This course will explore the intersection of Christian theology, liturgy and in the work of Johann Sebastian Bach. Bach was one of the most prolific, and most profound, of church musicians of any age; his legacy is vast beyond the scope of a one-semester class. We will focus on Bach’s choral works (cantatas, passions, motets and the “Mass”) relating them to traditions of piety and prayer, the hymnody of medieval and early modern Europe, and Bach’s particular situations of patronage at various stages of his career. Some of the issues to be considered are the transition from “Catholic” to “Protestant” forms of worship, the influence of German Pietism on established religion, and the portrayal of Jews and Judaism in Bach’s works.

Each class will include a short background lecture, listening, and discussion. Students are expected to come to class prepared by having done the assigned reading and listening in advance. Texts will be provided a week in advance. Each student will write two 5-7 page papers, due on the dates indicated below. The papers will be discussed in class.

**COURSE OUTLINE:**

**September 10**  Introduction to the course. The early cantatas of Bach and their background, Life and Death in Lutheran Theology:
Cantata #106, “Gottes Zeit is die allerbeste Zeit” (“Actus Tragicus ”)
In *Eleven Great Cantatas* pp. 279-308. (English texts at end of the book)

**Part 1: Bach Before Leipzig**
(When available, read Wolff, prologue and chapters 1-7)

**September 17**  Cantata #4 “Christ lag in Todesbanden”  *Eleven Great Cantatas* pp. 2-28
5. (RR) Gerhard Herz, Bach Cantata No. 4: “Christ lag in Todesbanden”, all.

**September 24**  Cantata #182  “Himmelskönig sei willkommen”  (translations provided)

Part 2: The Leipzig Bach
(Wolff, chapter 8 – end)

October 1 Cantata #80 “Ein Feste Burg ist unser Gott” Eleven Great Cantatas pp. 195-254.

October 8 Cantata #140 “Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme” in Eleven Great Cantatas, pp. 309-342

October 15 FIRST PAPER DUE
Motets “Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied” (BWV 225), “Jesu, meine Freude” (BWV 227) (texts will be provided)

October 22 Magnificat in D (BWV 243) (texts will be provided)

October 29 Mass in B minor (BWV 232) (texts will be provided)

November 5 Saint Matthew Passion (BWV 244) (texts will be provided)

**November 12**  
Saint Matthew Passion, continued  

**November 19**  
NO CLASS – Happy Thanksgiving!

**November 26**  
Saint John Passion (BWV 245), in Saint John Passion in Full Score.  
Reading: 1. Michael Marissen, Lutheranism, Anti-Judaism and Bach’s St. John Passion.  

**December 3**  
Saint John Passion, continued  

**December 10**  
Final Class discussion and listening.  
Copies of Robin A. Leaver, Bach’s Theological Library (1983) available.

**FINAL PAPER DUE BY NOON, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18**

BOOK LIST (Books are available at the Penn Book Center at 34th and Sansom and are on reserve in Rosengarten Reserve Room of Van Pelt Library. Xeroxed readings are on reserve at Rosengarten and may be copied for individual use).