

SPRING 2025

**REL 101-8-21
RELIGION
AND
HORROR**

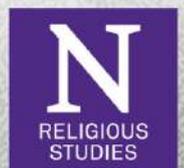


Why are so many horror movies about religion? How does religion help people through experiences of horror? How does religion create and normalize horror in everyday lives? How does horror help us construct and understand the differences between “other people” and “other people’s religions” and our own selves and religious worlds?

This class explores these and other questions about the relationship between religion and horror. We will consider how horror as a genre can be a meaningful way for people to think through their experiences of religious trauma, and how religion has likewise been a meaningful way to heal from the horrors of war, loss, and violence. In the first half of the course, will consider how the languages of horror, monstrosity, and the unknown have been used to construct the bodies and ideologies of “other people” from ancient world cultures to modern ones. We will analyze how processes of fear and hate, like racism and xenophobia, draw from (and reproduce) strange and frightening constructions of religious “others.”

TTH 11:00-12:20 PM

DR. LILY STEWART



SPRING 2025

REL 172-20

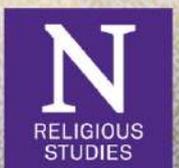
INTRODUCTION TO RELIGION, MEDIA, & CULTURE



Dive into one of today's most exciting and rapidly growing areas of scholarship – the intriguing entanglements of religion and media in society and culture. This course draws from an array of sources, such as television, film, and radio, digital gaming worlds, billboards, advertisements and media campaigns, popular music, streaming video, social media, and even tattoos, body art, and graffiti. Study media while getting to make your own media for course projects!

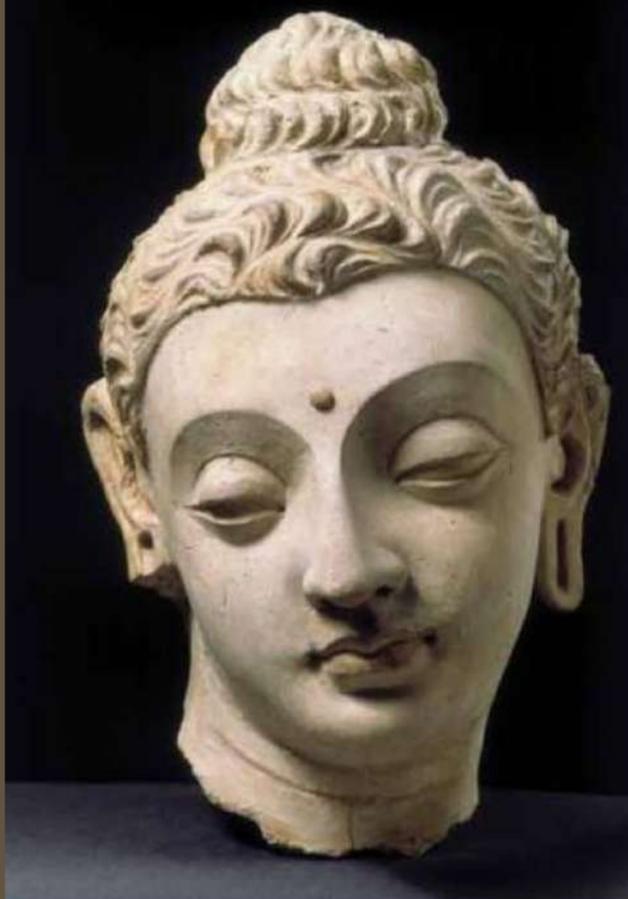
TTH 11:00-12:20 PM

PROF. SARAH TAYLOR



SPRING 2025

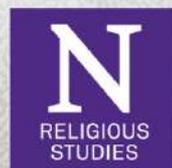
**REL 210-21
INTRODUCTION
TO BUDDHISM**



This course provides an introduction to key aspects of the Buddhist religious traditions of multiple Asian countries and the United States. Through careful examination of a variety of literature produced by these traditions, we will consider the ways in which Buddhists have understood human suffering, life after death, karma, merit, the nature of the world and human's place within it, and the path to enlightenment. Our emphasis will be on attempting to understand the moral values, philosophical insights, ritual practices, and social concerns that have shaped Buddhism over centuries of dynamic change in diverse cultural contexts. We will examine not only the history of Buddhism and its three-fold division into Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana, but also facets of the contemporary practice of Buddhism with a focus on the place of mindfulness in America.

MW 12:30-1:50 PM

SARAH JACOBY





REL 220-20

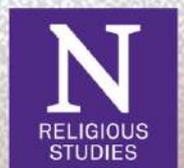
SPRING 2025

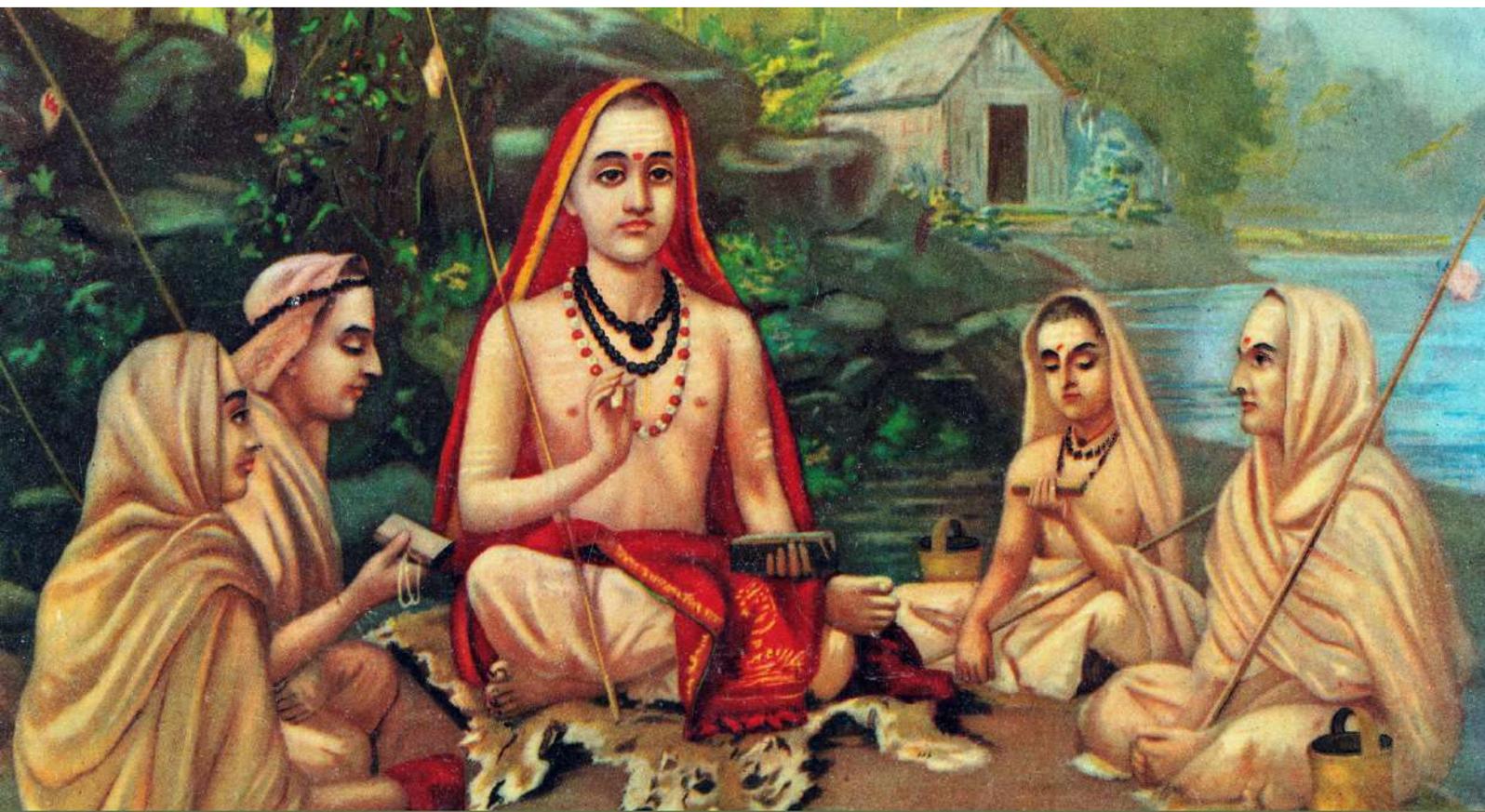
INTRODUCTION TO HEBREW BIBLE

The Bible is a text that has been repeatedly turned to for spiritual guidance, for explanations of mankind's origins and as the basis of both classical art and contemporary cinema. This course introduces students to the Hebrew Bible by reading sections of most of the Bible's books. This course will introduce students to the various challenges that present themselves within the study of the Hebrew Bible and the varied approaches scholars take when reading the Hebrew Bible.

TTH 9:30-10:50 AM

PROF. WIMPFHEIMER





REL 308-20

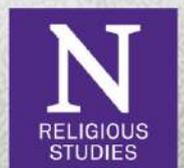
SPRING 2025

INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

This course will introduce students to the philosophical traditions of classical and early medieval India: Hindu, Buddhist and Jain. We will explore the features of Indian philosophy that make it distinctive, such as its goals, practices, and theories of knowledge. We will acquaint ourselves with the schools of Indian philosophy and follow debates between major thinkers from each on subjects such as the self, consciousness, the relationship between mind and the cosmos, and the relationship between language and reality.

TTH 2-3:20 PM

PROF. MARK MCCLISH



SPRING 2025

REL 319-23

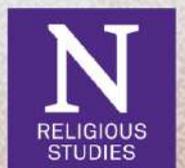
BUDDHIST LITERATURE IN TRANSLATION



In this course, students will read writings from Buddhist canonical and non-canonical literature on a variety of subjects to gain an introduction to the variety of literary genres used in Buddhist works, as well as to consider the central tenets of the Buddhist literary tradition these works convey. Who was the Buddha? What did he preach? Why do we suffer and how do we realize enlightenment? How should one follow the Buddhist path? What metaphors and parables have Buddhists used to convey these insights over the centuries?

TTH 9:30-10:50 AM

PROF. ANTONIO TERRONE



SPRING 2025

REL 339-22

JEWISH TEXTS AS MEDIA

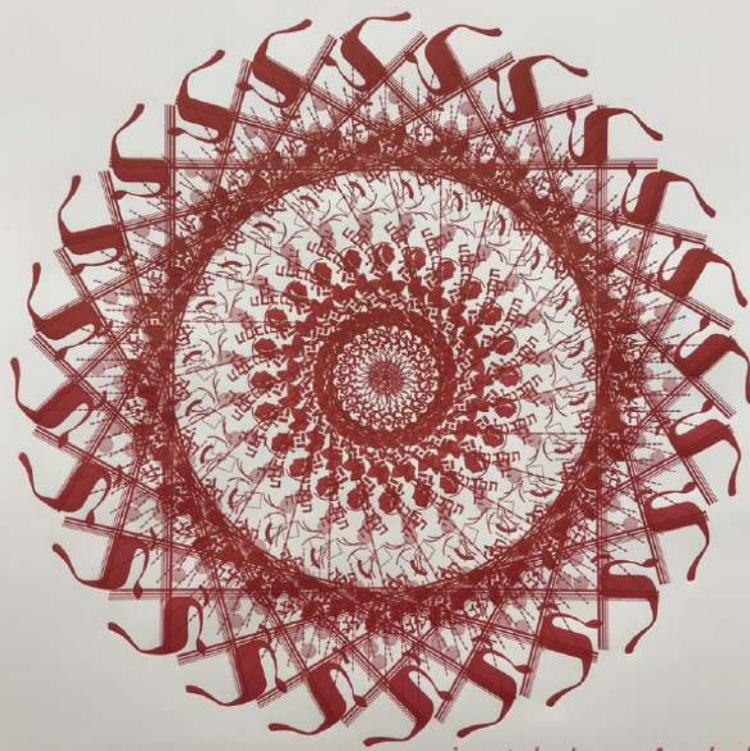


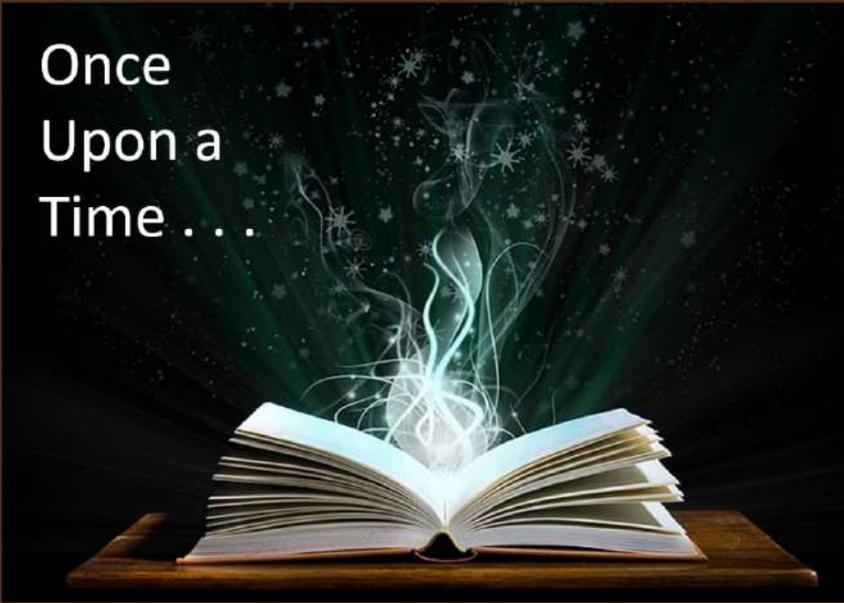
image by Lynne Avadenka

This course approaches Jewish texts through the lens of media studies. The course will explore a range of classical and contemporary Jewish textual genres, as well as Jewish textual objects, from Torah scrolls and Jewish type, to digital commentary, music, and performance. Students will learn how to engage texts deeply through different hermeneutics, including through close-reading and in partnership with other students. Our approach will also pay attention to the media and materiality of Jewish transmission across different kinds of Jewish sources. All non-English language texts will be presented in translation. No prior background with Jewish sources necessary. Class time will be divided between partnered text study and group discussion, and a special site visit to Special Collections at the University Library.

W 3:30-5:50 PM

PROF. SHIRA SCHWARTZ

Once
Upon a
Time . . .



SPRING 2025

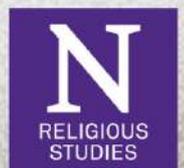
REL 339-23

ANCIENT JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN NARRATIVE

From foundational myths that create the space within which religion happens to discrete episodes that ground specific rituals, narratives are the very stuff of religion. This course considers narratives as a special site for the production of religious meaning; the course draws heavily from both religion theory and literary theory. Issues covered include: whether textual meaning is located in the author, text or reader; how the religious context of a narrative affects its possible interpretations; how myths and rituals comprise different modes of narrative; the relationship between narrative time and religious time; the challenge to authority inherent to much religious narrative; the variety of ways through which religious figures mobilize narrative to further their authority.

TTH 2:00 - 3:20 PM

PROF. BARRY WIMPFHEIMER





SPRING 2025

REL 349-21

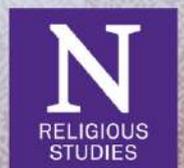
WHAT IS CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM?

**NEW
TOPIC**

In this course, students will explore the religious, social, and political dimensions of Christian nationalist movements. We will consider the U.S. case in historical and ethnographic perspective, and contextualize it amid global comparative examples.

MW 11-12:20 PM

PROF. JAMES BIELO



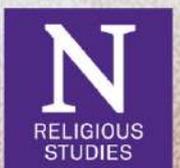
SPRING 2025

REL 349-22
BLOOD AND
CHRISTIANITY:
A HISTORY IN
SUBSTANCE



Whether it causes fear or fascination, blood holds a mysterious sway on the modern imagination. From those who faint at the sight of it, to those who love vampire movies and gory thrillers, to those who study and analyze it in labs, this strange substance serves as a constant source of conflict, anxiety, and ideology. Representations of blood in Christian art, literature, and theology have been just as fraught. Ancient and medieval Christians saw the substance as alternately miraculous and polluting, life-giving and death-bringing, a marker of difference and a symbol of unity. In this class, we will explore these complex and often contradictory representations of blood and bloodshed in Christian history. By approaching this topic from a range of sources and theoretical perspectives we will use blood as a starting point for exploring broader questions about gender, religion, race, culture, and individuality.

TTH 3:30-4:50 PM
DR. LILY STEWART



**NEW
TOPIC**

SPRING 2025

**REL 359-20/
MENA-390-5-1**

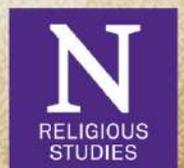
BIBLICAL PROPHETS IN ISLAM



This course introduces students to Islamic narratives concerning the lives of famous figures from the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. Prophets such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Solomon, and Jesus feature prominently in the Qur'an, popular storytelling, universal histories, paintings, and poetry. How did Muslims view these figures? What do these narratives about the Prophets tell us about Muslim interactions with Judaism and Christianity? How were the stories of important Prophetic figures used to impart important religious teachings? This course presumes no previous knowledge of Islam, Judaism, or Christianity.

MW 12:30-1:50 PM

PROF. USMAN HAMID



REL 369-20

SPRING 2025

RELIGION, ART, AND CREATIVITY

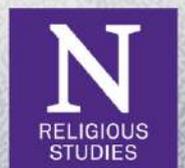
NEW
TOPIC



In this course students, students will explore diverse ways in which religion is made through artistic expression. We will consider examples such as tattooing, Christian outsider artists, Muslim rappers, and accusations of blasphemy.

MW 2-3:20 PM

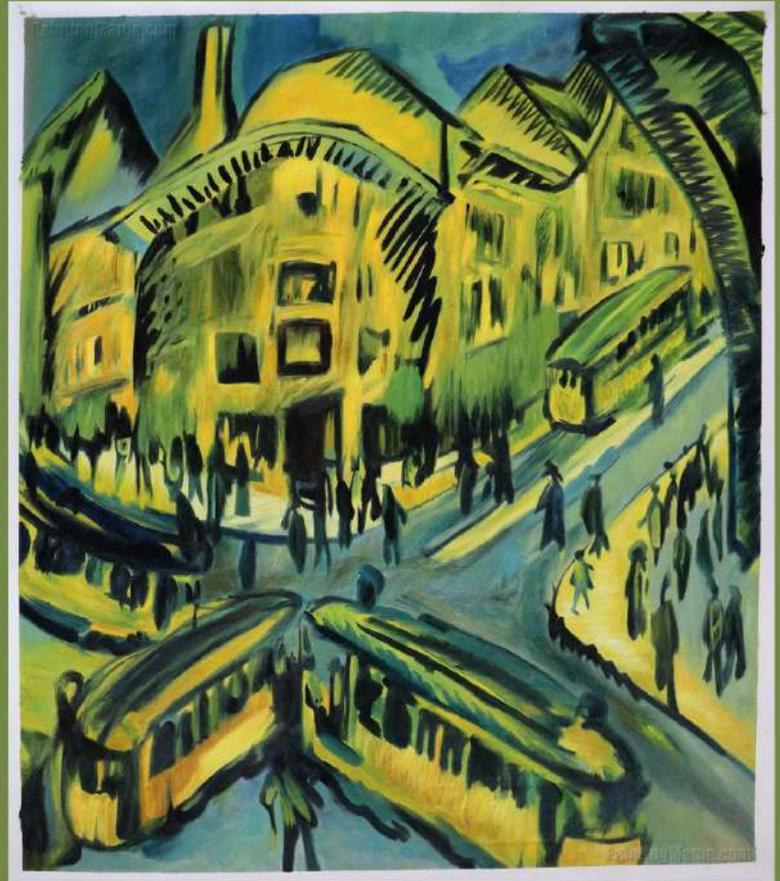
PROF. JAMES BIELO



SPRING 2025

REL 376-20

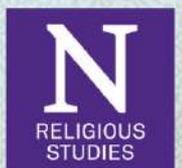
CHRISTIANITY AND THE MAKING OF MODERNITY



Our concern in this course is to examine the concept of modernity so that we can better understand our modern world. Our discussion focuses on how Christianity is bound together with particular conceptions of modernity, for example secularization and antisemitism. We also examine how Jewish philosophers and Christian theologians offer critical accounts of modernity, even as we explore movements coalescing around criticisms of modernity that possibly undermine modernity itself.

MW 9:30-10:50 AM

PROF. CHRISTINE HELMER



**NEW
TOPIC**

SPRING 2025

**REL 379-23 /
MENA 390-5-2**

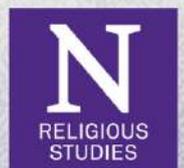
MEDIATING RELIGION



We experience the religious through an engagement with multiple sensorial forms—things seen, felt, tasted, heard, and smelt. These can include a wide set of media ranging from YouTube videos of preachers to calendars with images of Hindu deities sold in bazars; mechanized prayer counters to relics of venerated figures; food distributed in temples, shrines, churches and gurdwaras to water brought back from pilgrimage to holy sites; Gregorian chants to Muslim calls to prayer; incense lit to commemorate the dead to camphor burnt before the image of the divine. The spaces in which we experience these religious phenomena are ever broadening as well. We do not experience the religious in places of worship alone but also at museums and public buildings, on superhighways and in cyberspace. This seminar adopts the perspective of religious materiality with the aim of offering a fresh perspective on our understanding of religious experience.

TTH 3:30-4:50 PM

PROF. USMAN HAMID



REL 470-20

SPRING 2025

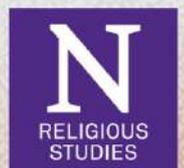
THEOLOGY AND THE STUDY OF RELIGION



If “we” have never been modern, then what have “we” been, and what does this have to do with “religion” (as object of inquiry) and “religions” (as lived practice) amid the multiple crises of the current moment? Topics will include the question of the secularity (or not) of critique; the resurgence of the supernatural across multiple fields of contemporary thought and practice; post-liberalism and the enduring power of anti-realism; and theologies of modernity. Readings comprise a mix of classic texts (Horkheimer, Barth, Schleiermacher, and others); recent scholarship and theory in religious studies and adjacent fields; and first-person accounts of contemporaries consumed with or by these questions.

M 3:00-5:30 PM

PROF. ORSI / PROF. HELMER



SPRING 2025

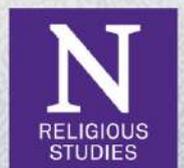
REL 481-1-20 CLASSICAL THEORIES OF RELIGION



This course offers a critical examination of scholars – the Comparative Religions “canon” – who played major roles in the formation of Religious Studies as a discipline in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The course begins by interrogating the very notion of a canon. What is a canon for? How do they get formed? For what purpose and by whom? Are they still relevant? Can we form new canons? We then proceed to approach the “canon” through a series of modules, focusing on the work, legacies, and scholarly interlocutors of William James, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Mircea Eliade.

T 3:00-5:30 PM

PROF. BRANNON INGRAM



SPRING 2025

**REL 482-21 /
GNDR_ST 490-23**

**QUEER AND
TRANSGENDER
STUDIES IN
RELIGION**



PIECE BY RAFAEL RACHEL NEIS

This seminar introduces students to the growing subfield of queer and transgender studies in religion. Combining theoretical frameworks from religious studies and queer and transgender studies, we will study the impact of religious norms on queer/trans lives within religious communities, queer/trans forms of religion that emerge on the margins of normative religious communities, and when queerness/transness become points of religious exit. We will explore the norming systems of religion and gender/sex/sexuality together, examining how they produce both normative and non-normative forms of embodiment and desire, while interrogating the boundaries of religion/race/ethnicity. Crucial to our study will be the examination of the language and categories of “queer” “trans” and “religious” as social identities and structural subject positions. Where do these terms originate and who do they include? Do they articulate forms of identity, practice, belief, or power? And how do we trace the boundaries of normativity in a transnational, transhistorical, and comparative ethnoreligious context?

TH 3:30-5:50 PM

PROF. SHIRA SCHWARTZ

