**Graduate Division of Religion**

**Spring 2022 Course Atlas**  
**(Please check back for changes and updates - last update 1.6.2022)**

**RLE 732 History of Christian Theological Ethics  
Wednesday, 7:00pm-9:00pm  
Timothy Jackson**

This course provides a critical look at a broad range of Christian moral theologies and theologians, from early in the fifth century to roughly the middle of the twentieth.  It is meant to be a companion course to RLE 730, "Contemporary Theological Ethics," which looks exclusively at twentieth and twenty-first century figures.  We begin with St. Augustine and read selectively from Thomas Aquinas, Julian of Norwich, Martin Luther, Jacob Arminius, Søren Kierkegaard, and Simone Weil.  Additional diversity of perspective will be provided, in part, by secondary essays – feminist, pragmatist, liberation­ist, deconstructionist, or etc. – on these figures reported on by students.

Some of the enduring questions that concern us are:

* How are we to understand human nature and its virtues and vices?
* What is the nature of sin and the place of Jesus Christ in overcoming it?
* What specifically is the relation between Christ-like love, personal prudence, and social justice?
* What is the relation between God's providence and human freedom?
* Is the Kingdom of God, a.k.a. “eternal life,” open in principle to everyone or only to the elect few?
* Does the Kingdom, esp. love and sacrifice, look different for women and men?

No claim is made to be comprehen­sive; the object is to hit a few influential high points in a very rich tradition, noting continuity and change, as well as insight and error, as we go along.  The format is seminar, but I will lead off each new Part with an orienting lecture.

**RLR 700 - Politics of Translation: Feminism, Postcolonialism and Biblical Translation**  
**Thursday 2:30-5:30**  
**Musa Dube**

*Course Description*

Feminist biblical studies have highlighted translations’ investment in the patriarchal agenda.  In postcolonial studies, Bible translations’ involvement in the power dynamics of modern empire building is increasingly becoming evident.  In this course, we will study the politics of translation by investigating the power relations espoused in its theories and practices as attested in the cases of gender, race, class, ethnicity and postcoloniality. We will explore theories of biblical translation and examine examples of its practices from feminist and postcolonial perspectives, using cases from Translation Studies, Two-Thirds World and feminist biblical scholars. We will also investigate what constitutes liberating postcolonial feminist translation theories and practices.

*Course Objectives*

By the end of the semester students should be able to:

* Identify challenges of translating cross-culturally
* Identify ideological differences behind various Bible versions
* Discuss various translation frameworks advanced by translation studies
* Analyze translation and power, regarding gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, nationality and postcoloniality
* Evaluate biblical translation theories from postcolonial and feminist perspectives
* Discuss liberating translation models in the context of hybrid identities
* Explore the possible intersection of biblical studies with translation studies theories in the postcolonial feminist context
* Construct liberating biblical translation models in the postcolonial feminist space.

*Required Books and Reading*

Alter, Robert.  *The Art of Bible Translation.* Princeton University Press, 2019.

Dube, M. W. & Robert W.  *Postcoloniality, Translation and the Bible in Africa.* Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2017.

Bassnett, S. & H. Trivedi, eds.  *Postcolonial Translation: Theory and Practice*. New York: Routledge 1999.

Bassnett, S. & A. Lefevere, eds. *Translation, History and Culture*. New York: Continuum, 1990.

Elliot S. S. & R. Boer, eds., *Ideology, Culture and Translation.* Atlanta: SBL, 2018.

Gentzler, E.  *Contemporary Translation Theories* (Revised 2nd Edition).  Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2001.

Simon, S. *Gender in Translation*. New York: Routledge 1996.

*Semeia 76:* *Race, Class and the Politics of Bible Translation*. Atlanta: SBL, 1996. (ATLA)

Strauss, M.K. *Distorting Scripture: The Challenge of Bible Translation and Gender*. *Accuracy.*  Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1998.

Wilt, Timothy ed.  *Bible Translations: Frames of Reference*.  Manchester: St Jerome, 2002.

Key Readings will be available on Canvas

[http://www.bible-researcher.com](http://www.bible-researcher.com/) /translation-methods

*New Testament*—any version is welcome!

*Reserved Books and Articles*

Alter, Robert.  *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with a Commentary.*  N.W. Norton Company, 2018.

Bivins, W. E. “Mother-tongue Translations &Contextualization in Latin America,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol 34/2, 2010.

Brenner, A. & J. W. van Henten eds. *Bible Translation on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century: Authority, Reception, Culture and Religion.*  New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002.

Carson, D. A. *The Inclusive-Language Debate: A Plea for Realism*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998.

Carter, W.  *John and Empire: Initial Explorations*.   T&T Clark, 2008.

De Young,  C. P. ed. *The People’s Bible*. Atlanta: Fortress Press, 2008.

Donaldson, L. and Kwok, Pui-lan, eds. *Postcolonialism, Feminism and Religious*

**RLR 700 Hinduism and the Senses  
Thursday, 10:00-1:00  
Ellen Gough**

This seminar examines Hindu beliefs and practices through the lens of the senses: sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch. We’ll first read some texts on religion and the senses outside of South Asia to develop some theoretical frameworks for the course. We will then look at works in the study of Hinduism and South Asian religions that focus on either using or rejecting at least one of the five senses. Religious traditions’ engagements with the senses both create and reflect religious ideologies, social structures, values, and worldviews, so specific, culturally contextualized case studies will raise new questions of the theoretical readings.  
  
We will read selections from the following texts to provide some theoretical frameworks for the seminar:  
  
• Michael Jackson, “Knowledge of the Body”  
• Elizabeth Pérez, Religion in the Kitchen: Cooking, Talking, and the Making of Black Atlantic Tradition  
• Sally M. Promey, Sensational Religion: Sensory Cultures in Material Practice  
• Jonathan Sterne, The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction   
• Manuel A. Vasquez, More Than Belief: A Materialist Theory of Religion  
  
And we’ll read parts of these and other texts for our case studies:  
  
• John E. Cort, “Situating Darśan: Seeing the Digambar Jina Icon in Eighteenth-and Nineteenth-Century North India”  
• Arindam Chakrabarti, ed., The Bloomsbury Research Handbook of Indian Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art  
• Vidya Dehejia, The Body Adorned: Sacred and Profane in Indian Art  
• Rachel Dwyer, Filming the Gods: Religion and Indian Cinema  
• Joyce Flueckiger, Material Acts in Everyday Hindu Worlds  
• Linda Hess, Bodies of Song: Kabir Oral Traditions and Performative Worlds in North India  
• Jon Keune, Shared Devotion, Shared Food: Equality and the Bhakti-Caste Question in Western India  
• James McHugh, Sandalwood and Carrion: Smell in Indian Religion and Culture  
• Patrick Olivelle, Ascetics and Brahmins: Studies in Ideologies and Institutions

**RLR 700 World Christianity Methodologies  
Tuesday, 1:00-4:00  
Jehu Hanciles**

This seminar studies major texts, conceptual frameworks or theories, models, and approaches central to the study of world Christianity with a focus on three major disciplinary areas (history, theology, and  intercultural studies). The reshaping of global Christianity in the last half century or so has prompted searching questions about the near hegemonic dominance of Western models and perspectives in theological discourse. This Western- or Euro-centric paradigm is marked by fixed geographical focus, implicit cultural bias (including a tendency to universalize particular Western views or experiences), and an outlook that privileges the intellectual heritage and initiatives of Western peoples. The study of the Christian movement as a global phenomenon (or of global Christianities) not only requires serious consideration of non-Western realities or dimensions but also calls for new models or conceptual tools (“fresh navigational aids”) that facilitate critical appraisal of the wealth of data from contexts around the world. The most common approaches emphasize the intersection of global and local, the inherently  multicultural and multidirectional nature of the global Christian movement, and the multiplicity of experiences and representations (over time and space) needed to provide a full account of the Christian story

**RLR 700 Christians in Africa/Asia  
Wednesday, 2:00-5:00  
Arun Jones**

***\*This seminar will fulfill one of the required Theories and Methods seminars***This course explores the development of Christian identities and expressions in select Asian and African societies, when these were either directly controlled or significantly influenced by European or other (Japanese, Ottoman) imperialism and colonialism during the 19th and 20th centuries. Through rich case studies, it interrogates assumptions about the unidirectional movement of Christianity, from missionary and colonizer to convert and colonized. The course employs various comparative schema to elucidate the history of Christian communities and persons in Africa and Asia. Methodologically, it compares works of social history with those in the new and burgeoning field of anthropology of Christianity, to assess relative strengths and challenges in distinctive disciplinary approaches to the writing of history. In subject matter, the course compares various regions of the world in order to apprehend particular perceptions and appropriations of Christianity in Africa and Asia. The course also compares diverse forms of imperial rule, and the effects these had on local populations, as well as different local understandings of power and authority, and how these interacted with specific forms of colonialism and imperialism. Finally, it compares distinct expressions of Christian mission, and of various local religious traditions and cultures, to discern their roles in the formation of Asian and African Christian thought and practice.

**RLR 700 History of Religions  
Wednesday, 2:30-5:15  
Scott Kugle**

***\*This seminar will fulfill one of the required Theories and Methods seminars***

This course critically examines the discipline of Religious Studies, as it developed from “The History of Religions” (*Religionsgeschichte*, sometimes dubbed “The Science of Religion,” *Religionswissenschaft*). It is designed to fulfill the theory and method requirement in the GDR.

“The History of Religions” is a product of Western intellectual engagement—through colonial domination, literary translation, and ethnographic documentation—with religions other than Christianity. The discipline also reflects Western intellectuals’ changing understanding of Christianity through sectarian conflicts, secular challenges, and political compromises. This course asks how the study of religion was conceived as a science. How were world religions labeled, numbered and ordered in taxonomies or hierarchies? Did comparing different religious traditions allow one to distill the essence of religion? If so, how was the essential religion related to psychology, sociology, anthropology or linguistics ( “sciences” that also developed in the late 19th century)? Was essential religion practiced as an original religion? Is it long exinct or does it persist somewhere among the world’s diverse people? How is the original religion related to historical traditions or to modern Christianity (or Judaism) of these scholars’ society?

This course gives students a critical understanding of key authors who shaped “The History of Religions,” who sought to define the function of religion, find the origin of religion, discover the essence of religions, or articulate the universal concepts that would allow comparison between religions. We will analyze their primary texts, read critical histories of their political-intellectual production, and sample postcolonial application of their theories in African and Asian contexts.  The application will be to Islam, a religious tradition which Tomoko Masuzawa finds particularly problematic for “The History of Religions,” even as Buddhism and Hinduism were particularly productive for it.

The authors in “The History of Religions” worked in the first half of the 20th century (mainly between the World Wars) in Germany, the Netherlands, Britain, France and the USA; they were all white and mostly male, all beneficieries of colonialism, and many believed in social evolution. Their era had very different hegemonies of race, class, gender and empire than ours, yet their ideas still shape our methods and assumptions. Can we disentagle the still challenging and sometimes provocative insights of “The History of Religions” from the fraught history of their endeavor to build that discipline?  In what ways did these writers critique Euro-American modernity, either directly through their politics or indirectly through their intellectual work? As we work in academic Departments of Religion, we are inhibiting the work-space that they carved out for us. Can we appreciate what they did while refining their tools, even as we critique their blindspots and focus on new challenges that never occurred to them?

Successful students will read assigned texts before seminar and participate in discussion during seminar; each student will chose weeks 2-3 to write a short essay in response to the reading (to be circulated before seminar) and prepare to lead discussion in 2-3 other weeks. Students will write a final essay of 10-15 pages in length that relates the texts and theoretical discussions of the course to a phenomenon related to their specialized field.

**RLR 700 The Study of Religous Practices  
Monday, 2:00-5:00  
Devaka Premawardhana**

***\*This seminar will fulfill one of the required Theories and Methods seminars***

This course explores a recent and far-reaching paradigm shift in religious studies and theology. That is the turn toward practice, toward the body, toward objects, and toward place—in short, toward the palpable “stuff” of religion. To understand the significance of this development, we will work together to identify and weigh the virtues and limits of hitherto dominant approaches to the academic study of religion. Specifically, we will inquire into what has come to be recognized as a set of biases and assumptions that have fundamentally shaped our fields of study, if not the modern academy at large. These biases and assumptions have made the work of scholarly inquiry possible, but not without costs and consequences—the privileging of, for example, discursive over practical knowledge, textual over oral media, symbolic over somatic analysis, and elite over popular perspectives.  
  
Throughout this semester, we will be reading classic theoretical works on the nature of practice and putting them into conversation with the writings of historians, philosophers, theologians, and ethnographers who have helped advanced the practice turn in religious studies. We will pay particular attention to methodological implications for our own scholarship in religious and/or theological studies, to the ethics of research among living and often vulnerable populations, and to the intersections of the study of practice and questions of power (along such axes as race, class, sex, gender, colonial status, and educational attainment).

**RLR 700/ICIVS 770 Speech Genres  
Monday, 4:00-7:00  
Devin Stewart**

This course will focus speech genres. It will examine Mikhail Bakhtin's essay "The Problem of Speech Genres," explore the connections of this field of study to Biblical form criticism, and examine studies written in the tradition of the ethnography of speech by Dell Hymes, John J. Gumperz, Gary H. Gossen, Joel Sherzer, Charles L. Briggs, Richard Baumann, and others. A major component of the course will focus on the students' application of speech genre theory to the analysis of sacred texts such as the Qur'an, other historical and literary texts, speech performances, and natural language use. While not a requirement, advanced knowledge of one or more foreign languages will be useful.