

STUDY OF RELIGION: COURSES FOR SUMMER 2010

Session A

June 21 — July 30

Religion 140: Palestinian-Israeli Conflict in Film

Instructor: Sami Chetrit

Meets Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:15–5:20pm in Public Affairs 2214

Description: This course introduces the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as it's been reflected through documentary films in the last decade, mostly by Israeli filmmakers. Each class meeting (2 hours) will consist of watching a 50 to 90 minute documentary film, followed by class discussion, which will be informed by students' responses to the films, related readings (one textbook and some articles), and critical questions regarding the official narratives of the conflict.

Religion 140: Religion and Cinema in Various Cultures

Instructor: Angela Aleiss

Meets Mondays and Wednesdays, 5:30–9:00pm in Physics & Astronomy 1749

Description: This course will look at religion in film from a variety of historical and thematic perspectives. We will examine how the cultural phenomenon of religion is represented in film through visual and narrative components and how the power of cinematic images can define our own religious sensibility. A selection of movies highlighting Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Native American spirituality as well as new religious movements will be drawn from European, Japanese, Canadian, and American cinema. Screenings twice a week, readings, and discussions.

Religion 140: Women and Gender in Early Christianity

Instructor: Lily Vuong

Meets Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:45am–12:45pm in Bunche 2160

Description: This course investigates images of women and gender in the New Testament and other early Christian texts including “apocrypha,” “pseudepigrapha,” and “gnostic” writings, with special attention paid to both their historical and contemporary significance. Although we will focus primarily on Greek and Latin representations of women in the Christian tradition, Eastern expressions will also be considered. We will ask what these ancient representations of women and femininity reveal to us about the experiences and voices of “real” women and discuss the ways early Christian traditions about women have impacted understandings of gender in Western culture. Examination of the variety of images and symbols of the feminine used in early Christian literature (e.g., images of the feminine to describe the Divine) will further enhance our discussions.

Session C

August 2 — September 10

Religion 110: Martyrdom and Religious Violence in Ancient Mediterranean World

Instructor: Kevin McGinnis

Meets Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:45am–12:50pm in Bunche 3157

Description: This seminar explores the relationship between “religion” and “violence” in the ancient Mediterranean world, with attention to the political, legal, institutional, and cultural frameworks that shaped the discourses of religious violence in various settings. Special emphasis will be placed on the development of Jewish and Christian notions of martyrdom against their biblical and Graeco-Roman backgrounds as well as on the impact of Christianization on the relationship between political power, religiously-motivated violence, and communal identity. We will also consider how these long-standing discourses of religious violence, with roots in the ancient world, continue to inform and condition the phenomenon of “religious violence” in today's society.

Religion 140: Mythology of Otherworld Journeys

Instructor: Matthew J. Suriano

Meets Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00–3:05pm in Bunche 3156

Description: Mythical journeys to otherworldly places are common in Mediterranean cultures, and represent an important point of intersection between the ancient Near East and the Classical world. A fundamental aspect of these mythical journeys is the natural division between the realm of the living and that of the dead. These mythical journeys served various objectives in their respective cultures: they could describe the heroic actions of a central character (god or human); they could represent a quest for secret knowledge; or they could serve as an explanation of what awaits the faithful beyond death. The purpose of this class is to explore the myth of the otherworld journey by drawing from Near Eastern, Classical, and Biblical texts, as well as literature from medieval Europe, situating them in both historical context and comparative perspective. Directed readings of mythological texts that deal with otherworldly journeys will allow the student to gain a better understanding of the ways in which past cultures confronted the larger mysteries of life and death.