

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (REL)

REL 101. Introduction to Religion. 3 Credit Hours.

An overview of religious perspectives concerning ultimate reality, humankind, and the world, with special attention to major Asian and Abrahamic religions.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, & Summer.

REL 102. Problem of God. 3 Credit Hours.

Contemporary religious issues related to the concept of God. Foundational to this course is an examination of the religious dimension of human experience and consciousness in relation to a number of historical and contemporary problems and challenges. This course approaches "the problem of God" from the angle of human experience, focusing on the various historical, social, and existential determinants of belief. Topics include: globalized religion, the challenge of atheism and humanism, the impact of secularization on religion, and an exploration of the historical, social, and theological images of creation and the divine.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

REL 103. One God: Judaism, Christianity, Islam. 3 Credit Hours.

Monotheism is one of the most important ideas in human history. This course examines how Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have lived it, understood it and interpreted it. The basic structures of all three religions and explore their similarities, differences and interactions on a set of critical issues, both contemporary and classical. The course will encourage students' conversation and active participation.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, & Summer.

REL 104. Atheism: Doubts and Debates. 3 Credit Hours.

This course examines faith-based claims that invite skepticism and atheist critiques of the phenomenon of religion. This course defines atheism as a lack of belief in a deity or God and explores atheist literature and history to understand this worldview. Topics include: faith, doubt, unbelief, scripture, the supernatural, naturalism, morality, secular humanism, violence, extremism, and discussions about epistemology, or how we can know anything.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

REL 105. One Goal: Transforming the Self in Asian Religions. 3 Credit Hours.

A selective survey of some of the continent's major religious traditions that attempts to provide a sense of their diversity, including a hint of their internal diversity. We will encounter major figures, doctrines, and ethical precepts, but special attention will be paid to one key element shared that distinguishes them from their Abrahamic counterparts (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam): the one goal of self-transformation and the techniques for achieving it. Here we will find the differences among traditions thrown into stark relief even as we encounter surprising parallels and continuities. Along the way students will be exposed to major concepts and approaches to the academic study of religion.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

REL 109. Anthropology of Religion. 3 Credit Hours.

Through themes such as myth, word and text, symbol, gender, pilgrimage, embodiment, and ritual, students learn about lived religion through anthropological research and field methods. The course also exposes introductory-level students to diverse world religious traditions: Korean folk religion, Indonesian Islam, Hinduism in diaspora, Judaism across cultures, Japanese temple Shinto traditions, and more.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

REL 111. Introduction to the Bible: Tanakh, Old Testament. 3 Credit Hours.

The history and literature of ancient Israel and early Judaism.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall & Spring.

REL 119. Courses taken at other institutions with no direct equivalents.. 1-4 Credit Hours.

A warded for course work at another institution for which LTM has no direct equivalent.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, & Summer.

REL 121. Introduction to the New Testament. 3 Credit Hours.

The history and literature of the early Christian movement.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall Even Years.

REL 131. Religion in America. 3 Credit Hours.

The history of religion in the U.S. from the pre-colonial period to the present. Includes study of the religion of Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, women, Protestants, Catholics, Jews, and cults.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall & Summer.

REL 139. Course taken at other institutions with no direct equivalents. 1-4 Credit Hours.

Awarded for course work at another institution for which UM has no direct equivalent.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, & Summer.

REL 151. Religion and Moral Choices. 3 Credit Hours.

Religious responses to dilemmas raised by issues such as capital punishment, biotechnology, abortion, euthanasia, and war.

Components: SEM.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall & Spring.

REL 159. Courses taken at other institutions with no direct equivalents. 1-4 Credit Hours.

Awarded for course work at another institution for which UM has no direct equivalent.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, & Summer.

REL 161. Religion and Medicine: Health Care as Spiritual Practice. 3 Credit Hours.

An exploration of the history of medical care and the history of medicine as calling, as well as the changing professionalism of health care; the role of virtue ethics in the practice of medicine; the tensions between religion and medicine; the place of personal religious beliefs in health care; and the changing landscape of health, holism, healing, faith, and the science of medicine.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

REL 181. Asian Religions. 3 Credit Hours.

The religions of Asia loom large in American popular consciousness, yet are at best dimly understood. This course will peel back the platitudes of fortune cookies and "Eastern wisdom" to reveal the richness of Asian religious traditions in their cultural contexts. Students in this highly selective survey will be exposed to some of the major traditions of South and East Asia, gaining a familiarity with their ideas, practices, and sacred figures as well as certain key issues and categories in the academic study of religion.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 219. Courses taken at other institutions with no direct equivalent. 1-4 Credit Hours.

Awarded for course work at another institution for which UM has no direct equivalent.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, & Summer.

REL 231. Jewish Civilization and Intro to Judaism, Jews, and Jewishness from Abraham to Wonder Woman. 3 Credit Hours.

Introduction to Jewish Civilization from Abraham to present.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

REL 232. A Global History of Christianity. 3 Credit Hours.

A survey of the historical development of Christianity from the first century to the present, focusing on the major theological and institutional issues considered in their social and cultural contexts.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

REL 234. Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus - An Archaeological Odyssey. 3 Credit Hours.

The archaeological evidence of Jerusalem during the time of Jesus. Emphasis on the architectural remains, material culture, and inscriptions of the period that illuminate Jewish society and religion in Jerusalem. The places associated with the Gospels and the last days of Jesus will be a focus.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 235. African American Religion. 3 Credit Hours.

This course introduces you to the variety of African American religions that developed in the U.S. The historical and ethnographical contexts surrounding the development of African American religions and the lived experiences of African Americans are the main topics of our course. The class includes discussion of West African and Central African religions, the impact of the Atlantic slave trade, the role of politics, the construction of racial identities, and most importantly, the diversity of African American religions. Thematically, we will work through concepts of the religion such as: memory, myth and authenticity; ritual and material practices; borders, migration, gender and sexuality, religious commodities and exchange. As we traverse through these various religious traditions, it is through the readings, lectures, invited speakers, films and class discussions that we will develop a complex understanding of integrative religious worldviews that impacts every aspect of life: family structure, gender relations, education, healing, economics, politics, arts, and so on.

Components: SEM.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

REL 236. Cults and New Religious Movements in America. 3 Credit Hours.

Twentieth and twenty-first century religious groups in America, so-called "cults" or new religious movements (NRM's), located on the periphery of "mainstream" religion. An examination of the origins, beliefs, attraction, and interaction of the NRMs from a variety of disciplinary perspectives (historical, psychological, sociological) as well as from another variety of disciplinary perspectives (potential for violence, "brainwashing", involvement of women, and charismatic leadership). The goal is to increase our understanding of certain aspects of contemporary religious activity and the general societal response to them, and hence, of religion in general. The task is not to commend or condemn particular religious' groups, but rather to attempt to reach some understanding of them, first on their terms, then on ours in the appropriate disciplinary contexts.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

REL 238. Holy War and Toleration in Western Religious Traditions. 3 Credit Hours.

An exploration of concepts of Holy War and Just War and of traditions of tolerance and intolerance in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, from ancient times to the present.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 239. Transfer Credits. 1-4 Credit Hours.

Courses taken at other institutions with no direct equivalents (Religious or Historical Traditions subject area).

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, & Summer.

REL 240. Pilgrims, Shrines, Crusades and Saint in Spain. 3 Credit Hours.

The diversity and complexity of the unique kind of Catholic culture which developed in Spain. The focus is on the formative period from 700 to 1700 CE and the major trends in both formal Spanish Catholic thought and everyday lived religion. Themes of pilgrimage, shrines, religious wars, and sainthood are examined. Because Spain in effect exported this particular form of Catholicism to the Americas beginning in 1492, an appreciation of Spanish Catholicism ought to have particular resonance for students interested in Latin America today.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 242. Religion in Revolutionary History. 3 Credit Hours.

Explores the pivotal role of religion in the revolutions that have shaped the modern Western world: the Puritan Revolt in 17th-century England, the American/French Revolutions of 1776 and 1789, and the Russian (Communist) Revolution of 1917.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall & Summer.

REL 244. Sacred Space. 3 Credit Hours.

An inter-disciplinary seminar, SACRED SPACE explores the multiple and layered intersections of religion and architecture, through a close study of contemporary and historic religious buildings across culture, time and place. Students and Faculty investigate if, how, and to what extent architecture and the sacred require one another.

Components: HRK.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

REL 250. Spiritual, Not Religious: Spirituality in the 21st Century. 3 Credit Hours.

An examination of the spiritual outlets and the fabric of religious life in the 21st century, including the New Age movement, the rise of yoga as a spiritual practice, the growth of the self-help phenomenon, the influence of spiritually-oriented figures like Oprah, and the adaptation of religious practice to spiritual seeking. In particular, we will filter this discussion through the experience of the growing percentage of relatively young Americans have no affiliation with religious institutions, many of whom feel attracted to an uncoordinated and decentralized spirituality directed by an individual's life and practice, rather than a church or particular religion.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

REL 252. Religion and Human Sexuality. 3 Credit Hours.

The relationship between religious concepts and sexual values as the religious traditions of the United States confront contemporary sexual ethics and behavior.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 253. Cognitive Science and Religion. 3 Credit Hours.

The basic topics and questions in the cognitive science of religion (CSR), the interdisciplinary approach to understanding how thought, perception, and affective states that underlie the kinds of beliefs and practices we recognize as religion. Questions include: What is religion and how should it be defined? Why throughout history and around the world have people believed in supernatural entities like ancestors, ghosts, or gods? Why do people perform rituals, observe religious dietary restrictions or holy days, read or recite oral and scriptural traditions?

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 255. Religion and Sports: From the Ancients to the Present. 3 Credit Hours.

The intersection of sports and religion from the ancient Greeks to the present, with attention given to the role of religion and sports in American culture. It examines the functions and significance of sport, play, ritual, and religion, recognizing both the dialectical and intimate relationship between sports and religion. Religion has not only influenced sports and sports has influenced religion; in some cases; the two have merged: sports has become a religion. Through various media we will study the topics of religion and sports, the spirituality of sports, and sports as a religion.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring Even Years.

REL 259. Transfer Credits. 1-4 Credit Hours.

Courses taken at other institutions with no direct equivalents (Religious Issues or Problems subject area).

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, & Summer.

REL 261. Religion, Health, and Human Suffering. 3 Credit Hours.

Examines how religion contributes to conceptions of health and suffering and promotes health in the context of suffering

Components: MOD.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

REL 271. Introduction to Islam. 3 Credit Hours.

Interested in learning about Islam? In this introductory course, students will learn about the religion, culture, and history of Islam. The course examines Muslim beliefs about God, the Prophet Muhammad, the Qur'an, the caliphate and the emergence of various sects. No prior knowledge is assumed. For more, see this video trailer: https://youtu.be/YICoOXg:_WZM

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

REL 281. Introduction to Buddhism. 3 Credit Hours.

The Buddhist tradition from a variety of angles and in several cultural contexts. We will attend to the ideas for which Buddhism is famous, while situating Buddhist practitioners in their social contexts at key historical moments. Throughout we will give attention to the issue of our own perspective and what it means to think across the porous borders of culture in an interrelated world.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

REL 288. Chinese Religions. 3 Credit Hours.

Over the last generation, China has largely thrown off communist ideology, becoming an economic powerhouse that will shape the 21st century. Alongside economic growth has come a rediscovery and revitalization of its religious heritage. But what is this religious heritage? What makes it unique? What does it offer? And how does this heritage shape China's religious scene today? This course addresses these questions through a survey of Chinese religion focusing on the "Three Teachings"—Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism—as well as popular religion. We will examine their development and mutual interaction, attending to their thought and practice as well as their historical and social context. Students will gain not only a familiarity with the religious traditions of China, but also cultivate their ability to think historically and to balance sympathetic and critical understanding.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring Odd Years.

REL 291. Introduction to Hinduism. 3 Credit Hours.

Sources of Hindu belief and practice date back as early as 1500 BCE, but the mythologies of India harken to time immemorial. The tradition that is now known as Hinduism developed through the rise and fall of empires, the evolution of social hierarchies, and the telling and retelling of colorful stories about heroes and divinities. Today, Hindu practices are part of the landscape not only in India, but in Europe, Africa and the Middle East, Southeast Asia and the Americas, too. Through readings, images and films, this course will introduce the rich and layered diversity of Hindu traditions as well as provide exposure to the methods and theories of Religious studies.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring Odd Years.

REL 301. Ancient Greece. 3 Credit Hours.

Greek civilization from the Late Bronze Age to the end of Greek independence at the battle of Chaeronea in 338 B.C.E.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall Odd Years.

REL 302. The Hellenistic Age. 3 Credit Hours.

Conquests of Alexander the Great and the spread of Greek culture in the Near East under Alexander's successors until the death of Cleopatra in 31 B.C.E.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 303. The Roman Republic. 3 Credit Hours.

Roman civilization from the establishment of the Republic until the Battle of Actium in 31 B.C.E.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall Even Years.

REL 304. The Roman Empire. 3 Credit Hours.

Roman civilization from the reign of Augustus in 27 B.C.E. to the Fall of Rome in 476 C.E.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall Even Years.

REL 305. The Ancient Near East: Religion and Culture. 3 Credit Hours.

Historical and cultural forces in the major religions of the ancient Near East, from 3000 to 300 B. C. E. Cultural achievements such as the Epic of Gilgamesh, the pyramids and the Bible.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 307. Religion and Culture in Pre-Islamic Arabia. 3 Credit Hours.

A survey of religion and culture in Arabia from prehistory to the coming of Islam.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 308. The Greco-Roman Context of Early Christianity. 3 Credit Hours.

An examination of a range of first-century CE practices and texts that informed the lives of the people who we now call early Christians. Emphasis will be given to the historical, moral psychological, political, religious, rhetorical, archaeological and social contexts of early Christianity. From practices like animal sacrifice, to discourses on the role of the gods in human activity, we will consider what aspects of Greco-Roman religion Christianity adapted or rejected. We will also discuss how people conducted their daily lives, and how they understood larger issues such as how the body worked, the significance of gender, morality and philosophy and how these discourses are reflected in the early theology of the Jesus movement.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring Odd Years.

REL 311. Prophecy and Prophetic Literature in the Hebrew Bible. 3 Credit Hours.

Prophecy in ancient Israel and Judah and the prophetic literature of the Hebrew Bible in relation to its ancient near-eastern historical, religious, and social context.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

REL 312. The Torah and Ancient Law. 3 Credit Hours.

The first five books of the Hebrew Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy) in relation to their ancient Near Eastern historical, cultural, and religious context.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall & Spring.

REL 314. The Rise of Judaism. 3 Credit Hours.

The history and literature of early Judaism, covering the period from the fall of Jerusalem in 587/586 BCE to the beginnings of rabbinic Judaism and the formation of the Mishnah (ca.200 CE).

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 315. Jewish Mysticism. 3 Credit Hours.

A survey of the major ideas and texts dealing with Jewish Mysticism (Kabbalah, Hassidism).

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 319. Transfer Credits. 1-4 Credit Hours.

Courses taken at other institutions with no direct equivalents (Religious Literature or Texts subject area).

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, & Summer.

REL 321. Jesus and the Gospels. 3 Credit Hours.

An examination of the Jesus tradition, focusing on the formative period of the first two centuries. Special emphasis on the four New Testament Gospels, with a survey of the treatment of Jesus in other documents, both Christian and non-Christian.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring Even Years.

REL 322. The Apostle Paul: Letters, Controversies, and Philosophy. 3 Credit Hours.

The heritage, writings, and legacy of the apostle Paul. Careful analysis of the Pauline corpus (especially Romans), with particular attention given to the radically different interpretations of Paul in both ancient and modern thought.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring Odd Years.

REL 324. The Bible and Modern Film. 3 Credit Hours.

The diverse ways in which contemporary cinematic arts interpret and depict narratives from the Bible and the ancient Mediterranean world.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Summer.

REL 325. Jesus in Myth and History. 3 Credit Hours.

Changing concepts of Jesus in Western culture, as they emerge in literature, art, and films.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall & Spring.

REL 326. The Bible in History. 3 Credit Hours.

The use of key biblical texts in the history of Christianity. First, it gives general attention to the ways in which Christians have understood the Bible through two thousand years of history. Second, it explores the relationship between the Bible and important historical developments in Christianity with close attention to particular episodes. We seek to answer the question of why biblical texts lie dormant or are largely ignored and then spring to life, become the focus of attention, and transform the way people think and live.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall Odd Years.

REL 330. Caribbean Religion. 3 Credit Hours.

Caribbean Religion with an emphasis on African Diaspora and Creole religions. The religious traditions we will cover include: Rastafarianism, Regla de Ocha (Santería), Voodoo, Espiritismo, Regla de Palo, and Obeah.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

REL 331. Religions of Asia. 3 Credit Hours.

The major religions of South and East Asia including Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Shinto.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 332. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. 3 Credit Hours.

Completes the study of world religions begun in REL 331, but emphasizes the religions of the West. Religions studied: Zoroastrianism, Sikhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. May be taken without having had REL 331.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 334. The American Jewish Experience: Hollywood and Popular Culture. 3 Credit Hours.

Analysis and interpretation of the image of the Jew and the Jewish experience in American cinema, with emphasis on how the experience and attitudes of Americans in general and the American Jewish community in particular have been reflected on the screen from the pre-World War II period until the present and on the tension between maintaining an ethnic identity and assimilating.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

REL 335. American Religion in Modern Film. 3 Credit Hours.

A study of the role of religion (primarily Christianity) in popular culture and the way in which religion becomes the vehicle for aesthetic, social, political, and other cultural purposes. Exploration of contemporary American religious life with special attention given to groups and issues depicted through the medium of film. We focus on how film uses religion rather than on how religion uses film. That is, we analyze how mainstream movies (both directly religious and essentially secular) appropriate religious imagery and themes, rather than how religions use film to communicate their beliefs and practices.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall & Spring.

REL 338. Latin American and U.S. Latino/a Religion. 3 Credit Hours.

The roots of Latino/a religion in Indigenous, African, and Spanish culture and religiosity. Issues of race, identity, politics, and culture will feature prominently throughout the course.

Components: SEM.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 339. Transfer Credits. 1-4 Credit Hours.

Courses taken at other institutions with no direct equivalents (Religious or Historical Traditions subject area).

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, & Summer.

REL 341. Modern Religious Thought I. 3 Credit Hours.

The main currents and major figures in Western religious thought from the beginnings of the Enlightenment to the middle of the nineteenth century.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 342. Modern Religious Thought II. 3 Credit Hours.

Western religious thought from the middle of the nineteenth century to the present.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 343. Saints and Sinners: Introduction to Catholicism. 3 Credit Hours.

This course considers contemporary forms of Catholic piety, social ethics, political action, and theology.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall Odd Years.

REL 345. Religion and Gender. 3 Credit Hours.

Examination of what we know about the lives of woman (and men) from the classical period through modernity, with an emphasis on sexuality and gender in ancient Greece and Rome. Using cross-cultural analysis and a variety of ancient literature, scholarship and material culture, together we will reconstruct and (re)examine the socio-cultural environments and practices that have fostered Western discourses on sexual difference and gender identity over time, paying particular attention to how religion and religious practices are integral to understandings of the natural world, natural law and the self. Some of the questions we will ask include: What does it mean to be male or female? What can we discover about ourselves from the way(s) we have sex? How are all these things related to life, love, power?

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall Even Years.

REL 347. Experiencing Religion: Conversion. 3 Credit Hours.

The phenomenon of religious conversion from a multi-disciplinary (anthropological, historical, psychological, sociological) perspective in a variety of religious traditions, which address the following questions: What is religious conversion? What are the factors that make religious conversion viable for some people? How do we describe, explain, and evaluate religious conversion? Special emphasis is given to the history of Christian conversion.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 348. Reformation Europe. 3 Credit Hours.

The religious, political, cultural, social, and economic forces that produced a schism in 16th-century Western Christendom. Note: May be taken for credit in only one department as REL 348 or HIS 328.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 349. All Roads Lead to Rome: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Religion and Rome. 3 Credit Hours.

This course examines Rome's role as importer, exporter, cultivator, and transformer of religion and the religious life, giving attention to both the past and the present. Students will increase their awareness of the important elements of the major religions discussed in class—their myths, symbols, rituals, doctrines, moral codes, and artistic expressions—and the ways in which Rome has influenced them.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

REL 350. Current Issues in Religion. 3 Credit Hours.

Individual study and group discussion of the relevance of religion to contemporary issues such as race conflict, women's rights, intermarriage, refugees, media, prejudice, and counter culture groups.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall & Spring.

REL 351. Death and Dying. 3 Credit Hours.

For as long as we have documented history on the subject, human beings have debated issues about what it means to be mortal, what it means to live well, how to die well and whether death is truly the end of life. This course surveys discourses about death and death rituals from the ancient Mediterranean (ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome) to the present day. Some of the issues we will discuss include (but are not limited to): the history of certain perspectives on illness, death and burial; the relationship between organized religious systems and death and dying; personhood; theodicy; euthanasia; suicide; and the afterlife.

Components: SEM.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall & Spring.

REL 352. Religion and Science. 3 Credit Hours.

The religious and ethical issues created by modern science and technology.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall & Spring.

REL 353. Religion and American Politics. 3 Credit Hours.

Religious and ethical issues at debate in the American political scene.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 354. Religion and the Problem of Evil. 3 Credit Hours.

Major religious perspectives on the origin and nature of evil and human suffering.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring Even Years.

REL 356. Myth and Religion. 3 Credit Hours.

How humans use language to form and communicate conceptions of reality, focusing on the highly elusive concept "myth"; special attention to the concept's usefulness for thinking about religion.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

REL 357. Gender, Power, Gods. 3 Credit Hours.

The relationship between sex, gender, and ethics in Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. Topics covered include feminism, race and ethnicity, homosexuality, transexuality, and masculinity.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall Even Years.

REL 358. The Color of God: Race and Religion. 3 Credit Hours.

This course will examine the role of race and ethnicity within the discipline of religious studies. We will emphasize the manner in which racial and ethnic identity have contributed to religious identity, and the way in which religion has functioned within the struggles of racially and ethnically marginalized peoples. This course will focus on the Americas and draw from diverse racial, ethnic, and religious traditions.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, & Summer.

REL 359. Transfer Credits. 1-4 Credit Hours.

Courses taken at other institutions with no direct equivalents (Religious Issues or Problems subject area).

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, & Summer.

REL 360. Religion and Bioethics. 3 Credit Hours.

The implications of religious thought for contemporary problems of biomedical ethics.

Components: SEM.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

REL 361. Religion and Youth in Contemporary America. 3 Credit Hours.

An interdisciplinary examination of the role of religion in the lives of teenagers and college students in contemporary America.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

REL 362. The Sanctity of Life: Selected Themes From the Ancient World to the Present. 3 Credit Hours.

This course examines the religious foundation of the idea that human life is “sacred” and considers a wide range of historical and ethical issues associated with this central concept of Western thought. It explores the meaning of the multi-faceted phrase “sanctity of life,” including its implications for such ethical and legal concerns as conception, birth, and termination of life; human dignity and human rights; the quality of life; and social justice. Some of the issues considered will include bigotry and prejudice; economic and social injustice; euthanasia, infanticide, and suicide; genocide, holy war, jihad, terrorism, and violence; health care and its cost; human trafficking and slavery; martyrdom and self-martyrdom; social-stratification; aging, death, disposal of the body; and the afterlife, especially in Dante’s *Inferno*. We will examine how “life” is defined and described in different cultures at different times in history, and how various religions have influenced these matters.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

REL 363. Religion and Science Fiction: Dystopia, Faith, and the Future. 3 Credit Hours.

Issues surrounding “dystopia” and religion. We will study sustainability movements, authentic vs. synthetic nature, bioethics, technology, and their effects on modern spirituality and the future of religion. In order to discuss these topics, we will examine the intersections between the cultural significance of various dystopic science fiction novels, short stories, video games, television shows, and films with religion.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

REL 364. Spiritual Healing in the Americas from Controversy to Cure. 3 Credit Hours.

Miraculous and nonmedical healing is often accused of being superstitious and bogus, particularly when it comes in conflict with scientific knowledge, biomedical practices, and government regulation. In spite of this religious healing today has garnered increasing visibility and legitimacy. This course explores an interdisciplinary discussion of religious healing in the Americas with an emphasis on healing practices in numerous religious traditions and controversies surrounding faith healing.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

REL 365. The Cognitive Foundations of Personal Faith. 3 Credit Hours.

The concept of personal faith, both as a religious construct in the Western Judeo-Christian tradition, and as a secular value in American society. This course approaches the topic through the lens of the interdisciplinary field of cognitive science. In addition to considering religion and faith as objects of study, the course will survey and examine relevant theories and models within current cognitive science, including (a) non-representational dynamical systems and (b) how agents use images in processes of self- and social regulation. The course will also examine biblical texts as the basis of later theological and secular reflection on faith, testing the usefulness of the theories and models studied in the course.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 367. Black Religion in Literature: Afrofuturism and Africanjujuism. 3 Credit Hours.

DESCRIPTION: We will explore the history and religious creative genre of Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism and Africanjujuism. We begin by considering the literary and scholastic works on Afrofuturism by focusing on the works of three writers and scholars: N.K. Jeminsin, Nnedi Okorafor and Toni Morrison. In between, we will discuss issues of religion, language, dialect, political art, music, genre, and gender as we read poems, novels, speeches and short stories. Additionally, we will consider questions like what role has writing by Black religion played in the sci-fi and fantasy? How has this genre of writing been shaped by different ways of thinking about race and religion? How has race and religion, in turn, been shaped or constructed by that writing? And how do representations of gender and sexuality participate in a literary construction of race and religion?

Components: DIS.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

REL 368. Voodoo to Wakanda: Africana Religion in Film and Media. 3 Credit Hours.

This course will introduce students to the study of African diaspora religions by exploring why these traditions—usually in sensationalistic forms—appear so frequently in American pop culture products. The course quickly moves beyond the simple question of whether such products accurately depict these religions, and focuses on exploring how they create and maintain cultural and racial boundaries. While the special focus of the course will be Haitian Vodou, students will also explore Regla de Ocha (Santería), Palo, Candomblé, and conjure/hoodoo. Each class meeting will begin with a short presentation by the instructor, during which the week's readings will be discussed in conversation with common themes. However, the emphasis of each class meeting will be small group presentations and discussions. Students will be expected to arrive prepared to help shape the conversation. Course materials will include scholarly depictions of African diaspora religions and popular stories, novels, films, and television shows. In addition to the weekly assigned readings, students will be expected to have watched the assigned films. Many of the films are short, while others are only short clips. Some will be viewed together in class, and others will need to be viewed prior to class meetings. The instructor will help students organize group film viewings. Students are forewarned that course materials will include depictions of violence and sexuality—and an emphasis will be placed on critically deconstructing these images, rather than passively receiving them. Students can buy as many or as few of the assigned texts as they wish. We only read selections from most textbooks, and therefore it is possible in many cases to make copies from texts that will be placed on reserve at the library. Many of the readings will also be placed on the course website as PDFs. Every effort will be made to guarantee that all of the assigned films are also available on reserve at the library, where they can be viewed for free, at the student's convenience.

Components: SEM.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring Odd Years.

REL 369. Is Star Wars a Religion?. 3 Credit Hours.

From a mysterious force that links the universe, to the resurrection of power figures, from supernatural adoptions, to the clothes and the ruins of its holy cities, the Star Wars franchise both invokes and evokes associations with what we might call religious themes and imagery. This course will explore the possible intersections between the Star Wars universe and the category of religion in an effort to test the proposition that Star Wars is—or perhaps one day might become—a religion. Among the questions we will ask through this case study are: what does it take for something to be a religion? How do new religious movements start? How do we theorize the study of religion? What turns certain narratives into canon? And, crucially, do the similarities between Star Wars and religion represent intentional strategy on the part of the filmmakers, writers, artists, imagineers, or does it reflect a larger social phenomenon?

Components: HRK.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring Even Years.

REL 370. Islam in the Modern World. 3 Credit Hours.

How is Islam understood and practiced in the modern world? Students will learn about the rituals, traditions and popular beliefs of contemporary Muslims through film and key texts. The course also explores fault lines in the community such as the rise of authoritarian states, secularism, and liberal values on one hand and increased sectarianism and patterns of radicalization on the other.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

REL 371. Women, Gender, and Islam. 3 Credit Hours.

An examination of issues related to women and gender with an emphasis upon themes pertaining to the Muslim world. We will study the contributions of progressive/feminist Muslim writers in addition to secular academic research on the subject. Topics include Qur'anic revelations concerning women; gendered ideals that developed after the founder's death; understanding how Islamic texts, rituals, and doctrines have both reinforced and challenged certain gender categories; and the experience of Muslims living in the U.S. and the Middle East, addressing racial as well as gendered hierarchies.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

REL 372. Islam and the United States: The Politics of Race, Media, and Terrorism. 3 Credit Hours.

A critical review of the cultural and political history of U.S. relations with various Muslim communities both domestic and foreign. Major themes include the experience of Muslims in North America, xenophobia, racism, national security, law enforcement and violence.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

REL 375. Democracy and Religion in Israel and Palestine. 3 Credit Hours.

Israel's evolution as a nation and a society by focusing on the impact of religion on ethnicity, culture, and democracy.

Components: SEM.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

REL 377. Sufism: Islamic Mysticism. 3 Credit Hours.

The doctrines, practices, teachings, and history of Sufism, the mystical dimension of Islam.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall & Spring.

REL 378. Religion and Civic Engagement. 3 Credit Hours.

The role of religion within civic engagement, the manner in which religion is a driving force behind civic engagement in the United States. Issues that will be covered include: immigration, gender, law, youth, religious pluralism, and racism. Emphasis will be placed on the relationship between critical thinking and concrete action, as well as the intersection of belief and social transformation. This is a service-learning course that will integrate course material with student service placements. Students will be required to do service learning throughout the semester.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 380. Holy Bones, Sacred Stones: Archaeology of Early Judaism. 3 Credit Hours.

The post-exilic Jewish community from the Persian period until the Bar Kokhba Revolt (539 BCE to 135 CE). The emphasis will be major archaeological contributions from the Persian period to the Roman imperial period, but particularly the late Hasmonean and Herodian kingdoms that resulted in the transformation of Judaism and the emergence of Christianity. The aim of the course is to acquaint you with the method and theory used in interpreting material culture including comparative, contextual and problem-oriented approaches currently used in Near Eastern archaeology.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 383. Activist Bodhisattvas: Buddhist Ethics and Social Engagement. 3 Credit Hours.

One of the most important developments in modern Buddhism has been the turn toward social engagement and activism. Across Asia and beyond, Buddhist organizations and movements have emerged that consider improving society to be an intrinsic Buddhist concern alongside the classic focus on perfecting the self. Where does this development come from? To what degree is it a departure from previous tradition? How do these movements reconceive and rearticulate Buddhist teachings and practices to address the problems of their societies and the global community? What perspectives does socially engaged Buddhism offer to others movements seeking to address the ills of our time? This course will explore these questions through a consideration of selected examples drawn from several Buddhist traditions

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring Even Years.

REL 384. Karma. 3 Credit Hours.

Karma is one of the most central doctrines of Buddhism and by far the most viral. Through lip jars, pop songs, and TV shows, the concept has become familiar to many. But what is karma? How does it work? What does it mean to live in a karmic universe? This course will examine these questions through a consideration of Buddhist doctrine, ritual, ethics, and narrative.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall Odd Years.

REL 388. Living Stories: Narrative in Asian Traditions. 3 Credit Hours.

In popular culture, Asian religions are referred to as "Eastern Philosophy." Yet, philosophical doctrine is only one part of Asian religious traditions and for many not the most prominent. Oftentimes narrative, key stories or modes of storytelling, occupies a more central role. But what is that role? How do narratives transmit religious ideas and values and inform ritual life? How do they evolve over time? And how do religious individuals and communities drawn upon them to work in the world? This course will address these questions through a focus on a few narratives selected Asian religions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. We will attend to these stories as living phenomena that evolve over time and play a vital role in their communities and also as something that those communities live with as they make their way through the world.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring Even Years.

REL 391. Bollywood and Beyond: Religion, Gender and Politics in South Asian Film. 3 Credit Hours.

Themes in Indian society through the lens of Indian cinema – both Bollywood and the regional film industry. The course consists of five modules each lasting between two to three weeks. Module one will situate and frame the entire semester's readings with a discussion of a brief history of Bollywood and regional cinema, their respective reach, influence and limits in framing, valorizing or even critiquing societal and cultural norms. Each subsequent module will open to lecture and discussion with the screening of either a Bollywood film (often an excerpt), regional cinema or a documentary. The important themes that will be covered in the four modules will relate to a) the significance, centrality, fluidity and perversion of caste in Indian society; b) the multiple cinematic and popular representations and framing of the religious epic - the Ramayana. Using multiple visual and textual narratives of the Ramayana we will discuss the place of myths in the construction of politics and society; c) issues of gender and sexuality - studying the shaping of celluloid goddesses and real lives of women, consumption of sex, queering of it and its depiction in film and reception in society; d) Colonial and post-colonial engagement with modernity in India – through the lens of the nation state and its women, as well as the nation and its "others": identity politics based on religious exclusivity, communal and secular anxieties in modern India; and e) Diaspora identities and cultural appropriation of Bollywood cinematic frames and references outside India.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

REL 399. Method and Theory in the Study of Religion. 3 Credit Hours.

An examination of central issues and texts in the academic study of religion, with special focus on the rise of the discipline, its axioms, and its several schools of interpretation.

Components: SEM.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall.

REL 401. Supervised Reading in Religious Literature or Texts. 1-3 Credit Hours.

Independent study to enable students to read extensively in an area of personal interest in religious literature or texts.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, & Summer.

REL 402. Supervised Reading in Religious or Historical Traditions. 1-3 Credit Hours.

Independent study to enable students to read extensively in an area of personal interest in religious or historical traditions.

Components: THI.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, & Summer.

REL 403. Supervised Reading in Religious Issues or Problems. 1-3 Credit Hours.

Independent study to enable students to read extensively in an area of personal interest in religious issues or problems.

Components: THI.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Spring.

REL 404. Special Topics in Religious Literature or Texts. 3 Credit Hours.

Selected topics in religious literature or texts.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 405. Special Topics in Religious or Historical Traditions. 3 Credit Hours.

Selected topics in religious or historical traditions.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 406. Special Topics in Religious Issues or Problems. 3 Credit Hours.

Selected topics in religious issues or problems.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 407. Special Projects in Religious Literature or Texts. 3 Credit Hours.

Selected projects in religious literature or texts.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 408. Special Projects in Religious or Historical Traditions. 3 Credit Hours.

Selected projects in religious or historical traditions.

Components: DIS.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 409. Special Projects in Religious Issues or Problems. 3 Credit Hours.

Selected projects in religious issues or problems.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 419. Transfer Credits. 1-4 Credit Hours.

Courses taken at other institutions with no direct equivalents (Religious Literature or Texts subject area).

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, & Summer.

REL 439. Transfer Credits. 1-4 Credit Hours.

Courses taken at other institutions with no direct equivalents (Religious or Historical Traditions subject area).

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, & Summer.

REL 450. Psychology of Religion. 3 Credit Hours.

Contemporary psychological theory and research on religious belief, experience, and behavior. Topics include the biological bases of religion, religious development, and the links of religion to health and well-being.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 451. Ethics and Genetics. 3 Credit Hours.

Pressing social, ethical, and legal issues raised by our constantly increasing knowledge of genetics, and the applications of this knowledge already available or being proposed. Access to and use of personal genetic information; race and genetics; the diagnosis and treatment of inherited diseases; new modalities of healthcare delivery becoming available through genetics; the current state of stem cell research; genetically modified animals and plants as sources of food, medicines, and fuel; and the use of genomics.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 459. Transfer Credits. 1-4 Credit Hours.

Courses taken at other institutions with no direct equivalents (Religious Issues or Problems subject area).

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, & Summer.

REL 491. Sr. Honors Thesis. 3 Credit Hours.

Directed honors thesis.

Components: THI.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 492. Sr. Honors Thesis II. 3 Credit Hours.

Directed honors thesis.

Components: LEC.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 501. Supervised Reading in Religious Literature or Texts. 1-3 Credit Hours.

Independent study to enable students to read extensively in an area of personal interest in religious literature or texts.

Components: THI.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 502. Supervised Reading in Religious or Historical Traditions. 1-3 Credit Hours.

Independent study to enable students to read extensively in an area of personal interest in religious or historical traditions.

Components: THI.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 503. Supervised Reading in Religious Issues or Problems. 1-3 Credit Hours.

Independent study to enable students to read extensively in an area of personal interest in religious issues or problems.

Components: THI.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 505. Seminar in Ancient Studies. 3 Credit Hours.

Various topics in Greek and Roman Studies.

Components: SEM.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 510. Seminar in Hebrew Bible and Ancient Judaism. 3 Credit Hours.

Selected topics in Hebrew Bible and Ancient Judaism.

Components: SEM.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 520. Seminar in New Testament and Early Christianity. 3 Credit Hours.

Selected topics in New Testament and Early Christianity.

Components: SEM.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 530. Seminar in Religious or Historical Traditions. 1-3 Credit Hours.

Selected topics in religious or historical traditions.

Components: SEM.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 550. Seminar in Religious Ethics. 3 Credit Hours.

Selected issues in religious ethics and their social implications.

Components: SEM.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 560. Seminar in Contemporary Religious Issues. 1-3 Credit Hours.

Selected topics in contemporary religious issues.

Components: SEM.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 601. Supervised Reading in Religious Literature or Texts. 1-3 Credit Hours.

Independent study to enable students to read extensively in an area of personal interest in religious literature or texts.

Components: THI.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 602. Supervised Reading in Religious or Historical Traditions. 1-3 Credit Hours.

Independent study to enable students to read extensively in an area of personal interest in religious or historical traditions.

Components: THI.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 605. Seminar in Ancient Studies. 3 Credit Hours.

Various topics in Greek and Roman Studies.

Components: SEM.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 610. Seminar in Hebrew Bible and Ancient Judaism. 3 Credit Hours.

Selected topics in Hebrew Bible and Ancient Judaism.

Components: SEM.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 620. Seminar in New Testament and Early Christianity. 3 Credit Hours.

Selected topics in New Testament and Early Christianity.

Components: SEM.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 630. Seminar in Religious or Historical Traditions. 1-3 Credit Hours.

Selected topics in religious or historical traditions.

Components: SEM.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 650. Seminar in Religious Ethics. 3 Credit Hours.

Selected issues in religious ethics and their social implications.

Components: SEM.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.

REL 660. Seminar in Contemporary Religious Issues. 1-3 Credit Hours.

Selected topics in contemporary religious issues.

Components: SEM.

Grading: GRD.

Typically Offered: Offered by Announcement Only.