

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

REL

Department of Religious Studies College of Arts and Letters

101 Exploring Religion

Fall, Spring, 3 credits.

Religion and religions as historical phenomena. Non-textual and textual religions. Theories of the origins and functions of religion. Exemplary voices from various traditions examined in their historical and doctrinal settings.

150 Introduction to Biblical Literature

Fall, 3(3-0)

A critical survey of biblical texts, including the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and writings found in the Apocrypha/Deuterocanon, that combine historical and literary analysis with attention to the ancient religious context of this literature.

205 Myth, Self, and Religion

Fall, Spring, 3(3-0)

The mythic quest for meaning, identity, value, and transcendence as seen through religious biography and literary narrative. Myth in relation to religious symbols and life-cycle rituals. Cross-cultural perspective on religious world views and the interpretation of myth as sacred narrative.

220 Religion in America

Fall, 3(3-0)

History, themes and issues of religions in America from precolonial times to the present.

230 Shamanism, Trance and Sacred Journeys

Fall, 3(3-0)

Shamanic practice in different cultural and religious contexts. Ecstatic, cosmological, and performative dimensions. Healing, sacred knowledge, spiritual journeys, sacred space, presence in world religions, patterns of pilgrimage, theoretical debates regarding shamanism.

275 Magic and Mysticism: Western Esoteric Traditions and Practices

Fall, 3(3-0)

Surveys the history of Western esoteric traditions in Europe, England and North America including alchemy, magic, Jewish and Christian mysticisms, and secret or semisecret groups like Freemasonry. Transdisciplinary investigation of religion, science, literature, art and history.

290 Independent Study

Fall, Spring, 1 to 4 credits. A student may earn a maximum of 12 credits in all enrollments for this course. R: Approval of department.

Special projects arranged by an individual student and a faculty member in areas supplementing regular course offerings.

301 Methods and Theories in the Study of Religion

Spring, 3(3-0)

Introduction to prominent methods and theories through which religions and religious phenomena can be understood.

306 Native American Religions

Spring, 3(3-0) R: Not open to freshmen

Indigenous forms of spirituality among the Native American peoples. Materials from myth, ritual, ceremonial life, and art as ways of obtaining and sharing religious knowledge. Pervasive spiritual and cosmological themes.

310 Judaism (D)

Fall, 3(3-0) P: Completion of Tier I Writing Requirement RB: REL 220 R: Not open to freshmen and open to undergraduate students in the Jewish Studies Specialization.

Jewish life, thought, and institutions. Jewish calendar. Second Temple and Rabbinic periods. Talmud and Midrash. Jewish life in Europe and America. Hasidic, Reform, Orthodox, and Conservative movements. Anti-Semitism, Zionism, and the Holocaust. Current issues.

315 Religion and Gender

Spring of even years. 3(3-0) Interdepartmental with Women's Studies. Administered by Religious Studies.

The relationship between religion and gender viewed through foundational sacred texts and historical interpreters that define gender, sexuality, the body, the divine. Contemporary responses to the relationship between religion and gender through ritual, liturgy, new religious movements, and feminist theology.

320 Christianity

Spring of even years. 3(3-0) R: Not open to freshmen.

Origins and historical development of Christianity. Rituals, institutional forms (Eastern Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant). Monastic and mendicant movements. Major doctrines and their development. Contemporary status and role.

330 Islam (D)

Spring, 3(3-0) RB: REL 220 R: Not open to freshmen and open to students in the Department of Religious Studies or in the Muslim Studies Specialization.

Islam from the time of Muhammad to the present. Pre-modern developments: life of Muhammad. Qur'an, Hadith, and Islamic law. Sunnis, Shiites, sects, and their rituals. Unity and diversity. Modern movements and trends.

331 Islam and Gender

Spring of even years. 3(3-0) RB: REL 315

Relationship between Islam and gender as presented in sacred texts. Traditional and diverse modern interpretations and responses of Muslims.

340 Hinduism (I)

Fall, 3(3-0) P: Completion of Tier I Writing Requirement R: Not open to freshmen.

Historical, philosophical and doctrinal development. Vedic Sacrifice, Upanishads, Samkhya-Yoga and Vedanta, Vaishnavism, Shaivism, Shaktism, and modern Hinduism.

345 Religions of South Asia (I)

Spring of odd years. 3(3-0) P: Completion of Tier I Writing Requirement R: Not open to freshmen.

Historical, philosophical, and doctrinal development of Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, North Indian Islam, and Sikhism.

350 Buddhism in South Asia

Spring, 3(3-0) R: Not open to freshmen.

Early origins of Buddhism. Life of the Buddha. Formulation of the Samgha. Pali canon. Three turnings of the Wheel of the Law. Monastic developments vs. lay Buddhism. Buddhist meditation practices.

355 Southeast Asian Religions

Fall, 3(3-0) R: Not open to freshmen.

Southeast Asia as a religious and cultural crossroads. The historic mix of Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, and Chinese religions. Diversity of indigenous animistic religions. Past and present relations between religions and the state.

360 African Religion (I)

Spring of odd years. 3(3-0) P: Completion of Tier I Writing Requirement R: Not open to freshmen and open to students in the Post-colonial and Diaspora Literature and Culture Specialization or in the Global and Area Studies-Social Science major.

Variant forms of the religions of Africa. Indigenous African religions examined through their mythology, rituals, symbols, and social consequences. Islam and Christianity. Interaction between religion and politics.

365 Evangelicalism in the U.S.

Fall, 3(3-0)

History, culture, beliefs, and practices of American evangelicalism.

380 New Religions: U.S. and the World

Fall of odd years. 3(3-0) P: REL 101 and REL 150

New religious movements, groups and individuals seen historically. Major controversies.

410 Torah and its Interpreters (W)

Fall, 3(3-0) P: Completion of Tier I Writing Requirement R: Not open to freshmen or sophomores.

Historical setting and types and meaning of the text of the Hebrew Bible (Christian Old Testament) explored through various techniques of historical, literary, and textual analysis.

411 Modern Jewish Thought (W)

Spring of even years. 3(3-0) P: Completion of Tier I Writing Requirement R: Not open to freshmen or sophomores.

Representative Jewish thought from the Enlightenment to the present. Authors such as Moses Mendelssohn, Abraham Geiger, Leo Pinsker, Hermann Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig, Ahad Ha-Am, Martin Buber, Mordecai Kaplan, A. I. Heschel, and Emil Fackenheim.

420 Birth of Christianity (W)

Spring, 3(3-0) P: Completion of Tier I Writing Requirement R: Not open to freshmen or sophomores.

The historical setting and types and meaning of the text of the New Testament explored through various techniques of historical, literary, and textual analysis.

432 Modern Muslim Thought (W)

Spring, 3(3-0) P: (REL 330) and completion of Tier I writing requirement RB: One Additional REL Course R: Not open to freshmen.

Representative Muslim thinkers and intellectual trends from the 19th century to the present. Focus on issues such as social order, the role of Islamic law, pluralism and gender.

Religious Studies—REL

441 **Bhakti Hinduism (D) (W)**

Fall of odd years. 3(3-0) P: Completion of Tier I Writing Requirement R: Not open to freshmen.

Historical, philosophical, and doctrinal development of Bhakti Hinduism (devotional Hinduism) of North India from the 12th to the 18th century.

460 **Advanced Topics in the Philosophy of Religion (W)**

Fall, Spring. 3(3-0) P: (REL 101) and completion of Tier I writing requirement RB: Introductory course in philosophy of religion or in history of philosophy.

In-depth investigation focused on specific themes on figures in the philosophy of religion such as notions of divinity, the rationality of belief, philosophy under religious authority, conceptions of human perfection.

465 **Advanced Readings in American Religion (W)**

Fall, Spring. 3(3-0) P: (REL 101 or REL 150) and (REL 220 and completion of Tier I writing requirement)

Advanced study of religion in the U.S.

471 **The Ritual Process (W)**

Spring. 3(3-0) P: Completion of Tier I Writing Requirement R: Not open to freshmen or sophomores.

Definitions of ritual. Aspects of ritual, such as repetitiveness and drama. Generic forms of ritual including passage rites, renewal rites, liminality, sacrifice, taboo, and divination. Experience of ritual and its power to inform and transform the participant.

480 **Comparative Studies in Religion (W)**

Fall, Spring. 3(3-0) A student may earn a maximum of 9 credits in all enrollments for this course. P: Completion of Tier I Writing Requirement R: Not open to freshmen or sophomores.

Multidisciplinary approaches to topics such as patterns in comparative religion, comparative mysticism, or comparative mythology.

490 **Independent Study (W)**

Fall, Spring. 1 to 4 credits. A student may earn a maximum of 12 credits in all enrollments for this course. P: Completion of Tier I Writing Requirement R: Approval of department.

Special projects arranged by an individual student and a faculty member in areas supplementing regular course offerings.

491 **Special Topics in Religious Studies (W)**

Fall, Spring. 3(3-0) A student may earn a maximum of 12 credits in all enrollments for this course. P: Completion of Tier I Writing Requirement R: Approval of department.

Special topics supplementing regular course offerings, proposed by faculty on a group study basis.

493 **Religious Studies Internship**

Fall, Spring. 1 to 4 credits. A student may earn a maximum of 4 credits in all enrollments for this course. R: Not open to freshmen. Approval of department; application required.

Supervised pre-professional experience related to religious studies.

499 **Senior Thesis or Project (W)**

Fall, Spring. 1 to 4 credits. P: Completion of Tier I Writing Requirement R: Approval of department.

Individual research project supervised by a faculty member that demonstrates the student's ability to do independent research.