

RELIGION (RELI)

RELI 100. Introduction to Religion. 1 Credit.

Offered Both Fall and Spring; Lecture hours:3

This course will introduce students to the academic study of religion to provide a foundation for religious literacy. Multiple sections of this course are offered every semester, under a variety of titles.

RELI 200. Buddhism. 1 Credit.

Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3,Other:1

An interdisciplinary introduction to Buddhism, including basic teachings of liberation from suffering, impermanence, no-self, ethics, and meditation. Also explores the historical development of various streams of Buddhism in Asia and the West, with attention to the mutual influence between Buddhism and society, politics, and material culture. Crosslisted as EAST 251.

RELI 201. Islam. 1 Credit.

Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3

An overview of the many cultural expressions of Islam, which emerged in the 6th century and spread from Arabia to the larger world. The course will cover Muhammad as prophet, Qur'an as scripture, Hadith as religious narrative, and tensions between law, modernity, and mysticism.

RELI 202. Hinduism. 1 Credit.

Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3

A historical survey of Hindu religious traditions. This course traces the development of Hindu scriptures, rituals, philosophies, and ethics from the ancient to the contemporary world. Concepts such as karma, yoga, and reincarnation will be put in the broader contexts of Hindu dharma (religious law), theism, and ritual.

RELI 203. Hinduism and Film. 1 Credit.

Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3

A survey of Indian cinema and Hinduism, exploring early Hindu mythological films, the underlying religious messages of popular "secular" films, and the influence of Hindu worship practices on Indian cinema.

RELI 205. Hebrew. 1 Credit.

Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3

Essentials of grammar, syntax, and vocabulary of Biblical Hebrew. Includes readings of narrative portions of the Hebrew Bible and additional texts in Hebrew.

RELI 206. Sacred Objects: Religion, Violence and History. 1 Credit.

Lecture hours:3; Repeatable

This course examines religion and violence through a social history of sacred objects circulating in medieval and modern South Asia. It explores political ideologies of the Indian state by studying how objects (images, buildings, idols, books, jewels) become imbued with religious power and motivate cataclysmic violence. Crosslisted as IREL 206.

RELI 207. Holocaust: Event and Reception. 1 Credit.

Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3; Repeatable

During the Holocaust more than six million Jews, one third of the Jewish population of the world, were systematically killed. We study the event, reflections by major thinkers and scholars, and the aftermath of the Holocaust.

RELI 209. Israel: Land, People, and Tradition. 1 Credit.

Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3

Study of the complex relationship between Judaism and the sacred traditions of the Jews as related to the Land of Israel including the cultural situation and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

RELI 210. Judaism. 1 Credit.

Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3

A survey of Jewish religious traditions, addressing major historical developments (e.g., biblical, rabbinic, and modern periods) and basic rituals and theological issues (e.g., "chosenness", covenant, salvation).

RELI 211. Women In Judaism. 1 Credit.

Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3

Survey of Jewish texts and films that focus specifically on women or use feminine imagery; considers feminist and historical-critical interpretations of the evolving role of Jewish women. Crosslisted as WMST 211.

RELI 212. Christianity. 1 Credit.

Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3

A broad introduction to Christianity, including a survey of Christian scripture, various Christian doctrines and beliefs, and major traditions of thought and practice within Christianity.

RELI 213. God, Suffering, and Evil. 1 Credit.

Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3

An investigation into the problem suffering and evil pose for western religious and Christian reflection on the existence and nature of God.

RELI 214. God, Nature, and Knowledge. 1 Credit.

Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3

Study of various philosophical, religious, and scientific theories regarding the concept of divine nature, human nature, and non-human nature.

RELI 215. Essentials of Christian Thought. 1 Credit.

Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3

A survey of major topics in Christian thought, including God, creation, human nature, sin, salvation, the Christian life, the church, the status of other religions, and the future of human history and the world.

RELI 216. Philosophy of Religion. 1 Credit.

Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3

Problems for rational inquiry arising from the claims and practices of religious faith, e.g., the nature of religious language, arguments for the existence of God, the concept of evil. Prerequisite: permission of the instructor. Crosslisted as PHIL 223.

RELI 217. Catholicism. 1 Credit.

Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3

A broad survey of Roman Catholicism, including its main beliefs and practices, within the larger context of the history of Christianity and the history of Christian thought.

RELI 218. Christian Ethics. 1 Credit.

Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3

Major trends in Christian ethics, with particular attention to the diversity of sources and methods used by Christian thinkers to reflect on moral issues.

RELI 219. Contemporary Religion: Race, Gender, and Sexuality. 1 Credit.

Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3

Through historical, political, and sociological analysis, this course will study how sexuality, race, and gender issues are affecting contemporary religious thought. Crosslisted as WMST 219.

RELI 220. Comparative Ethics. 1 Credit.

Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3

An examination of the symbols, concepts, beliefs, and practices of a variety of religious traditions and their role in providing ethical guidance for human life. Special attention will be given to critical methods of comparative analysis and their application to diverse traditions.

RELI 221. God and Morality. 1 Credit.

Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3

An overview of Western religious ethics, focusing on the relation between religion and morality, the connection between ideas of human selfhood and moral goodness, and the uses of argument to justify religious and moral claims.

RELI 222. Images of Jerusalem. 1 Credit.

Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3

This is a writing class (W2) focusing on Jerusalem (Israel), its history, as a pilgrimage site, and the three Western religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) in the city.

RELI 223. History Western Religious Thought. 1 Credit.

Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3

A survey of the major religious ideas and problems which have shaped the Western intellectual tradition. Topics to be explored include conceptions of God, theories of human nature, and the relation between religious belief and cultural values.

RELI 224. Global Religions and the Politics of Pluralism. 1 Credit.

Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3

Explores the presence and practice of global relations and analyzes the cultural and political challenges of religious pluralism. Students will examine a wide variety of religious traditions, assess how minority religions negotiate issues of acculturation, and evaluate the political problems often created by religious diversity. Prerequisite: permission of the instructor.

RELI 225. Religion and Literature. 1 Credit.

Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3; Repeatable

Examination of the religious, philosophical, and ethical quandaries confronting human beings through the study of literary works. Themes may include autobiography and the construction of identity; the nature of human freedom, love, and aspiration; the problems of evil, suffering, and alienation; the experience of moral conflict; and other topics.

RELI 226. Environmental Ethics. 1 Credit.

Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3

A survey of the major theories of environmental ethics, with particular attention to the challenge of developing an ethic commensurate with increasing human power. Crosslisted as ENST 236.

RELI 227. Bioethics: Issues in Ethics, Medicine, and the Life Sciences. 1 Credit.

Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3

Systematic study of the moral and social implications of practices and developments in medicine and the life sciences including abortion, human experimentation, genetic intervention, behavioral control, death and dying.

RELI 228. Religions in the Modern World. 1 Credit.**Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3**

An examination of how religious communities respond to contemporary issues such as nationalism, secularism, atheism, culture and history of a group. The formation of religious identities and institutions in contexts of cultural diversity and pluralism will be discussed.

RELI 229. The Ethics of Consumption. 1 Credit.**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

Analysis of ethical issues related to human consumption, such as world hunger, poverty, environmental destruction, and the effects of consumerism on human values and interactions.

RELI 230. End of Nature, Posthuman Future. 1 Credit.**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

Analysis of ethical issues related to human technological interventions (both environmental and medical), and their implications for our changing conceptions of nature and human nature.

RELI 232. What is Religion? Theories and Methods. 1 Credit.**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

Exploration of theoretical models and methods in religious studies. Readings from major texts may include sociological, psychological, anthropological, and phenomenological approaches, along with challenges to such theories from thinkers of feminist, postmodern, and postcolonial perspectives. Prerequisite: sophomore, junior or senior status only. Open to others by permission of instructor.

RELI 233. Global Feminism and Religion. 1 Credit.**Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3**

This course examines the relationship between developments in feminist thought and movements in various parts of the world and the array of religious ideologies and practices in those societies. Crosslisted as WMST 233.

RELI 234. Issues of Religion and Culture. 1 Credit.**Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3, Other:1; Repeatable**

Focus on interdependence of religion and cultural phenomena: ideology; alienation; formation of world view; understandings of time and space; relation between church and state; faith and science.

RELI 235. Religion and Popular Culture. 1 Credit.**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

This course examines the relationship of religion to contemporary popular culture, both in how religion is portrayed (in music, movies, sports, and consumer culture) and how it is replicated (in ritual, myth, and morality).

RELI 237. Judaism in Film. 1 Credit.**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

This is an introduction to Judaism in Film. Judaism has been characterized as a culture, a civilization, a philosophy, a nation, an ethnic group, and a religion. In this introductory class we will discuss ritual, ethical and historical issues.

RELI 239. Queering Christian Thought. 1 Credit.**Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3**

This course explores the relationship between queer theories, sexuality studies, and Christian theology. In addition to the concepts of gender, race and sexuality, it offers a survey of major topics in Christian thought, including God, love, justice, sin, and salvation. Crosslisted as WMST 239.

RELI 240. Perspectives in Religion and Science. 1 Credit.**Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3**

Survey of theories, topics, and problems involved in understanding the historically evolved and complex relationship between western religion and science and their respective truth claims.

RELI 241. Religion and the Loss of Traditional Faith. 1 Credit.**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

Examination of new approaches (linguistical, philosophical, and hermeneutical) that challenge traditional Western religious ideas and the role of faith in contemporary world. Emphasis is on intersection of religion and critical theory.

RELI 242. Religious Naturalism. 1 Credit.**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

This course will examine some of the diverse perspectives and ideas associated with religious naturalism. Students will explore the ways religious naturalists reconceptualize traditional concepts (God or supernatural theism), and examine their various approaches to understanding evil, morality, human nature, and humans' connectivity to nature.

RELI 243. Religions of South Asia. 1 Credit.**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3; Repeatable**

Focused study of one or more South Asian religious traditions. This course centers on South Asian religions and on topics that may include, but will not be limited to: Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, Islam in Pakistan and India, and Buddhism in Tibet, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka.

RELI 244. Ghosts, Gods, & Immortals: The Taoist Religion in China. 1 Credit.**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

To live as long as heaven and earth; to make the body indestructible; to master the transformations of the cosmos; to control legions of demons and deities. These are the aims of the Chinese religion known as Taoism. This course examines Taoist beliefs and practices from ancient to modern times. Crosslisted as EAST 244.

RELI 245. Marketing Chinese Religions. 1 Credit.**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

Focus on the economic dimensions of Chinese religious institutions in modern and contemporary periods, with attention also paid to premodern precedents. Economics here indicates not only mechanisms of monetary exchange, but also negotiations of spiritual capital (ledgers of [de]merit) and of religious identities amidst rampant consumerism and commodification of sanctity. Crosslisted as EAST 252.

RELI 246. Death of Religion in Japan. 1 Credit.**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3,Other:1**

Religion in Japan is dead. Or, the rumors of its demise are greatly exaggerated. But one thing's for sure, Japanese religion is the province of the dead. This course examines how Japanese religions, which are supposedly dead or dying, supply the primary means for coping with life and death. Crosslisted as EAST 253.

RELI 247. Epic India: Gods and Goddesses. 1 Credit.**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

Survey of the great Indian religious epics, focusing on the stories of the gods and goddesses and their interactions with humankind; and the place of these stories in classical India and throughout time as they are retold in new times and places as they are recast in new media.

RELI 248. Religions of the African Diaspora. 1 Credit.**Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3**

This course examines the historical development of African-derived or African-inspired religions in the African diaspora, including in the United States. It also examines the expansion and appropriation of major world religions into particular African diaspora communities. Crosslisted as WMST 248.

RELI 249. Pilgrimage in South Asia. 1 Credit.**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

An exploration of the sacred spaces of South Asia and the religious journeying practices of Hindus and others throughout the Indian subcontinent.

RELI 252. New Testament and Christian Origins. 1 Credit.**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

An exploration of the earliest Christians through the writings that later became the New Testament. We will examine these sources in the context of their specific social and historical concerns and consider the complex process in which some writings were included in Christian scripture while others were rejected. Crosslisted as CLAS 252.

RELI 253. Dying For God: Martyrs and Monks. 1 Credit.**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

Early Christians were attracted to dramatic narratives of suffering—whether about spectacular deaths in the arena or extreme self-denial in the desert. This course explores the world of martyrs and monks and considers how ancient ideals about pain, gender, and sexuality continue to influence Christian thinking about holiness and sainthood. Crosslisted as CLAS 235 and WMST 245.

RELI 254. Religious Radicalism. 1 Credit.**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

This course will examine the history of religious radicalism in the United States, focusing especially on religious challenges to American capitalism, democracy, and social inequality since the nineteenth century. Crosslisted as HIST 206.

RELI 275. BU in Cape Town, South Africa. Addressing the Legacy of Apartheid through Social Justice Initiatives. 1 Credit.**Offered Summer Session Only; Lecture hours:3**

This course introduces students to the historical, cultural, and economic factors that have been part of South Africa's apartheid past, offering them opportunities to explore and learn more about the varied steps taken by South Africans to move beyond the harsh realities of legal apartheid. Course counts as Integrative Perspectives. Crosslisted as WMST 274 and UNIV 274.

RELI 276. Judaism and Masculinity. 1 Credit.**Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3**

Theories of Judaism, masculinity and maleness applied to the bodies of athletes; Jewish/Black bodies; the body of soldiers; stereotyping; human and divine bodies; Jewish feet, nose, ideal bodies.

RELI 279. Judaism and Law. 1 Credit.**Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3**

Explores the cultural and ethical complexities of Jewish Law in the U.S., Europe, and the unique legal system of the state of Israel.

RELI 280. Religion and Constitutional Law. 1 Credit.**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

This course explores the developing relationship between religion and American constitutional law, focusing on historic documents and Supreme Court decisions relating to the First Amendment. Crosslisted as POLS 247.

RELI 281. Religion and American Politics. 1 Credit.**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

This course explores the historical relationship of religion and American politics, focusing on the impact of religion in both domestic and foreign policy.

RELI 286. Imagining Sustainability. 1 Credit.**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

An Integrated Perspectives course covering critical understandings and applications of sustainability across the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences as integrative of environmental, social, economic, and cultural perspectives. Crosslisted as UNIV 286 and ENST 286.

RELI 293. Ancestors and Androids: African Religions in a Global Era. 1 Credit.**Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:2,Other:1**

Examines African religions in a global era, focusing on the intersection of culture, religion, and globalization. Focuses on beliefs and practices in Africa's three major religious traditions: indigenous African religions, Christianity, and Islam. Crosslisted as AFST 293 and ANTH 293.

RELI 305. The Male Body in Judaism. 1 Credit.**Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3**

Investigates the male body from Jewish and comparative perspectives: the body of athletes; Jewish/Black relations; theories of masculinity; the body of soldiers; stereotyping; human and divine bodies. Prerequisites: sophomore, junior, or senior status and permission of the instructor.

RELI 306. Messianism and Madness. 1 Credit.**Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3**

Judaism and Jewish sectarianism include numerous Messianic figures: from Jesus to Messiah Ephraim; Shabbetai Zvi; Zionism; kabbalistic, midrashic, philosophical, Hassidic, and contemporary ideas of redemption. Prerequisites: sophomore, junior, or seniors only. Others by permission of instructor.

RELI 307. Post-biblical Literature. 1 Credit.**Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3**

Survey of Jewish post-biblical literature and thought which may include literature of the Second Temple period and rabbinic literature (Pseudepigrapha, Dead Sea Scrolls, Targum, Josephus, Mishnah-Tosefta, Midrash, Talmud, and contemporary phenomena) in religious, historical, literary, and cultural contexts.

RELI 310. Topics in Religion and Law. 1 Credit.**Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3; Repeatable**

This course will examine aspects of the relationship between religion and law in global, regional, tradition-based, and/or historical contexts. Prerequisite: sophomore, junior or senior status only. Open to others by permission of the instructor.

RELI 311. On Being Spiritual, Not Religious. 1 Credit.**Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3**

Study of the nature, role and meaning of mysticism and spirituality for Western audiences, examining the social/cultural variables influencing mystical quests; truth, reality, and transcendence in diverse mystical experiences; the role of the body in spiritual practices. Prerequisite: sophomore, junior or senior only. Open to others by permission of instructor.

RELI 312. Digesting Divinity: Religion and Food. 1 Credit.**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

This course considers the relationship between food, consumption, and the construction of religious identity. Students will read a wide range of sources from antiquity to the present, exploring the ways in which food customs structure human belief and function as a point of communication between humanity and divinity.

RELI 315. Topics in American Religion. 1 Credit.**Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3; Repeatable**

This course will examine specific topics in American religion including in-depth analyses of religious movements and traditions in America. Prerequisite: sophomore, junior or senior status only. Open to others by permission of the instructor.

RELI 316. Topics in Religion and Culture. 1 Credit.**Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3; Repeatable**

This course will examine the interrelation between religion and cultural phenomena in diverse contexts of human experience. Prerequisite: sophomore, junior or senior status only. Open to others by permission of the instructor.

RELI 317. Cultivating the Self. 1 Credit.**Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3**

Study of self-cultivation as a central theme in religious and philosophical reflection. Students will explore different meanings of self-cultivation as a practice of training the self's energies to attain an ideal of human excellence in multiple traditions. Prerequisite: sophomore, junior or senior only. Open to others by permission of instructor.

RELI 318. Jewish Thought. 1 Credit.**Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3**

Text-based class: cultural influences upon Jewish thought and practice in major Jewish books, traditional and contemporary Judaism, from Philo to Derrida: Human existence and identity. Prerequisite: sophomore, junior, or senior only. Open to others by permission of instructor.

RELI 320. Individual Studies In Religion. .5-1 Credits.

Offered Both Fall and Spring; Lecture hours:Varies,Other:Varies; Repeatable

Guided investigations. Open to qualified students with some previous study of religion who wish to pursue individual programs of study in the field.

Prerequisite: Only by permission of the instructor.

RELI 321. Introduction to Jewish Law. 1 Credit.

Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3

Jewish law: function, ethical and philosophical principles. Major sources: Bible, Rabbinics, Interpretations (Commentaries Codifications), science.

Applications to contemporary legal issues. Prerequisite: sophomore, junior, or senior only. Open to others by permission of the instructor.

RELI 325. Major Religious Thinkers. 1 Credit.

Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3; Repeatable

The thought, historical setting, and influence of one or more classical religious thinkers, e.g., Paul the Apostle, Augustine, Kierkegaard, Confucius,

Rosenzweig, Gandhi. Prerequisite: sophomore, junior, or senior only. Open to others by permission of the instructor.

RELI 326. Major Religious Movements. 1 Credit.

Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3; Repeatable

Origins, beliefs, and significance of selected religious communities and movements, e.g., Mysticism, Modern Catholicism, Evangelicalism,

Monasticism, Religious Socialism. Prerequisite: sophomore, junior, or senior only. Open to others by permission of the instructor.

RELI 350. Honors Thesis. 1 Credit.

Offered Both Fall and Spring; Lecture hours:3; Repeatable

Honors thesis. Prerequisite: permission of the instructor.

RELI 400. Senior Seminar - Culminating Experience. 1 Credit.

Offered Spring Semester Only; Lecture hours:3

The Senior Seminar is required for all majors in Religious Studies, and is designed to give majors an opportunity to integrate the knowledge and skills they have acquired, and to hone their research, writing, and oral skills. Prerequisites: Open to seniors in Religious Studies and others by permission of instructor.