

**Department of Religions and Cultures  
Graduate Course Offering  
2020-2021**

**Fall**

RELI 6001A Method and Theory in Religion	Dr. Leslie Orr	W. 15:30-17:45
RELI 6015A Food, Culture and Religion	Dr. Norma Joseph	T. 14:45-17:00
RELI 6006A Islam and the West: Gender Issues	Dr. Lynda Clarke	J. 16:00-18:15

**Winter**

RELI 6002C Religion and Popular Culture	Dr. Lorenzo DiTommaso	M. 11:45-14:00
RELI 6006A Christian Bodies	Dr. Carly Daniel-Hughes	T. 13:00-15:15
RELI 6007D The Tantric Systems	Dr. Marc des Jardins	W. 11:45-14:00
RELI 6017B Holocaust History, Gender & Sexuality	Dr. Norman Ravvin	T. 15:30-17:45

<b>F/W</b> RELI 890 Joint Doctoral Seminar	Dr. Marc des Jardins	TBA
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**Fall**

**RELI 6001 Method and Theory in Religion**

This course introduces an array of important theoretical and methodological approaches in the study of religions and cultures, as well as specific examples that bring out the nuances of the variety of approaches we encounter. Together, we will explore the strengths and weakness of the questions asked and the manner of answering the questions. Further, we will ponder the ways in which both religious/cultural traditions and our scholarly framework shape our understanding of human activity. The aim of the course is to create a toolkit from which each student can draw in further coursework in their final project.

**RELI 6015 Food, Culture and Religion**

What does a cookbook tell you? What can you learn from a religious festive meal? Food is present as part of every religious event. Examining foodways exposes the complexity of nationhood and religious continuity. Food studies can facilitate our understanding of cultural and religious patterns.

This course will use the study of food as a vehicle through which to approach the ethnographic study of religious communities and their ritual practices. In this course, you will learn how to do an ethnographic study of a community or ritual of your choice by focusing on some aspect of their commensal or culinary heritage.

## **RELI 6006 Islam in the West: Gender Issues**

This course treats gender issues in relation to Muslim communities in Canada and the West, both in terms of the perceptions of non-Muslims and commitments and debates among Muslims themselves. Topics include veiling practices, media representations, gender ideals, Muslim family law, women's authority, queer movements and intermarriage. Special attention will be paid to viewpoints and legislation in Québec aimed at gender norms and veiling practices.

## **Winter**

### **RELI 6002 Religion and Popular Culture**

This seminar explores the relationship between religion and popular culture. Topics for discussion include: the topographies of popular culture in today's digitally integrated, superflat world; the nature of religion in a society that is inundated, saturated, and orientated by popular culture; the redeployment and functions of traditional religious themes and tropes in new pop-cultural forms; and the global "apocalyptic shift" of the past generation and its pop-cultural expressions.

### **RELI 6006A Christian Bodies**

This course will examine the history of the body in Christianity. Students will be introduced to various theoretical approaches to the study of the body and embodiment. The course will be organized around a set of themes and topics from different Christian contexts from Roman antiquity to the present day. These topics include disability, gender performance, illness and pain, death and afterlife, corporeal discipline, dress and bodily augmentation, food and consumption, as well as sexuality and erotic practices. A major component of this course will be devoted to writing and researching a final paper. Students will acquire advanced research skills, enhance their own writing and editing abilities, and participate in peer-review.

### **RELI 6007 The Tantric Systems**

The Tantras are one of the more flamboyant of the spiritual systems of India. They created a revolution in spiritual practices during the Medieval period (roughly 600-1300). Its adaptations of Vedic ritual for non-Brahmins shocked the conservative establishment with antinomian behaviour and macabre symbolism and rituals. These various systems were soon adopted by Jainism and Buddhism and in the latter's versions spread far to Central, South-East, and East Asia. Tantric masters were considered holders of occult powers and were hired by courts to lend their spiritual help to imperial and royal governments.

This course examines the history, textual sources, ritual, philosophies, practices and social contexts of the tantric or "esoteric" traditions of Asia, and explores the roles of tantric practice in the broader landscape of Asian religion and culture.

The first part of the course will be dedicated to the ‘Hindu’ section of the Tantric traditions while the second part will focus on the Buddhist tantric systems and traditions.

**RELI 6017 Holocaust History, Gender, and Sexuality**

This course will engage with recent and important shifts in Holocaust reception. Gender and sexuality have not been among the foremost contexts in the field, though recently, important work is changing this. We will consider established forms of response, by way of a review of canonical Holocaust materials in order to explore how new approaches have changed their status. Established memoirs by women writers such as Ruth Kluger and Charlotte Delbo will be viewed in relation to newer critical work, including Zoe Waxman’s study *Women in the Holocaust: A Feminist History*. Similarly, we will look at how an early work like the play *Bent*, in its presentation of gay wartime experience, accounted for recent approaches. While offering a review of the field this class will aim to examine where these issues are leading Holocaust studies.

**890/3 Joint Doctoral Seminar**

The aims of the seminar are (1) to introduce you to a range of approaches to and issues in the study of religion (as well as to faculty members of our Department and of our sister departments at UQAM and Laval); and (2) to help you develop professional skills and gain experience – in terms of collegial interaction, self-expression, teaching, and gaining access to funding and opportunities for presenting your research to scholarly audiences. The seminar is held within the framework of our joint doctoral program with UQAM and Laval, and there will be several opportunities to collaborate with your colleagues from these universities.