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# DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

# NEWSLETTER

## 2015-16/FALL 2015/VOLUME 16

## Greetings from the Chair

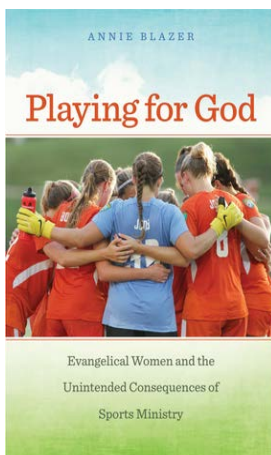
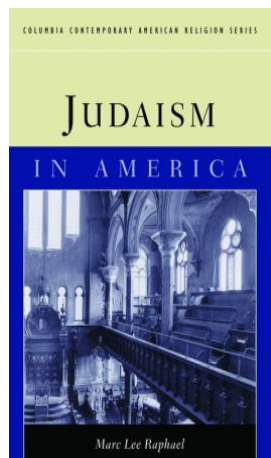
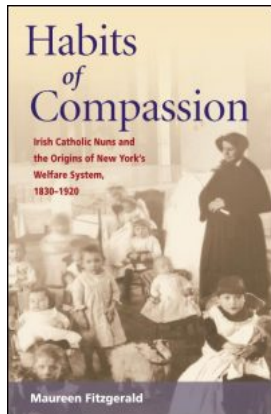
This past year has seen great change in Religious Studies. After fifteen years of service to the College and a long career in the academy, Prof. John Morreall retired. Prof. Morreall is a pioneer of Humor Studies and author of seminal works on the intersections of philosophy, religion, and humor. His course on Comedy, Tragedy, and Religion introduced a generation of students to this research, while his courses on Modern Religious Thought, Catholicism, and Religious Studies Theory and Method guided students through a wide range of his interests. He spent the final five years of his career serving admirably as our department chair. We wish him well in his deserved retirement.

We welcome two new tenure-track faculty this fall, Patton Burchett and Faraz Sheikh. Prof. Burchett joins us after completing a post-doc at New York University and is our new specialist in Hinduism and South Asian Religions. In addition to teaching courses in these areas of expertise, he will introduce a new course on Magic, Science, and Religion. Prof. Sheikh joins our department from Indiana University, where he completed his Ph.D. in Religious Ethics. After ten years, Religious Studies has a long-term replacement for Hans Tiefel. Prof. Sheikh will teach a range of Ethics courses, including in his specialty, formations of the self. Read more about both our new faculty members inside.

The College's new general education curriculum launched this fall, with new courses that explore "Big Ideas" (COLL 100) and that cross disciplinary boundaries (COLL 200). Our faculty are contributing some exciting new courses, including Annie Blazer's "Religion and American Youth" and Mark McLaughlin's "Meditation and the Self. Both of these are COLL 100 courses that explore a particular "Big Idea" and help students develop non-written communication skills. We also continue to offer writing-intensive first-year seminars. Given that Religious Studies utilizes a broad range of scholarly approaches—textual, historical, sociological, anthropological, and philosophical—we are well situated to play a leading role in the College Curriculum, with its new emphasis on interdisciplinary studies.

Kevin Vose  
Religious Studies Department Chair

## Faculty Publications



## Faculty Changes

### On Leave Spring 2016

**Annie Blazer**

### Visiting Faculty, 2015-2016

**Rebecca Hernandez:** PhD, Georgetown University; teaching Introduction to Islam (F'15, S'16), Islam in the Modern World (F'15), and Women in Islam (S'16).

**Mark McLaughlin:** PhD, University of California, Santa Barbara; teaching Introduction to Hinduism (F'15, S'16), Fr Sem: Temples, Tombs & Topography (F'15); Topics: Feminine Power & Voices in Hinduism (F'15), and Fr Sem: Meditation and the Self (S'16).

## Faculty News

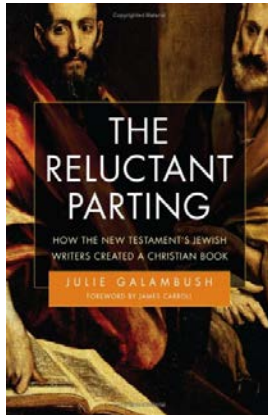
**Alexander Angelov:** The past academic year was eventful and exciting for Alex Angelov. He was a Kingdon Fellow at the Institute for Research in the Humanities at the University of Wisconsin. The generous research grant allowed him to devote his full attention to writing and productive exchange with scholars from various disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences. He completed the major revisions for his book on mass conversions to Eastern Christianity. He also published two articles, presented at academic conferences, and delivered invited lectures. He enjoyed his panel on comparative conversions at the International Congress for Medieval Studies and was delighted to organize and then chair a panel at the Byzantine Studies Conference. The general committee elected Professor Angelov as a board member of the Byzantine Studies Association of North America, a wonderful opportunity to collaborate with scholars and help in the shaping of the field. He is now back in Williamsburg, teaching his Introduction to Christianity, one of his favorite classes. He delights in re-examining the history of Christianity through the students' fresh inquisitiveness. He has also introduced a class on Eastern Christianity exposing students to little-known, yet critical developments in states like Byzantium, Persia, China, India, Kievan Rus' and others. It is a busy semester back at the College, but Professor Angelov is glad to be back among colleagues and friends.

**Annie Blazer:** Annie Blazer's first book, *Playing for God: Evangelical Women and the Unintended Consequences of Sports Ministry*, was published this summer. The book is an anthropological investigation of the religious lives of female Christian athletes in the U.S. Drawing on Professor Blazer's substantial fieldwork with female Christian athletes, the book focuses on athletes' struggles to combine their theological understandings of morality, salvation, and gender obligations with their sporting participation. Professor Blazer shows that female Christian athletes increasingly turned to their own bodies to understand their religious identity, and in so doing, came to question evangelical mainstays on gender and sexuality. This exploration of the history and religious lives of Christian athletes shows how evangelical engagement with popular culture can carry unintended consequences.

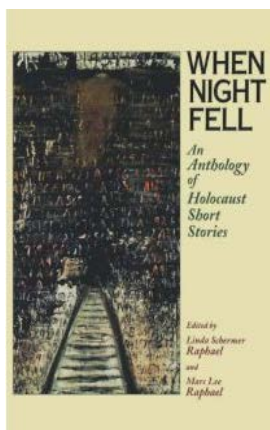
This past summer, Professor Blazer led the College's study abroad program in Cape Town, South Africa. Her class there focused on the role of religion in colonial, national, and post-apartheid South Africa. While in Cape Town, students visited five sites of worship and had conversations with leaders from multiple faith traditions. Students were able to reflect on the benefits and drawbacks of anthropological investigation as well as reflect on their own cultural position and preconceptions. Professor Blazer has also developed a new course that she is teaching this Fall—Religion and American Youth. The course engages first-year students in an anthropological investigation of teenagers' religious and spiritual lives.

## Faculty Publications

## Faculty News Continued

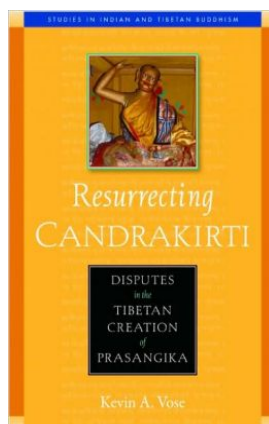


**Michael Daise:** This last year Michael Daise taught the courses 'Judaism in the Greco-Roman World', 'Christian Origins' and 'Jesus and the Gospels'. He delivered two papers: one on the Gospel of John at the 78<sup>th</sup> International Meeting of the Catholic Biblical Association, New Orleans; the other on methodologies for Christian Origins at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, San Diego. He edited a review issue for the *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* (12/3 [2014]), treating two major works on the historical Jesus: *Constructing Jesus: Memory, Imagination, and History* by Dale C. Allison, Jr. and *Gesù il 'Nazareno': indagine storica* by Rinaldo Fabris. He published three articles: 'Quotations with "Remembrance" Formulae in the Fourth Gospel' for the volume *Abiding Words: Perspectives on the Use of Scripture in the Gospel of John* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature); 'Jesus and the Jewish Festivals: Methodological Reflections' for the volume *Jesus Research: New Methodologies and Perceptions. The Second Princeton-Prague Symposium on Jesus Research* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans); and 'Feasts and Festivals: Second Temple and Hellenistic Judaism' for *The Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception* (Berlin: De Gruyter). And, in collaboration with Christophe Rico, he published the two volume *Polis: Speaking Ancient Greek as a Living Language, Level 1* (Jerusalem: Polis Institute Press), an English translation based on the 2<sup>nd</sup> French edition of a method for teaching *Koine* Greek as a living language.



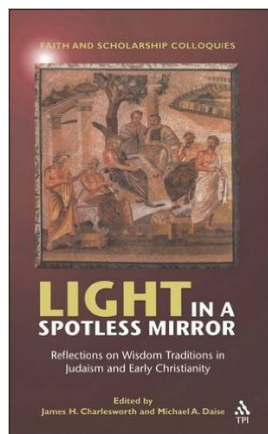
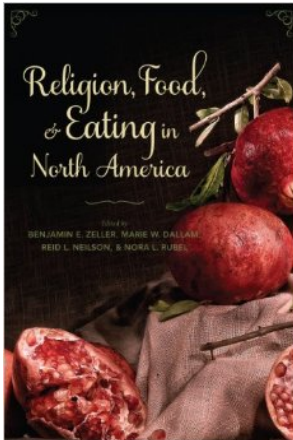
**Julie Galambush:** Julie Galambush spent last summer in Israel, digging at the excavation where she worked as a grad student and locating partners for student internships. On the excavation (Tel Halif in Lahav, Israel) she worked uncovering the floor of a house destroyed in Sennacherib's invasion of 701 BCE (yes, you could look it up). When not digging, she was exploring ways William and Mary students can study in Israel via Judaic Studies's new Meyers-Stern travel scholarships (the result of a bequest from Ruth Stern Hilborn, class of 1928). From archaeology to peace studies, from museum studies to environmental science, we are preparing to help our students make the most of this terrific opportunity.

**Marc Lee Raphael:** Marc Lee Raphael had his first full year sabbatical ever in 2014-15 and used it primarily to prepare a new course for Fall, 2015, Leonard Cohen and Scriptures. In addition, he attempted to visit all 24 Bohemian Jewish communities, totally destroyed by the Nazis, that still had an abandoned synagogue and an abandoned cemetery but no Jews since 1941-42. Of course, in longhand (once again), he wrote most of a book on Jewish poets and the counter-culture of the mid-1960s.



**Kevin Vose:** Kevin Vose directed William and Mary's Global Studies Program in 2014-15, working to promote the College's regional studies programs: Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, European Studies, Latin American Studies, and Russian and Post-Soviet Studies. With the help of a Mellon Foundation grant, Global Studies will make its first two tenure-track hires this coming year. Vose published two articles this year in the *Journal of Buddhist Philosophy*, "Do Mādhyamikas See What the Rest of Us See" and "Some Current Strategies for Research on Tibetan Madhyamaka." He gave two public talks, one on the Dalai Lama's formal retirement from political life and the other as part of a traveling show of ancient Buddhist relics. He became department chair upon Professor Morreall's retirement.

## Faculty Publications



## Spotlight on New Faculty

**Patton Burchett** joined the Religious Studies Department in Fall of 2015. In his first semester at the college, he taught “Introduction to Hinduism” and a class on the historical development and practice of “Yoga and Tantra,” from ancient India to contemporary America. In the Spring, he will be offering a new class entitled “Magic, Science, and Religion” that deals with a broad array of topics such as the historical development of science in the West and its implications for “religion,” the intersections of religion with quantum physics and parapsychological phenomena, the cognitive scientific approaches to religion, occult movements in the modern era, and practices of “magic” and witchcraft in non-western cultures.

Prof. Burchett, his wife Michelle, and his one-year-old daughter Ella moved to Williamsburg this summer from New York, where he spent three years as an Assistant Professor and Faculty Fellow in the Religious Studies Program at New York University. Prof. Burchett’s doctoral work was also completed in New York, at Columbia University. After nearly ten years in the big city, he and his family are enjoying the space, beautiful natural surroundings, and southern hospitality that Williamsburg has to offer. In fact, this is a return to the South for Prof. Burchett, who received his B.A. from Davidson College (near Charlotte, NC), and then served in the Army for four years—three of which were spent at Fort Lee, VA—prior to beginning his graduate academic work.

Prof. Burchett specializes in the religious history and culture of South Asia and spent two years of his graduate program living in north India (primarily Jaipur and Delhi) mastering Hindi and doing ethnographic fieldwork and archival research. He is currently working on his first book, tentatively entitled *Bhakti “Religion” and Tantric “Magic”: Yogis, Poets, and Sufis in Mughal India*. The book explores the rise of Hindu devotional religiosity (*bhakti*) in north India, circa 1400-1700 CE, examining the role of tantric yogis, popular Sufism, and Persianate and Sanskrit literary-political cultures in the formation of *bhakti* communities and identity in this period.

**Faraz Sheikh** earned his Ph.D. (May 2015) in Religious Studies from Indiana University Bloomington (IUB). He holds an M.A. in Arabic and Islamic Studies, also from IUB, and a Bachelors in Computer Science from the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), Lahore Pakistan. In the broadest sense, his research comparatively examines the variety of ways in which adherents of religious traditions experience themselves and the world around them and the ways in which they are formed by, interpret and respond to these experiences. In his dissertation, Faraz comparatively analyzes the moral teachings of the 9<sup>th</sup> century Muslim moral pedagogue, exegete and ascetic-theologian, al-Harith b. Asad al-Muhasibi (d. 857), from a practices of the self perspective, producing a comparatively informed and detailed account of religio-moral subjectivity and ethical formation in early Muslim thought. His teaching interests include religion and ethics, virtue ethics, comparative religious ethics, Muslim Ethics and practices of ethical formation.

Since joining William & Mary in Fall 2015, Faraz has been working on two research projects. The first examines scholarly analyses of religious subjectivity in the Islamic tradition, especially as they pertain to contemporary discussions about religious pluralism and tolerance, and puts these accounts into critical dialogue with al-Muhasibi’s conception of subjectivity. A second project examines the role of “others”, and more specifically the practices of mutual admonition and mutual counseling as complex strategies of proper ethical formation in early Muslim thought. This study challenges and complicates influential anthropological descriptions of the practice of mutual counseling, its meaning and function, among Muslims today.

## Alumni News

**Owen Phelan '98** graduated with majors in religion and history, and has recently published an important book: *The Formation of Christian Europe: The Carolingians, Baptism, & The Imperium Christianum* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014). He is Associate Professor of Church History, Mount St. Mary's University, Emmitsburg, Md.

On graduation, Owen attended the University of Notre Dame, seeking a doctorate in History and specializing in the early - Middle Ages. His book is the result of the long course of revising his dissertation, the thesis of which is vital for understanding how Europe came to be Christendom.

Charlemagne, crowned Emperor in 800 by Pope Leo III, and his court associates, in particular Alcuin of York, created a common vision of what they considered the integrated society, the *imperium christianum*/Christendom. Concepts and metaphors derived from the sacrament of baptism underlay that vision. As a result, Christian formation based on the creed, followed by baptismal initiation, gave the recipient rebirth into that integrated society, which imperial coronation underscored as the Roman Empire renewed, namely, the society of the baptized—Christendom.

**Daniel Vaca '02** finished his PhD in North American Religion at Columbia in 2012; he had a postdoc at Princeton from 2012-2013; and now he's teaching in the Department of Religious Studies at Brown. Dan has a son and a daughter.

**Rachel Hamberger '03** started a PhD program in Education, with a concentration in Special Education, at George Washington University.

## Jewish Cultural and Social Pathways in the Upper Rhine Valley

*Sponsored by the Meyers Stern Endowment to further students' knowledge of Judaic Studies*



In front of the New Synagogue, Mainz, from left to right: W&M students Sarah Wall, Casey Neary, Claire Etheridge, Natalie Morgan, Mary Andino, Chloe Wang, Matthew Noah Baker

Professor Rob Leventhal, Associate Professor of German Studies, led a group of William and Mary students on a study-research spring-break trip, to the Upper Rhine Valley from Basel, Switzerland to Cologne, Germany in eight days.

Stops included: **Frankfurt am Main**, a major center for Jewish life from the early modern period until the Nazi seizure of power in 1933, where they visited the Frankfurt Jewish Museum and saw the special exhibition “Im Lichte der Monora” (*In the Light of the Monorah*); **Basel, Switzerland**, which included a visit to the *Augusta Raurica*, one of the earliest and best-preserved Roman archeological sites north of the Alps, where many Jewish artifacts from the 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> c. CE have been found; **Freiburg**, which was the launching pad for their excursion to the tiny village of Sulzburg in the Black Forest, where a Jewish community thrived until it was deported to the French Concentration Camp Gurs, and from there to the killing centers in the East; **Mainz**, where the group took in the new Synagogue, visited the Chagall Windows at St. Stephens Church, went to Speyer to view the ShPIRA Museum, the remains of the Old Synagogue (1185, and still in use today), and its incredible Mikveh (Ritual Bath), the oldest one of its kind north of the Alps (1120); **Bacherach am Rhein**, where they stayed in the castle Burg Stahleck high above the river and the Sankt Werner Kapelle; **Cologne**, their last stop before heading back to Frankfurt and then home, included a visit to the *Stadtmuseum* (The City Museum), where detailed histories of the Jews of Cologne provided them with an in-depth sense of Jews' lives from the Middle Ages until the Nazi Genocide.

The director reported that it was an amazing trip. Everyone saw and learned so much. To experience these memorials, museums, and sites of remembrance/commemoration first hand enabled the students to get a fuller, richer, more textured sense of Jewish History in Germany, the relations between Germans/Christians and Jews, and the ties that connected them since the Early Middle Ages.

## Lectures

Thanks to the generous donations from our friends and alumni\*, the department is able to sponsor lecture series and host events for our concentrators. Here are highlights from our 2014/15 schedule:

**9/19/14: Amy Simon**, PhD, Indiana Univ., “**Diarists in the Warsaw Ghetto**”

**10/30/14: Michael Knight**, PhD candidate, Univ. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, “**1970s-80s Brooklyn Community that incorporated African Amer Islam and Black Israelite traditions which influenced Amer hip hop**”

**11/7/14: Margaret E. Mohrmann**, MD, PhD, Univ. of Virginia, “**Religious Ethics/Professional Ethics: Coherence and Conflict**”

**11/13/14: Barbara Porter**, PhD, Harvard Semitic Museum, “**What Was a God in Ancient Mesopotamia?**”

**11/17/14: Josh Beraha**, Rabbi, Temple Micah, DC, “**Reform Judaic Thought Today**”

**11/17/14: Maria Mayo**, M.Div., PhD, Nat'l Health Care for the Homeless Council, “**Forgiveness After the Holocaust**”

**11/19/14: Dov Berel Lang**, PhD, Wesleyan Univ., “**Primo Levi as Writer and Thinker**” and “**Act and Idea**”

**11/21/14: Matthew Klein**, W&M '06, Cantor, Congregation Beth El, “**Conservative Judaism: Academy and Laity at the Crossroads**”

**2/6/15: Elyssa Auster**, Rabbi and Director, Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington, “**Talmud**”

**2/9/15: Patricia Heberer-Rice**, Historian, US Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC, “**German Physicians and Nazi Crimes: The Medical Profession and its Role in Nazi Policy**”

**2/13/15: Faye Moskowitz**, Professor, George Washington Univ., “**The Things We Carry When We Come From Someplace Else**”

**2/18/15: Katja Vehlow**, Professor, Univ. of South Carolina, “**Language and Gender Ambiguity in Jewish Texts**”

**3/3/15: Jerome Creach**, Professor, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, “**The Worldview of the Psalms**”

**3/4/15: David Katz**, Rabbi, Temple Bethel, “**Writing Spiritual Autobiographies**”

**3/20/15: Sarah Cramsey**, W&M '04, PhD candidate, Univ. of California, Berkeley, “**Saying Kaddish in Czechoslovakia: How Hana Volavkova memorialized the Jewish tragedy in a communist state**”

**3/23/15: Steven Weitzman**, Professor, Univ. of Pennsylvania, “**Solomon: The Lure of Wisdom**”

**4/10/15: Jarrod Tanny**, Professor, Univ. of North Carolina, Wilmington, “**From the Borscht Belt to the Bible Belt: Jewish Humor in Dixieland**”

**4/15/15: Brannon Ingram**, Professor, Northwestern Univ., “**Religious Diversity in Cape Town, South Africa**”

**4/20/15: Josh Beraha**, Rabbi, Temple Micah, DC. “**Reform Judaic Thought Today**”

**4/24/15: Lauren Strauss**, Professor, George Washington Univ., “**Judaism and Feminism in 20<sup>th</sup> Century America and Beyond**”

**4/24/15: Willis Jenkins**, Professor, Univ. of Virginia, “**The Future of Ethics: Climate Change and Moral Incompetence**”

\***July 2014-June 2015 Donors:** S. Allibhai-Mawani, M. Allison, D. Alpert, A. Anderson, D. Ardis, W. & S. Bangel, C. Brockwell, C. Darnell, R. Davis, A. Dean, S. Dorton, K. Eason, S. & J. Farmer, A. Ford, J. Fuquay, M. Guillaudeu, M. Hanzel, C. Heaney, C. Jones, J. & M. Kresak, A. Leslie, D. Lewis, J. & E. Low, K. Matteson, N. Mercer, B. Miller, R. Miller, J. Morton, A. Nimmo, S. Page, K. Phillip, J. Pierce, J. Riesenber, A. Roumeliotes, J. Schley-Johnson, J. Schouten, M. Soffin, S. Smith, J. & C. Spivey, L. Tancredi, A. Toabe, R. Tuttle, Z. Woodward, D. Zimmerman,

## Donor Opportunities

If you wish to support the Department of Religious Studies by contributing on-line to our operating funds, you can do so by visiting our website:

<http://www.wm.edu/as/religiousstudies/>

and clicking on “Support Religious Studies.” To contribute by mail, please make your check payable to Gift Accounting, The College of William and Mary, P.O. Box 1693, Williamsburg, VA 23187-1693 and write “For the Department of Religious Studies” in the memo area of your check. Your gift will enhance the kind of student-faculty engagement that makes Religious Studies a special place for our students.

## Religious Humor



## Fall 2015 Courses

R.S. 100: Topic: Religion & Amer Youth	A. Blazer
R.S. 150: Topic: Temples, Tombs & Topography	M. McLaughlin
R.S. 203: History & Religion of Ancient Israel	J. Galambush
R.S. 204: Christian Origins	M. Daise
R.S. 205: Reading the Bible in Hebrew I	R. McCall
R.S. 210: Intro to Christianity	A. Angelov
R.S. 211: Intro to History of Jewish Thought	M. Raphael
R.S. 212: Intro to Islam	R. Hernandez
R.S. 212: Intro to Islam	R. Hernandez
R.S. 213: Intro to Hinduism	P. Burchett
R.S. 213: Intro to Hinduism	M. McLaughlin
R.S. 214: Intro to Buddhism	K. Vose
R.S. 221: Religion and Ethics	F. Sheikh
R.S. 305: Biblical Wisdom	J. Galambush
R.S. 308: Topic: Yoga & Tantra	P. Burchett
R.S. 308: Topic: Holy Days in Early Judaism & Christianity	M. Daise
R.S. 308: Topic: Eastern Christianity	A. Angelov
R.S. 308: Topic: L. Cohen & Scripture	M. Raphael
R.S. 308: Topic: Conceptions of the Self	F. Sheikh
R.S. 308: Topic: Feminine Power & Voices In Hinduism	M. McLaughlin
R.S. 318: Islam in the Modern World	R. Hernandez
R.S. 320: Pagans & Christians	J. Donohue
R.S. 345: Religion, Colonization & Nationalism in N. Amer	M. Fitzgerald
R.S. 346: Religion, the State, & Amer Politics	A. Blazer
R.S. 349: Transnationalism, Immigration & Religion in America	M. Fitzgerald
R.S. 481: Independent Study	Department
R.S. 495: Honors	Department

## Spring 2016 Courses

R.S. 100: Latin Amer Music & Ritual	M. Iyanaga
R.S. 150: Topic: Temples, Tombs & Topography	M. McLaughlin
R.S. 150: Topic: Gender and Judaism	M. Kirsh
R.S. 150: Topic: Sex & God in America	M. Fitzgerald
R.S. 201: Intro to Religion	M. Raphael
R.S. 203: History & Religion of Ancient Israel	J. Galambush
R.S. 204: Christian Origins	M. Daise
R.S. 210: Intro to History of Christianity	A. Angelov
R.S. 212: Intro to Islam	R. Hernandez
R.S. 212: Intro to Islam	R. Hernandez
R.S. 213: Intro to Hinduism	P. Burchett
R.S. 213: Intro to Hinduism	M. McLaughlin
R.S. 215: History of Religion of East Asia	K. Vose
R.S. 221: Religion and Ethics	F. Sheikh
R.S. 308: Topic: Magic, Religion & Science	P. Burchett
R.S. 308: Topic: Mesopotamian Religion	J. Galambush
R.S. 308: Topic: Ethical Formation in Comparative Perspective	F. Sheikh
R.S. 309: The Holocaust	M. Raphael
R.S. 310: The Dead Sea Scrolls	M. Daise
R.S. 317: Women in Islam	R. Hernandez
R.S. 348: African American Religions	M. Fitzgerald
R.S. 363: Sociology of Religion	K. Jenkins
R.S. 378: Psychology of Religion	L. Ventis
R.S. 391: Theory of Religion	A. Angelov
R.S. 482: Independent Study	Department
R.S. 496: Honors	Department

