

## **Overview Courses at CERES in English Language (Winter Term 2021/22) – Religious Studies**

**Please note:** *Due to the uncertain Covid situation in Germany, the courses are currently planned online. However, it cannot be guaranteed that all of them will actually take place online; it is possible that some will switch to face-to-face teaching at short notice (see course descriptions for details). If in doubt, please contact the lecturer directly.*

### **Introduction to Religious Studies – Dr. Jens Schlamelcher, Friday 10-11, Start 15.04.**

This course aims to introduce Master Students with no background in Religious Studies to this scientific subject. Broadly speaking, religious Studies is divided into two branches, one with a theoretical and social scientific and another one with a historical and philological orientation. While the M.A. program at the RUB covers both branches, this course will focus on the first and cover the following topics:

- the historical emergence and distinction of the scientific study of religion from theology and the enlightenment critique of religion
- theoretical approaches aiming to answer the question: what is religion?
- Theoretical approaches aiming to answer the question: how does religion, understood as a social fact, distinguish itself from other 'social facts'?
- Theoretical approaches aiming to clarify the complex relation and entanglement between 'religion' and the 'scientific study of religion'

In general, this course includes a broad overview on theoretical approaches in the social science and humanities and their relevance for the scientific of religion.

### **Theories and Approaches in the Study of Religion – Dr. Maren Freudenberg, Tuesday 14-16, start: 19.10.**

The systematic study of religion examines religious phenomena from diverse theoretical perspectives, including those of classical sociology, but also of cultural anthropology, economics, social constructivism, modernity theory, and postcolonialism. This course introduces students to various theories and approaches used in the study of religion, revealing manifold influences from other disciplines as well as the importance of religion as a research object in these disciplines. The theories and approaches will be discussed critically to foster a theoretically orientated perspective on religion. Please note that the course language is English and that it will most likely take place virtually.

### **Qualitativ Empirical Methods in the Study of Religion – Dr. Maren Freudenberg, Wednesday 10-12, start: 13.10.**

The course is an introduction to qualitative methods of empirical social research that are used in the study of religion to collect and analyze data. Students will learn how to design a research project, including developing a specific research question to be pursued from a social-scientific angle. By conducting their own individual research projects, students will be familiarized with methods of data gathering, particularly conducting interviews and observations. In a second step, they will learn to analyze their first-hand empirical data by means of coding and categorizing, thereby being introduced to methodologies such as Grounded Theory, qualitative content analysis, as well as visual and textual sequence analysis. Finally, they will learn how to adequately present their research results in the form of a research paper.

This course will be held in English and will take place virtually.

Religion and cultural heritage in South Asia – Jun.-Prof. Dr. Jessie Pons, Block seminar: 14.-18.02., 10-16

Description will be added soon: <https://vvz.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/campus/all/event.asp?gguid=0x79CA059612E840329750B9CBCA6BDE91&from=&tabID=2&tguid=0x6BD942F2335C413E99E5D61BE54377E5&objgguid=NEW&lang=en>

The Power of Pictures: Visual Culture and Religious Practices in Modern India – Dr. Anne Hartig, Friday 10-12, start: 15.10.

Pictures not only play an increasingly important role in our world, they are also prominent objects in religious practice. In the context of religion, pictures produce a sense of transcendental presence through which they gain a special status. Pictures are objects of everyday use. They are seen, shown, displayed, venerated, shared, widely circulated, abandoned, exposed to censorship and participate in rituals. Stressing the fundamental role pictures play in the larger fabric of religious, cultural, social and political life, this visually rich course examines pictures with focus on modern and contemporary Hinduism through various new media such as prints, photographs, film, and mobile photographs on the social media platform Instagram. For instance, we will look at how the popular inexpensive prints (also known as “calendar art,” “god posters,” “bazaar art,” and “god photos”) came into being, learn about their production and distribution, and analyze their iconography and aesthetics. Further, we will look at photographs of prominent religious figures, such as Vivekananda, Ramakrishna, Sai Baba, Mahatma Gandhi and Ambedkar, which will help us to discuss the religious, social and communal function of pictures, as well as their reception and the role they play as means of identity formation. Beyond equipping the students with essential tools and knowledge in studying pictures, it will offer students an apt point of entry into popular religious practices.

To participate in this course, students need internet access, a computer with webcam and microphone. Also, it will be preferable for students to have an instagram account so as to access to some of the visual material that we will refer to in class. Students are expected to regularly attend and actively participate in class. Students will find the course easier if they have basic knowledge about India and Hinduism.

Islam and ritual – Dr. George Warner, Monday 14-16, start: 18.10.

Description will be added soon: <https://vvz.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/campus/all/event.asp?gguid=0x24338F05E7434B36B1A7EBAF1C598290&from=&tabID=2&tguid=0x6BD942F2335C413E99E5D61BE54377E5&objgguid=NEW&lang=en>

Jews, Christians and Muslims in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods – Prof. Dr. Alexandra Cuffel, Wednesday 12-14, start: 13.10.

Description will be added soon: <https://vvz.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/campus/all/event.asp?gguid=0x5399B997CD2445E3BE385B3D9C98D260&from=&tabID=2&tguid=0x6BD942F2335C413E99E5D61BE54377E5&objgguid=NEW&lang=en>

Ways that Never Parted? Jewish-Christian Relations in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages – Prof. Dr. Alexandra Cuffel, Wednesday 14-16, start: 13.10.

Description will be added soon: <https://vvz.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/campus/all/event.asp?gguid=0xED77FE1AAF2A476AAAB9E244FB0A0C2C&from=&tabID=2&tguid=0x6BD942F2335C413E99E5D61BE54377E5&objgguid=NEW&lang=en>

Gendering Fables and Travelling Tricksters: Mqamat (rhymed prose) in medieval Arabic and Hebrew Literature – Prof. Dr. Alexandra Cuffel, Thursday 10-12, start: 14.10.

Description will be added soon: <https://vvz.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/campus/all/event.asp?gguid=0xEAE29A12506741E3AF5E9D3851CD2433&from=&tabID=2&tqid=0x6BD942F2335C413E99E5D61BE54377E5&objguid=NEW&lang=en>

Popular Culture of Early Modern Religious Encounter – Prof. Dr. Alexandra Cuffel, Prof. Dr. Adam Knobler, Thursday 16-18, start: 14.10.

Description will be added soon: <https://vvz.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/campus/all/event.asp?gguid=0xF55C7443E902488793A9D5421187D81D&from=&tabID=2&tqid=0x6BD942F2335C413E99E5D61BE54377E5&objguid=NEW&lang=en>

Religion and Ancient Globalization – Dr. Serena Autiero, Wednesday 14-16, start: 13.10.

This seminar examines the value of globalization theories for the study of religious interconnections across the ancient world with a specific focus on Eurasia. The seminar explores how globalization thinking may enhance our understanding of the spread of religions in antiquity, in a wider context made of trade networks, diffusion of global fashions, migration of technologies, public and private initiatives, and wider cultural exchanges.

Complex connectivities, that is to say sustained and significant links between peoples across the globe, extend well back into human history. The conceptual value of Globalization is that it demands us to think beyond the economic factors, grasping the cultural significance of the movement of goods, peoples and ideas as a result of trans-regional interconnections. Such connectivities had profound significance for various ancient societies.

Utilising the theoretical tools of Globalization, students will be stimulated to consider more complex, nuanced and multifaceted ways in which the mobility of goods, the migration of peoples, and transfer of knowledge helped to develop an increasingly interconnected world. Humanity constantly showed an urge and an incredible capacity to connect with distant lands and people, this seminar is particularly devoted to the analysis of the role of religion in the creation of networks of trust and of a common language to facilitate and enhance interconnections. Adopting concepts and methodologies from the study of contemporary societies adds value to the understanding of early human history.

Students will approach the various themes from a multidisciplinary point of view, ranging from world history, archaeology, art history and the social sciences. Sources will be provided in various media.

The detailed program and list of assignments will be distributed during the introductory meeting.

Basic knowledge of the religious history of Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and/or Islam is expected.

African Christianities: The awakening of the Spirit(s) – Daniel Jara Jhayya, Thursday 16-18, start: 14.10.

The seminar deals with the topic of African Christianities, its historical background, spread, and the methodological consideration for its study that it poses. It deepens into the Christian African identities, spiritualities, imaginaries, and their emphasis on proselytism, church planting, and church growth. Furthermore, it analyses the empowerment effect that a Pentecostal/Charismatic spirituality can produce among believers. Subsequently, the seminar focuses on the corporeal dimension of Christian experiences as the site of religious struggle, and the role of the Spirit and spirits in African religious traditions, the gifts and baptism of the Holy Spirit, and other spiritually-based experiences in these churches as child prophesies, revivals, miraculous healings, “diabolic” possessions, and spiritual battles over sorcery and witchcraft. Finally, the seminar studies the processes of delocalization/relocalization of identities among migrant Christian African believers in the global North, and the prospects of Christianity in Africa in the XXI century.

Resonating Religion: About the Intersection of Music and Religion – Dunja Sharbat Dar M.A., Tuesday 10-12, start: 19.10.

Music and religion are tightly intermingled. Religious traditions from all over the earth make, use and consume music as part of their religious practice. At the same time, musicians have been inspired to write about religion for centuries, and it is no coincidence that many old and new popular songs deal with religion in one way or the other.

Where do religion and music intersect? Why and how do they intermingle by whom? We seek to find answers to these questions during the course of this seminar. By taking into consideration recent phenomena and some historical accounts, we will investigate cases of religious and musical meeting. From the perspective of the study of religious aesthetics, we will look at contemporary Christian worship music, Buddhist chanting, Islamic singing, Jewish songs, indigenous religious musicking, as well as popcultural use of religious themes in contemporary music. Additionally, theoretical approaches from sound studies, religious aesthetics and the senses, atmosphere and sociology will be taken as a basis for discussion.

[Please note: the selection of topics is subject to change.]

If possible, we will have face 2 face meetings, otherwise weekly Zoom meetings.

Participation in this course is limited to 15 students. Please write a short motivational letter (about 250-400 words) to Dunja Sharbat Dar ([dunja.sharbatdar@ruhr-uni-bochum.de](mailto:dunja.sharbatdar@ruhr-uni-bochum.de)) stating your personal interest in the course topic until September 30, 2021. The motivational letter should be written in English or German.

Sanskrit I – Tillo Detige M.A., Wednesday 12-14, start: 13.10.

Sanskrit is an Indo-European language which has served as the ritual, devotional, scriptural, literary, philosophical, and scholarly language of Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain traditions since two millennia and longer. It has been of lasting impact on the cultures, religions, and languages of South, Southeast, East, and Central Asia. Unsurprisingly then, there exists an inexhaustible body of Sanskrit texts, and far from being a 'dead' language, it remains alive in contemporary India and in globalized South Asian traditions.

In this course, students will develop a basic knowledge of Sanskrit, becoming familiar with the main points of grammar, building a practical vocabulary, and mastering the Devanagari script. Throughout, the course will maintain a special focus on traditional usages of Sanskrit in the acquisition of embodied religious knowledge through linguistic performance. For this, selected text fragments from various genres (mantras, hymns, ritual and devotional texts) and different traditions (Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Yoga) will be read and contextualized.

The course will be taught online and will use online resources and other materials which will be made available to the students. Classes will be held in English but the instructor also understands and speaks German.

Sanskrit II – Tillo Detige M.A., Wednesday 8-10, start: 13.10.

This course of intermediate Sanskrit is intended for students who have completed the CERES course 'Sanskrit I' or have comparable prior knowledge of Sanskrit grammar and vocabulary, including fluency in reading Devanagari script.

The course aims to complete the overview of Sanskrit grammar while reading fragments of epic Sanskrit, notably classics of religious literature like the Bhagavadgita and Ramayana. By the end of the course, students should have a firm command of the main points of Sanskrit grammar and an active knowledge of basic vocabulary, enabling them to independently work with Sanskrit materials.

The course will be taught online and will use online resources as well as other materials which will be made available to the students. Classes will be held in English but the instructor also understands and speaks German.

A reading course of advanced Sanskrit ('Sanskrit Lektüre') is planned to be organised at CERES in the winter semester 2021-22.

## **English on demand – Students may have to read texts in German, discussions take place in English if requested**

### Global Charismatic Christianity – Dr. Maren Freudenberg, Thursday 14-16, start: 14.10., English on demand

Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity is currently the fastest-growing Christian tradition across the world and counts more than 500 million adherents. In this course, students will be introduced to the various currents that comprise Charismatic Christianity across the globe, including classical Pentecostalism with its practices of speaking in tongues and miracle healings; charismatic strains in the Roman Catholic Church, known for its emphasis on mystical experiences of the divine; neo-Pentecostal redefinitions, such as megachurches focusing on prosperity theology; and neo-charismatic movements that introduce popular cultural elements such as modern Christian music and concert-like worship events into their churches. We will access these very diverse sub-traditions through the perspectives of both the anthropology of religion and the sociology of religion, with a special focus on the various social forms that play a role – individual church congregations and larger religious organizations, but also networks, events, and religious markets. In this way, students will be familiarized with global Charismatic Christianity both empirically – what is Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity? – and theoretically – How can we study it from an anthropological, sociological and religious studies point of view?

This course will take place virtually (most likely) and in English.

### East Asian Religions and the Chicago Congress of Religions (1893) – Dr. Licia Di Giacinto, Thursday 16-18, start: 14.10.

Description will be added soon: <https://vvz.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/campus/all/event.asp?objgguid=NEW&from=vvz&gguid=0x9BE3A37C7DD64E7D916105D1DEFCE7D1&mode=own&tguid=0x6BD942F2335C413E99E5D61BE54377E5&lang=en>

### Nestorian Christianity in China – Dr. Licia Di Giacinto, Friday 10-12, start: 15.10.

Description will be added soon: <https://vvz.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/campus/all/event.asp?gguid=0x69852199039D4A05A5FDB8D35329ACF5&from=&tabID=2&tguid=0x6BD942F2335C413E99E5D61BE54377E5&objgguid=NEW&lang=en>

### Daoism and Italian Fascism – Dr. Licia Di Giacinto, Friday 12-14, start: 15.10. (opened for M.A. only)

Description will be added soon: <https://vvz.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/campus/all/event.asp?gguid=0x98C5F4FB09C24798B857FEA7E1548BBB&from=&tabID=2&tguid=0x6BD942F2335C413E99E5D61BE54377E5&objgguid=NEW&lang=en>

### The Xiang'er commentary on the Laozi – Dr. Licia Di Giacinto, Thursday 14-16, start: 14.10. (opened for M.A. only)

Description will be added soon: <https://vvz.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/campus/all/event.asp?gguid=0x241147A38C2A42B8B65669929CFA463E&from=&tabID=2&tguid=0x6BD942F2335C413E99E5D61BE54377E5&objgguid=NEW&lang=en>

Introduction to Tibetan Religious History – Prof. Dr. Carmen Meinert, Monday 10-12, start: 18.10.

The religious history of Tibet is essentially the history of the establishment and development of Buddhism. However, throughout history - only partially successful - missionary attempts by Muslims (especially in western and northeastern Tibet) and Christians can be observed. The course offers an introduction to the development and contact dimension of the aforementioned religious networks from their beginnings to the present, especially in order to understand the significance of Tibet's religious history in the context of interrelationships with the neighboring Chinese and Indian empires.

The lessons are divided into an introduction to the respective epoch or current and joint work on translations of sources and secondary literature. In addition to the deepening of important aspects, the critical handling of secondary literature and translations will be practiced.

For the successful passing of the module part, the thorough preparation of the texts to be read, the regular attendance of the seminar and the active participation are recommended. At the beginning of the semester it will be discussed which further assignment will be required.

The seminar will be held online.

Reading of a Tibetan Manuscript from Central Asia – Prof. Dr. Carmen Meinert, Monday 8-10, start: 18.10.

In this class, a Tibetan manuscript from Central Asia will be read to provide insights into the spread of Tibetan Buddhism there. The two-semester Introduction to Classical Tibetan or equivalent prior knowledge is required for participation.

Performance Record:

Active participation and consistent preparation of readings is recommended. For East Asian Studies students, a willingness to prepare a written translation (for major credit) is required.

The seminar will be held online.

Conceptions of time in ancient and late antique religions – Prof. Dr. Kianoosh Rezanian, Tuesday 16-18, start: 19.10

Time is one of the enigmatic concepts of humanity. Different aspects such as the biological, cosm(ogon)ic, calendrical, social and ultimately the transcendental intersect at an abstract concept called time. In some religious themes such as eschatology or cosmogony, the concept of time is particularly emphasised. How time is imagined in a religion, e.g. how it runs, linearly, circularly, circulatory or spirally, is different in different religions and has consequences on or depends on the wider concepts of a religion.

This course deals with the concepts of time in Indian, Iranian and Mesopotamian cultural areas from the earliest evidence to the early Islamic period. We will systematically deal with the concept of time on the basis of the concepts of time in the Vedic religion, in Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism, the Mesopotamian religion and in Islam. The genesis of time abstraction, the emergence of time words and the development of time concepts are of particular interest. In the course, we will discuss cosmogonic, ritual and eschatological conceptions of time. In particular, the developmental processes of these conceptions of time will be studied in light of the contacts between these religions. A comparative approach will be practised in the course.

The seminar is aimed at both BA and MA students. The study of the literature provided for the sessions, active participation in the discussions, group work and short written or oral presentations are obligatory for the acquisition of the corresponding credit points.

Introduction to Middle Persian religions – Prof. Dr. Kianoosh Rezania, Tuesday 14-16, start: 19.10

The Iranian languages are chronologically divided into three Old, Middle and New Iranian groups. Each group is linguistically divided into four regionally marked categories: Northeastern, Southeastern, Northwestern and Southwestern. Middle Persian is a southwestern Middle Iranian language that evolved from Old Persian, the language of the Achaemenids, and from which New Persian developed in the first centuries after the Islamic conquest of Iran. Most evidence of this language comes from the Sasanian and early Islamic periods, and from the Zoroastrian, Manichaean and Christian religious fields. Thus, Middle Persian is an indispensable tool for the study of Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism. Various scripts were used to write the texts, especially the Pahlavi cursive script, the inscription Pahlavi script and the Manichaean script.

This course offers an introduction to the easy grammar of Middle Persian and an insight into the Pahlavi cursive script, which promotes brain gymnastics. It also provides the linguistic basis for analysing a non-European Indo-European language. In addition, students will find the opportunity to acquire some basic computer linguistic skills.

The course is aimed at both BA and MA students and enables interested and competent students to participate in the project "Zoroastrian Middle Persian: Digital Corpus and Dictionary (MPCD)", a long-term DFG project that has been running at Ceres since April 2021. The reading of the textbook and the preparation of the exercises are required for the acquisition of the corresponding credit points.

It is strongly recommended to take this course in parallel with the course "Zoroastrian-Middle Persian History of Religion".

Introduction the Zoroastrian-/ Middle Persian History of Religion – Prof. Dr. Kianoosh Rezania, Thursday 14-16, start: 14.10

The Zoroastrian Middle Persian corpus is the most extensive corpus of Middle Persian, and the Middle Persian corpus is the most extensive corpus of all Old or Middle Iranian languages. Therefore, the historical source material for Zoroastrian religious history in the Middle Persian period, i.e. 3rd-10th century CE, is relatively more productive than the other periods.

This course offers the reading of several text dividers of Middle Persian literature. We will deal with the processes of religious history found in these texts. In the course we will work with both translation and original text.

The course is aimed at BA and MA students and enables interested and competent students to participate in the project "Zoroastrian Middle Persian: Digital Corpus and Dictionary (MPCD)", a long-term DFG project that has been running at Ceres since April 2021. Active participation in the course and preparation of the reading material for each session is required for the acquisition of the corresponding credit points.

It is strongly recommended to take this course in parallel with the course "Introduction to Middle Persian".

**English and German – Courses held in English with a few German elements. It is advisable to contact the lecturer directly and ask whether German language skills are required.**

History of Religion of South Asia – Jun.-Prof. Dr. Jessie Pons, Wednesday 10-12, start: 13.10.

The lecture will be held in English, materials and quizzes on the platform Moodle will be in German. Students have to pass the quizzes in order to pass the course.

Description will be added soon: <https://vvz.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/campus/all/event.asp?gguid=0x4DB2DB91AA8C45F0ABDA3C1AD20958CE&from=vvz&mode=own&tabID=2&tguid=0x6BD942F2335C413E99E5D61BE54377E5&objguid=NEW&lang=en>

Introduction to Islam – Dr. George Warner, Tuesday 12-14, start: 19.10.

Description will be added soon: <https://vvz.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/campus/all/event.asp?gguid=0x177C7EC6B5894F86A14F71B6C1B80923&from=&tabID=2&tguid=0x6BD942F2335C413E99E5D61BE54377E5&objgguid=NEW&lang=en>

System Theory in the Study of Religion – Dr Jens Schlamelcher, Wednesday 16-18, start: 13.10.

Systems theory is one of the most important theoretical developments in the 20th century. As a pan-disciplinary approach, it is suitable as a general theory to build a bridge between natural sciences, humanities and technical sciences. In this seminar, central systems theoretical approaches will be studied and discussed, which take into account the social or psychological fact 'religion'.

Fundamentalism – Dr. Jens Schlamelcher, Monday 14-16, start: 18.10.

In public discourse, the term fundamentalism is usually applied uncritically and pejoratively to religious movements, sometimes even to entire religious traditions such as Islam. The aim of this seminar is to critically examine public discourses and to attempt a sociological approach to the topic of 'fundamentalism'. To this end, individual religious movements within different religious traditions will be examined and related to theoretical approaches. In addition to revealing the structures of fundamentalist discourses, the focus is also on the question of the conditions under which such movements arise.

Egypt, Nubia and Ethiopia in the high and late Middle Ages – Prof. Dr. Alexandra Cuffel (together with Dr. Verena Krebs), Thursday 14-16, start: 14.10.

Description will be added soon: <https://vvz.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/campus/all/event.asp?gguid=0x30F2F77C5CAE4E8EB10C224B50EBAE34&from=vvz&mode=own&tabID=2&tguid=0x6BD942F2335C413E99E5D61BE54377E5&objgguid=NEW&lang=en>