I. Course Description
The course invites students to explore recent interdisciplinary literatures on the subject of the visual cultures of religions in the United States and to present work that takes shape around critical readings of texts and/or objects related to this subject.

II. Course Opportunities and Requirements
A. Readings: This class is designed to address interdisciplinary research (in history, folklore, literary theory and criticism, religious studies, American studies) in the scholarship of the visual culture of religions. A key requirement for this course is the student’s critical engagement of assigned readings. Every student in the class is responsible for completing each week’s reading assignment before the class meeting. Individual students will lead discussion of texts; all class participants will contribute to analysis and discussion each week. Assignment of discussion leadership and specific readings will be made on the first day of class. In order to facilitate discussion of a broader range of materials, for some class sessions reading responsibilities will be distributed, with some students assigned to one text and some to another. In such cases, all students may be asked to read the introductory material for each assigned text.

B. Discussion Leadership: Students assigned to leadership roles for each week’s readings will come to class prepared to facilitate discussion. It may be useful to think of this task as, in part, a critical review of the reading in question. In addition to summarizing and critiquing key aspects of the author’s argument, discussion leaders will be expected to engage the class in conversation on closely related subjects. Students in leadership roles will arrange to make available in class, and when relevant, reproductions of major images under discussion.

C. Annotated Bibliography: Over the course of the semester, each member of the class will be expected to produce an annotated bibliography of course readings and other course-related materials. Each student’s bibliography will include, in addition to the readings that student is assigned, at least twenty selections of the student’s own choosing. Annotations may vary in length for different items but should represent assessment and description of key content and arguments, including a statement of the author’s thesis. Two paragraphs is a reasonable average length for required annotations. You may also wish to annotate other relevant books and articles you have read in a more summary fashion for inclusion in this bibliography. At the end of the semester, we will share these files so that all students have access to material assembled over the course of the semester.

D. Object(s) Assignment (Paper): In addition to participating in explorations of weekly readings, and producing an annotated bibliography, each student is expected to select an object, monument, or performance and to apply the semester’s experience by producing a 10-12 page
analysis/historical study of the object/subject they have selected. These may be short polished research pieces that present a specific interpretation and thesis or they may be refined outlines of the archival and methodological challenges presented by a particular object. Students will meet individually with the professor, once before spring break, and once after, to discuss progress on these projects.

III. Course Grades
Grades will be earned for performance in three areas:
Discussion leadership and overall class participation (one third)
Annotated bibliography (one third)
Final paper (one third)

IV. Course Calendar and Readings

Th 17 Jan. Introduction to the Course

Th 24 Jan. Defining Terms
Readings:

Th 31 Jan. The Visual Cultures of Religions in Public
Readings:
Th 7 Feb. Readings:  The “Popular” Cultures of Religions
● Annabel Jane Wharton, *Selling Jerusalem: Relics, Replicas, Theme Parks* (University of Chicago Press, 2006), read introduction and conclusion, as well as chapters four and five.

Th 14 Feb. Readings:  Representations of Muslim America
● Jodi Eichler-Levine and Rosemary R. Hicks, “As Americans Against Genocide”: The Crisis in Darfur and Interreligious Political Activism,” in *American Quarterly* special issue on *Religion and Politics in the Contemporary United States*, R. Marie Griffith and Melanie McAlister, 59 (September 2007), 711-735.

Th 21 Feb. Readings:  Shaping an Interdiscipline(?)

Th 28 Feb. Readings:  Construing Imagination(s)
● Robert Blair St. George, *Conversing by Signs: Poetics of Implication in Colonial


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<th>Date</th>
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<td>Th 6 Mar.</td>
<td>Visual/Material Tradition and Innovation</td>
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<td><em>Myer Myers: Jewish Silversmith in Colonial New York</em>, exhibition catalogue for traveling exhibition, organized by David L. Barquist, Yale University Art Gallery, with essays by Barquist, Jon Butler, and Jonathan D. Sarna.</td>
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<td>Th 13 Mar.</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK; No Class Session.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Th 20 Mar.</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK; No Class Session.</td>
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<td>Th 27 Mar.</td>
<td>Between and Beyond “Arts”</td>
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<td>Th 3 Apr.</td>
<td>Attend “Visual Exegesis” Exhibition Opening (part of Middle Passage Conversations: On Black Religion in the African Diaspora)</td>
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<td>Th 10 Apr.</td>
<td>Buildings, Space, and Place</td>
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Th 17 Apr.  Religion, Film, and Media Studies
Readings:

Th 24 Apr.  Aesthetic Hierarchies
Readings:

7:00 PM  Summary Session and dinner at promey/fallot home—Annotated Bibliographies and Papers Due