### Important Dates

- **August 24th** - 1st day of classes
- **September 2nd** - Last day to register, add, drop with no grade
- **September 2nd** - Deadline for Graduate students to apply for Dec. 2015 graduation
- **September 7th** - No Classes/University Closed
- **October 12th & 13th** - No Classes
- **October 12th** - Spring 2016 Schedule of Classes available
- **October 27th** - Last day to withdraw from course
- **November 2nd** - Registration for Spring 2016 begins
- **November 25th & 26th** - No classes/University closed
- **December 9th** - Last day of classes
- **December 14th-18th** - Final Examinations
- **December 18th** - Summer 2016 Schedule of Classes available

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### Fall 2015 Graduate Courses

**Department of Religious Studies**

[www.religiousstudies.com](http://www.religiousstudies.com)

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**Religious Studies in the Contemporary U.S.**

R 2/00-4:45/Sean McCloud

What can one say about contemporary American religious cultures? Has American religion changed in the last 70 years? Can one discuss “American religion” as if it were an undifferentiated whole? And, given that the term itself has no stable meaning, can we easily pick out some social formation we call “religion” that can be separately examined as a field apart from “culture,” “politics,” “economics,” or other categories we might construe? There are multiple ways—complementary and contradictory—in which one might describe contemporary American culture and its religious imaginaries. Our class will focus on three characterizations: the consumerist, the haunted, and the therapeutic. While these certainly aren’t the only tropes for understanding something out there called “contemporary American culture,” they do provide useful monikers for getting at some prominent discourses that permeate contemporary social institutions and individual habits. The class format entails seminar-style discussions, student reading presentations, and writing assignments.

**Apocalypticism Ancient & Modern**

T 2:00-4:45/James Tabor

(Across-list with ANTH 5090, HIST 5002 & MALS 6000)

A historical examination of the idea of the “end of the world” as it developed in ancient Judaism and early Christianity and has continued to manifest itself in modern times among both Christian and Jewish Groups. Topics emphasized include: The Dead Sea Scrolls, Jesus as an Apocalyptic Messiah, Paul’s Apocalyptic Outlook, Jewish Messiahs through the ages, American Millenarian movements including Waco, and apocalyptic visions of the Modern Middle East including Zionism and ISIS.

**Critical Philosophy of Race**

R 5:30-8:15/Shannon Sullivan

(Cross-list with PHIL 4990, PHIL 5050, AFRS 4050, AFRS 5000, WGST 4050)

Is race real? And if so, in what respects and to what effect? In this course on critical philosophy of race, we will study a variety of perspectives that examine the seeming naturalness or “givenness” of race. Beginning with philosophical arguments that the concept of race should be eliminated because it has no biological/genetic foundation, we next turn to arguments that race is real even though (or, perhaps, precisely because) it is socially constructed. Then in contrast to these two opposing positions, we will question the dichotomy between the biological and the social that tends to reign in critical philosophy of race, examining arguments that critical conceptions of race can and should include human physiology and biology in some fashion. As the course examines the reality and effects of race, it will pay close attention to the operations of whiteness and white domination. It also will examine how race intersects with sex/gender and class, among other salient axes of lived experience. The main topics/readings for the semester will include: the racial contract, intersectionality, and biopsychosocial approaches to race and racial disparities in health. The upshot of the course will be for students to understand how theoretical questions about the reality of race can have concrete, practical effects in people’s lives.

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**Medieval and Reformation Christianity**

F 11:00-1:45/Joanne Robinson

This course explores the variety and evolution of Christian beliefs and practices in medieval Europe from the fifth century CE through the sixteenth century reformation within and outside formal Church structures. We will read and analyze primary sources on topics including the “conversion” and Christian acculturation of European peoples; the power and appeal of Christian saints; notions of Christian authority and power; monastic, scholas-tic, and lay piety; issues of theological anthropology, free will, and the relation of human to divine; church creeds and rituals; pilgrimages and Crusades; dissent, heresy, and institutional response; and Protestant and Catholic theological divergence.

**Approach to the Study of Religion**

M 6:30-9:15/Kent Brintnall

This course provides students with critical tools for research, analytical thinking, and writing in the academic study of religion. The topics and individuals this course covers represent several major currents of thought in the field of religious studies.

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**Department Chair**

Joanne Robinson

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Sean McCloud

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