REL—Religious Studies

Department of Religious Studies
College of Arts and Letters

101 Exploring Religion
Fall, Spring: 3(3-0) R: Not open to seniors. 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.

175 Religion in Film
Fall: 3(3-0) R: Not open to juniors or seniors. Exploration of religions and spiritual traditions through their representations in film.

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.

215 The Sound Of World Religions
Fall of even years: 3(3-0) Introduction to the lived experience of world religions through investigation of their sacred songs.

220 Religion in America
Fall: 3(3-0) History, themes and issues of religions in America from precolonial times to the present.

221 Islam in North America
Spring of odd years: 3(3-0) RB: REL 101 R: Not open to freshmen. History, major themes and issues in history of Islam in North America from colonial 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.

240 Music and Spirituality in North America
Spring: 3(3-0) Historical and thematic survey of the interplay of religion and music in North America.

260 Philosophy of Religion
Fall: 3(3-0) Interdepartmental with Philosophy. Administered by Religious Studies. RB: REL 101 or PHL 200 Key concepts, themes, and questions in the philosophy of religion.

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)

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.

325 East Asian Buddhism (I)
Spring: 3(3-0) P: Completion of Tier I Writing Requirement RB: REL 101 Buddhist traditions of East Asia, including China, Tibet, Korea, and Japan, as well as Mahayana and Vajrayana.

330 Islam (D)
Spring: 3(3-0) R: Not open to freshmen. Islam from the time of Muhammad to the present. Pre-modern developments. Life of Muhammad, Qur’an, Hadith, and Islamic law. Sunnis, Shifites, sects, and their rituals. Unity and diversity. Modern movements and trends.

331 Islam and Gender
Spring of even years: 3(3-0) R: Not open to freshmen. Relationship between Islam and gender as presented in sacred texts. Traditional and diverse modern interpretations and responses of Muslims.

335 East Asian Religions
Spring: 3(3-0) RB: REL 101 R: Not open to freshmen. Religious traditions of East Asia, including China, Korea, and Japan.

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

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) R: Not open to freshmen. 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.

375 Religion and U.S. Literature
Spring of odd years: 3(3-0) P: REL 101 or REL 150 Religion in works of American literature seen in historical context.

380 New Religions
Fall of odd years: 3(3-0) RB: REL 220 or REL 275 R: Not open to freshmen. New religious movements, groups and individuals seen historically. Major controversies.

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, Leop Pinsky, Hermann Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig, Ahad Ha-Am, Martin Buber, Mordecai Kaplan, A. I. Heschel, and Emil Fackenheim.
Advanced study of religion in the U.S.

In-depth investigation focused on specific themes on

465 Advanced Readings in American Religion (W)
Fall, Spring. 3(3-0) P: (REL 101 or REL 150 or REL 220)(or approval of department) and completion of Tier I writing requirement RB: REL 220 or REL 375 or REL 380
Advanced study of religion in the U.S.

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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.

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.

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: Not open to freshmen or sophomores.

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

Religious Studies Internship
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; application required.

Supervised pre-professional experience related to religious studies.

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.

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, directed reading, and research arranged by an individual graduate student and a faculty member in areas supplementing regular course offerings.

Special Topics in Religious Studies
Fall, Spring, Summer. 3(3-0) A student may earn a maximum of 6 credits in all enrollments for this course. RB: Undergraduate degree. R: Approval of department.

Special topics supplementing regular course offerings proposed by faculty for graduate students on a group study basis.