Course Description
This course is an introduction to the academic study of religion and a survey of different understandings of the “sacred” in the American South. The course theme of “searching for the sacred and the strange” takes us away from mainstream Protestant Christianity to examine the religiosity and aesthetic expression of marginalized folks, whose visionary experiences inspire their creation of religious art, music, and food. We begin by reading the studies of two “Road Scholars” who explore unusual forms of religiosity expressed in Southern stories, art and song while they undertake a common American ritual: the road trip. On their journeys they encounter religion on the margins of the South, yet they find themes that are central to American religious life, especially the desire to recreate sacred time and space. Then we move to New Orleans, the birthplace of jazz, where we will examine the relationship between African religions, voodoo, jazz funerals, and Mardi Gras Indians. Finally, we return to Charleston to examine the African American Gullah/Geechee tradition of communicating with the dead and African ancestors through visions, stories, sweetgrass basketry, and song. We will learn to see the customs, stories, and ritual performances as an expression of the religious imagination, where believers have sought to give aesthetic form to their experiences and re-create the “substance of faith.”

The course presumes no previous experience in religious studies, but it has as a prerequisite the desire to read challenging materials about different religions and to engage in conversation about them. We will rely on texts that combine travel narrative and storytelling, as well as films, songs, and images, to gain insight into the sacred art, stories, music, food, and rituals that inspire faith and create ties that bind communities together. One of the fun things about this course is that we do some “traveling” across the American South through documentary and feature films and the HBO series Treme. You should consider these visual media as “texts,” for their content will be covered on exams and in essay assignments.

Course Goals
- to gain knowledge of religions beyond your own experience and develop new ways of hearing, seeing, sensing, and thinking about what is “sacred” in the American South
- to gain appreciation for the diversity of Southern subcultures and peoples, their shared humanity and creativity, especially among black folks and “outsiders”: artists, musicians, and storytellers

Student Learning Outcomes
- students learn how to make what is strange seem familiar and what is familiar seem strange
- students learn to think critically and comparatively about their own and others’ religious traditions
- students learn to analyze how race, class, and gender shape religious and cultural productions
- students demonstrate effective writing skills by crafting an argument in defense of a thesis

This course also satisfies the two General Education Student Learning Outcomes in the Humanities: 1) Students analyze how ideas are represented, interpreted and valued in various expressions of human culture; and 2) Students examine relevant primary source materials as understood by the discipline and interpret the material in writing assignments. These two Student Learning Outcomes will be assessed on the final exam essay that analyzes the religious ideas and practices in two different visual media, namely Treme and Daughters of the Dust (15% of grade).

Two Required Texts are available at the Barnes & Noble CofC Bookstore or from Amazon:
- Timothy K. Beal, Roadside Religion: In Search of the Sacred, the Strange, and the Substance of Faith
- LeRhonda S. Manigault-Bryant, Talking to the Dead: Religion, Music, and Lived Memory Among Gullah/Geechee Women (available free online from CofC library)

There are also required E-Readings (ER#1-20), pdf of scholar’s articles and stories available on OAKS, which students access after they login to MyCharleston—http://my.cofc.edu. Look for the acorn icon.
Course Requirements and Grade Calculations

- **Attendance Policy**
  The COVID-19 pandemic requires a flexible approach to handling student absence. Students are not required to provide medical documentation of illness as in past semesters. Instead, you will be responsible for reporting directly to me the reasons for all absences including but not limited to personal illness, COVID-related illness, a requirement that you isolate or quarantine, or the need to care for a family member who is ill due to COVID. For students who become ill or indicate a need to quarantine or isolate themselves, I will determine reasonable accommodations based on course content and expectations.

- **Active participation in class or in zoom discussions (10% of grade)**
  Whatever you get out of this course is directly related to how much you put into it. Please prepare for class (whether on zoom or in person) with ideas and questions that can help us engage in meaningful discussion. You cannot participate in class if you are not present. Quality counts more than quantity, but you must speak and post your contributions on discussion threads to contribute. If you are worried about participation, meet with me (email, zoom) as soon as possible to strategize. There is a rubric posted in class resources on OAKS to clarify how participation grades are calculated.

- **Weekly Reflection Cards due once we resume face-to-face classes (10% of grade)**
  There will be regular homework assignments. Every day marked on syllabus with RC due you are to bring to class a thoughtful, written reflection related to the assigned reading for that week. Your reflection should be written on a 3x5 or 5x7 card, and respond to an issue that you have found puzzling, provocative, challenging, disturbing, or fascinating. RC grades: + = 100; √+ = 90; √ = 80; √- = 75; — = 70

- **Three short essays: two of 2 pp. (10% each) due 9/3 & 9/29, one 3 pp. due 11/10 (15%) = (35%)**
  The essays will be written on the assigned reading in response to specific prompts. The essays will require that you analyze the texts closely, formulate an interpretation, and express it concisely in 2 or 3 pages. The essays are due in class on the day we will discuss it; late papers are not accepted since the topic for the essay will be discussed in class or in our zoom session.

- **One quiz on 10/7 (5%), a Midterm on 10/14 (15%) and Final Exam on 12/12 (25%) = (45%)**
  The quiz & exams consist of short answer questions, an explanation of important passages excerpted from texts, and essay questions on exams. The final exam is not comprehensive, but deals with the material from the second half of the semester; the final essay topic will be given in advance. Review sheets will be provided beforehand. If you miss an exam and provide a documented excuse, I do give makeup tests.

**Grading Scale:**

- A = 100-93
- A- = 92-90
- B+ = 89-87
- B = 86-83
- B- = 82-80
- C+ = 79-77
- C = 76-73
- C- = 72-70
- D+ = 69-67
- D = 66-63
- D- = 62-60
- F = 59-below
* **Academic Integrity**

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when suspected, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception in involved. Incidents where the instructor determines the student’s action are related more to misunderstanding and confusion will be handled by me as the instructor. Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a **XXF grade** in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This status indicator will appear on the student’s transcript for two years. If you are unfamiliar with the **Honor Code** or what plagiarism is, please click on the links.

* **Course Resources**

I encourage you to utilize the academic support services offered by the [Center for Student Learning](http://studentlearning.cofc.edu) and the [Writing Lab](http://writinglab.cofc.edu) for assistance in study strategies and essay writing consultation. Students of all abilities have become more successful using these programs throughout their academic career and the services are available to you at no additional cost. For more information on the Center for Student Learning call 843.953.5635. Here is a link for help on writing an essay for Religious Studies. [http://disabilityservices.cofc.edu](http://disabilityservices.cofc.edu) or 843.953.1431

* **Universal Learning and SNAP program**

I am committed to the principle of universal learning. This means that our classroom, our virtual spaces, our practices and our interactions be as inclusive as possible. Mutual respect, civility, and the ability to listen carefully are crucial to universal learning. Any student eligible for or needing accommodations because of a disability is requested to speak with me during the first two weeks of class or as soon as the student has been approved for services so that reasonable accommodations can be made. For more information on the SNAP program, see: [http://disabilityservices.cofc.edu](http://disabilityservices.cofc.edu) or 843.953.1431

* **Religious Observances and Accommodation**

The College of Charleston community is enriched by students of many faiths that have various religious observances, practices, and beliefs. Religious observances will be accommodated. If you need to be absent for any given class for a specific observance, please submit requests in writing to me by the end of the second week of class (September 3) so we can agree upon accommodations.

* **Recording of Classes (via Zoom)**

Class sessions will be recorded via both voice and video recording. By attending and remaining in this class, the student consents to being recorded. Recorded class sessions are for instructional use only and may not be shared with anyone who is not enrolled in the class.

* **Continuity of Learning: Hybrid Class that Meets Online, Then Face-to-Face, Then Online**

Due to social distancing requirements, this class will include a variety of online and technology enhanced components to reinforce continuity of learning for all enrolled students. Before the **drop/add deadline** on 8/31, students should decide whether the course plan described here matches their own circumstance. Our class will begin online for the first three weeks, and then conclude online after Thanksgiving, which offers us some flexibility but we will still have a schedule to follow. Because I will not be lecturing face-to-face during the four weeks that we are online (between August 25-September 14, and in December), it is imperative that you read all the required texts for each lesson, read the lecture notes and listen to the VoiceThread, and make use of the additional resources provided to you. Then, you will be prepared to engage in the discussion threads related to that lesson. Also, keep in mind that the first writing assignment will have to be completed in VERY short order!

Our classes will meet face-to-face from 9/16 to 11/23, when you will submit weekly **Reflection Cards** rather than post your thoughts on discussion threads. However, it is possible that our class will be interrupted by inclement weather; after all, it is hurricane season right now! And so, it is likely that storms will force us to cancel and/or make up one or more class days this semester. Since we know neither the day nor the hour a storm will strike, the first thing to say is be prepared and stay safe. As far as our class is concerned, get your books ASAP, so you have them. If and when classes are canceled/rescheduled, please pay close attention to your CofC email.
If in-person classes are suspended due to a hurricane or the health pandemic, I will announce on OAKS and by your CoC email address a detailed plan for a change of modality to ensure continuance of learning. All students must have access to a computer equipped with a web camera, microphone, and internet access. But how should we behave online? What is proper network etiquette or Netiquette?

Here's some Netiquette and Protocols for our course
Because online communication often lacks the body language and nonverbal cues we’re used to in a normal face-to-face course, it is important to set some expectations for each other in this brave new world we’re embarking on.

- Be patient and forgiving. Go easy on each other. We all make mistakes. We’re learning. I have had some training in online course delivery, but there will be some glitches.
- Be kind. Treat each other with the full respect and dignity each of you deserve.
- Be ethical. Racist, sexist, homophobic, or any language or behavior that dehumanizes or degrades others will not be tolerated. Period.
- Take the time to learn how to use OAKS, Zoom, and VoiceThread. If you don’t know how to do something, use the CoC tutorials here to teach yourself before you ask.
- Think and reread before you post (hit enter/reply). Once up, you can’t go back.
- Use proper capitalization/punctuation when writing online and keep in mind how people will read what you write. For example, ALL CAPS IS LIKE YELLING!
- When you attend a Zoom session for our course (whether it is an office hours session with me or a scheduled online session as a class), please try to call from a quiet place where you won’t be disturbed, dress appropriately, and be aware of your surroundings. Remember, whatever your webcam sees, EVERYONE sees!

A Hindu goddess to ward off COVID-19
We might need Her this semester!
Lecture Topics and Class Schedule

Since our first 3 weeks will take place online, when we will have some synchronous classes on Zoom, there are 6 Lesson Plans with a list of major questions to consider, reading assignments, & Zoom classes.

I. Introduction: How Do We Study Religion in an Academic Secular Setting?

8/26 Lesson 1: Review Course Structure & Requirements: Introducing “Religion”
- Major questions: What is “religion” and “religious studies?” How do we study different religions found in the American South? Why study such “strange” religions?
- Reading: review this syllabus and the course requirements
- Assignment: Read Syllabus and listen to VoiceThread on it, complete “quiz”

8/31 Lesson 2: Ways of Exploring Religion: Who are the Nacirema?
- Major questions: What are the advantages and disadvantages of studying religion as an “insider” or an “outsider?” What is the value of making the familiar seem foreign?
  Who are the “Nacirema?” At what point in the ER#2 article did you “get it?”
- Reading: “Thinking about Being a Student of Religion;” “Body Rituals of Nacirema”
- Assignments: Read ER#1-2 first and then review the Notes and VoiceThread about ER#1
  - Post to Lesson 2 thread by 12 noon before Zoom class
  - Participate in Zoom class scheduled during regular course time (4:00 pm)

9/2 Lesson 3: Bringing the Spiritual to its Senses: What is this Religious “Stuff?”
- Major questions: Why are all five senses so important for understanding religious experience? Why is it important to consider religious folks as “technologists” rather than as “believers?” What is “soul” and how is it “produced?”
- Assignments: Read ER#3 on “1/2” and “Soul” then review the Notes and VoiceThread on ER#3
  - Post to Lesson 3 thread by 12 noon before Zoom class
  - Zoom class at 4:00 pm when we will discuss ER#3 and review the essay#1 assignment

9/7 Lesson 4: Blind Men, Elephants, & the Holy Virgin Mary: Ways of Seeing Religiously
- Reading: “Blind Men & Elephant;” “Interpreting the Sacred;” “Cultural Relativity of Dung”
- Assignments: Read ER#4-6 carefully, locate quotes for each essay prompt, and outline your essay
  - Write a two-page essay and upload it to the Dropbox on OAKS by 3:30 pm

Essay topic#1: The parable of the Blind Men and the Elephant is often cited by scholars of religion as a useful way for thinking about the study of religions (see ER#5). After considering the morals of the story, how is the parable useful for understanding religion? In what way is religion not like an elephant? Apply
the parable to ER#6 and explain how the mixed responses to Ofili’s provocative “Holy Virgin Mary” illustrate how we need to adopt multiple perspectives in order to assess its meaning and “see religiously.”

- Zoom class at 4:00 pm when we will discuss ER#4-6 and the essay topic

II. Religion on the Road: Seeing the Sacred in Southern Evangelical Outsider Art

9/9 Lesson 5: Surveying the Sacred from Outside: What is “Outsider” Art and Religion?

- Major questions: What does “outsider religion” mean, and why is it important to study it? Why is it dangerous to presume that one can completely understand the Other? How did Bill Rice come to see his project of erecting crosses as “nest building?”

Assignments:
- Read Roadside Religion: Introduction & Chapter 6, review VoiceThread
- Post to Lesson 5 thread by 12 noon

9/14 Lesson 6: Now-a-Day Noahs in Alabama and Maryland

- Major questions: What did you learn from Beal about the story of Noah that allows people like Rice and Greene to see themselves as “now-a-day Noahs?” How did you respond to Beal disclosing the illness of his father, reflecting on Pastor Greene’s words about his healing powers, considering whether to ask Greene to pray for his dad, but then passing?

Assignments:
- Read Roadside Religion: Chapter 4, review VoiceThread
- Read “Some Biblical ‘Keys’ to Unlocking Cross Garden”
- Zoom class when we will discuss Roadside Religion Ch. 4 & 6
Classes will meet on campus in **ECTR 103 at 4:00 pm**. Please read assignment before class and bring a **Reflection Card** based on that reading assignment to class when you see **RC due**.

**9/16**  
Re-creating the Holy Land in Virginia and Orlando: Making It Real  
(Read *Roadside Religion*: Chapters 1-2) **RC#1 due** Watch clip from Bill Maher’s *Religulous*

**9/21**  
Seeking the Sacred in the South: Some Scary and Mysterious Stories  
(ER#7: Excerpts from Harry Crews’ *A Childhood: The Biography of a Place*) **RC#2 due**  
Film: *Searching for the Wrong-Eyed Jesus* (2005), pt. I

**9/23**  
Slain in the Spirit: Speaking in Tongues, Singing for God  
(ER#8: “God Not Only Speaks but Sings”) Film: *Searching for the Wrong-Eyed Jesus*, pt. II

**9/28**  
Paradise Gardens, a Folk Art Church: Is Creativity the Substance of Faith?  
(*Roadside Religion*: Chapter 10 & Conclusion) **RC#3 due**  
Finish *Searching for... Jesus*, pt. III

**9/30**  
Re-Envisioning Howard Finster: The Truth Shall Make You Odd!  
(ER#9: “Once Upon a Time”) Film: “The Remarkable Story of Howard Finster”  
**Essay#2 due:** Howard Finster is America’s most famous self-taught visionary artist, and unlike many other “outsider artists” his life story became well known and his art work was appreciated by many.  
*Explain how Finster’s art and his Paradise Garden illustrate a Bible-based story-shaped world, where nostalgia for the past and fear of the apocalypse are both present. Based on what you’ve read by Timothy Beal and Norman Girardot, is Paradise Garden primarily a place of apocalyptic prophecy or a place of creative healing? How does Girardot explain the religious and human significance of this visionary art?*
III. Hearing the Soulful Sounds and Tasting the Flavorful Foods of the South

10/5 Feeling the Rhythm: To Be is To Beat
(ER#10: “Drums”) RC#4 due

10/7 In Rhythm with African Spirits
(ER#11: “West African Possession Religion & American Popular Music”) Quiz in class

10/12 Food and Faith in the American South: Holy Smoke & Barbecue
(ER#12: “Blood in the Barbecue?”) RC#5 due Clip of Stephen Colbert on NC vs. SC BBQ

10/14 Midterm exam in class (Study Review Sheet for exam)

IV. New Orleans Voodoo, Jazz Religion, and “Masking” as Indians on Mardi Gras

10/19 Congo Square in Faubourg Treme: African Gatherings, Birthplace of Jazz
(ER#13: Congo Square: African Roots in New Orleans) RC#6 due

10/21 African Religions and Voodoo in New Orleans: Before and After Katrina
(ER#14: “Follow the Second Line” and “Interlude”)
Film: clips on voodoo from Angel Heart (1987)

10/26 Mardi Gras Indians and Second Line Parades
(ER#15: “Mardi Gras Indians and Second Lines”) Scenes from HBO series Treme

10/28 “Masking” as Indians: An Invented Tradition Driven by the Spirit of Resistance
(ER#16: “We Won’t Bow Down”) RC#7 due Treme clips
11/2 New Orleans as City of the Dead, City of the Good Life: Jazz Funerals
(ER#17: “In Rhythm with the Spirit”)  
Treme clips

11/4 Cultural Authenticity and Appropriation in Treme
(ER#18A-18B: “Begin Again” & “Treme’s Big Problem: Authenticity”)  
RC#8 due  
Treme clips

11/9 Preserving New Orleans’ Culture after Katrina: Saving the City’s “Soul”
Essay #3 due: In Why New Orleans Matters, Tom Piazza notes that jazz funerals combine grief and revelry, solemnity and celebration, and that the funeral procession provides a “map of a profound relationship to the grief that is a part of life.” After viewing the jazz funerals featured in Treme and described in the works that we’ve read, assess Piazza’s claim that the rituals of the jazz funeral “contain the opposites that are a part of life in a way that allows the individual, and the community, to function with style and grace, even wit, under the most adverse circumstances.” While jazz funerals are a reminder of mortality, how might they help residents rebuild their lives and communities after Hurricane Katrina?

V. Sensing the Sacred in Charleston: Gullah/Geechee Religion and Music

11/11 Encountering Ghosts in Charleston’s Market: Making the Familiar Seem Strange
(Talking to the Dead: pp. xiii-xix, 1-4, 16-31)  
RC#9 due

11/16 “Ah Tulk to de Dead All de Time”: What does it mean to “talk” to the “dead?”

11/18 African Foods and Sacred Stories Retold in Daughters of the Dust
(ER#20: “Repositioning: Center & Margin in Daughters of the Dust)  
RC#10 due
Daughters of the Dust, pt. II

11/23 The Lowcountry Clap and African American Spirituals: Trance and Dance
(Talking to the Dead, chapter 4: “Sendin’ Up my Timbah”) Finish Daughters of the Dust
11/25 **Thanksgiving Break** (go home, give thanks, eat a feast with your family)

**Our last two classes will resume online**

11/30 **Penultimate Lesson**: *Celebrating the Dead and the Cost of Preserving the Past*
- **Major questions**: What role does music (especially spirituals) play in the ecstatic experiences that take place in church? Do you think that the Gullah practice of “Seekin’” could be revived for young people today? Would talking to the dead make more sense if our culture today treated death as part of life rather than as two “separate worlds?”
- **Reading**: *Talking to the Dead* chapter 5 “Lived Memory”
- **Assignment**: Read Chapter 5 then review the Notes and VoiceThread on this topic
  - Post to Penultimate Lesson thread **by 12 noon** before Zoom class
  - Participate in Zoom class scheduled during regular course time (1:45 pm)

12/2 **Final Lesson**: *Amazing Grace: Full Circle at the “Sacred Space” of TD Arena*
- **Reading**: *Talking to the Dead*, Epilogue: “Between the Living and the Dead”; Obama’s Eulogy
- **Assignment**: Read Epilogue and Notes on Obama’s Eulogy
  - Watch YouTube clip of Obama’s Eulogy
  - Post to Final Lesson thread **by 12 noon** before Zoom class
  - Participate in our last Zoom class when we wrap up the course, discuss what you learned from this class and the Final Exam essay

President Obama sings “Amazing Grace” at College of Charleston’s T.D. Arena (6/26/2015)

12/12 **Final Exam from 3:30-5:30 pm online** (study Review Sheet and write take-home essay)
Sources for ER Articles on OAKS


Terms to Review for Quizzes and Exams (next page)

The study of different religions is a lot like studying a foreign language: gaining “religious literacy” occurs after acquiring a new vocabulary of key terms used in each religion as well as developing mastery of the technical terms that scholars use in their study of these religions and their location in the US South.
Below are terms that you must know in order to do well on the quiz and the two exams. Keep this list handy as you read the assignments and write down their meanings.

**Key terms in the Academic Study of Religion and Southern Outsider Art**

- Theology, Insider’s vs. Outsider’s perspectives on religion, empathy, bracketing
- Ethnocentrism, “making the strange seem familiar and the familiar seem strange,” body rituals
- Half-body, religious people as technologists, technology and forgetfulness
- Elephant & Blind Men parable, hip-hop Virgin Mary, visual culture, iconoclasm, idolatry
- Orthodox vs. “Outsider” religion, sacred vs. profane, pilgrimage, sacred narratives & story-shaped worlds
- Faith vs. irony & cynicism, *re-legere* vs *re-ligare*, intra-mental vs. extra-mental idea
- Golgotha, narrative arrangement of space, paradox of the sacred, gaps in Noah narrative
- Apocalypse, cosmic dualism, proselytize, Book of Revelation, New Jerusalem
- Harry Crews, Southern Gothic, possum and bird stories, conjuring, blood as symbol
- Pentecostal, speaking in tongues, gift of the Holy Spirit, social marginality & religious vision
- Creativity as religious devotion, production vs. sacred creation, “spiritual authenticity,” Biblical literalism
- Religious re-creation, nostalgia, born again experience, memory and myth

**Soulful Sounds and Flavorful Foods of the South**

- Religious functions of drumming, mystical at-one-ment, ephemeral drumbeats
- Shaman, ecstatic soul travel, spirit possession, enthusiasm, trance, collective self-transcendence
- West African spirituality, call and response, crossroads, voodoo, loa/lwa, emotional catharsis in the Blues

**New Orleans Voodoo, Jazz Religion, and “Masking” as Indians**

- Code Noir, Cajun, Creole, Congo Square, WWOZ
- Voodoo, Catholic-African syncretism, ancestral spirits, vèvé, gris-gris, Marie Laveau
- Faubourg Treme, second line, jazz funeral, improvisation, Kermit Ruffins, Dr John
- Indian masking, invented tradition, Indian Red, Chief “Tootie” Montana, Congo Nation
- Cities of the Dead, Social Aid & Pleasure Clubs, All Saints Day, Gede spirits, trickster
- Cultural authenticity vs. appropriation, preservation purists, Bounce-Brass Band fusion, Lil Calliope
- Al Sharpton, Black Men of Labor, Sheldon Alexander, Beatitudes, top-down vs. bottom-up revitalization

**Sensing the Sacred in Charleston: Gullah-Geechee Religious Practice**

- Manigault’s insider/outsider status, Africanisms, Gullah Geechee, tide metaphor, “lived religion”
- Talking to the dead, Holy Spirit vs. ancestral spirits, *griot*, *Daughters of the Dust*, Nana Peazant
- Yenenga/Caroline White, buckra, seekin,’ Lowcountry clap, cyclical time, polyrhythms, call & response
- Black Church as “hush harbor,” Mother Emanuel, *Amazing Grace*, cultural commodification
RELS 120.01 Religion, Art & Culture/SOST 175.01 Religions in the U.S. South Fall 2020
“Searching for the Sacred, the Strange, and the Substance of Faith in the South” (M/W 4-5:15 pm)

About Me…

I grew up on the west coast in beautiful Santa Barbara California, went to Reed College in Portland Oregon (where I majored in religion), earned a MA degree in religious studies at UC Santa Barbara before I moved to Ann Arbor Michigan to pursue degrees in Buddhist Studies (I have a PhD in B.S.!). Since graduating from college, I have spent many years living in Buddhist monasteries and traveling throughout India, especially in the Himalayas of North India. But I’ve also explored the Appalachian mountains in NC and spent time exploring New Orleans, one of my favorite cities. When not at work, I enjoy watching sports (especially CofC basketball games—go Cougs!), biking, canoeing, and hiking in the mountains, and going on long road trips in the South, in the Pacific Northwest, and in Canada.

I joined the Department of Religious Studies at CofC in 1999, where I was hired to teach courses in Asian religions (Religion and Society in India and Tibet, Buddhist and Hindu Traditions, Religions of China and Japan, Sacred Texts of the East, Tibetan Buddhism). But I also teach thematic courses like this one on “Religion, Art & Culture” or “Religions in the U.S. South,” “Religion and Globalization,” and “Religion and Violence.”

Learning about different religions should be an intellectual adventure that engages the imagination, and I have chosen reading material and films (like those featured below) that I hope you will find fascinating. I expect students to come prepared and make meaningful contributions to our class discussions, whether those take place in class or on Zoom. If you are experiencing challenges that make it difficult for you to do so, I encourage you to meet with me privately (in person or on zoom) so that we can work together to develop a solution.