

CRN#**Fall 2021 Religious Studies Cornerstone Course Descriptions****20344 RST 112-A, CS: Saints & Sinners in Church History****Prof. R. Gribble, CSC**

Saints and sinners, much like victors and vanquished in war, are often determined by those who triumph in Church conflicts. This course will address several Church controversies throughout the 2000 years of its history, review the issues and debates that arose through the reading of primary and secondary sources, and who in the end were considered victors, saints, and the vanquished, sinners, in Church history.

20345 RST 117-A, CS: Gods, Myths, and Rituals in the Ancient Mediterranean**Prof. N. DesRosiers**

This class investigates the diverse religions of the ancient Mediterranean world (ca. 600 BCE-400CE), including Greek and Roman religions, formative Judaism, and the earliest Christianity. The course explores the history and development of these traditions by examining topics related to issues of ritual, myth, sacred space, gender, and concepts of divinity within each group. Particular focus is placed on the ways in which these groups influenced one another and reshaped cultural and religious landscapes through competitive interaction. Through a critical analysis of the sources students will begin to understand the practices, beliefs, and experiences of the Greco-Roman world and the communities that produced them.

20346 RST 118-A, CS: Pilgrimage in Nature**20347 RST 118-B, CS: Pilgrimage in Nature****Prof. C. Ives**

Stories in scriptures and the experiences of pilgrims remind us that religious life does not always take place indoors. Much of human religious experience occurs outside, in nature. We will explore this dimension of human religiosity through examination of Christian, Islamic, and Buddhist pilgrimages to such places as Lourdes, Mecca, and northern India, as well as the broader themes of nature symbolism and nature mysticism.

20348 RST 120-A, HON: CS: Deviance and the Divine**20349 RST 120-B, CS: Deviance and the Divine****Prof. S. Lowin**

This course will use the concept of deviance as the lens through which we will study the three major monotheistic traditions of the world – Islam, Judaism and Christianity. What are the major tenets and beliefs of each? What do they share and where are the conflicts? What does each consider normative and why? When does a belief or practice cross the line in deviance? Ultimately, are they all simply deviants of one another? In our investigation, we will also look to some lesser known religious traditions as foils, such as Scientology, Raelianism, the Nation of Islam, Jews for Jesus, Mormonism, and Christian Science.

Only open to Honors scholars. Fulfills the First-Year Seminar and the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.

20350 RST 121-A, CS: Religion as Pharmakon: Poison or Cure**20351 RST 121-B, CS: Religion as Pharmakon: Poison or Cure****Prof. G. Shaw**

For the ancient Greeks *pharmakon* meant both cure and poison depending on the context. Religion functions in the same way: it can heal us but can also poison us. We will explore the ambiguity and the power-both healing and destructive-of religious traditions.

20352 RST 122-A, CS: Pilgrimage and Passage: Religion as “Sacred” Journey**Prof. S. Wilbricht, CSC**

The course begins with the premise that all religions are at their best when they are “betwixt and between,” living in the threshold, open to new and unexpected horizons. After a close reading of the Book of Exodus, which will provide the opportunity to identify various themes associated with ritual passage, we will concentrate primarily on the study of the three chief monotheistic religions of Semitic origin: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The course will end with a brief exploration of Hinduism and Buddhism. Through comparative analysis of these religions, we will strive to determine similarities and differences in particular approaches to God, worship, institution, and moral conduct.

20353 RST 124-A, CS: God Doesn't Do Religion**20354 RST 124-B, CS: God Doesn't Do Religion****Prof. M. Leith**

We tend to think that religion is all about God, but why? And if God “doesn't do religion,” who does? What do we even mean by “religion” in these questions? This course will inquire into the “building blocks” of religion and human religiousness, considering the practices of Jews, Christians and Muslims from an anthropological and historical perspective.

20355 RST 126-A, CS: Critique of Religion

20356 RST 126-B, CS: Critique of Religion

20357 RST 126-C, CS: Critique of Religion
Prof. D. Ullucci

This course is an introduction to the critical, academic study of religion. It will touch on both personal and broader societal issues that are involved in the contemporary study of religion. It will examine several of the most prominent modern critiques of religion, as well as the various responses to those critiques. Further, it will explore and ask students to reflect on the meaning of religion in today's culturally diverse and religiously pluralistic world. Its objectives are to acquire a basic knowledge of some of the foundational theories of religion, to acquire a working understanding of various methodologies in the critical study of religion, to reflect on one's own understanding and experience of religion, and to reflect on the role of religion in the contemporary world.

20358 RST 128-A, CS: Catholic and Indigenous Religions in the Americas

Prof. C. Tichelkamp

When Catholic missionaries first met the indigenous peoples of the Americas, they faced a moral and theological dilemma. What to make of these peoples and their religious thought and practice? This course studies indigenous religious cultures such as the Aztec, Ojibwe and Inca alongside three European religious orders who encountered them. Through readings, field trips, guest speakers, and artwork, we will compare indigenous traditions to Catholic traditions, thinking analytically and critically about indigenous spirituality, Catholic theology, and "religion" itself.

20359 RST 131-A, CS: What to Do With Suffering?

20360 RST 131-B, CS: What to Do With Suffering?

Prof. H. Dubois

From religious leaders to artists to politicians, people use the language of suffering to express deeply held experiences and to justify a bewildering range of behaviors. The first part of this course analyzes different types of suffering, explained in terms of violence, injustice, trauma, finitude, and transformation. The second part is a survey of constructive responses to suffering, discussed in terms of healing, justice, solidarity, accompaniment, and understanding. Throughout, the course pays attention particularly to Christian theological and spiritual interpretations and practices.

20793 RST 133-A, CS: Hearing Jesus' Stories: A History of Parable Interpretation

20794 RST 133-B, CS: Hearing Jesus' Stories: A History of Parable Interpretation
TBA

The Gospels often depict Jesus telling stories. How have people been interpreting those stories over the past two millennia? How have their contexts influenced how they read these stories and how they communicated their interpretations? This class uses Jesus' parables to explore how people read and interpret classic religious texts. The Gospels often depict Jesus telling stories. Good stories draw us into their world, evoke different reactions from different people, and impact how we live afterwards. How have people been impacted by Jesus' stories over the past two millennia? How have they communicated this impact to others? In this class, we will examine a wide range of readings of Jesus' parables, from people in different historical contexts, with different identities, beliefs and experiences, and who produce different types of writing in response. What do these examples tell us about the different ways reading and story-telling can function as religious practices?