

Elective Course Descriptions for Fall 2014

**Note: Other course descriptions will be added as they become available.*



WAKE FOREST
UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL of DIVINITY

Biblical Studies

BIB 615 Myth and Scripture: The Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Myth Neal Walls

This seminar explores biblical texts that depict the creation of the world, divine conflicts, and the abode of the dead within their ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean mythological contexts. The focus this year will be on (1) Genesis 1–11 and Babylonian creation myths and (2) descents to (and ascents from) the Netherworld (*The Descent of Ishtar; Nergal and Ereshkigal; Isis and Osiris*; the Baal Cycle; and Jesus Christ). We will also give some attention to the diabolical figure of Satan and his legions of fallen angels in early Judaism and Christianity. *Prerequisite: BIB 521, BIB 541, or permission of the instructor.*

BIB 790A Martyrs, Prophets, Preachers: Women and Slaves in Early Christianity Katherine Shaner

This course will be taught during the first part of fall term: August 26–October 9, 2014; required retreat shared with students in HIS 790A Classics of Contemplative Theology during fall break

This course explores the role of women, named and un-named, in the religious practices of early Christianity, Judaism, and Greek and Roman religions. The course traces the historical world of women and seeks to find ways to describe women's spirituality in the first three centuries CE. We will examine texts written about women (Gospel of Luke, Gospel of Mary, Acts of Thecla), and texts which attempt to suppress women's voices (Pastoral Epistles, 1 Peter, Tertullian.) The course meets intensively in the first 7 weeks of the semester and will conclude with a retreat, shared with Dr. Voss Robert's course, "Classics of Contemplative Theology".

Historical Studies

HIS 790A Classics of Contemplative Theology Michelle Voss Roberts

This course will be taught during the second part of fall term: October 14–December 4, 2014; required retreat shared with students in BIB 790A Martyrs, Prophets, and Preachers: Women and Slaves in Early Christianity during fall break

Before the establishment of the great medieval universities, theology was an activity most often carried out in communal contexts of asceticism and contemplation. This course explores contemplative texts and practices as a mode of doing theology. Students will read spiritual classics from early Christianity through the early modern period. A weekend retreat (*dates*) and participation in the Monastic Project (a three-week commitment to dietary, meditative, and other practices of contemplation) offer opportunities for experiential learning.

HIS 790B Evangelicalism in America: Historical, Theological, Political, and Cultural Perspectives

Derek Hicks

Through a variety of mediums, this course will consider the development, history, culture, and characteristics of evangelicalism in the U.S. Proceeding both chronologically and topically, we will first focus on its early development during the antebellum period leading up the Civil War, highlighting the cultural impact of and its connection to the religious revivals and mass conversions. The course will continue through the crucial years of the early twentieth century and calls for a “return to the fundamentals” of the faith before highlighting contemporary evangelical concerns. Topically the course will examine evangelicalism with regard to its important contributions to American religious culture, its variety in forms, and its ability to reconsider itself in an increasingly pluralistic United States. We will also examine evangelical perspectives around biblical authority, original sin, the Christ Event, and the end times, notably as these theological issues relate to American culture and society. Variety invokes various debates and tensions between evangelical traditions, as well as tensions between evangelicals and non-evangelicals. We will explore these tensions, especially in relation to later political developments as evangelicals rise in the halls of American political power. Finally, we will give critical attention to evangelicalism and the issue of race in American. In the end, the course will reveal evangelicalism as a complex religious tradition in American culture. President Nathan Hatch and other guests will provide historical and cultural perspectives according to their expertise.

Ministerial Studies

MIN 560 Field, Table, Communion: Food and the Work of Ministry

Fred Bahnson

Food is life. Food is physical nourishment that sustains our bodies. Food is an emotional force that binds us to one another in table fellowship. And food is a sacramental vehicle, through bread and wine, for carrying God’s boundless grace into our bodies and out into the world. Whether it’s the Lord’s Supper or the Last Supper, the grand Messianic feast or a simple breakfast of fish on the lakeshore, food has long been a central metaphor of the Christian faith, and for centuries the *festal* meal we celebrate in the Eucharist hasn’t much changed. But within the past five years in American Christianity, people have a renewed interest in *ferial* meals, those everyday affairs that are part of life’s routine. Suddenly Christians are rethinking not only what we eat, but how our food is grown, who we eat with (or don’t), who harvested our food, and how agriculture contributes to climate change. Food is now a problem. Can it also be a solution? We will consider these seemingly mundane questions as a set of practical and spiritual challenges to our current way of life, questions that go straight to the heart of our identity as the people of God. In this class we will think about food through scriptural and theological lenses. We will learn to recognize the difference between healthy and destructive farming practices. We will look at the rise of faith-based food projects in America and around the world. We will look at why hunger and obesity are flip sides of the same coin, and how the church should respond to them. In addition to discussing readings together, we will visit farms and community gardens. And naturally, we will eat together.

MIN 633 Introduction to Pastoral Counseling
Bryan Hatcher

This course introduces students to the context, content and practices of pastoral counseling.

MIN 644 Preaching, Worship and the Care of Souls: Funerals, Weddings and Other Pastoral Rites
Jill Crainshaw

This seminar and practicum explores how pastoral concerns and theological perspectives shape our ritual practices during times of transition and crisis in people's lives. We will look at diverse Christian rituals occasioned by holy unions/marriage, illness, and death/bereavement and consider related theological perspectives. We will also explore briefly approaches to developing rituals for other life transitions and occasions, such as miscarriages and stillbirths, divorce, adoption, marriages that form diverse family configurations, and moving into retirement communities and nursing homes.

MIN 654 Preaching and Worship in Sacred Time: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany
Jill Crainshaw and Gail O'Day

This course explores one of the two major pulses of the Christian year—Incarnation. Students will explore the liturgical history and theology of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany as well as consider the biblical texts assigned for this season in Year B of the Revised Common Lectionary. Students will have an opportunity to design a liturgy and craft a sermon appropriate to the season.

Spirituality

SPI 610 Spirituality & Discernment
Chris Copeland

This course introduces students to some theological and spiritual foundations of discernment as it relates to individuals, groups, and systems. Students will learn processes for discernment as a spiritual practice using the Examen, the Clearness Committee, and the Social Discernment Cycle. They will practice individual discernment for themselves, group discernment with others in the class, and discernment of systems with an organization or institution of which they are a part.

SPI 790A Spirituality and Ministry in Architecture and the Sense of Place
Thomas Frank

The purpose of this course is to provoke and pursue questions of spirituality and ministry that arise from encounter and engagement with architecture, the creation of space, and the sense of place. The course explores the significance of buildings and spaces for spiritual and ministerial practice, with a larger aim of enriching imaginative resources for deepened spirituality, so that students are better prepared for creative and transformative leadership in ministry.

SPI 790B Thriving Nourishment: Christian Spiritual Practices and Food
Nancy Wiens

Whatever we practice shapes our lives from the minutest levels in a human being to the most macro levels of culture and nature. This course explores personal and corporate Christian spiritual practices, as daily ways to contribute to thriving social and ecological systems, specifically related to food. It explores the insights of Christian spirituality in dialogue with three natural sciences to invite students into conscious life patterns or practices that nourish their relationship with the divine, themselves, and their neighbors universe-wide.

Theological Studies

THS 626 Contemporary Ethical Issues
Kevin Jung

This course explores contemporary ethical issues that have wide social, political, and religious significance. The issues include health care, environment, immigration, dying, and criminal justice. In order to properly understand the issues, we will examine arguments of various kinds – philosophical, sociological, political, economic, and theological, as they are often heard in public discussion. In particular, we will pay close attention to the ways in which theological discourse may make contribution to our moral reflection

THS 790A Being Human: Readings in Theological Anthropology
Michelle Voss Roberts

This one-credit course surveys classic and contemporary treatments of human existence in theological perspective: What makes us human? Are there particular faculties or abilities that distinguish us as created in the image of God? How does Christian theology understand our relation to other species and the earth? *Prerequisite: THS 501 or permission of instructor*

THS 790B Markets, Justice and Christian Ethics
John Senior

What is the market system, and how does it structure economic and social life? What is economic justice in the context of modern market systems, and how should Christians promote it? This course examines the structure of modern markets and evaluates their moral meaning in Christian theological perspective. The first section introduces the market system as a mechanism of social coordination and a context of moral meaning, practice, and experience. The second section embarks upon a fast-paced tour through Protestant and Catholic responses to modern industrial economies in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The third section explores contemporary issues in economic ethics, including consumption, desire, freedom, exchange, market regulation, globalization, corporate responsibility, and the relationship between economy and ecology.

THS 790C Black Theologies in the U.S.**Derek Hicks**

This seminar will review the historical and cultural development of Black Theology in the United States. Participants will read primary texts of the movement and review the social contexts out of which their distinct theological thinking arose. Seminar participants will be invited to fully engage multiple modes of the black theological tradition, including early Black Liberation Theology, critical theorists of theodicy, Womanist Theology, intersecting feminist theories, and “Third Wave” Womanist thought.

THS 730 Philosophy of Human Nature**Kevin Jung**

What is a human person? Is the person all material? Does the universe contain consciousness? Has science proven that religion is a mere illusion? Is life after death really possible? This course embarks on a scientific, philosophical, and theological exploration in search of answers to Big Questions. We will think deeply about these and other enduring questions that have puzzled scientists, philosophers, and theologians over the centuries. *Prerequisite: THS 501. THS 521, THS 522 or permission of the instructor*