

Religious Studies

I N T E R D I S C I P L I N A R Y S T U D I E S

In this issue

New Director!	1
Senior Class	1
Events	2
Course Offerings	2
– Islamic & Jewish Philosophy	2
– Ancient Greek Religion	3
– The Hebrew Bible	3
– Intro to Existentialism	5
– Ancient Judaism, Early Christianity	2
– Evolution of the Bible	4
– Biblical Hebrew	3
– Philosophy of Religion	5
– Religions of the West	4
– Christology	5
– Guided Readings	4
Faculty Publications	6

Meet the New Director

Dear Students,

It is an honor to be able to work with all of you and our fine Religious Studies faculty.

College, as you know, is a quest. Not for money, love or success (of course, those things may come too) but rather, it is the quest for meaning, that which comes with knowledge: to know, to discover, and to yearn for more. And with that knowledge comes virtue, for it cannot be otherwise; for to know is to appreciate and understand and empathize and to fit our behavior to those truths as we know them. I applaud all of you for your desire to undertake this quest. And for such a quest, there is no better place than Religious Studies. May your pursuit prove enlightening, enriching, and fun.

I hope I will get to meet all of you soon. In the meantime, let me introduce myself. I have been teaching at Purdue since 1993 when I graduated from Georgetown with a PhD in History. My expertise is early modern British history, but I teach a wide range of courses: from the medieval history survey to courses on Shakespeare, gender, and religion. I am also active the History Honors program. I have written a couple of books, most recently one entitled, *Protestantism, Politics and Women in Britain, 1660-1714*, which explores the religiosity and political actions of women in early modern Britain.

It is my hope that our program continue to be student-centered, offering you a community: a place of learning, engagement, and sociability.

–Professor Melinda S. Zook



SENIOR CLASS:
Congratulations & Farewell to our Spring 2013 Senior Class

- ★ Scott E. Moran
- ★ Joseph W. Snedden
- ★ Chantalle S. Brown
- ★ Sarah E. Voltmann
- ★ and our Outstanding Senior, Jim Elliot

The Religious Studies faculty congratulates all of you, reminding all of you that “To whom much is given, much is expected.”

RELIGIOUS STUDIES NEWSLETTER

Events

Exciting Religious Studies Events: Mark your calendars!

- On August 29, Brian Reynolds will present, "Masterpiece of the Incarnation: The Marian Hermeneutics of Praise in the Patristic and Medieval periods." His talk will begin at 7:30 p.m. in the Anniversary Drawing Room, PMU, followed by a reception at 8:30.
- Let's Meet, Greet, and Eat at our Annual Religious Studies Open House for faculty, students, and friends which will be held at the PMU, East Faculty Lounge, Wednesday, October 9 from 5:00-7:00 p.m.
- In November, Religious Studies is hosting the annual Larry Axel Lecture. This year's speaker is Wendy Furman-Adams (English, Whittier College) and she will be speaking on "Visualizing Paradise: Artists Representing Eden Before and After Milton's Paradise Lost," Thursday, November 7, 7:00-8:00 p.m., STEW 214ABC.
- And, finally, Religious Studies is proud to co-sponsor, "Global ReOrient: Chinese Pentecostal/ Charismatic Movements in the Global East," An Interdisciplinary Conference, Friday and Saturday, November 1-2, 2013. More information coming shortly.

Exciting Religious Studies Courses offered this fall

PHIL 505: Islamic and Jewish Philosophy and the Classical Tradition

Professor Dan Frank

Often medieval philosophy is presented in its Christian guise alone, giving the impression that the medieval philosophical tradition, influenced by the great thinkers of Greek antiquity, is exclusively a Latin tradition, with no substantive contribution by those who wrote in Arabic and Hebrew. We shall revise this view. Our focus will be primarily on the 10th-12th centuries, a roughly three hundred-year period that is a high point in medieval Islamic and Jewish philosophy. Amongst philosophers to be studied are, on the Islamic side, Farabi, Ghazali, Ibn Tufayl, and Ibn Rushd (Averroes), and, on the Jewish side, Saadia, Halevi, and Maimonides. Select topics in the philosophy of language, metaphysics, epistemology, cosmology, philosophical psychology, and especially in philosophy of law, ethics, and political philosophy will be addressed and discussed. A background in Greek philosophy will be helpful and is assumed. Course requirements include class presentations and a seminar paper due at the end of term.

REL 317: Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity

Professor Stuart Robertson

The Jewish faith is, perhaps, the oldest religion of all. Most people know that the Jewish faith and Christianity are somehow related. The Jewish Bible is the Christian Old Testament. So the stories of Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Moses, and David and Bathsheba are common to both. Have you ever wondered how they are related, other than that, and when they became two religions instead of just one, and how they are similar and how they are different now? In this course, we discover how the Jewish faith began—which is the origin of Christianity too. We trace their history and ideas until they divided after the time of Jesus. There's a lot more to it than you may have thought. If you are really interested, join us this coming semester.

Course Offerings, CONT'd

CLCS 386: Ancient Greek Religion

Professor Keith Dickson (MWF 10:30-11:20)



This course is a study of the religious beliefs and practices of the ancient Greeks. We will learn how they understood, represented, and related to the gods. We will see how they legitimized their view of the world by placing it in the context of a transcendent reality. We will ask whether their use of the sacred continues to influence modern Western religious behavior. No animals will be harmed in the course of this class. For more information, contact kdickson@purdue.edu

HEBR 121: Biblical Hebrew

Professor Stuart Robertson (T-Th 9:00-10:15)

Many students have the idea that Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament, is very hard. After all, it has completely different letters, it is read from right to left, and you don't even know its alphabet. But I've been teaching biblical Hebrew here fourteen years, and I've discovered that many students find it the most interesting, happiest, funnest class they've had—ever. You discover, before very long, that Hebrew is more simple than English, a lot more. You discover you are coming to see much more than vocabulary and grammar, but even how the language works, how it is filled with fascinating word-pictures in its vocabulary. And more, if you're really interested in the Bible, you can find out for yourself exactly what the Old Testament "says" rather than depending on an English (or Spanish, etc.) translation. You'll see that your translations often only give an odd sort of reflection of what the text means, because there is simply a big hurdle in transferring ideas and figures of speech from language to another. If you are really willing to give it a good effort, come join us! You're welcome, for sure.

ENGL 462: Biblical Reading: The Hebrew Bible

Professor Sandor Goodhart



In this course we will learn to read the Hebrew Bible through the tradition in which it has come down to us: namely, the Jewish rabbinic, and especially, the prophetic, tradition. We will read closely the book of Genesis and the early portions of Exodus, and then take a more sweeping account of the remainder of Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, and selected books of the Holy Writings and the Prophetic texts: Job, Jonah, Isaiah, and Esther, among other books. All readings will be examined in modern English translations. We will also consider in our discussions selections from the Midrashic, Talmudic, and Kabbalistic (Jewish mystical) traditions, as well as samples from the later rabbinic writings. PREREQUISITE: English 264 or permission

of the instructor. Although "Biblical Hebrew" (HEBR 121-122) is not required for this course, it is recommended as a wonderful complement to ENGLISH 264 and 462, and information about signing up for "Biblical Hebrew" (HEBR 121-122) is available from Professor Stuart Robertson.

Course Offerings, CONT'd

HONR 199: The Evolution of the Bible and its Revolutionary Effects

Professor Stuart Robertson (MWF 1:30-2:20)



If you are invited into the Honors College at Purdue you may want to learn a very important aspect of not only Western civilization, but more broadly than that, touching much of our globe. The Bible is the most read book, or maybe the most talked-about book of any that has ever been written. How did the Bible come to be written? Many people had a hand in writing it, and far more than that have tried to say what it means. Its effect on the English language, and on many other languages—you'll be surprised how many—have been significant. Its ideas have helped to shape our ideas about not only God, but about business, architecture, ethics, race, the relationship of men

and women in society, etc. Sometimes the Bible is mis-used to form opinions, but even a misuse is a use. We'll look at that too. You may not even realize how the Bible has touched your life, even if you think you're not religious. If you're interested, and are willing to give it a big time effort, join us.

IDIS/PHIL 59000: Guided Readings

Professor Thomas Ryba [Time and place will be arranged.]

This course provides an opportunity for students to explore individually tailored research topics and projects. The emphasis is upon independence, initiative and creativity within limits agreed upon by instructor and student. Students must meet with Dr. Ryba before the end of the second week of class to begin the development of a bibliography and to set regular meeting dates. If two or more students wish to work on joint interests, seminar-style meetings can be arranged. Topics in the past have included: readings in Protestant and Roman Catholic history, business ethics from a Christian perspective, Christianity and non-Christian religions, changing forms of the ministry in the Church and Theology of the Body. Possible topics for the future are open but subject to approval by the instructor. This is an opportunity for students to design their own courses.

PHIL 331/REL 231: Religions of the West

Professor Thomas Ryba (MWF: 8:30-9:20, COULT 239)

This course provides a systematic survey of those religions variously described, in the West, as 'Western Religions' or 'Religions of the West.' Immediately, a problem arises because the adjective, 'Western,' is questionable. The descriptions 'Western' or 'of the West' have been understood as designating a problematic "ltural location—but also a homogeneous style of religious thought because of their common origins as Abrahamic monotheisms. Contemporary scholars of religion, and indigenous believers, often contest this imputed homogeneity and have pointed to the incredible complexity and fluidity of these traditions, characteristics which resist simplistic classification. Well aware of the challenges such descriptions present, we will engage in a comparative study of the systems of belief, thought, and practice traditionally termed 'Western Religions' by Western scholars of religions. This will be accomplished through a series of readings on these systems' histories, philosophies and scriptures.

Course Offerings, CONT'd

REL 451: Christology

Professor Thomas Ryba (MWF: 10:30-11:20, Recitation 112)



Who do Christians think Jesus Christ was? What do they think was his mission? What does it mean when Christians affirm that he was both God and Man? Jesus Christ's historical and ontological identity is at the basis of any understanding of Christianity. In this course, we will examine the historical development of Christology from the time of the New Testament to the late 20th century. Particular emphasis will be placed on the New Testament data and on conciliar formulations in their historical settings, especially as these have influenced the course of Christological development. Ideas and issues addressed will include: the nature of the hypostatic union, the consciousness of Jesus Christ, the necessity of the Incarnation, the works of Jesus Christ, the significance of the suffering of Jesus Christ, the necessity of the atonement, etc, have been understood by Christians. Also examined will be some notable contemporary retortations of Christology such as those of Bultmann, Schillebeeckx, Rahner, Lonergan, Pannenberg, Kasper, Marion, or others, especially as these have expanded the understanding of Jesus Christ at the dawn of the 21st century.

PHIL 206: Philosophy of Religion

Professor Michael Bergmann (T-TH 12:30-1:20 Lecture; W Recitation at 9:30, 10:30, or 12:30 Lawson B155)



Is belief in God rational? The first part of this course will deal with this very question that has loomed so large in the philosophical history of western monotheism (Judaism, Christianity and Islam). Our focus will be on arguments for God's existence (such as the argument from miracles or the argument from the fact that the universe seems to have been designed), on arguments against God's existence (e.g., the argument that a loving God wouldn't permit terrible things to happen), and on whether belief in God can be rational if it isn't supported by argument. The second part of our course looks at the plurality of religions in the world, most of which claim to be the only religion that is right about the most important truths. Our question here is whether it is

rational to think that one's own religion is right and that other religions incompatible with it are mistaken. Finally, we will also discuss some questions in philosophical theology: can we be free if God foreknows what we will do? Does objective morality make sense given a nontheistic view of the world? How can theists make sense of the relation between God and morality given that it seems neither could be authoritative over the other? Grades are based on several short quizzes, a midterm exam and a final exam.

PHIL 219: Introduction to Existentialism.

Professor Jacqueline Mariña

This course will be an exploration the existentialist movement through a careful analysis of both the philosophical and literary works of some of its most prominent expositors. Readings will include Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky, Heidegger, Sartre and Kafka. Requirements will be a midterm, a final, and one short 5-7 page paper.

Our Outstanding Faculty (recent publications)

Our Religious Studies faculty might be diverse but we are all equally distinguished.

Paul Draper (PHIL) published two articles and a book chapter this year:

- ★ "Diagnosing Bias in Philosophy of Religion" (with Ryan Nichols) in *The Monist* 96.3 (July 2013), 422-448
- ★ "The Limitations of Pure Skeptical Theism," *Res Philosophica* 90 (2013), 97-111
- ★ "Explanation and the Problem of Evil" (with Trent Dougherty), in *A Companion to the Problem of Evil* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), pp. 71-87.

Melinda Zook (HIST) published:

- ★ *Protestantism, Politics and Women in Britain, 1660-1714* (Palgrave, 2013).

Jacqueline Mariña (PHIL) contributed:

- ★ "Ultimacy and Subjectivity: Theism in 19th and 20th Century Intellectual Life," to the *Routledge Companion to Theism* (Routledge, 2012)
- ★ "Metaphysical Realism and Epistemological Modesty in Schleiermacher's Method," in *The Persistence of the Sacred in Modern Thought* (Notre Dame University Press, 2012), 319-334.

Rebekah Klein-Pejšová (HIST) published:

- ★ "Building Slovak Jewry: Communal Reorientation in Interwar Czechoslovakia," *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*, 30 (Summer 2012), 18-40.

Stacy Holden (HIST) contributed:

- ★ "Muslim and Jewish Interaction in Moroccan Meat Markets, 1873-1912," in *Jewish Culture and Society in North Africa* (Indiana University Press, 2011), 150-167.