

RELI 368H: Race, Sexuality, and Disability in the History of Western Christianity



← Clergy spectators pray before a United Methodist judicial council hearing on whether a gay bishop can be consecrated.



Christ heals a paralytic
Syrian Lectionary, northern Iraq, c. 1256

Contemporary debates over race relations and racism, pre-marital sex and homosexuality, and attitudes towards physical and mental disability are rooted explicitly or implicitly in a Western Christian framework that hierarchizes the worth of persons. This course proposes that careful examination of the ways that Christian institutions and practices have contributed to theories of race, sexuality, and disability in previous eras enables us to reconsider modern “hot-button issues.” We examine premodern case studies such as racialized stereotypes of the religious “other,” the categorization of virginity as a sexuality, or the valuing of illness as a form of asceticism, before turning to the nineteenth century watershed movements of scientific racism, the pathologizing of homosexuality, and the growth of “muscular Christianity.” The last third of the course will examine race, sexuality, and disability - and their intersections - in twentieth and twenty-first century America in light of the questions that the historical sections of the course raise.

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Tuesday/Thursday
2:00PM-3:15PM

**General Education
Requirements: Fulfills
HS, NA**

