

RLST 015

DEATH



UC RIVERSIDE • FALL 2020 • M/W/F 1:00-1:50



DESCRIPTION

What happens when we die? How do we bury our dead? Religion offers a way to conceptualize the afterlife and a framework for mourning the dead. This course explores the interpretations of death and mourning among various religious traditions.

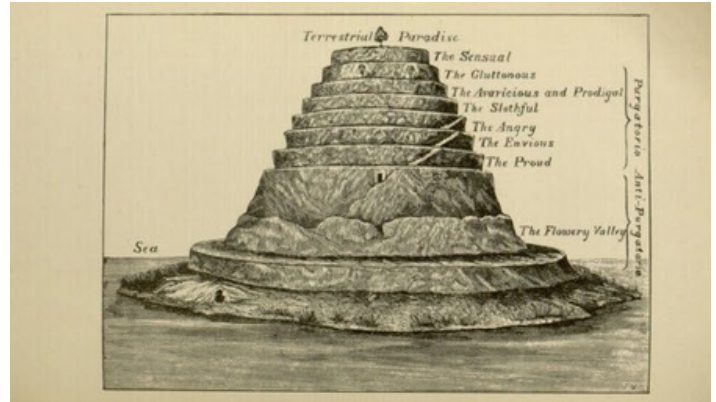
In light of current events, this course will also focus on the ways death has been interpreted in the history of the United States beginning with the Civil War.

Lectures will take place at the scheduled course time over Zoom. A Zoom link will be available on the Announcements page of iLearn.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Beyond the Threshold: Afterlife and Experiences in World Religions, Christopher M. Moreman (Rowman & Littlefield, 2008)

All other readings will be available online



EXPECTATIONS

This course offers an introduction to the study of death, and to religious studies in general. I do not expect students have prior knowledge about any of the traditions we cover or the way scholars study religion. That's what we're here to learn.

During this course, we will discuss difficult ideas, many of which will be new to you. Part of this class is working to build understanding accross diverse cultures and experiences. When you're confronted with something unfamiliar, I ask that you approach the subject with respect and inquiry.

OUTCOMES

Demonstrate an understanding of how diverse religious traditions conceptualize death.

Understand the way the religious, social, psychological, and cultural come together to respond to death.

Assess the way the Civil War shaped American religion and contemporary ideas about death.

Discuss the interactions between religion, death, and current events.

LATE WORK

Makeup quizzes will be allowed in the event of an emergency with documentation.

Paper proposal and final paper grades will be reduced by a letter grade for every day late.


INTEGRITY

All assignments in this course fall under University of California, Riverside Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures. For more information on these policies, refer to <http://conduct.ucr.edu>. Please, don't cheat. Consequences range from a zero on the assignment to a failing grade in the course. If you have questions about proper citation, please reach out prior to submission.

ACCESSIBILITY

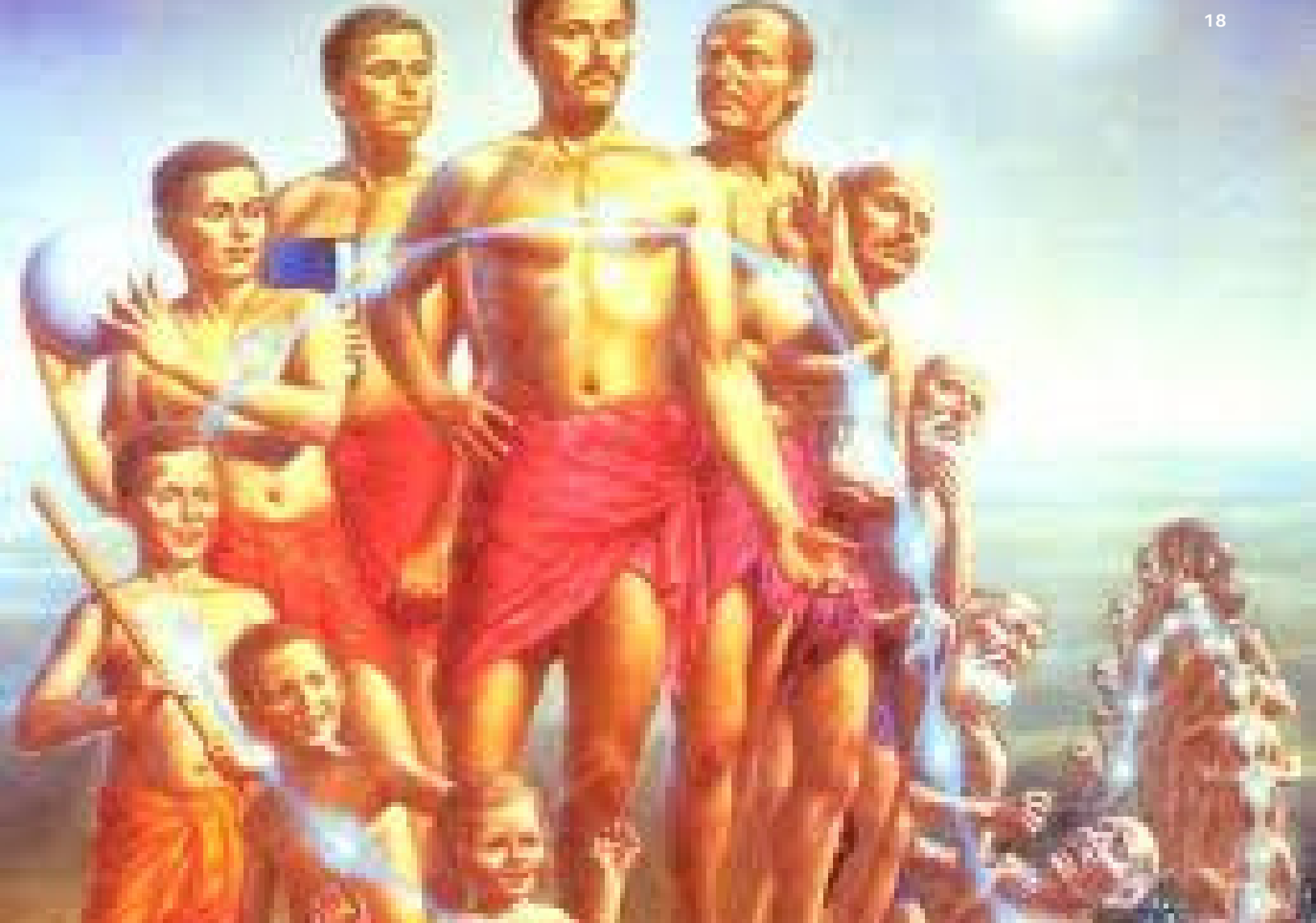
I'm happy to work with you to meet any and all accessibility needs. Please contact Accessibility Services and your Academic Advisor so that we can set whatever provisions you need to succeed in this course.



A night scene at a crematorium in India. The image shows a large, multi-story building with traditional Indian architectural features, including arched windows and balconies. In the foreground, a large fire pit is lit, and several people are gathered around it, some appearing to be in the process of cremating a body. The scene is illuminated by the warm glow of the fire and the ambient light of the night.

**THE NEED TO
MANAGE DEATH IS
THE PRACTICAL
LOT OF
HUMANITY.**

DREW GILPIN FAUST



GRADING RUBRIC

Participation (25%)

Reading Quizzes (25%)

Paper Proposal (10%)

Final Research Paper (40%)

A = 94-100 | A- = 90-93

B+ = 87-89 | B = 83-86 | B- = 80-82

C+ = 79-77 | C = 73-76 | C- = 70-72

D+ = 67-69 | D = 63-66 | D- = 60-62

F = 59 and below

ASSIGNMENTS

DISCUSSION SECTION

Attendance and participation in discussion sections is required to pass this course. Show up ready and prepared to discuss the course readings and assignments. Specific requirements for your section will be given by your TA.

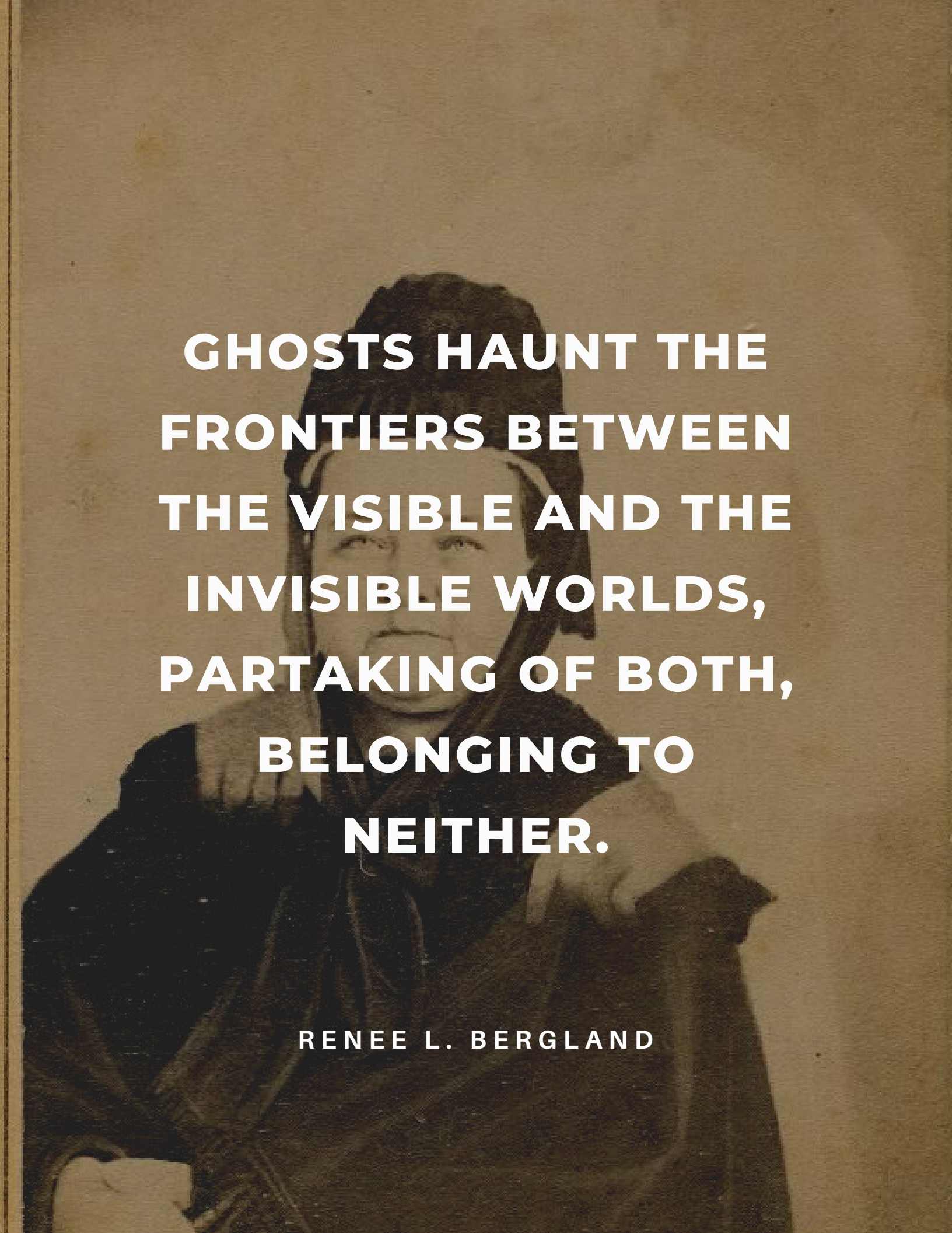
Part of humanities scholarship is learning to actively engage with unfamiliar ideas. Section offers an opportunity to learn how to discuss new and complex ideas in productive and meaningful ways.

READING QUIZZES

Each Friday, a reading quiz will be posted in the "Assignment" section of the course. Quizzes are due by 5pm on Friday evening. The quizzes will cover the major topics from the week's reading and ask students to reflect on the themes they encountered over the week. These quizzes are not fill-in or multiple choice. I'm interested in your thoughts, not your memorization skills.

If you have never worked with primary sources, you may find some reading assignments challenging. If you need assistance understanding a source, reach out prior to the deadline.





**GHOSTS HAUNT THE
FRONTIERS BETWEEN
THE VISIBLE AND THE
INVISIBLE WORLDS,
PARTAKING OF BOTH,
BELONGING TO
NEITHER.**

RENEE L. BERGLAND

ASSIGNMENTS



PAPER PROPOSAL

A paper proposal is designed to help you determine a topic for your final paper and begin compiling the sources needed to complete the assignment.

The paper proposal should include a topic, a working thesis, and an annotated bibliography of at least five academic sources. If you plan to change topics at any point over the course of this class, a new proposal will be required. The proposal is due on October 30 by 5:00pm.

FINAL PAPER

Drawing on the various topics and themes from this course, choose a specific topic from one of the units in this course to write a five-page analysis.

This assignment is designed to allow students to gain an increased understanding of a specific aspect of the course that they find interesting. The paper should include a thesis and use at least five academic sources. The final paper is due the day of the final, December 14 by 5:00pm.

CLASS SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
10/2	Welcome	Review Syllabus
10/5	Studying Religion and Death	Albanese, "Elephant in a Dark Room" Moreman, "Introduction"
10/7	Introduction to Hinduism	Moreman, "Hinduism"
10/9	Death as Transformation	Bhagavad-Gita excerpts Katha Upanishad
10/12	Death as Continuation	Review Hinduism Readings
10/14	Introduction to Buddhism	Moreman, "Buddhism"
10/16	Death as Extinguishment	Dhammapada excerpts Tibetan Book of the Dead
10/19	Acceptance of Death	Review Buddhism Readings
10/21	Introduction to Judaism	Moreman, "Judaism"
10/23	Death as a Friend to Life	"Tanakh excerpts Maimonides, "The Essay on Resurrection"
10/26	Death as Conclusion	Review Judaism Readings
10/28	Introduction to Christianity	Moreman, "Christianity"
10/30	Death as Resurrection	Dante Alighieri "Purgatorio" "Transgender Sex Workers, Santisima Muerte, and Spiritual Solidarity in Guadalajara and San Francisco" in <i>Religion at the Corner of Bliss and Nirvana</i> PAPER PROPOSAL DUE BY 5PM
11/2	Death as Aid	Review Christianity Readings
11/4	Introduction to Islam	Moreman, "Islam"
11/6	Death as Judgement	Reading: Quran excerpts Al-Ghazali excerpts
11/9	Care for the Dead	Review Islam Readings
11/11	NO CLASS: VETERAN'S DAY	

CLASS SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
11/13	Death and the Civil War	Faust, Drew Gilpin "Dying" in <i>This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War</i>
11/16	Talking to the Dead	Albanese, "Communicating with Spirits" in <i>Republic of Mind and Spirit: A Cultural History of American Metaphysical Religion</i>
11/18	Haunting	Review American Religion Readings
11/20	Theosophy and the Philosophy of Dying	Kripal, Jeffrey J. "The Book as Séance: Frederick Myers and the London Society for Psychical Research" in <i>Authors of the Impossible: The Paranormal and the Sacred</i>
11/23	Death as Regression	Moreman, "Near- Death and Out-of-Body Experiences" and "Past-Life Memories"
11/25	Death as Near	Review Paranormal Readings
11/27	NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK	
11/30	Plague and Memento Mori	"Responses to Plague" in <i>Epidemics and Society</i>
12/2	AIDS	HIV/AIDS: The Experience of the United States in <i>Epidemics and Society</i>
12/4	COVID19	Review Pandemic Readings
12/7	Death and Racial Justice	Cone, "'Nobody Knows the Trouble I see': The Cross and the Lynching Tree in the Black Experience in <i>The Cross and the Lynching Tree</i>
12/9	Death as Disproportionate	Fort, "Refusing to give death the last word" Butler, "The Fire this Time"
12/9	Death and Justice	Review BLM Readings
12/11	Review	No reading! Please bring any questions you may have about readings or assignments as we wrap up the quarter.
12/14	FINAL PAPER DUE BY 5PM	



THE SUMMER LAND ZONE WITHIN THE MILKY WAY,

“If I have told you of earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?”—*Testimony of Mary's Son, as recorded in the New Testament.*



Instructor: Dr. Cristina Rosetti
Email: cristina.rosetti@ucr.edu
Office hours: Fri. 11am-1pm
or by appointment

I am not on campus this semester. Office hours will be held over Zoom .

Teaching Assistants:

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Christopher Hayes: chaye001@ucr.edu