

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (REL)

REL-1000 Faith: A Biblical Perspective (3 Credits)

To appreciate the challenge of faith is to see its role in all that we are: in our beliefs, our relationships and our outlook on the world and the events that shape our lives. Students will be asked to probe the more puzzling aspects of Biblical faith and its relevance today. Topics will include the following: Abraham: a possible model of relationship, Miracles: hype or challenge? & the Apocalypse: a timetable of events or a foreshadowing of what will occur in every person's life span.

Typically offered: All Sessions

REL-1101 Survey of the World's Religions (3 Credits)

An introduction to the beliefs and practices of the world's religions, including traditions of indigenous peoples, religions originating in India (Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism), in China and Japan (Confucianism, Taoism, Shinto), and Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam).

Fulfills General Education Requirement: RS1

Typically offered: All Sessions

REL-1106 The Lives and Legacy of St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi (3 Credits)

This course will examine the lives and legacy of St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi. The investigation will cover a broad understanding of the world in which Francis and Clare lived, and the paradoxes of medieval Italian life that contributed to Francis and Clare's lives and messages of simplicity and devotion to God as well as the development, influence and continuity of the Franciscan tradition. Attention will be given to St. Bonaventure, Blessed John Duns Scotus and other notable Franciscans. The course will also explore and consider Franciscan values, principles and spirituality.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: RS1

Typically offered: All Sessions

REL-1107 Sacred Movement Sacred Space St. Clare of Assisi (3 Credits)

This course will explore the idea of pilgrimage as an ancient and intentional journey to a sacred site as practiced within the Christian Tradition. Topics for exploration will include, sacred journeys both past and present; pilgrimage as metaphor; human formation; transformative learning experiences that make connections with the cognitive, embodied and spiritual; pilgrimage and healing; the spiritual vs. religious journey as well as the communal vs. solitary journey; the spiritual, mental and physical challenges faced by the pilgrim; inward and external experiences; sacred movements and sacred spaces of the pilgrimage route.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: RS1

Typically offered: All Sessions

REL-1108 Wellness/Mindfulness St. Clare of Assisi (3 Credits)

This class introduces students to the wide variety of wellness and mindfulness practices that they can use to improve their physical and psychological well-being, to manage stress, and to develop healthy habits. Students will be introduced to current theory, practice, and research into wellness and mindfulness by the mind sciences and social sciences. This class fulfills the Personal Wellness requirement in the General Education program.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: RS1

Typically offered: As Needed

REL-1112 Death and the Afterlife (3 Credits)

This course surveys death- and afterlife-related beliefs, practices, and symbols across a wide range of religious traditions. Topics to be explored include religious conceptions of death, the soul, and the afterlife (e.g., salvation, liberation, reincarnation); death and funerary rituals; religious perspectives on bioethical issues (e.g., suicide, euthanasia, organ donation); religious interpretations of near-death experiences; and the historical changes in (and challenges to) death- and afterlife-related beliefs and practices

Fulfills General Education Requirement: RS1

Typically offered: All Sessions

REL-1201 The Christian Tradition (3 Credits)

An introduction to the major people, ideas, events and movements in Christian history. This course covers Jesus, Paul and the earliest Christians, the diversity of the Christian movement in the second and third centuries, the rise of imperial Christianity, the Christological controversies, the division between Eastern and Western Christianity, the power of the medieval church, Protestantism, the Enlightenment and Christianity in the modern world

Fulfills General Education Requirement: RS1

Typically offered: All Sessions

REL-1202 Judaism (3 Credits)

An introduction to Judaism concentrating on the teachings (including creation, revelation and redemption), values, customs, rituals, and liturgy that define it as a religion, as well as the texts (Torah, Talmud) and institutions (Yeshiva, Synagogue) in which they are preserved and the role played by historical circumstances in shaping them. Attention is paid to major Jewish movements (Orthodox, Hasidic, Conservative, and Reform).

Fulfills General Education Requirement: RS1

Typically offered: All Sessions

REL-1203 Islam (3 Credits)

An introduction to Islam taught in historical perspective from the life of the Prophet Muhammad, the Qur'an and Traditions, early leadership and the expansion of Islam, Shi'ah Islam, Sufism and Islam in Asia, Africa and the Americas. Attention will be given to the Islamic movement and its impact on international affairs as well as other contemporary issues.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: RS1

Typically offered: As Needed

REL-1204 Quranic Arabic (3 Credits)

Requisite(s): One REL course at the 1000 level.

An introduction to the study of Quranic Arabic vocabulary and grammar. Students will learn to translate basic texts from the Quran and related Classical Arabic texts, including the medieval Arabic translation of the Hebrew Bible, and to understand the religious movements that produced these texts.

Typically offered: As Needed

REL-1206 Buddhism (3 Credits)

This course is an introduction to Buddhism taught in historical perspective. It begins with the life of the founder of Buddhism, Siddhartha Gautama, which is known to all Buddhists. It then covers the origins of Buddhism in India and the basic teachings of Buddhism. Following this it looks at the life of monks and the relation of the community of the monks to Buddhist laity, and also considers the practice of meditation and devotion to Buddhist relics. The course then studies the rise of Mahayana Buddhism, the second major movement in Buddhism, and the transmission of Buddhism to China and Japan, looking at the different schools of East Asian Buddhism, mainly Chan or Zen and Pure Land Buddhism. Esoteric Buddhism or Vajrayana as found in Tibetan culture will also be studied briefly. The course concludes with a discussion of the transmission of Buddhism to the West, especially America, and looks at issues for Buddhism in the modern world.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: RS1

Typically offered: All Sessions

REL-1301 Introduction to Hebrew Bible (3 Credits)

A study of representative selections from the Pentateuch (the five books of Moses) as well as the historical, wisdom, and prophetic literature of the Old Testament. Literary and historical criticism are used to gain understanding of basic elements of Hebrew biblical faith and practice. Problems and methods of the interpretation of scripture are explored.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: RS1

Typically offered: Fall Only

REL-1302 Introduction to the New Testament (3 Credits)

An introduction to the New Testament and the larger Christian movement from Jesus through the end of the second century. This course examines the diverse set of early Christian writings in their original contexts.

Primary focus is given to the first-century writings contained in the New Testament. Additional attention is given to Christian writings from the second century, which are not included in the New Testament. The historical Jesus is also discussed.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: RS1

Typically offered: All Sessions

REL-2000 Religion, Science and Spirituality (3 Credits)

Requisite(s): Any 1000 level REL course

Religious beliefs, scientific theories, and spiritual practices all shape our world views and attitudes: how we think about and respond to issues from health care and education to politics and climate change. This course explores the relationships between religion, science and spirituality, and how different communities and institutions navigate these domains, by examining current topics such as vaccines and medicine, climate crisis and denial, evolution and creationism, Noe-Paganism, alternative spirituality, conspiracy theories, social media and commodification, and more.

Typically offered: As Needed

REL-2106 The Lives and Legacy of St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi (3 Credits)

This course will examine the lives and legacy of St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi. The investigation will cover a broad understanding of the world in which Francis and Clare lived, and the paradoxes of medieval Italian life that contributed to Francis and Clare's lives and messages of simplicity and devotion to God as well as the development, influence and continuity of the Franciscan tradition. Attention will be given to St. Bonaventure, Blessed John Duns Scotus and other notable Franciscans. The course will also explore and consider Franciscan values, principles and spirituality.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: RS1

Typically offered: As Needed

REL-2108 Zen Buddhism (3 Credits)

Requisite(s): Any 1000 level REL course.

A topic-based, multi-disciplinary, historical and experiential approach to Zen Buddhism: its origins and development; doctrines and practices; influence on art, literature, and design; and its current forms in modern global societies, including Engaged Buddhism and the relationship between Zen Buddhism and modern science and psychology.

Typically offered: All Sessions

REL-2110 Biblical Greek I (3 Credits)

Cross-listed with: GRK-1101. An introduction to the study of Biblical Greek vocabulary and grammar. Students are enabled to translate basic texts from the New Testament and the Septuagint.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: RS1

Typically offered: All Sessions

REL-2111 Biblical Greek II (3 Credits)

Requisite(s): REL-2110

Cross-listed with: GRK-1102. Building on REL 2110, this course completes the Biblical Greek Grammar. Students are enabled to translate texts from the New Testament and the Septuagint. Students are also introduced to the fields of textual criticism and translation studies.

Typically offered: All Sessions

REL-2113 The Story of American Evangelicalism (3 Credits)

Requisite(s): Any 1000 level REL course.,Optional prerequisite AMS-1001 for student in AMS minor

One in every four Americans self-identifies as an evangelical Christian. While evangelicals often think of themselves as cultural outsiders, they have an enormous impact on America's moral, political, financial, cultural, and spiritual life. Following a brief history of evangelicalism in America, this course examines the variety and development of evangelical perspectives on topics ranging from gender to science to economics to apocalypticism.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: PEM

Typically offered: All Sessions

REL-2200 Religion in Israel/Palestine (3 Credits)

Requisite(s): Any 1000 level REL course.,Travel course:Valid Passport required.

This course offers students a nine-day study-abroad experience in Israel and the Palestinian territories, a land whose history and major cities and sites allow a unique opportunity to explore the history and development of the Biblical literature, as well as of the three major monotheistic faiths: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. On-site learning, coupled with reading prior to the trip and a reflective essay after returning, will allow students to explore major aspects of the study of religion in Israel/Palestine as it relates to their own interests, majors, career paths.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: PEM

Typically offered: Summer Only

REL-2204 Religions of India (3 Credits)

An introduction to the religious traditions originating in India, with the exception of Buddhism (covered in REL 2206): Hinduism, Jainism and Sikhism. The course is taught in historical perspective, covering ancient India and the religion of the Veda, the rise of Yoga and ascetic movements, social ethics and Dharma, and devotion to the main forms of God in Hinduism the Goddess, Shiva and Vishnu. Hindu and Jain teachings on nonviolence and the values and practices of Sikhism will be studied. The course will also consider modern movements and Indian religions in the global context.

Typically offered: As Needed

REL-2501 Contemporary Moral Issues (3 Credits)**Requisite(s):** Sophomore standing

Study of moral issues that are of current importance and Christian ethics on these issues. Selected topics include abortion, new reproductive technologies, genetic research, physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia, the death penalty, sexual ethics, race, war and nonviolence, and the environment. Student participation, analysis, and discussion.

Typically offered: All Sessions**REL-3601 Introduction to Jewish Thought (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** PHI-2201 or PHI-2203

The Western tradition can be viewed as the encounter of two seemingly irreconcilable ways of understanding the world: philosophy and faith. The former relies on the autonomous exercise of the speculative mind; the latter trusts revelation as the ultimate source of authority and truth. This course examines the Jewish philosophical tradition in light of philosophy and faith and explores whether or not the two are indeed irreconcilable.

Typically offered: As Needed**REL-3701 Approaches to the Study of Religion (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Any REL course;

A study of the main methods of the modern study of religions including the history of the religions, sociology, psychology, and philosophical, and theological approaches. The study is conducted through reading the writings of major scholars of religion. The course is taught in seminar format.

Typically offered: As Needed**REL-3702 Sociology of Religion (3 Credits)**

This course examines theoretical perspectives on religion and its reciprocal relationship to society. We will discuss religion from a macro-sociological perspective as a social institution and as a cultural system. We will also discuss definitions, functions, variation and linkages across history and across groups in collective religious experience. Thus students will be able to identify patterns of religious forms as these relate to types of societies and the phenomenon of modernization, as well as key issues of gender, ethnicity, class and politics.

Typically offered: Spring Only**REL-4000 Special Topics in Religion (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Any REL course

In-depth study of special topics to be announced.

Typically offered: As Needed**REL-4002 Rebuilding God's House: the Lives and Legacy of St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi (3 Credits)**

This course will examine the lives and legacy of St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi. The investigation will cover a broad understanding of the world in which Francis and Clare lived, and the paradoxes of the medieval Italian life that contributed to Francis life and message of simplicity and devotion to God as well as the development, influence, and continuity of the Franciscan tradition.

Typically offered: As Needed**REL-4003 Topic: Black Theologies (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Complete one (1) in REL

This course centers on an interpretation of the rise of Black theology in the 1960s to the present day. To establish the necessarily historical and political nature of Black theologies, attention will be given to the social and political contexts that inform the dominant themes of Black theologies. In conjunction with the twentieth century rise of distinctly religious proponents of Black Power such as Malcolm X and Audley Queen Mother Moore and others, the course will also engage the politico-religious thought of late 19th century figures such as Frederick Douglas, Ida B. Wells, and H.M. Turner in order to establish the lineage that produced Black theologians, ethicists, and womanists such as James Cone, Deotis Roberts, Deloris Williams, and Katie Canon. The course will also offer perspectives on Black theology's relation to Third World theologies, critical race theories, intersectionality, and Afro-Futurism. Required assignments include weekly readings and online responses that raise questions and offer perspective that will be engaged during bi-weekly synchronous online sessions. Students will also be able to choose between a final research paper or five short papers based on weekly themes.

Typically offered: As Needed**REL-4004 Topic: Justice and Ecology in the Hebrew (3 Credits)**

This course will explore the stories, commandments, and traditions around social justice and ecological stewardship in the Hebrew Bible. We will read the primary texts (in English translation) as well as rabbinic commentaries and modern interpretations. Students will gain an understanding of the deep origins of our modern ethics of justice, human rights, and ecological healing.

Typically offered: As Needed**REL-4991 Thesis Direction (1-3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** 9 REL credits, Junior Standing**Typically offered:** On Demand**REL-4995 Independent Study in Religious Studies (1-3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** 9 REL credits, Junior Standing

Directed research in a Religious Studies topic selected by the student.

Typically offered: On Demand**REL-4998 Thesis Direction (3 Credits)****Typically offered:** As Needed**REL-5309 Environmental Crisis & the World's Religions (3 Credits)**

An exploration the response of the world's religious traditions to the crisis of the environment, including the destruction and pollution of the natural world, the extinction of species and the over-consumption of resources. First, what do religions have to say about the value of nature and non-human living beings and the ethics of human actions affecting nature? Second, what are religious communities actually doing today to solve environmental problems? The seminar will consider Judaism, Christianity, Islam, the religions of India, China, and Japan, and Indigenous traditions. Open only to Honors Program students.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: HON,NPW,PEM**Typically offered:** As Needed

REL-5310 The End of the World Religion (3 Credits)

This course will examine ideas, rhetoric, and ideology concerning the end of the world in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam from antiquity to the present. Almost since the beginning of the world, people have been thinking about the end of the world. Why? What do major world religions have to say on the topic? Does it lead to violence? To kindness? We will read and dissect primary texts as well as modern scholarship on this topic, and we'll try to figure out why on earth people have been so obsessed with this topic for so long.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: HON,HCE,WHG

Typically offered: As Needed

REL-5350 Religion and Science: History, Method, Dialogue (Honors) (3 Credits)

Cross-listed with: SCI-5001. An interdisciplinary team-taught Honors seminar that explores the dialogue that is occurring between scientists and theologians. It examines the historical context of the methods of inquiry used in the sciences and those used in religion and the similarities and differences between them. Included are varied case studies where scientists and theologians are engaged in dialogue. Open only to Honors Program scholars.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: HON

Typically offered: As Needed

REL-5351 Christian Ethics: An Honors Seminar (3 Credits)

Students in this seminar will study key works of important recent and contemporary Christian theologians in the field of ethics in the Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox Christian traditions. The course will focus on the method and central concerns of each theologian. Such questions as: how do we arrive at moral judgments? What ethical questions are most important in the Christian moral life? The roles of scripture, tradition, reason, and experience in theological ethics will shape the inquiry. The course will attempt to assess the contribution of each author studied to Christian ethics. Open only to Honors Program scholars.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: HON

Typically offered: As Needed

REL-5352 Images of Human Nature in Western, Non-Literate, and Eastern Cultures: An Interdisciplinary Honors Seminar I (3 Credits)

Cross-listed with: PSY-5352. Students are exposed to conceptions of human nature as they have existed in Eastern and Western cultures. The seminar focuses upon universal aspects of human experience and unique historical and cultural conceptions of human identity. These conceptions may be expressed in art, myths, literature, sacred books, philosophical or political treatises, and are reflected in day-to-day living. The seminar is team taught, stresses broad interdisciplinary perspectives, and emphasizes original readings. Visits to plays, operas, movies, and museums are integral to the seminar. Open only to Honors Program scholars.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: HON

Typically offered: As Needed

REL-5353 Images of Human Nature in Western, Non-Literate, and Eastern Cultures: An Interdisciplinary Honors Seminar II (3 Credits)

Cross-listed with: PSY-5353. A continuation of Images of Human Nature 1. Open only to Honors students.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: HON

Typically offered: As Needed

REL-5354 Tolkien the Mythmaker (Honors) (3 Credits)

A study of the works of J. R. R. Tolkien, drawing out their implications for modern culture, ethics, religion and the philosophy of the imaginative art that Tolkien called myth or fantasy. Tolkien was a scholar of the languages and literature of northern Europe. He was also the author of a large body of myth and legend which is the context for the story of The Lord of the Rings, as well as essays, poetry, and shorter narratives. All of these disclose varied facets of the complex and profound mind of a singular visionary, and give insight into his vast appeal.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: HON

REL-5355 Early Christian Gospels (honors) (3 Credits)

This course is designed to lay the foundation for modern academic study of the early Christian gospels. Using the historical-critical approach, students are exposed to the important issues in gospel research. The course focuses on understanding the historical context for the early Christian gospels, examining the gospels individually, and discerning what the gospels might tell us about the communities that created and transmitted stories about Jesus.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: HON

REL-5357 Brooklyn Jews (3 Credits)

This course will explore the Jews of Brooklyn, past and present. While the Hasidic Jewish community is the most visible and well known (though least understood), this is only part of the picture of Jewish Brooklyn. In addition to understanding the Hasidic communities of Brooklyn and their unique issues, we will explore progressive and secular Jews, a variety of Jewish ethnic identities including Syrian and Moroccan Jews, as well as internal Jewish controversies on multiple issues. Topics will intersect with urban development and immigration, race and racism in New York City, political allegiances, responses to the COVID19 pandemic and other public health issues, and controversies in education, ranging from public school integration in the 1960s to contemporary secular education in Hasidic schools. Students will have the opportunity to interview (as a class) multiple types of Jews from Brooklyn who will visit the class.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: SEH,WHG

Typically offered: All Sessions

REL-5358 Genesis and the Meaning (3 Credits)

This course will examine a series of questions about the meaning of life through the lens of the biblical book of Genesis in conjunction with major philosophical texts that address the same questions. Questions include, for example: Why is there something instead of nothing? Are human beings fundamentally bad? Why should we be moral? Do the ends justify the means? How can reproduction be just? This course will incorporate literary, historical, comparative religious, and philosophical analyses.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: SEH,PEM

Typically offered: As Needed