

WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION

Fall 2008 – Course Descriptions

REL 268: Religion & Music – Dr. Rhon Manigault Wednesdays 3:30 in Wingate 314

What is the relationship between religion and music? This class explores the ways religion and music intersect in contemporary spaces. We will survey the aesthetic and popular function of different styles of music with an emphasis on examining how music is represented and performed in various religious settings. Additionally, we will examine the ways that contemporary media forms have influenced the performance and production of religious music. Most significantly, we will investigate the numerous ways that music facilitates experiences of the sacred. This course begins with the premise that music is intrinsic to religious practice and experience.

REL 311/611: The Psalms – Dr. Fred Horton T/H 9:30 in Wingate 314

Study of Hebrew poetry in English translation with special attention to its types, its literary and rhetorical characteristics, and its importance for our understanding of the religion and culture of ancient Israel.

REL 317/617: Wisdom Literature – Dr. Ken Hoglund MWF at 11:00 in Wingate 314

An examination of the canonical and deuterocanonical wisdom literature of ancient Israel. Specifically, the course offers an in-depth analysis of the books of Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, and Ben Sira (Ecclesiasticus). The study will emphasize an understanding of the literary forms in these books, the evidence for growth and development, as well as the interpretive problems raised by these elements. The unique theological insights of Israel's Wisdom literature will be a continuous concern of the class. A great deal of emphasis is placed on class discussion and interaction.

REL 332: Religion and Public Life – Dr. Ulrike Wiethaus T/H 9:30 in Wingate 206

Examination of alternative historical paradigms within specific religious traditions and the implications of those paradigms for the public activity of their adherents. Traditions and topics, including religious leadership, social entrepreneurship, and the separation of church and state.

REL 336/636 Religious Traditions and Human Rights – Dr. Simeon Ilesanmi T/H at 3:00 in Wingate 206

Study of relationships and tensions between religious traditions and human rights, with illustrations from historical and contemporary issues and movements.

REL 363/663: Religions of Japan – Dr. Jay Ford T/H 1:30 in Wingate 314

Study of the central religious traditions of Japan from prehistory to the present, including Shinto, Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, Christianity, and Confucianism.

REL 365/665: History of Religions in America – Dr. Lynn Neal
MWF at 11:00 in Wingate 206

This course introduces you to a wide range of religious movements, people, events, and issues in the history of the United States. From Native American beginnings to contemporary New Religious Movements, we will examine both the chronological and thematic highlights of American religious history. Through a variety of sources, from prayers to popular culture, this course explores different visions of the relationship between religion and America.

REL 388: South Asian Women: Religion, Culture and Politics – Dr. Tanisha Ramachandran
T/H at 12:00 in Wingate 314

Grouped under the title South Asia, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka differ culturally but also share geographical proximity, languages, religion and most importantly a history of colonization that still looms large. It is from this point of convergence that we can connect the lives of women within the South Asian subcontinent. This course takes into account the histories, experiences and lives of South Asian Women. Using a feminist and postcolonial perspective, it examines the intersection of religion, race and gender from both a theoretical and a practical point of view. This course focuses on issues of representation and identity formation, recognizing how categories such as “South Asian” and “woman” become tools for a simultaneous understanding of both culture and gender creating a place for both oppression and empowerment. It brings together the voices of South Asian women living in the subcontinent as well as the diaspora.

REL 390/690: Special Topics--Forgiveness as a Social Strategy
Dr. Frank Wood (WFU Medical School Section of Neuropsychology), Dr. Simeon Ilesanmi
and Dr. Fred Horton
M/W 12:00-1:15 Wingate 206

A critical examination of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission in three contexts: its background in several major world religions; its neuropsychology as suggested by brain imaging studies of the mental states associated with forgiveness; and the practical implications for public policy ranging from bankruptcy to amnesty.

REL 700: Theory & Method in the Study of Religion – Jarrod Whitaker
Thursday 12:00 Wingate 206

This graduate course will explore the history of and recent methodological resources for the study of religion. The emphasis will be on the ways religion has been defined, studied, and interpreted over the last several centuries with particular focus on more recent interdisciplinary theories.

REL 726: Seminar in Early Christianity Studies--The Body and Sexuality – Dr. Mary Foskett
Tuesday 12:00 Wingate 206

This course examines early Christian perspectives on the body and sexuality at the graduate level. The class will engage a broad range of Christian writings, including select New Testament texts, Gnostic literature and “secret Gospels”, martyrological accounts and Patristic discourse, as well as Greco-Roman and Jewish literature. Special attention will be given to ancient constructions of gender, sexuality, homoeroticism and early Christian theologies of the body.