

RELIGION (RELI)

Religion Undergraduate Courses

RELI 1000 TOPICS IN RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY (1 credit)

As a first year topics course, the main purpose is to introduce students to some aspect of the academic study of religion and spirituality. The specific topics will vary considerably; however, the objectives include training students in study methods generally and how to study religion as a scholarly subject in particular.

RELI 1010 INTRODUCTION TO WORLD RELIGIONS (3 credits)

A introductory course in religious studies, designed both to introduce students to ways of understanding religion as a phenomenon in human culture and history and also to survey a wide variety of the religions of the world.

Distribution: Humanities and Fine Arts General Education course and Global Diversity General Education course

RELI 1050 FIRST YEAR SEMINAR IN RELIGION (3 credits)

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to a particular topic in the study of religion. Although the topic for this course will vary from semester to semester, students will be expected to read, to write, and to discuss the assigned texts and the ideas they contain. Students will learn basic skills in reading academic literature, writing about significant issues, and speaking articulately about the questions and issues. These skills will be helpful in other university and professional work.

RELI 2000 ARCHAEOLOGY OF BIBLICAL LANDS (3 credits)

This course introduces students to the purpose and methods of biblical archaeology and includes a survey of the material culture of the land of the Bible from the Chalcolithic (5th - 4th millennia BCE) to the Persian periods (4th century BCE). Special emphasis will be placed on the relationship between biblical narratives and the archaeological reconstruction of ancient social and natural environments.

RELI 2010 RELIGION AND CRITICAL THOUGHT (3 credits)

This class introduces students to critical approaches to the study of religion. Students are exposed to a variety of social scientific, scientific, philosophical, indigenous, and critical literary approaches to the study of wide-ranging religious beliefs and practices. The course is required for majors and recommended for minors in Religion as well as others with high interest in the field of Religious Studies.

Prerequisite(s): 3 hours in Religion or permission of instructor.

RELI 2020 RELIGION AND HUMAN RIGHTS (3 credits)

This course introduces students to the intersection of religion and human rights. It takes human rights as a moral tradition and asks how it impacts and is impacted by religious moral thought.

Distribution: Humanities and Fine Arts General Education course and Global Diversity General Education course

RELI 2060 THE RELIGION OF ANCIENT EGYPT AND MESOPOTAMIA (3 credits)

This course is designed to familiarize the student with the religions of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. The course will use archaeological discoveries together with ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian texts to explore the religions of these two civilizations. It will deal with Mesopotamian and Egyptian beliefs surrounding issues such as creation, afterlife, ethics, morality and rituals.

Prerequisite(s): Intro to World Religion is recommended but not necessary.

RELI 2120 HINDU SCRIPTURES (3 credits)

An introduction to some of the foundational scriptures of Hinduism (Sanatana Dharma) from traditional and modern perspectives, including the Vedas, the Upanishads, and the Bhagavad-Gita.

Prerequisite(s): Not open to non-degree graduate students.

RELI 2150 HEBREW SCRIPTURES (3 credits)

A historical introduction to the study of the Hebrew Scriptures from the Biblical to Talmudic period in the light of recent scholarship.

Distribution: Humanities and Fine Arts General Education course and Global Diversity General Education course

RELI 2160 NEW TESTAMENT: HISTORY, LITERATURE, AND SOCIETY (3 credits)

Who were Jesus, Peter, Mary, and Paul in the Roman empire of the early first century? How did these Jews of the Second Temple Period become the earliest generation of a 2,000 year history of Christianity? How did early Christian understandings of God and humanity shape or constrain their interpretations of and responses to affliction, healing, and death, both conceptually and in practice? Finding answers to these questions requires students to study the literature of the New Testament and other early Christian literature, along with scholarly analyses of key issues related to authorship, dating, textual analysis, literary genres, historical contexts, and varying interpretations. The purpose of the course is to train students in the content of the texts as well as critical tools related to documentary analysis, archaeological methods, and various literary and social scientific approaches, interdisciplinary tools which also enhance one's skills in a variety of careers and professions.

Distribution: Humanities and Fine Arts General Education course and Global Diversity General Education course

RELI 2170 QUR'AN (3 credits)

This course provides an introduction to the academic study of the Qur'an, its uses, interpretations, and applications in society from its earliest appearance up to the present.

Distribution: Humanities and Fine Arts General Education course and Global Diversity General Education course

RELI 2190 THE MODERN MIDDLE EAST (3 credits)

An interdisciplinary study of the social, religious, and historical dimensions of contemporary issues and events which make the Middle East cultural and geographic region a center of global tensions. After providing a background of how Islam spread in and unified the region, students will study factors which have shaped the Middle East from the late Ottoman period to the present, analyzing the principal sociocultural and political economic developments in the Middle East from the early 19th century to the early 21st century. (Cross-listed with HIST 2190, SOC 2190).

Distribution: Humanities and Fine Arts General Education course and Global Diversity General Education course

RELI 2200 GLOBAL RELIGIOUS ETHICS: THE BASICS (3 credits)

An introduction to the main types of ethical thought in religious traditions worldwide. The course will consider both historical and contemporary approaches and will relate ideas and practices of religious ethics to contemporary moral problems.

RELI 2400 RELIGION IN AMERICA (3 credits)

The role of religion in American culture, seen in the interaction between the inherited religious traditions and the crucial events in American experience and how this affects American identity - past and present.

Prerequisite(s): Sophomore or permission of instructor.

RELI 2500 SPIRITUALITY AND WELLNESS (3 credits)

This course provides an introduction to the emerging field of spirituality and wellness. Utilizing perspectives from multiple disciplines and incorporating both third-person (research, theory) and first-person (experiential, reflective) approaches, students will explore topics such as: the nature of spirituality; mindfulness, meditation and wellness; spirituality and public health; spiritual wellness on campuses; and ecospirituality.

Prerequisite(s): Not open to non-degree graduate students.

RELI 2730 THE BLACK SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE (3 credits)

The Black Spiritual Experience course examines the trajectory of early African religions and philosophies, and their syncretization with European settler religions in America that have been practiced and embraced by Blacks in the U.S. since slavery. Students will survey the historical development of the Black church in America, and the emergence of liberation and Black theologies to combat white supremacy, oppression, and exploitation. This course will explore the cultural importance of music, dance, and art in worship and Black spiritual expressions; the role of religion and theology in empowering and uplifting African Americans, particularly during the Black Power and Civil Rights movements; the political impact of Black religious institutions in the long fight against systemic racism, racial violence, police brutality, and voter suppression in America; and the challenges of inclusion, equity, and intersectionality within the Black church around issues of gender, class, and sexual orientation. (Cross-listed with BLST 2730).

Distribution: U.S. Diversity General Education course

RELI 3020 NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIONS (3 credits)

This course examines the life-ways, oral narratives, ceremonies, and philosophies of selected Native American tribal nations and communities from the major cultural regions of North America, utilizing historical, anthropological, and literary approaches. No single Native spiritual tradition or culture represents all Native North American beliefs and customs. Thus, attention will be given both to similarities among different tribal groups, and also the great diversity among the hundreds of indigenous ways of life on the North American continent, both ancient and modern. Particular topics addressed include the following: healing traditions and maintaining personal and communal balance, pilgrimages to sacred sites, and, critically, Native American creation stories inform the manner in which Native communities approach the natural world, including plants and animals as "other-than-human" persons.

RELI 3030 SHAMANISM (3 credits)

Study of the forms and techniques of shamanic experience from its Paleolithic and Neolithic origins to its contemporary practice among Indigenous peoples worldwide, including its role in the development of human religious traditions and systems of healing.

RELI 3050 RELIGIONS OF THE EAST (3 credits)

A study of the major religions that originate in South, Southeast, and East Asia, considering their origins, foundational doctrines, practices, beliefs, rituals and contemporary expressions. Included are the religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Daoism, Confucianism and Shintoism. Knowledge of the religious and spiritual traditions of South, Southeast, and East Asia will help students who intend to travel or work in those regions or who may have friends and colleagues from those regions of the world. A broad grasp of these critical cultural traditions will enhance international, cross-cultural understanding for any career or professional track.

RELI 3060 RELIGIONS OF THE WEST (3 credits)

The stories and histories, practices, communities, and interactions among Jews, Christians, and Muslims are part of a larger history of inter-religious encounters and development. In addition to learning about the ideas and scriptures, the ritual and ethical practices, and the forms of social organization of these religious communities, students will analyze how each one of these major religious traditions not only impacts each other, but also play significant roles in the emerging global community. With this additional perspective, students will be able to understand and discuss Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as dynamic forces historically and in the twenty-first century.

RELI 3130 WOMEN AND THE BIBLE (3 credits)

This course explores the characterization of women in Hebrew and Christian scriptures as well as what we can learn about the lives of women in the ancient world from these and other sources. Attention is also given to the reception and use of these texts in later historical periods including contemporary religious contexts. (Cross-listed with WGST 3120).

RELI 3200 ISLAM AND MUSLIMS (3 credits)

What do Muslims believe? How do they practice their faith? What role does Islam and what roles do Muslims play in the 21st century? This course provides an introduction to the history, beliefs, and practices of Islam and Muslim communities, including both Sunni and Shi'i traditions, Sufis and Salafis, from the time of Muhammad ibn Abdullah to the 21st century. Students will examine the ways in which we come to 'know' about Islam and how to approach mediated sources with a critical lens. Thus, in addition to highlighting the many important cultural, scientific, medical, artistic, and architectural contributions of Muslim societies throughout the past millennium, critical contemporary issues will also be addressed, including the role of women in Islam, the meaning of jihad, the legal traditions (shari'a and fiqh), the relationship between religion and politics in Islam, and issues of law, gender, myth, violence, colonialism, modernity, and Islamophobia.

RELI 3330 ROMAN CATHOLIC THOUGHT AND PRACTICE (3 credits)

What does the Roman Catholic Church teach today? What are the major official documents outlining the theological concerns of the Holy See since the time of Vatican II? How do Roman Catholics themselves think about the official teachings? This course is an investigation of developments and differences in Roman Catholic thought and practice over the past century. Students will examine prominent official statements (e.g., papal encyclicals and episcopal pronouncements) and commentary about different points of view. Special consideration will be given to the theological ethical bases in the tradition for various progressive and conservative theological trends. Students will analyze documents and issues and articulate their own perspectives both orally and in writing. Topics to be examined include both moral issues (e.g., ends of life decisions, poverty and justice, climate and human responsibility) and questions about the priesthood and the diaconate, interfaith dialogue, and inter-religious relations.

RELI 3400 RELIGION AND FILM (3 credits)

This course will examine the various ways in which religion and film connect, including the representations of religious groups in films, ways in which films replicate or alter religious concepts, and ways in which film as an aspect of popular culture functions analogously to religions in society. Methods used will include the analysis of film technique, auteur criticism, and audience reception analysis.

Prerequisite(s): Not open to non-degree graduate students.

RELI 3500 TOPICS IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES (3 credits)

The content of this course varies from semester to semester, giving instructor and students an opportunity to investigate various subjects of interest in religious studies. Typically, students will learn through reading, viewing, discussing, and writing about the topic under study. Some sections may include service learning and other forms of experiential learning. (May be repeated for credit as long as the topic is different, up to 18 hours of credit.)

RELI 3960 READINGS IN RELIGION (1-6 credits)

Individual research in selected areas or particular questions in religious studies, which are not covered in other courses. Typically, a student proposes a topic to an instructor, and they agree upon a list of readings (or other resources) to read, analyze, and evaluate, as well as expectations for writing papers and presenting ideas orally. Students are welcome to propose topics of study!

Prerequisite(s): Permission of instructor.

RELI 4000 RELIGIOUS STUDIES INTERNSHIP (1-6 credits)

A supervised internship enabling students to develop and apply knowledge and gain expertise related to the field of Religious Studies while working at a non-profit, educational, non-governmental or related organization. The host organization for the student must be approved in advance in consultation with the internship coordinator and the Chair of Religious Studies. This course may be repeated for a maximum of six credit hours.

Prerequisite(s): Junior or senior. Religious Studies major or minor. Permission of internship coordinator. Not open to non-degree graduate students.

RELI 4010 SENIOR SEMINAR IN RELIGION (3 credits)

This course provides a capstone experience in religious studies. It serves as the third writing course and is required for Religious Studies majors. The readings will deepen students' understanding of the field of Religious Studies and how it relates to social concerns, as well as guide students through developing a research project. Students will present research both in writing and verbally, in ways that address scholarship in Religious Studies and that are accessible to a general audience. Student will also have opportunities to reflect on experiential learning and career goals. **Prerequisite(s):** Five courses in Religion, or permission of instructor.

RELI 4020 BUDDHIST TRADITIONS (3 credits)

This course is an exploration of Buddhist history, thought and practices. It begins with the origins, cultural context, and development of Buddhism in South Asia and then traces the path of Buddhism through Southeast Asia, Tibet, China, Korea, Japan and North America. **Prerequisite(s):** Junior or permission of instructor.

RELI 4030 AFRICANA RELIGIONS (3 credits)

An introduction to religions in Africa and the diaspora, including African Traditional Religions, Christianity, Islam, and Afro-Caribbean religious traditions, using anthropological, historical, and other academic approaches to the study of religious and spiritual traditions. In particular, students will learn about the role of spirits, ancestors, witches, and other invisible agents in ideas and practices regarding health and healing. Finally, the class will examine the complex inter-relationships between religious ideas and practices and contemporary post-colonial political-economic realities, including the consequences of genocide and other human rights violations and the role of religious communities in social and economic development. (Cross-listed with RELI 8036, BLST 8036, BLST 4030).

RELI 4050 RELIGION IN EARLY AMERICA (3 credits)

This course examines the history and nature of religion in North America to c. 1770 with an emphasis on the British colonies. (Cross-listed with HIST 4010; HIST 8016).

Prerequisite(s): Junior or senior standing. Not open to non-degree graduate students.

RELI 4060 FIRST NATIONS: SPIRIT IN ARTS AND CULTURES (3 credits)

First Nations: Spirit in Arts and Cultures explores how contemporary Indigenous/Native (First Nations, Metis and Inuit) artists in the lands now known as Canada express their cultures, especially beliefs, through the fine arts. While we will focus on visual culture (sculpture, painting, film, mixed media), literary works (a novel, poetry) and music will also be included. First Nations, Metis and Inuit artists often simultaneously express traditions, their own experiences, and reflections on the present and past through their work. By doing this, they share valuable perspectives on health and healing as well as the national process of Truth and Reconciliation. Trying, so much as possible, to let the artists speak for themselves, we will explore how spirituality manifests itself in contemporary cultures for these Indigenous artists north of the border. (Cross-listed with RELI 8066, NAMS 4060, NAMS 8066).

RELI 4150 JUDAISM IN THE MODERN AGE (3 credits)

A study of Jewish communities and movements since the Enlightenment emphasizing historical, intellectual, religious-legal, and socio-cultural developments. Pivotal movements (e.g., Hassidism, Reform, Historical Conservative Judaism, Modern Orthodoxy, Zionism) and major historical events (e.g., the American and French Revolutions, Tsarist oppression, the Holocaust/Shoah and the establishment of the State of Israel) will be analyzed for their ongoing impact on Jewish thought, practice, and social organization. (Cross-listed with RELI 8156)

Prerequisite(s): Junior, three hours in religion, or permission of instructor.

RELI 4160 THE HOLOCAUST (3 credits)

An interdisciplinary approach in a seminar oriented format discussing various aspects of the most notorious genocide in modern times. The course will explore the history of anti-Semitism, the rise of Nazi Germany and the road to the 'final solution.' It will further explore psychological, sociological and intellectual aspects of the dark side of humanity. (Cross-listed with RELI 8166, HIST 4720, HIST 8726)

Prerequisite(s): Junior or instructor permission.

RELI 4170 HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY I (3 credits)

The development of Christian theological, ritual, and social practice from the beginnings of Christianity through the Reformation. History of Christianity from its origins in the first century through the sixteenth century movements for reform. (Cross-listed with RELI 8176).

RELI 4180 HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY II (3 credits)

This course will focus on the historical development of Christian ideas, practices, and institutions from the reformations of the sixteenth century CE through the early twenty-first century CE. In addition to the theological claims, students will examine the history of ritual practice and organizational development of the principal varieties of Christianity - Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and other eastern churches, Protestant, and Pentecostal. (Cross-listed with RELI 8186).

RELI 4200 COMPARATIVE RELIGIOUS ETHICS (3 credits)

An introduction to historical and contemporary approaches to comparative religious ethics, with special focus on specific case studies as encountered in societies and religious communities across the globe. In addition to reading authors from a variety of perspectives (Aristotelians, natural law theorists, philosophers of law, pragmatists, theologians, and historians of religion), students will be introduced to special topics in the field, e.g., religion and public life, religion and law, syncretism, the secular/non-secular divide, etc. This course supports the Ethics and Values concentration in the Master of Arts in Critical and Creative Thinking. (Cross-listed with RELI 8206, CACT 8206)

RELI 4210 PUBLIC HEALTH, RELIGION, AND HUMAN RIGHTS (3 credits)

This course examines the intersections among public health, religion, and human rights. It considers how human rights impact public health and vice versa; how human rights and religious thought impact each other; how religious communities approach issues of public health; and how religious thought and practice affects people's health. Topics include infectious diseases such as HIV and COVID-19; issues of stigma and discrimination in public health; social determinants of health such as poverty and environmental quality; and women's and LGBTQ+ health. Students will gain skills of textual analysis, dialogue, and argumentative reasoning in both written and verbal form. (Cross-listed with RELI 8216, CACT 8216)

Prerequisite(s): Prerequisites: junior standing OR prior completion of either RELI 1010 or MEDH 1000.

RELI 4220 VIOLENT CONFLICTS, PEACEBUILDING, AND THE ETHICS OF INTERVENTION (3 credits)

This course is designed to familiarize the student with the nature of violent conflict, including terrorism, and a variety of the mechanisms for peacebuilding. The course will also explore human rights and the ethics of intervention. This course supports the Ethics and Values concentration in the Master of Arts in Critical and Creative Thinking. (Cross-listed with RELI 8226, CACT 8226)

RELI 4250 WAR, RELIGION, AND HUMAN RIGHTS (3 credits)

What is the connection between human rights, religion, conflict, and peacebuilding? Does religion cause war or help to stop it? How can human rights violations be prevented or stopped, and can religious actors be engaged in this work? Is the use of force ever appropriate to protect human rights? This course engages all of these questions by examining the ethical thought of multiple religious traditions; the work of human rights organizations; the just war tradition; and questions about sovereignty, peacebuilding, and the use of force worldwide. It includes discussion of historical issues and contemporary case studies. (Cross-listed with RELI 8256).

RELI 4260 THE END OF THE WORLD: RELIGION AND APOCALYPSE (3 credits)

This course introduces students to sacred texts and their interpretation by "end of the world" groups across world history. Several ancient, medieval, and contemporary groups are discussed. Special attention is paid to the connections between apocalyptic and political movements, as well as religion and violence. (Cross-listed with RELI 8266).

RELI 4400 WOMEN IN ISLAM (3 credits)

This course examines the religious, political and cultural assignments ascribed to Muslim women. Starting with the Qur'an, social, legal, and scriptural norms will be explored through the voices of Muslim women around the world. Passages of the Qur'an, hadiths and the commentaries that lead to the elevation and/ or demise of Muslim women and their rights are studied. Examining the role of the female body, sexuality and seclusion within a historical context will lead to an understanding of the gendering of women in Islam. (Cross-listed with RELI 8406)

Prerequisite(s): RELI 3200

RELI 4420 MUSLIMS IN AMERICA (3 credits)

This course is designed to familiarize the student with the multiplicity of Muslim voices in the United States and to examine the myths created through stereotyping and orientalizing. The course will also investigate how Muslims in America form identities as hybrids and transnationals and follows the chronological development of American Muslims including their identity construction, religious issues, and politics. (Cross-listed with RELI 8426)

Prerequisite(s): RELI 3200 or permission.

RELI 4450 HOLY TERROR: RELIGION AND HORROR (3 credits)

Examining the genre of horror in books, films, and television, students will explore the ways in which horror in its many forms illuminates upon an array of religious ideas. Some of the major subjects and themes examined in this class include: various cultural interpretations of sleep paralysis, the fear of death and dying badly, Hell and Satan, nature horror, body horror, and the breakdown of the established order of reality and its replacement with one that is alien and hostile to it. In addition to these themes, we will also explore horror in Native American and Eastern social and cultural contexts. Emphasis is placed on the genre's ability to portray complex religious, philosophical, sociological, and anthropological subject matter. (Cross-listed with RELI 8456).

RELI 4500 ANCIENT ISRAEL (3 credits)

Who were the Israelites? Where did they come from? This is one of the most debated topics in biblical studies. This course examines biblical texts, historical documents, archaeological discoveries, and sociological studies.

RELI 4520 JESUS AND ARCHAEOLOGY (3 credits)

Jesus and Archaeology is a course surveying the material culture of Judea and Galilee in the time of Jesus. Studying materials is a new approach to the long study of the Historical Jesus Quest. By providing a large amount of archaeological data, this method contributes a critical mass on old debated questions such as the society in Judea and Galilee, rural versus urban, Hellenism versus Judaism, size, population and language of Galilee in the time of Jesus and much more. (Cross-listed with RELI 8526).

RELI 4550 JESUS IN FILM (3 credits)

This course is a study of how the life of Jesus of Nazareth has been portrayed in cinema over the past century. Emphasis will be placed upon the ways in which the biblical sources are adapted for films, how Jesus films reflected and influenced the values and beliefs of the times in which they were made, and the reception by audiences of the diverse film representations of Jesus. (Cross-listed with RELI 8556).

RELI 4600 WOMEN AND RELIGION (3 credits)

This course on women and religion will focus on the intersections of power and oppression that women experience in four of the major world religions - Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam. Students will examine the historical, cultural and religious contexts that highlight women's involvement or exclusion from activity and power within each religion. Students will research case studies from around the world to examine tensions within and between religious and secular societies through the lens of gender. (Cross-listed with RELI 8606).

RELI 4700 RELIGION, FILM, AND VIOLENCE (3 credits)

A study of the ways in which films represent violence and how these representations intersect with religious concepts. Topics will include how films express the justification or "sanctification" of violence as legitimate, redemptive violence, notions of sacrifice, and the nonviolent critique of violence. We will examine a variety of genres including action films, crime stories, horror, and religious films, noting their societal influence and how they express diverse values regarding violence and its legitimation. (Cross-listed with RELI 8756).

RELI 4830 ANCIENT GREEK MYTH, RELIGION & MAGIC (3 credits)

Students will examine the impact of ancient Greek myth and belief on actual religious practice: e.g., "lived" religion. Areas covered include formal civic sacrifice, wartime religion, family and personal devotions, mystery cults, oracles and seers, plus the popular pursuit of magic. (Cross-listed with HIST 8836, HIST 4830, RELI 8836).

RELI 4850 ROME AND THE EARLY CHURCH (3 credits)

Students will cover Roman-Christian-Jewish interactions from just before the birth of Jesus of Nazareth to c. 450 CE, with an emphasis on social and political history. We catalogue Christianity's transformation from its origins as a Jewish movement and an illegal "superstition" to the dominant religion of the Roman empire. (Cross-listed with HIST 8856, HIST 4850, RELI 8856).

Prerequisite(s): Junior standing.