; debates on law’s relationship to reason and will, flourishing and restraint, in the “Western” tradition from antiquity to early modernity; and the U.S. Constitution and debates over free exercise and establishment of religion.  
HU

* RLST 372b / ER&M 301b / JDST 357b / PORT 301b, Diaspora and Jewish Identity in the Transatlantic  
Igor De Souza  
Study of the formation of a Jewish diaspora which established communities from Amsterdam to West Africa, from Brazil to the Caribbean and New York against the framework of the transatlantic – Europe, Africa, and the Americas – from the sixteenth century to the present. Focus on descendants of Portuguese Jews, who sought to uphold aspects of both their Portuguese and Jewish identities, forming thereby a new hybrid, transatlantic Portuguese-Jewish identity.  
HU

* RLST 382a / SAST 407a, Biography in Asian Religions  
Andrew Quintman  
The significance of life writing in the religious traditions of Asia. Readings both from primary texts in translation and from theoretical works on biography and autobiography.  
HU

Advanced Topics in Religious Studies (Group D)

* RLST 400b / JDST 286b / MMES 236b / NELC 232b, The Dead Sea Scrolls: The Damascus Document  
Steven Fraade  
Study of the Damascus Document, one of the most important of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Attention to the document’s place in the history of biblical interpretation and ancient Jewish law; the nature and rhetorical function of its textual practices, both narrative and legal; and its relation to the central sectarian writings of the Qumran community. Prerequisite: reading proficiency in ancient Hebrew.  
L5, HU

RLST 402a / PHIL 326a, The Philosophy of Religion  
John Hare  
The relation between religion and ethics, traditional arguments for the existence of God, religious experience, the problem of evil, miracles, immortality, science and religion, and faith and reason.  
HU

* RLST 405a / JDST 392a / NELC 382a, Mishnah Seminar: Tractate Ta’anit on Fasting  
Steven Fraade  
Close study of a section of the Mishnah, the earliest digest of Jewish law, treating procedures for public fasts in response to drought and other forms of collective adversity. Particular attention to the textual practices of rabbinic legal discourse in relation to its social function, and to the interplay of law and narrative. Prerequisite: reading fluency in ancient Hebrew.  
L5, HU

* RLST 407a / JDST 391a / NELC 381a, Midrash Seminar: The Revelation at Sinai  
Steven Fraade  
The giving of the Torah to Israel as seen through rabbinic eyes. Close readings of midrashic texts. Views of revelation, tradition, interpretation, law, and commandment in their literary and historical contexts. Interpretations and interpretive strategies compared and contrasted with those of other ancient biblical exegetes (Jewish and non-Jewish). Reading fluency in ancient Hebrew.  
L5, HU

* RLST 412a / MMES 403a, Orientalism, Magic, and Religion  
Travis Zadeh  
Examination of the relationship between religion and magic as expressed in various historical and geographical contexts, with particular attention to the significance of these categories in the development of Orientalist literature, art, film, and scholarship.  
HU
* RLST 422a / EGYP 147a, Egyptian Monastic Literature in Coptic  Stephen Davis
Readings in the early Egyptian classics of Christian asceticism in Sahidic Coptic, including the desert Fathers and Shenute. Prerequisite: EGYP 127 or equivalent. Counts as L4 if taken after EGYP 137 or equivalent.  13

* RLST 423b / EGYP 137b, Gnostic Texts in Coptic  Harold Attridge
Reading, translation, and analysis of Gnostic and Valentinian literature from Nag Hammadi, in several dialects of Coptic. Prerequisite: EGYP 127 or equivalent. Counts as L4 if taken after EGYP 147 or equivalent.  13

* RLST 427a / MMES 139a, Islam, Conquest, and Conversion  Travis Zadeh
Through examination of conquest and religious conversion in the formative periods of Islamic history this course interrogates the idea that Islam was spread by violent domination. Case studies are drawn from the Middle East, South and South East Asia, the Indian Ocean, Iberia, and West Africa.  HU

* RLST 444b / WGSS 404b, Persecution and Deviance in the West  Igor De Souza
Investigation into the dark side of medieval and early modern Europe through study of the historical persecution of four specific groups: Jews; sodomites; the disabled such as lepers and the mentally ill; and those accused of witchcraft. Identifying the persecutors and their ideology, as well as the persecuted.  HU

Other Courses

* RLST 488a and RLST 489b, Individual Tutorial  Staff
For students who wish, under faculty supervision, to investigate an area in religious studies not covered by regular departmental offerings. The course may be used for research or for directed reading. A long essay or several short ones are required. To apply, students should present a prospectus with bibliography of work they propose to undertake to the director of undergraduate studies together with a letter of support from the faculty member who will direct the work.

* RLST 490b, Religion and Society  Nancy Levene
Seminar on religion in its social formations. Issues include different concepts of social life, the operation of violence in social relationships, and religion as both champion and critic of society. No prerequisites.

* RLST 491a and RLST 492a or b, The Senior Essay  Staff
Students writing their senior essays meet periodically in the fall and weekly in the spring for a colloquium directed by the director of undergraduate studies. The essay, written under the supervision of a member of the department, should be a substantial paper between 12,500 and 15,000 words.