

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.

210 Religion and Media

Fall. 4 credits.

Portrayal of religion by the media in cultures around the world. Use of the media to promote religious beliefs. Examples from documentary film, television, print media and the internet.

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.

240 The Hindu Yoga Traditions

Fall of even years. 3(3-0)

Thought and practices (religious, philosophical, psychological, and social) of the Indian discipline known as Yoga. Yogic systems of the ancient and modern Hindu world.

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.

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

Fall. 4(4-0) R: Not open to freshmen.

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)

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. 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

Spring. 4(4-0) R: Not open to freshmen.

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

340 Hinduism

Fall. 4(4-0) R: Not open to freshmen.

Historical, philosophical and doctrinal development. Vedic Sacrifice, Upanishads, devotional Vashnavism, Yoga and meditation, Tantric and medieval forms, ritual and temple forms. Modern syncretism and interaction with Western world views.

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: An Introduction

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.

370 The End of the World in America

Spring. 3(3-0)

Examination of the ways in which Americans have anticipated the end of the world. Focus on millennial desires and anxieties within a larger theoretical and historical context. Sacred text, utopian ventures, prophecy, new religious movements, cultural constructions of endtimes theology.

410 Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

Fall. 3(3-0) 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

Spring of even years. 3(3-0) 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 New Testament

Spring. 3(3-0) 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.

431 Muhammad and the Qur'an

Spring of odd years. 3(3-0) R: Not open to freshmen or sophomores.

Life and contributions of the Prophet Muhammad. The Qur'an as a historical source. Origin, compilation, contents, and arrangements of the Qur'an. Forms of the Qur'an: recitation, scripture, calligraphy, theological concept.

470 Religious and Secular Cosmologies

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

Cosmological contents of religions. Religious questions raised by secular cosmologies. Perspectives from phenomenology and anthropology of religion.

471 The Ritual Process

Spring. 3(3-0) 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.

475 Anthropological Approaches to Religion

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

Religion and language as distinguishing human traits. The capacity to create symbols and the power of symbols. Early explanations of the origins of religion. Later functional appreciations of religion based on field studies. Leading theorists from different schools of religious studies.

Religious Studies—REL

480 Comparative Studies in Religion

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

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

490 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.

491 Special Topics in Religious Studies

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

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

499 Senior Thesis Research (W)

Fall, Spring. 1 to 4 credits. A student may earn a maximum of 12 credits in all enrollments for this course. P:M: 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 and submit or present a major paper.

890 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.