

# Religion

The major and minor in religion are administered by the Department of Religion: Professors Crosthwaite, Fine, Grayson (*chair*), Peterson; Associate Professors Mrozik (on leave 2011–2012), Penn (on leave 2011–2012); Assistant Professor Steinfelds; Visiting Associate Professor Hill; Visiting Assistant Professor Battaglia.

## Contact Persons

John Grayson, *chair*

To major in religion is to ask questions about the many ways women and men have sought to make sense of their lives. Examining religious traditions—their notable leaders, their valued texts, and the social behaviors designed to embody their visions—is a central way to study the profound questions that direct so many areas of human endeavor. The study of religion is an excellent way of organizing a liberal arts education so that diverse cultures, artistic expressions, political forces, and gender assignments can be questioned and set in historical and changing contexts.

## Requirements for the Major

### Credits

- A minimum of 32 credits
- 12 credits at the 300 level
- Only one 395 course will count toward the 300-level requirement.

### Courses

At least one course from each of the following three groups:

- Sacred texts and interpretive traditions. For example, Religion 201, Introduction to the Qur'an
- Religious thought (ethics/religious law, philosophy, theology). For example, Religion 226, Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion
- History and society. For example, Religion 218, Women in American Religious History

### Other

- Majors must take courses in at least three different major traditions—for example, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, or Judaism.
- Additional courses are selected in consultation with the advisor.
- Independent work is encouraged and, if approved by the advisor, such work may constitute partial fulfillment of the above requirements.

## Requirements for the Minor

### Credits

- A minimum of 20 credits (five courses)
- At least one of the five must be at the 300 level.
- At least three of the courses should be taken in the Mount Holyoke Department of Religion.

## Recommended Courses for First-Year Students

The following courses are recommended for first-year students: 100, 109, 202, 203, 204, 206, 207, 212, 226, 228, 235, 245, 261, and 263, 268.

## Course Offerings

### 100fs Introduction to Religion

This course is an introduction to the study of religion, assessing the nature of religion and methodological approaches through an examination of subject matter drawn from numerous traditions.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*L. Battaglia*

*4 credits*

### 109f First-Year Seminar: Muhammad

(First-year seminar) This course introduces Muhammad as a historical and religious figure. The traditional Islamic account of Muhammad's life will be examined. Historical problems will be discussed and attention will be paid to the different views of Muham-

mad held by Muslims and non-Muslims. Finally, the veneration of the Prophet Muhammad within the Muslim community will be explored.

*Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*A. Steinfelds*

*Prereq. fy; This course counts toward the Asian Studies major.; 4 credits*

#### **\*201f Introduction to the Qur'an**

This course examines the history, structure, and themes of the Qur'an and analyzes the place of the Qur'an in Islamic religious thought. Students will read the entire text of the Qur'an in translation, as well as selections from medieval and modern commentaries.

*Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*A. Steinfelds*

*4 credits*

#### **202f Introduction to Islam**

This course examines Islamic religious beliefs and practices from the origins of Islam to the present, focusing on such central issues as scripture and tradition, law and theology, sectarianism and mysticism. Attention will be given to the variety of Islamic understandings of monotheism, prophethood, dogma, ritual, and society.

*Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*A. Steinfelds*

*This course counts toward the Asian Studies major.; 4 credits*

#### **203f Introduction to the Hebrew Bible**

This course provides a critical introduction to the writings contained in the Hebrew Bible (also known as the Old Testament). It investigates the social and historical context of the ancient Israelites, examines a range of ancient Near Eastern literature, and introduces the principal methods of biblical studies. Participants will read much of the Hebrew Bible as well as select non-Israelite sources. Examples of recent biblical scholarship will provide additional information for better understanding these writings and will present different methods for approaching and interpreting ancient texts.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*H. Hill*

*4 credits*

#### **204f Introduction to the New Testament**

(Same as Jewish Studies 204) This course investigates the social and historical context of first and early second-century Christianity, examines New Testament and select non-canonical documents, and introduces participants to the principal methods of New Testament studies. Students will read the 27 works that make up most modern collections of the New Testament, a number of early Christian documents that did not make the final cut, and several ancient non-Christian sources. Examples of recent New Testament scholarship will provide historical background for better understanding of Christian writings and will present different methods for approaching and interpreting ancient texts.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*H. Hill*

*4 credits*

#### **\*206f Early Christianity in Conflict**

This course examines how conflicts between Christians and non-Christians, conflicts between different groups of Christians, and conflicts within given Christian communities shaped first- through fourth-century Christianity and influenced subsequent Christian history. We will pay particular attention to issues surrounding martyrdom, "heresy," anti-Judaism, the formation of a male-dominated clergy, and competing views regarding sexuality. We will analyze sources such as early Christian letters to the Roman Emperor, anti-Jewish poetry, Gnostic Gospels, the dream journal of a Christian martyr, depictions of Satan and his minions, descriptions of early heresies, and an ancient exorcism manual.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*M. Penn*

*4 credits*

#### **207s Women and Gender in Islam**

(Same as Gender Studies 210s-02) This course will examine a range of ways in which Islam has constructed women—and women have constructed Islam. We will study concepts of gender as they are reflected in classical Islamic texts, as well as different aspects of the social, economic, political, and ritual lives of women in various Islamic societies.

*Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*A. Steinfels*

*This course counts toward the Asian Studies major.; 4 credits*

### **208f Religion and Science Fiction**

This course examines the representation of religion in science fiction. We will read works that speculate on the nature, origin, and function of religious beliefs and practices, and on the place of religion in imagined futures and universes. We will also explore science fiction-based religious movements and the use of science fiction to communicate religious ideas. Readings will include works by U. K. Le Guin, C. S. Lewis, P. Pullman, A. C. Clarke, and L. Ron Hubbard, as well as viewings of selected episodes from *Star Trek: TNG* and *Battlestar Galactica*.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*A. Steinfels*

*4 credits*

### **210f Religious Ethics**

This course explores the ethical implications of religious convictions, particularly implications relevant to personal decisions. It introduces ethical principles through an examination of scriptural sources, a selection of major moral thinkers, and illustrative moral dilemmas. Among the concerns of the course are the components and motives of personal decision, the values and liabilities of fixed norms and principles, and the nature of personal responsibility.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*J. Crosthwaite*

*Prereq. soph, jr, sr; 4 credits*

### **212s Introduction to Judaism**

(Same as Jewish Studies 212) Judaism is a 3,500-year-old tradition that has developed over time as Jewish communities all over the world creatively interacted with the different cultural and historical milieus in which they lived. This course explores the ways in which Judaism has sought to transform ordinary life into sacred life. What are the ways in which Judaism conceives of God, and what is the meaning of life? What roles do study, prayer, ethics, sex, marriage, family, rituals of the life cycle, and community play in Judaism? These and other questions will be

taken up through study of diverse types of religious literature and historical evidence.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*L. Fine*

*4 credits*

### **\*215s Jewish Spiritual Autobiographies**

(Same as Jewish Studies 215) Along with such genres as letters, ethical wills, travel accounts, and other personal communications, spiritual autobiographies and diaries often reveal what people actually thought and felt about matters important to them. These sources provide insight into religion as lived experience. This course studies autobiographical accounts of Jewish religious figures from the medieval period to the contemporary. We include narratives by both women and men, philosophers, mystics, messianic pretenders, travelers, authors of Holocaust memoirs, and other contemporary Jews. Taken together, such accounts bring to life the diversity of spiritual quests in which Jews have engaged.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*L. Fine*

*4 credits*

### **\*218s Women in American Religious History**

(Same as Gender Studies 210) This course is a critical study of significant women (Anne Hutchinson, Mother Ann Lee, Mary Baker Eddy, Ellen Gould White, Aimee Semple McPherson, Dorothy Day, and others) and their roles in the pluralistic character of American religion. It raises central questions concerning leadership, marginality, deviant behavior, and criticism of women. Students are expected to contribute to the course by their participation and individual research.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*J. Crosthwaite*

*Prereq. soph, jr, sr; 4 credits*

### **\*220s Ethics and Public Policy**

This course focuses on ethics in the public sphere, on moral aspects of international, national, and institutional policy. It is concerned with evidence in policies and their formulation, of values with theological or religious roots. Emphasis is on thinkers who embody a double concern: religious/moral values and some area of public policy. Issues considered may include distribution of natu-

ral resources, national defense policy, health care distribution, gender, poverty, and the distribution of wealth.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*J. Crosthwaite*

*Prereq. soph, jr, sr; 4 credits*

### **\*221s Religious Movements in America**

This course is a study of the historical and theological development of the religious traditions in America, an assessment of the influence of these traditions on American civil institutions, and an examination of selected contemporary religious movements.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*J. Crosthwaite*

*Prereq. soph, jr, sr; 4 credits*

### **222s Engendering Judaism: Women and Jewish Tradition**

(Same as Jewish Studies-222-01 and Gender Studies-210-01)

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*L. Fine*

*4 credits*

### **226f Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion**

(Same as Philosophy 226fs, Critical Social Thought 250) This course surveys the classical responses major Western thinkers have had to great religious questions. Ancient Greece, the Enlightenment, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries serve as the primary periods of focus. Works by Plato, Anselm, Aquinas, Hume, Kant, Dostoevsky, Marx, Kierkegaard, and Tillich are just a few of the materials we will read. The classical arguments for G-D's existence, as well as the nature of human freedom, and the place of reason and faith in social life will be addressed.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*J. Grayson*

*4 credits*

### **228s On Human Freedom: Lordship and Bondage in Religion and Culture**

This course offers a critical investigation of selected materials taken from Eastern, Western, and Third World religious and cultural texts and customs in order to appreciate their respective views on human freedom. Particular attention is given to the varied definitions

and meanings of freedom; the master/slave relationship as a universal paradigm for reflecting on freedom; some moral and ethical implications associated with the idea of freedom; and the connections among freedom, will, and human identity.

*Meets multicultural requirement; meets*

*Humanities I-B requirement*

*J. Grayson*

*Prereq. Religion 100 or 226, or permission of instructor; 4 credits*

### **\*230f Spirituals and the Blues**

This course examines and analyzes African American music as a primary textual source for understanding philosophical and religious language within that community. It addresses various questions: What are the central philosophical and religious themes expressed within the text? How are these themes reflected in the music? What is the intrinsic character of the spirituals and the blues? Is there such a thing as a "music of oppression"? In what way(s) does the black experience contribute to philosophical and religious understanding, as well as the use of language? What does this material suggest about the connections among art, literature, and experience?

*Meets multicultural requirement; meets*

*Humanities I-B requirement*

*J. Grayson*

*Prereq. soph, jr, sr; 4 credits*

### **\*232f Contemporary Jewish Ethics**

(Same as Jewish Studies 232-01) This course will explore issues of contemporary ethics from the point of view of Jewish religious thought and tradition. Topics will include medical and genetic ethics, death and dying, family and sexual ethics, ethics of war, poverty, and the environment. The course will explore these issues in the context of the-oretical approaches to questions of religion and ethics.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*L. Fine*

*Prereq. 8 credits in religion or Jewish studies, or permission of instructor; 4 credits*

### **235f Introduction to Jewish Mysticism**

(Same as Jewish Studies 235) Mysticism refers to a type of religious life in which individuals seek intimate and personal, direct

and intense experience of the Divine. There exists a rich and fascinating Jewish mystical tradition with hundreds of books of diverse kinds. This course examines the Kabbalah of thirteenth-century Spain, focusing upon the seminal work of this period, the *Sohar*; the synthesis of mysticism and messianism that occurred in the city of Safed (in the Land of Israel) in the sixteenth century; and the popular pietistic movement of eastern Europe from the eighteenth century forward, Hasidism; and various expressions of mystical spirituality in our own time.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*L. Fine*

*4 credits*

### \*236f Early Christianity in Iraq and Iran

In the first millennium, Christianity thrived throughout the Middle East. Because Roman Catholic and Protestant churches later declared many of these Christians to be heretics, their stories have often been excluded from the history of Christianity. This course challenges the assumption of Christianity as a "Western" religion and asks how our understanding of global Christianity changes when we include the history and perspective of Eastern Christians. We will read such sources as the tale of a transvestite nun, a letter allegedly written by Jesus, ancient Christian hymns, the story of a demon-possessed monastery, and the first Christian writings on Islam.

*Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*M. Penn*

*4 credits*

### \*238s Violence vs. Nonviolence

This course explores in a comparative way, metaphysical reflections on violence and nonviolence. Sacred and classical texts that have informed social consciousness on the necessity of 'Duty' and its implications for the body, as well as offering a distinctive view of Reality will serve as the primary readings for this class; they include the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the *Phaedo*, the *Bible*, the *Koran*, and Douglass's *My Bondage and My Freedom*. Modern case studies involving Gandhi, King, Cleaver, and suicide bombers will be compared against the metaphysical premises of these sacred and classical texts.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*J. Grayson*

*4 credits*

### 241s Women and Buddhism

(Same as Gender Studies 210) This course explores women and Buddhism during different historical periods and in different cultures. Through a variety of sources, this course will illuminate Buddhist concepts of gender and sexuality, views of women's spiritual capacities, the diversity of women's images, roles, experiences, concerns, and contributions in Buddhist societies, and scholarly approaches to women in Buddhism. Special attention will be given to how gender is constructed in each cultural and religious context encountered, with particular emphasis on Buddhist women in Southeast Asia. We will look into the reasons why texts on religion have not always included the voices of women, and we will investigate ways to uncover them through research techniques and alternative hermeneutical strategies.

*Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*L. Battaglia*

*This course counts toward Asian Studies major.; 4 credits*

### \*255s Dimensions of Contemporary Judaism in America

(Same as Jewish Studies 255) Contemporary Judaism in America is in a state of extraordinary ferment and creative transition. This course will explore significant aspects of this ferment, including ritual innovation and experimentation, theological creativity, Jewish feminism, the growing interest in Jewish spirituality, Jewish environmentalism, Zionism, and the religious repercussions of the Holocaust.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*L. Fine*

*4 credits*

### 260f Cooking Your Life: Food, Eating, and the Sacred

This course explores the central role that food and eating have in religious cultures, particularly Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. What rules do religious traditions have about what to eat and what is prohibited? What practices are associ-

ated with daily religious rituals, table rites, and sacred festivals? What social dimensions to food and eating are there within the family and community? What are the ethical dimensions to food and religious traditions, especially in a world of hunger and concern about sustainability?

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*L. Fine*

*gateway course for thematic minor on food (2010-2013); 4 credits*

### **261f Hinduism**

(Same as Asian Studies 261) A major religious tradition of India, Hinduism is in practice a multiplicity of expressions. This course explores Hinduism's diverse traditions through its history, unifying themes, texts, and popular observances. We will read from the great texts (Ramayana, Mahabharata), learn about gods and goddesses (Krishna, the Great Goddess), and discuss art and ritual. Topics include: body techniques and the material universe (yoga, Tantra); philosophical traditions, concepts (karma, dharma); religious figures (Mirabai); movements (Bhakti). Hinduism's contemporary expressions in India and the West will be considered in social and historical context. Frequent illustration is provided through videos.

*Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*I. Peterson*

*4 credits*

### **263f Introduction to Buddhism**

Some scholars have argued that there is no such thing as "Buddhism" in the singular, but only "Buddhisms" in the plural. This course introduces students to the historically and culturally diverse expressions of Buddhism. We will ask ourselves what Buddhism has meant to different people in different times and places, with particular attention to changing conceptions of belief and practice. Among the traditions we will study are Theravada, Zen, Pure Land, and Tantra.

*Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*L. Battaglia*

*This course counts toward the Asian Studies major.; 4 credits*

### **\*265s Holy Feast, Holy Fast: Sacred Food and Eating in Judaism**

(Same as Jewish Studies 265) This course explores the role of food and eating in Jewish religious culture, but will also include a significant comparative religious dimension. Topics will include the ritual, religious, and social significance of the dietary laws in Judaism, the symbolic foods of Passover and other festivals, fasting and ascetic attitudes toward food, as well as food culture as a marker of Jewish identity.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*L. Fine*

*4 credits*

### **\*267f Buddhist Ethics**

This is an introduction to contemporary and classical Buddhist ethical ideals. Working with primary and secondary sources, we will ask the following questions: Is the universe moral? What are Buddhist ethical ideals and who embodies these? How do contemporary Buddhists interpret classical ethical ideals? What moral dilemmas do Buddhists face today? How do Buddhists grapple with moral ambiguity? We will consider the perspectives of Buddhists from different cultures including India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam, Japan, and the United States.

*Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*S. Mrozik*

*4 credits*

### **\*268s Buddhist Literature from Ginsberg to Gautama**

(Same as Asian Studies) This course is an introduction to Buddhist literature. We will read and discuss works from diverse cultures and historical periods, including contemporary North American Buddhist fiction, ancient Indian biographies of the Buddha, and medieval Japanese Buddhist poetry. We will ask how Buddhists, living in different times and places, have imagined the path to liberation.

*Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*S. Mrozik*

*4 credits*

**\*275s The Ethics of Interpersonal Relations in Judaism**

(Same as Jewish Studies 275-01) As in other religious traditions, interpersonal relations are central to Judaism. Drawing upon both classical and modern textual sources, this course explores such themes as forgiveness, compassion, humility, and honesty in interpersonal affairs. It also considers notions of love, friendship, and teacher-disciple relations, both between individuals and in the context of religious community.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*L. Fine*

*4 credits*

**285s The Jewish Poetic Tradition**

(Same as Jewish Studies 285) Beginning with the psalms of the Hebrew Bible, Jewish religious tradition has produced beautiful poetry over the course of three millennia. This course explores this rich and varied tradition, including biblical poetry, the extraordinary Arabic-influenced poetics of medieval Spanish Jewry, the poetry of Jewish mystical tradition, Holocaust poetry, and contemporary poems. The course will also include a comparative dimension, with examples from other religious traditions, focusing on contemplative poetry.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*L. Fine*

*4 credits*

**295fs Independent Study**

*Does not meet a distribution requirement*

*The department*

*Prereq. soph, permission of department; 1-4 credits*

**\*306s Sex and the Early Church**

(Same as Gender Studies 333) This course examines the various ways first-through fifth-century Christians addressed questions regarding human sexuality. We will concentrate on the rise of sexual asceticism and pay particular attention to the relationship between sexuality and issues of gender, culture, power, and resistance. Primary readings will include letters, narrative accounts of female and male ascetics, monastic rules, and "heretical" scriptures. These will be supplemented by modern scholarship in early Christian studies and the history of sexuality.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*M. Penn*

*Prereq. Previous course in religion or gender studies; 4 credits*

**309s Books Before You Go**

This course will serve as a senior seminar to engage students in reading basic texts that they may have missed or read only cursorily in other courses. It will offer a time for students to refine their critical reading and writing skills and, to the extent possible, to explore the faculty's own scholarly interests. We hope to exemplify the broad methodological and theoretical issues in the study of religion.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*J. Crosthwaite*

*Prereq. jr. sr. 8 credits in department; 4 credits*

**311s Sufism: The Mystic Path in Islam**

Exploration of the mystical tradition in Islam known as Sufism, from its origins in medieval Iraq to its role in contemporary Islamic societies. This course focuses on how the Sufi pursuit of unity with, or annihilation in, God relates to the core monotheistic beliefs of Islam. Sufi theories and practices are studied through primary source materials. Special attention will be paid to the themes of love, desire, and beauty in the literature of Sufism.

*Meets multicultural requirement; meets*

*Humanities I-B requirement*

*A. Steinfels*

*This course counts towards the Asian Studies major.; 4 credits*

**\*319s Women and Early Christianity**

This seminar investigates the role of women in the New Testament and in early Christian communities. We will explore controversies concerning women's leadership in the early church as well as the role of gender and gender imagery in the development of early Christian thought and practice. Our seminar will look at ancient marriage guides, misogynistic satires, New Testament gospels, Pauline letters, accounts of female martyrs, early church manuals, theological tractates, and accounts of female saints. We also will examine how recent work in women's studies, sexuality studies, and queer theory can help us bet-

ter understand the power dynamics of early Christianity.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*The department*

*Prereq. Religion 204, 206 or 315; 4 credits*

### \*322f Modern Theology

This course is a study of representative theologians in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries who have made significant contributions to religious thinking in the West. Thinkers include Kierkegaard, Schleiermacher, Bultmann, Barth, Tillich, and others. Emphasis is on the nineteenth century.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*J. Grayson*

*Prereq. 8 credits in department, Religion 226 recommended, or permission of instructor; 4 credits*

### 323fs Topics in Contemporary Theology

*Fall 2011*

#### 323f(1) Modern Mythmaking and Religion

Stories created through the cultural media have increasingly shaped social worldviews. Many have assumed the status as Sacred Myths. Using the analyses of Eliade, Geertz, Tillich, Derrida, and others, we will examine contemporary films and texts such as *The Wizard of Oz*, *The DaVinci Code*, *Life of Pi*, *The Matrix*, and *Whale Rider*. We will compare these cultural expressions with the classic stories of major religious traditions in order to determine if they qualify as contemporary Sacred Myths.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*J. Grayson*

*Prereq. 8 credits in department or permission of instructor; 4 credits*

*Spring 2012*

#### 323s(2) *The Women Who Shaped the Mind of Frederick Douglass*

Eight women - Harriet Bailey, Betsey Bailey, Sophia Auld, Anna Murray, Julia Crofts-Griffiths, Annie Douglass, Ottilia Assing, and Helen Pitts - occupied crucial roles in the formation of Frederick Douglass's mind. In this seminar we will read closely Douglass's three autobiographies and related primary sources in order to discern the theological signifi-

cance these women had for him. Students also will be introduced to contemporary readings in theological hermeneutics in order to consider its implications for reading and interpreting autobiography.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*J. Grayson*

*Prereq. 8 credits in department or permission of instructor; 4 credits*

### \*325s Asian Religions IV: Gods, Myths and Devotion: Hindu Sacred Narratives

This course provides the opportunity for intensive study in Asian religious traditions. One of the traditions listed here is considered each time the course is offered. The student may therefore receive credit more than once. I. The Islamic Tradition II. History of Chinese Thought III. Japanese Religious Traditions IV. Hinduism

Telling, enacting, and listening to myths and sacred tales are essential modes of religious practice in Hinduism. This seminar focuses on the myths of the major Hindu gods and goddesses, women's ritual tales, and the lives and poetry of exemplary devotees (*bhakta*) of Shiva, Krishna, and Devi, the Great Goddess. We will examine the theologies and meanings manifested in these stories, in relation to narrative genres and structures, forms of expression (e.g., the dancing Shiva icon, Ramayana epic theater) and ritual and performance contexts (e.g., Goddess festival).

*Meets multicultural requirement; meets*

*Humanities I-B requirement*

*I. Peterson*

*Prereq. permission of instructor. preference to juniors and seniors; 4 credits*

### \*326f Buddhism in the Pioneer Valley

This course is a research seminar on Buddhism in the Pioneer Valley. We will begin by studying the history and development of Buddhism in North America, then turn our attention to local Buddhist communities. Students will design and execute individual research projects on some aspect of Buddhism in the Pioneer Valley.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*S. Mrozik*

*Prereq. soph, jr, sr; 4 credits in religion, Asian studies, or anthropology; 4 credits*

**\*327s Robes, Amulets, and Over-Turned Rice Bowls: Buddhism in SE Asia**

This course examines contemporary Buddhist movements in Southeast Asia with particular focus on how Buddhist scholars, activists, practitioners, and leaders have (re)interpreted sacred texts and practices to find guidance in the face of modernization, globalization, and a secular economic world order. We will explore the Buddhist world and cultural change in Southeast Asia, the changing role of monks and the laity in the face of modernization, modern reform movements, the role of women, and Buddhism in the West. Students will do a research paper on some aspect of Buddhist thought and practice embedded in the cultures of Thailand, Myanmar (Burma), Laos, Cambodia, or Sri Lanka.

*Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*L. Battaglia*

*This course counts toward Asian Studies major.; 4 credits*

**332fs Seminar in American Religious History**

This course offers advanced students an opportunity to investigate with some sophistication a problem that requires careful attention to research methods, to critical literature, and to writing. Seminar topics include people, periods, or problems that have a particular bearing on religion in America.

*Fall 2011*

**332f(1) *The Shakers***

This course will examine the historical and cultural creation of the Shaker society. The religious vision of an alternative society whose birth and development paralleled that of the new American nation; by contrast and by imitation, the separate Shaker route thus offers an intriguing critique of American society and its values, and an unusual laboratory for examining a religious community based on a dual godhead.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*J. Crosthwaite*

*Prereq. jr, sr, 8 credits in department, Religion 221 or permission of instructor; 4 credits*

*Spring 2012*

**\*332s(3) *Creation vs. Evolution***

A distinctive mark of Western thought in the nineteenth century was its fascination with “the origin of things.” The origin of the species and the origin of the universe are two prime examples. These two concerns, in particular, had a decisive impact on how religion and science came to be understood and expressed in the twentieth century. As a consequence of the ensuing public debate, this question of “origins” presented a direct challenge to the received theory of creation, the meaning of miracles, as well as the nature of biblical inspiration.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*J. Grayson*

*Prereq. jr, sr, 8 credits in department, or permission of instructor; 4 credits*

**\*337s Topics in the Study of Christianity: Early Muslim/Christian Encounters**

This course explores a set of recently discovered documents that substantially changes our understanding of Christian/Muslim relations. We will read texts such as a Christian/Muslim debate, a bishop’s letter on how to bribe Muslim rulers, and an exorcism account concerning demon-possessed monks. Students will be among the first in a thousand years to read these works providing them with a strong knowledge of the history of Christianity, of Islam, and of their first interactions with each other.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*M. Penn*

*Prereq. 4 credits in Religion; 4 credits*

**\*345s Topics in the Study of Islam: Islam in the Twenty-first Century: Readings in Islamic Fundamentalism and Liberalism**

This course offers advanced students an opportunity to investigate with some sophistication a problem that requires careful attention to research methods, to critical literature, and to writing. Topics will include issues that have a particular bearing on Islamic religious traditions.

This course will explore the history of the most important ideas and trends in contemporary Islamic thought, beginning with their roots in the great classics of the Islamic tradition by Ibn Khaldun, al-Ghazali, and Ibn

Taymiyya. Close reading of the most important modern Muslim thinkers, including Muhammad Abduh, Muhamad Iqbal, Sayyid Qutb, Ali Shariati, Fazlur Rahman, and Mohammed Arkoun.

*Meets multicultural requirement; meets*

*Humanities I-B requirement*

*D. Brown*

*Prereq. Religion 201, 202, 205, or 207 or*

*permission of instructor; 4 credits*

### **352s Written on the Body: Body Images and Practices in Religious Traditions**

This course examines body images and practices in diverse religious traditions around the world. Working with different methodological and theoretical perspectives, we will ask the following questions: What are bodies? How do body images perpetuate or challenge religious and social norms? What roles do bodies play in religious experience? We will generate answers to these questions by investigating a wide range of religious phenomena including healing rituals, relics, saints, fasting, asceticism, and modest dress.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*L. Battaglia*

*4 credits*

### **\*355s Creation vs. Evolution**

A distinctive mark of Western thought in the nineteenth century was its fascination with “the origin of things.” The origin of the species and the origin of the universe are two prime examples. These two concerns, in particular, had a decisive impact on how religion and science came to be understood and expressed in the twentieth century. As a consequence of the ensuing public debate, this question of “origins” presented a direct challenge to the received theory of creation, the meaning of miracles, as well as the nature of biblical inspiration.

*Meets Humanities I-B requirement*

*J. Grayson*

*Prereq. jr, sr, 8 credits in department, or*

*permission of instructor; 4 credits*

### **395fs Independent Study**

*Does not meet a distribution requirement*

*The department*

*Prereq. jr, sr, permission of department; 1-8 credits*