UNDERGRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTION

Term: Spring 2015
Instructor: Dr. Joshua Ezra Burns
Course #: THEO 4520/5520
Section: 101/101
Course Title: Jewish Thought and Practice

Description:

The purpose of this class is to survey major theological and ritual dimensions of Jewish religious practice from its origins in classical antiquity to its diverse expressions in the present day. Envisioning Judaism as a multifarious historical phenomenon, students will be introduced to a variety of texts and ideas with the goal of achieving an informed and sympathetic understanding of the Jewish experience through the ages. Major topics to be explored include classical and modern Jewish conceptions of God, the Torah, and Israel, the Jewish liturgical calendar, and the Jewish life cycle. Particular attention will be paid to areas of contact and confluence between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

The course will follow a hybrid lecture/seminar format. Undergraduate students will be graded on the basis of attendance and class participation, regular quizzes, a research paper approximately 10 to 12 pages in length, and a final examination. Graduate students will be expected to undertake more substantial research projects with curricular requirements to be determined in consultation with the instructor. The course is designed for students with little or no background in the study of Judaism, although students with prior knowledge of the subjects are encouraged to enroll as well. All reading assignments will be in English.