

**CRN#****Spring 2024 Religious Studies Cornerstone Course Descriptions****40932 RST 112-A, CS: Saints & Sinners in Church History****40933 RST 112-B, CS: Saints & Sinners in Church History****Prof. J. Allison, 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.

Fulfills the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.

**41198 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.

Fulfills the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.

**40037 RST 118-A, CS: Pilgrimage in Nature****40038 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.

Fulfills the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.

**40696 RST 122-A, COR: 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.

Fulfills the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.

**40697 RST 123-A, COR: Demons, Devils, and Satans: Monsters of Religion****Prof. S. Lowin**

Monotheistic traditions maintain that God is both all-powerful and just. Yet, they simultaneously speak of demons, devils, and satans - characters who threaten both God and His control over the universe. How can such an obvious contradiction stand? This course will examine the narratives and images of demonic characters, by looking at scriptural texts, interpretive materials and folklore. In our investigation, we will address such questions as: Who or what is considered Evil? How does evil exist in a world in which God is good? Is there a universal concept of Satan? Do demons and the demonic straddle traditional lines or are they tradition-specific? In other

words, does each tradition create the demon most appropriate for it? What are these characters good for? What can they tell us about how each tradition conceives of itself and its place in the human-God relationship?

Fulfills the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.

**40043 RST 124-A, 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.

Fulfills the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.

**40045 RST 126-A, COR: Critique of Religion**

**40046 RST 126-B, COR: 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.

Fulfills the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.

**40048 RST 129-A, COR: From Cloister to Crossfit: Religion in Medieval and Modern Worlds**

**Prof. C. Tichelkamp**

What makes a medieval monastery different from a modern-day brewery or gym? What is religion? What is secularism? This course covers medieval and modern religions through critical reading of texts, films, and artwork drawn primarily from Christianity, but also neighboring traditions (Judaism, indigenous religions) and modern movements (science, nation-building).

Fulfills the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.

**40050 RST 132-A, COR: Biblical Narrative and Artistic Images**

**40051 RST 132-B, COR: Biblical Narrative 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?

Fulfills the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.

**40698 RST 133-A, COR: Hearing Jesus’ Stories: A History of Parable Interpretation**

**41199 RST 133-B, COR: Hearing Jesus’ Stories: A History of Parable Interpretation**

**Prof. A. Booth, CSC**

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?

Fulfills the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.

**40699 RST 134-A, HON: COR: Theology of Love**

**Prof. M. Scott**

Love is fundamental to human existence. It motivates our greatest acts of heroism, inspires our loftiest cultural achievements, and drives our interpersonal relationships. But what is love? Despite its centrality, love resists simple definition and categorization: it is an over-utilized but under-theorized term. Also, how do we love well in a world of woe, where it faces the constant head winds of sin and brokenness? In this course, we will examine biblical, philosophical, and theological texts for resources on understanding love and applying that knowledge to life.

Only open to Honors scholars. Fulfills the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.

**41196 RST 135-A, COR: Experiencing God in Time: A Survey of Church History**

**41197 RST 135-B, COR: Experiencing God in Time: A Survey of Church History**

**Prof. J. Allison, CSC**

This course traces the history of the Catholic Church from its beginnings in Jesus Christ to the present time. The focus of the course will be on the institutional development of the Church and the developing sacramental/liturgical life of the Church. Emphasis will be placed on the people and situations that made the history we study as well as the implications and impact of these people and events.

Fulfills the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.