

## **Queerly Religious**

QSX/REL 357 | Spring 2017

### **Who is teaching our course?**

Professor William Robert

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### **What is our course about?**

Is religion queer? Could it be? What would it mean to be queerly religious? Our course is about these questions and our responses to them. To help us respond, we will examine ways in which religion and sexuality, and their materials and performances, do not stay still or in place but resist, escape, or elude easy determinations or fixed identities.

As we shape and reshape our responses, we will consider related questions. How do religions and sexualities interact? How do religions and sexualities affect, and effect, each other? How do religions and sexualities, these two modes of experience, form, deform, reform, and transform each other and the humans who inhabit them?

To respond to these questions, we will go on interdisciplinary and intersectional explorations. Our explorations will blend theoretical inquiry and concrete case study. Doing so will enrich our responses, as they become nuanced and textured. It will also give us senses of how plural, how pliable, “queerly religious” can be, as a nexus for understanding and action—and how plural, how pliable, religion and sexuality can be in what they mark and affect.

### **What do we hope to gain from our course?**

Our course materials, discussions, and activities work together in the service of our course’s learning goals:

- (1) to articulate, individually and collectively, how religion and sexuality work, what religion and sexuality do, and why religion and sexuality matter, in multiple contexts;

- (2) to interpret written and performed expressions of religion and sexuality using a variety of approaches, methods, and theories;
- (3) to explain the difficulties and possibilities of studying religion and sexuality as a mode of humanistic inquiry;
- (4) to develop critical and self-critical habits of reading, thinking, and writing;
- (5) to demonstrate how these habits reflect on the humanities' relevance to contemporary ethical and social issues.

### **What skills will we develop?**

Critical reading, thinking, and writing skills are probably the most important and most applicable skills you can learn in college. Because they are skills, they are learnable. But like any skill, they require practice. They can be learned, and ultimately mastered, if you are willing to devote time and effort to practicing them. Think of these critical skills as investments that require large initial deposits but that provide substantial returns with interest on those deposits. We will develop these skills in tandem as we develop 5 critical practices: examination, interpretation, consideration, communication, and reflection. These practices form our course's learning rubric and will guide our learning and our assessments of it.

### **What will we read?**

Sophokles, *Antigone* (9780941051255)

Additional texts will be available on Blackboard. Be sure to bring to class a paper copy of each text we are discussing that day.

### **How is our course organized?**

At heart, our course is a series of conversations: among our course materials and among ourselves. Our class meetings stage these conversations as live opportunities for interactive learning, with as many conversation partners as possible. Our course is *ours*, not only mine or yours. It is our responsibility to engage in these ongoing conversations with the materials and each other.