

## **Elective Course Descriptions for Fall 2015**

These are descriptions for courses that are either not in the Bulletin or have a new permanent number. Please let Susan Robinson know if you have any questions.

### **Biblical Studies**

#### **BIB 611 Readings in Koine Greek: *Selections from Revelation***

Katherine Shaner

1 credit hour; **permission of the instructor (POI)**

Students will read selections from Revelation and review grammatical concepts that are important for reading New Testament texts.

#### **BIB 616 Myths of Creation**

Neal Walls

3 credit hours

This course explores a variety of ancient and “primitive” mythological texts concerned with the origins of the cosmos, the gods, and humanity. Selections from Hindu, Buddhist, Native American, Babylonian, Egyptian, Hebrew, Greek, Persian, and Norse mythology are examined within their respective cultures as well as in a comparative context. Attention is given to various anthropological and psychological theories of myth and literary methods of myth analysis. We also explore Genesis 1–3 and the creative reinterpretation of the Biblical images of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The course concludes with a consideration of the survival of myth in the postmodern world and the relationship of the mythological imagination to recent scientific explanations of universal origins and cosmology.

#### **BIB 790A The Book of Revelation**

Katherine Shaner

3 credit hours; **prerequisite: BIB 541**

From visions of heavenly worship to visions of a renewed creation, from fantasmic monsters to epic battles, the book of Revelation remains one of the most enigmatic texts in our scriptural canon. In the first half of this course, students will explore the historical context, including contemporaneous apocalyptic literature, archaeological materials, and early Christian uses of the Revelation of John. The second half of the course will turn to an examination of modern interpretations of Revelation found in popular literature (e.g. *Left Behind* series), political discourses, and contemporary Christianity. We will focus on how these interpretations manifest theologically and ethically in ministry.

### Denominational Studies

#### **MIN 647 Episcopal Church Studies: Sacramental Theology & Liturgics**

**Cross listed with MIN 790C Lutheran Church Studies**

Leon Spencer

3 credit hours; TBA

An exploration of the heritage and current theology of the sacraments and worship of the Episcopal Church. The course is a prerequisite for Episcopal students preparing for General Ordination Exams.

### Historical Studies

#### **HIS 790A Salvation & Evolution: The Scopes Trial, 1925 and Beyond**

Bill Leonard

1 credit hour; *weekend of September 11 – 12, 2015*

This one-credit course explores the history of the famous Scopes “Monkey” Trial as it occurred in Dayton, Tennessee, in the summer of 1925. The trial took place after the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) convinced Dayton public school teacher, John Scopes, to intentionally violate the Tennessee anti-evolution law in order to provoke a legal confrontation. When *Tennessee v. Scopes* came to trial, the ACLU secured the services of nationally-known attorney and public agnostic, Clarence Darrow, to defend the teacher. Supporters of the law enlisted William Jennings Bryan, populist Democratic presidential candidate, conservative Presbyterian, and master orator, to defend the state’s case. The trial highlighted debates over the nature of science and religion, public education, fundamentalism and liberalism, and modernity in early 20<sup>th</sup> century America. Ninety years later, *Tennessee v. Scopes* remains a much mythologized case study in the early stages of controversies that continue to rage over Darwinism, Creationism, Secularism, Evangelicalism, Politics, and Protestant privilege in 21<sup>st</sup> century America. This course explores those issues with particular concern for the science/religion debates then and now.

#### **HIS 790B Violence and the World’s Religions**

Earl Crow

3 credit hours

The course will provide students with a comparative study of violence in the tenets, attitudes, and practices of selected world’s religions. Topics will include war, terrorism, punishment for nonbelievers, gender abuse, and the death penalty. Students will use a comparative approach and will review the global effects of religions. The course will provide ministerial students a strong knowledge base and an understanding of the power of faith.

## **Ministerial Studies**

### **MIN 561 Faith, Food, & Health: Navigating the Intersections in Community**

Mark Jensen

3 credit hours; *foundation course for Food & Faith and Faith & Health of the Public Concentrations*

This course is required for students pursuing either concentration in Well-Being and Religious Leadership (Food and Faith or Faith and Health). It develops leadership skills applicable to either congregational or not-for-profit ministries. It utilizes interdisciplinary conceptual lenses and methods to introduce participants to food systems and health systems as overlapping "loci" for understanding brokenness and cultivating *shalom* in community. Students will interact with community leaders, local data, and faith-based initiatives working at these intersections.

### **MIN 572 Introduction to Urban Ministry**

Frank Dew

3 credit hours

This course will focus on the theological grounding for doing urban ministry, along with various local expressions of urban ministry based in churches and in community ministries. We will conclude by examining the connections between ministries of compassion and ministries of justice. The purpose of the course is to help students develop their own theology of urban ministry.

### **MIN/THS 672 Interfaith in Winston-Salem (cross listed)**

Michelle Voss Roberts

1 credit hour; *dates: August 28, October 23, December 4, 2015; POI due to possible scheduling conflicts*

Increasingly, leaders of faith communities are called upon to respond to issues related to religious diversity. This course seeks to prepare students to for this task through experiential engagement in interfaith dialogue and critical reflection on these experiences. Winston-Salem's vibrant interfaith culture offers many opportunities to develop skills in dialogue, including topical dialogues, interfaith contemplation, service projects, and storytelling. Students will attend a selection of events throughout the semester and reflect on them through course readings, journals, and class meetings.

### **MIN 790A Race, Gender and Religious Imagination (updated title and description)**

Veronice Miles

3 credit hours

Drawing upon Maria Harris' assertion that "the heart of teaching is the imagination" and Paul Ricoeur's claim that "in imagining possibilities, human beings act as prophets of their own existence," this course explores the impact of images, myths and ideologies that are prevalent in church and society upon religious imagination, formation and teaching practices in communities of faith. The course is particularly concerned with historical and popular representations of race and gender in U.S. culture and

in Christian religious tradition(s) and their impact upon persons and communities' ability to love God, neighbor and themselves and engage in practices that promote wholeness and wellbeing. The course aims to help students deconstruct negating images, myths and ideologies as well as identify life-affirming representations within and without the Christian religious tradition that can inform the development of pedagogical strategies and curricula that embody love, faith, hope, justice, peace and hospitality as formative religious practices.

**MIN 790B *Wait...You want me to lead the singing??* – Pastoral Leadership in Congregational Song**

Deborah Carlton Loftis

1 credit hour; ***weekend of October 23-24, 2015***

Congregational singing is an important part of Christian worship. It is one of the ways that congregants participate actively and regularly in corporate worship. What worshipers sing together, they remember deeply. Shared songs shape faith and influence the language through which that faith is articulated. Thus the content of the songs in worship is critically important, as is the extent to which worshipers sing with devotion and enthusiasm. Early in their careers, however, pastors often serve congregations without theologically trained musicians – or perhaps with no trained musicians at all. How then shall the pastor encourage and lead the congregation's song? This weekend course will offer opportunities for theological reflection on the role of song in the life of the congregation and provide a supportive environment in which to develop practical skills in choosing and leading congregational songs.

**MIN 790D Water and Health**

F. Bailey Green

3 credit hours; elective for Faith & health of the Public Concentration

Water is a powerful symbol and ritual element in Christianity and other religions. It is essential for life. Safe drinking water and sanitation are essential for human health, environmental health and global health and are, therefore, basic human needs and human rights. Within the Faith and Health of the Public Concentration, students in this course will explore water and sanitation, public health and environmental health sciences, and explore the interconnections among water, health, and faith. They will deepen their understanding and engagement with environmental theology, environmental stewardship, environmental health, environmental ethics, environmental justice, waterborne disease health disparities among the poor especially women and children, and the nexus of water, health, and faith.

## **Spirituality**

### **SPI 670 Spirituality & Fiction Writing**

Stacia Brown

1 credit hour; ***weekend of October 9 – 10, 2015***

This course undertakes fiction-reading and fiction-writing exercises using a writers-workshop format. Students will study the contributions of established fiction writers who grapple explicitly with religion or theology in their novels and stories. We will work collaboratively to strengthen our own original short stories and creative work. Examining our writing together will challenge us to retrieve the art and the discipline of storytelling for ministry and theological education.

### **SPI 790A Spirituality of Money: Holistic Financial Planning & Christian Spiritual Practices**

Nancy Wiens

1 credit hour; ***Fall Break: Thursday, October 15, and Friday, October 16, 2015***

The US economy's focus on supply and demand assigns value based on scarcity and possession. The economy of the Kingdom of Heaven, as well as we can tell from scripture and lived experience, understands value based on God cherishing every created thing as Beloved and God creating such that everything belongs, as an interconnected whole. Followers of The Way in a world shaped by capitalism need resources and practices to navigate those two economies.

Whatever we practice shapes our lives from the minutest levels in a human being to the macro levels of culture and nature. This course explores personal and corporate Christian spiritual practices as daily ways to develop inner and outer resources that infuse our interactions with money with Kingdom economy values. It explores the wisdom of incarnational Christian spirituality, in dialogue with permaculture and holistic financial planning, for the purpose of inviting students to

- Know themselves as the Beloved of God, who belong in the world; and
- Develop conscious life practices that nourish their relationship with the divine, themselves, and their neighbors, both human and natural, and that free them to engage money as an expression of those sacred relationships.

### **SPI 790B Sabbath as Spiritual Practice**

Chris Copeland

1 credit hour; ***second part-of-term, October 22 – December 3, 2015***

This course introduces students to some historical, biblical, theological and spiritual foundations of Sabbath and Sabbath-keeping. Students will learn and experience different ways of engaging Sabbath as a spiritual practice. They will explore the intersection of Sabbath as part of their personal spiritual life and Sabbath as a practice of ministry.

## **Theological Studies**

### **MIN/THS 672 Interfaith in Winston-Salem (cross listed)**

Michelle Voss Roberts

1 credit hour; **dates: August 28, October 23, December 4, 2015; POI due to possible scheduling conflicts**

Increasingly, leaders of faith communities are called upon to respond to issues related to religious diversity. This course seeks to prepare students to for this task through experiential engagement in interfaith dialogue and critical reflection on these experiences. Winston-Salem's vibrant interfaith culture offers many opportunities to develop skills in dialogue, including topical dialogues, interfaith contemplation, service projects, and storytelling. Students will attend a selection of events throughout the semester and reflect on them through course readings, journals, and class meetings. (POI due to overlap with other scheduled courses. Please email Susan Robinson to register.)

### **THS 790A Theology & Disability**

Michelle Voss Roberts and Jill Crainshaw

3 credit hours

Persons with disabilities are helping theologians to rethink Christian assumptions about God, humanity, and the church. They are also helping ministry practitioners to make worship more inclusive and hospitable to all people. This course will consider how Christian theology can overcome traditional exclusions and affirm persons with disabilities as created fully in the image of God. It will explore the distinct challenges and opportunities created by different kinds of disability. We will ask what practices can help Christians diminish fear and obliviousness toward others. The seminar will explore these questions through contemporary theological work on disability and conversations with guest speakers. Flexible Friday meetings will allow several field trips in the community. (We will not meet every Friday. Friday meetings will not conflict with Dr. Voss Roberts' "Interfaith in Winston-Salem" course.)

### **THS 790B Process Theology**

Ruslan Elistratov

3 credit hours

This course will explore distinctive ideas of process theology and their relevance for Christian faith and diverse contexts in today's world. After surveying the core doctrines of process theology, we will focus on a more in-depth exploration of its main contributions in the following five areas: 1) how process thinkers seek to reconcile theism and science and integrate them into a coherent worldview; 2) the problem of evil and suffering; 3) how process thought can support and inspire liberative praxis and social activism; 4) the impact process doctrines of the ultimate reality have been making in the area of interreligious dialogue; and 5) the promise process theology holds in the face of the moral relativism of postmodern culture.

### **THS 790C God and the Cosmos**

Kevin Jung

1 credit hour; *first class meeting will be August 26, 2015 at 11:00 am in Wingate room 202; weekend course November 6-8, 2015 – travel*

When did it all begin? How vast is it? Why is it expanding? Will it ever end? What is our place in it? These big questions about the nature of the cosmos have been around as far as the history of human beings goes, and both science and religion have been proposing cosmological theories about them. In this course, students will explore scientific facts and theories about the cosmos, while thinking about their implications for theology.

**Course Structure:** This is a one-credit course consisting of a field trip and reading assignments/papers. The field trip will include a full tour of the Kennedy Space Center in Florida and a visit to a roof-top observatory at Eastern Florida State College's planetarium for stargazing and amateur astronomy. Students will be able to use one of the largest public telescopes in Florida — a 24" Ritchey-Chretien reflector. All basic costs involved in the field trip (airfare, housing, ground transportation, and admission fees), excluding meals, will be fully paid for by the AAAS grant. The course enrollment limit will be set at 20.

### **THS 790D Latin American Liberation Theology**

Elizabeth Gandolfo

3 credit hours

This course offers students a contextual and theological overview of the body of thought broadly construed as Latin American Liberation Theology. The course begins by introducing the social, historical, and ecclesial contexts in which liberation theology emerged. It then analyzes the mutual influence between liberation theology and the Catholic church in Latin America at both grassroots and magisterial levels. The bulk of the course then proceeds to focus on the work of several major figures in Latin American liberation theology, paying special attention to their respective social-ecclesial contexts (including a brief look at the U.S. Hispanic/Latin@ context). In the final four weeks of the term, we examine some major critiques of Latin American liberation theology, analyze liberative elements in the leadership of Pope Francis, and assess the future of liberation theology in Latin America and beyond.