

**HIST 585-4: Special Topics in History:**

Topic: Religion, Mission & Empire

| Instructor | Day(s) | Time(s)        | Maximum Enrollment |
|------------|--------|----------------|--------------------|
| Schinker   | W      | 1:00 – 4:00 pm | 12                 |

**Semester Description:**

This course examines the history of religion and religious conversion in the modern period in the context of European empire. We will explore the upheaval in religious invention, creativity and conflict in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries regarding the sacred and its place in private life and public spaces. Drawing on social and cultural historical approaches to the study of religion, in addition to sociology and anthropology, we will examine religion as something that is experienced and shaped in social practice. In this vein, we will study conversion not just as a project of political and religious conquest but as a socio-cultural process with an eye to how converts exercised agency and developed strategies of resistance, negotiation, and survival. We will also use conversion as a way to study the construction, maintenance and transgression of social boundaries in empire (class, gender, race, ethnicity), and explore connected histories, cross-cultural interactions, and mingled identities.

We will study how the Christian missionary project became a key part of colonialism and nationalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and deeply affected Christianity at home as well as western projects and narratives of modernity. Through the lens of conversion and globalization, we will explore the rise of “world” religions, religious internationalisms, and religious humanitarianism. We will examine the imperial colony as an arena for debates on the location of religion in modernity, and the relationship of conquest and conversion. How has empire enabled new imaginations of community and how does this take form in the religious domain? How have empires and their mobility revolutions affected the ideas and practices of authority, community, and space among Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Hindu ethno-confessional groups? Overall, this seminar will offer graduate students a rich set of methods and approaches for studying religion, empire, secularisms, nation-building and modernization.

**Required Textbooks, Articles, and Resources:**

1. Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993)
2. Abigail Green, *Moses Montefiore: Jewish Liberator, Imperial Hero* (Harvard University Press, 2010)
3. David Blackbourn, *Marpingen: Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Bismarckian Germany* (1993)
4. Peter van der Veer, ed. *Conversion to Modernities: Globalization of Christianity* (Routledge, 1996)

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5. Eileen Kane, *Russian Hajj: Empire and the Pilgrimage to Mecca* (Cornell University Press, 2015)
6. Gauri Viswanathan, *Outside the Fold: Conversion, Modernity, and Belief* (Princeton University Press, 1998)
7. Christopher Clark, *The Politics of Conversion: Missionary Protestantism and the Jews in Prussia, 1728-1941* (1995)
8. Eliza Kent, *Converting Women: Gender and Protestant Christianity in Colonial South India* (Oxford University Press, 2004)
9. Ellie R. Schinker, *Confessions of the Shtetl: Converts from Judaism in Imperial Russia, 1817-1906* (Stanford University Press, 2016)
10. Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (UC Press, 1998)

**Grading:**

TBA