

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.

20361 RST 132-A, CS: Biblical Narratives and Artistic Images

Prof. L. Wills

The Bible contains many examples of great narrative literature—stories that move people with power and beauty. In the Jewish Bible (Old Testament), we find Genesis, Exodus, the warriors of Judges, the story of David's founding of Israel and the succession to Solomon, the kings and prophets, the story of Job. We find as well stories focused on remarkable women—Ruth and Esther, and in the Apocrypha, Susanna and Judith. The New Testament also features the story of Jesus's life and death in the gospels, and the experiences of the first followers of Jesus in the Book of Acts. These brilliant and powerful stories inspired equally powerful images in art and sculpture. Both story and image still affect us. This course will explore the ancient narratives as story and the art they inspired as visual image. How do the visual images alter the themes of the literary texts? Do they also reveal some of the "hidden" layers of the original texts in ways that we would not have noticed?