



## Theology and Religious Studies Current Topics Course Descriptions FALL 2012

The THRS 202, 203, and 494 topics courses are spaces for THRS professors to innovate with new and engaging subject matter. Worth checking out!

### **THRS 203**

#### **Religion and Ecology, East and West**

sec. 53 (CRN: 4570), TTh 5:30-6:50pm, 3 units

Dr. Lance Nelson

This course will explore the worldviews and, to a lesser extent, the religious practice of the Native American, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, and Muslim traditions in light of contemporary concern for our fragile and endangered environment. A key question will be, to what extent can religion—or particular religious beliefs, values, or practices—become part of the solution, and to what extent are aspects of religious faith and practice part of the problem? Relevant mythic, theological, ethical, and ritual aspects of each tradition will be examined.\*

\*This course is a preceptorial, open to incoming freshmen only.

### **THRS 494**

#### **Art and the Theological Imagination**

sec. 1 (CRN: 1099), TTh 5:30-6:50pm, 3 units

Dr. Susie Paulik Babka

What role does art and creative expression play in the task of theology, the disciplined and critical reflection on belief and the identity of God? What is expressed in art and through the creative process leads to deeper questions, which serves to enhance critical thought. Art maintains our memory of divine revelation and energizes the human imagination for the divine, seeing the divine in all things, from the ordinary to the sublime. Art expresses our nature as spiritual beings inseparable from the material world; it explores morality, politics, emotion, the subconscious, and the unknown. This course will consider the meaning and function of theological aesthetics, and attempt to cultivate a sharper awareness of seeing, of attention to detail, of encounter with beauty. We will primarily explore visual art in the Western world as material for doing Christian theology, but will also briefly consider visual art in other religions and cultures. Prerequisite: Any lower-division THRS course, or consent of instructor

### **THRS 494**

#### **Contemplative Traditions**

sec. 2 (CRN: 2537), MW 2:30-3:50pm, 3 units

Dr. Louis Komjathy

A peer-taught seminar on meditation and contemplative prayer from a historical contextualist, textual, comparative, and experiential perspective. This course examines contemplative practice in various religious traditions through close textual analysis of important and representative texts. Students also gain direct personal experience with meditation by practicing one self-selected method for the semester. Prerequisite: THRS 110, THRS 112, or consent of instructor.

[more . . .]

**THRS 494****Faith and Politics: Theological Perspectives**

sec. 3 (CRN 4509), MWF 10:10-11:05am, 3 units

sec. 4 (CRN 4510), MWF 11:15am-12:10pm, 3 units

Dr. Mary Doak

This course explores the role of religious faith in public life with a focus on the problems of religious freedom in pluralistic societies. This class will investigate why many people insist that their religious beliefs should influence governmental actions. We will also study some of the major contemporary views on how Christian beliefs should affect politics. Overall, this course is designed to analyze what religious freedom means, why it is important theologically, and how it can be preserved when the laws and governing structures of society are determined (in small or large part) by the religious beliefs of the citizens. Prerequisites: None.