

PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Phone: 718.489.5229

Mission of the Philosophy Major

Students receive a solid foundation for graduate study in philosophy and for training in any field that demands developed analytical and critical skills such as law, health care, journalism, and business. Philosophy offers students the instruments, methods, and sources needed to develop their intellectual lives and to promote human transformation. Only insofar as students achieve this has the College succeeded in its goal as a liberal arts college, namely, to form minds capable of responsible self-determination.

Program Student Learning Outcomes

PLO 1: Formulate an understanding of the nature, purpose and importance of the philosophical enterprise in writing and thereby engage personally in the activity of philosophizing.

PLO 2: Demonstrate respect both for reason as a defining feature of living as well as for truth and its pursuit.

PLO 3: Demonstrate critical thinking when considering issues in depth, when relating parts and wholes, when examining and assessing influential positions, when understanding the world of others, and when formulating principles for responsible actions.

PLO 4: Discuss major philosophical questions, which are none other than the fundamental questions confronting human beings as such, through the study of the views of philosophers belonging to many traditions.

PLO 5: Formulate understanding of primary texts from the history of philosophy, and the derived nourishment from them for one's own being.

Mission of the Religious Studies Major

Religious Studies trains students to examine critically the data of religious beliefs and practices to understand how humans establish values, maintain social orders, and cope with metaphysical anxieties.

In keeping with the Catholic and Franciscan heritage of the College, Religious Studies at St. Francis includes both descriptive study of religious history, literature, and practice as well as constructive inquiry into religious ideas and their meaning through the study of religious thought and of ethics with an emphasis on contemporary issues.

Program Student Learning Outcomes

PLO 1: Demonstrate a substantive knowledge of religious traditions and a critical understanding of the enterprise of the study of religion.

PLO 2: Compare the basic themes of religion and look at issues in the light of evidence and reasonable reflection.

PLO 3: Achieve competence in his or her area of concentration in an overall program of study designed in consultation with the faculty.

PLO 4: Develop a spirit of positive engagement with religions other than their own through class work, research and site visits.

Programs

- Philosophy Minor (<https://catalog.sfc.edu/catalogue/programs/philosophy-religious-studies/philosophy-minor/>)
- Philosophy, BA (<https://catalog.sfc.edu/catalogue/programs/philosophy-religious-studies/philosophy-ba/>)
- Religious Studies Minor (<https://catalog.sfc.edu/catalogue/programs/philosophy-religious-studies/religious-studies-minor/>)
- Religious Studies, BA (<https://catalog.sfc.edu/catalogue/programs/philosophy-religious-studies/religious-studies-ba/>)

Courses Philosophy

PHI-1101 Basic Problems in Philosophy (3 Credits)

An examination at a strictly introductory level of the character of philosophical questioning. Instances chosen for treatment are from the several areas of philosophy such as ethics, epistemology and metaphysics, and they are studied in the context of brief selections from the writings of philosophers from antiquity to the present.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: PEM

Typically offered: All Sessions

PHI-1114 Logic and Argumentation (3 Credits)

An introduction to logic and critical thinking. Emphasis is on the identification of arguments and the assessment of their validity. The course includes the analysis of terms, propositions, arguments and their linguistic contexts; common fallacies; the structure of deductive and inductive arguments.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: PEM

Typically offered: All Sessions

PHI-2201 Human Nature (3 Credits)

Requisite(s): Take one course in PHI

Do human beings have a fundamental nature? Do our environments and embodiment shape our nature, or is it inherent-or both? To answer these and related questions, we investigate such fundamental philosophical issues as death and immortality, mind and body, perception and conception, reason and emotion, and freedom and determinism as they appear in writings of philosophers from antiquity to the present.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: PEM

Typically offered: All Sessions

PHI-2203 Theories of Knowledge (3 Credits)

Requisite(s): Take one course in PHI.

We think we know what it means to know until someone asks us to explain it ourselves. This course pursues a clearer understanding of the personal operations and wider social contexts that compose human knowing. It inquires into the nature of knowledge by means of an examination of such explanations of knowledge as empiricism, idealism, skepticism, pragmatism, and various realisms, and an examination of ourselves as specimens, as knowers and as persons in pursuit of new knowledge. Readings of philosophers from antiquity to the present.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: PEM

Typically offered: All Sessions

PHI-2204 Utilitarianism (3 Credits)**Requisite(s):** Take one course in PHI.

Utilitarianism, the view that goods are worth pursuing when they benefit a majority, is an important moral theory. It continues to influence economics, business, government, law, criminal justice and medical ethics. This course examines the basic issues of utilitarian thought by studying the origins and development of the core utilitarian principles from ancient Greek philosophy in the ethical theory of Epicurus to later formulations in works by David Hume, Jeremy Bentham, and John Stuart Mill.

Typically offered: All Sessions**PHI-2205 Happiness and Pleasure (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one course in PHI.

In the search for happiness, how important is pleasure? Can happiness be explained solely in terms of pleasure? Is happiness the fundamental or an intrinsic good? Ought we pursue or avoid pleasure? This course examines different answers to these questions developed by philosophers from antiquity to today, with a focus on how much importance or priority to accord pleasure.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: PEM**Typically offered:** All Sessions**PHI-2210 Descartes (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one course in PHI.

This intensive intermediate-level course aims to acquaint the student with the thought of René Descartes. Many regard him to be the founder of modern philosophy, a towering figure in the history of metaphysics. The basis of the course will be a careful reading of Descartes's major works. Through these readings, students will examine key philosophical notions or themes including skepticism, truth, God, the self, the infinite, mind and body.

Typically offered: All Sessions**PHI-2211 Existentialism (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one course in PHI.

This course serves as an introduction to the most widely known contemporary Western philosophical movement. We examine different approaches to its major themes of human existence (such as authenticity, absurdity, freedom, responsibility, nothingness, or the possibility of a meaningful life) by key authors Camus, de Beauvoir, and Sartre, and perhaps also Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Dostoyevsky, or others. We may also examine its treatments of social issues such as anti-black racism or the construction of gender, and its impact in other areas of culture such as literature, jazz, and film.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: PEM**Typically offered:** All Sessions**PHI-2212 Latin American Philosophy (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one course in PHI.

This course introduces students to Latin American Philosophy from the 19th Century to the present. Accordingly, it addresses the history of philosophy in Latin America, Latin American culture, identity theory, political philosophy and literature. What does it mean to be Latin American, and is there such a thing as Latin American philosophy? Is there a Latino identity? What implications do our answers to such questions have for other urgent questions about cultural, ethnic, racial and gender identities?

Fulfills General Education Requirement: PEM**Typically offered:** All Sessions**PHI-2237 Theory of Being (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** PHI-1101 or PHI-1114

This course is a systematic study of basic reality. What is real, and what is reality? These and related questions about the meaning of being in general serve as our starting points. Readings may draw from pre-Socratic authorities on the basic ingredients or building blocks of existence through to Immanuel Kant's account of the limits of our rational capacities and competencies and, from there, into contemporary scholarship too. Topics include the nature of entities, finitude, space, time, the universe, God, and the place of human being and doing among these.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: PEM**Typically offered:** All Sessions**PHI-2310 American Philosophy (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one course in PHI.,AMS-1001 for students pursuing AMS minor

American philosophy consists of various movements and sentiments; what might unify them is their being influenced by and impactful on a variety of other areas in society and culture, such as human rights activism, science, literature, politics, education, psychology, and environmentalism. This course surveys a representation of its innovative contributions, which may include works by Jonathan Edwards, Thomas Paine, the Grimké sisters, the authors of The Federalist Papers, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Frederick Douglass, Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Anna Julia Cooper, W.E.B. Du Bois, John Dewey, Alain Locke, Angela Davis, or others. Attention will be paid to authors' wider contexts, whether Puritanism, pragmatism, or otherwise.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: PEM**Typically offered:** All Sessions**PHI-2316 Art and Aesthetics (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one course in PHI

This course examines the nature of art and the character of our aesthetic experiences. It deals with such issues as: the concept of beauty; the role of art in society; censorship, propaganda, and advertising; imagination; taste; art as imitation, representation, or expression; the relation of art to knowledge, freedom, or truth; symbol and metaphor; emotional responses to art; artistic process and creative expression; aesthetic experiences outside of artistic ones. We engage with a wide variety of historical and contemporary philosophical texts as well as artworks and other aesthetic experiences.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: PEM**Typically offered:** As Needed

PHI-2341 Authority and Law (3 Credits)**Requisite(s):** Take one course in PHI.

Must we obey the law? Why or why not? This intermediate course in legal philosophy focuses on the related concepts of authority and law through a study of different explanations of what law is, especially addressing the relations of law to justice and morality. Augustine contends an unjust law is no law at all, and assuming he is right, today we continue to revise or overturn many legal statutes. But why is there law in the first place? What good is it, given its deeply ambivalent track record for repressing and promoting human virtue? Clean air, healthy food, fair wages and taxes, public safety and the protection of basic rights all depend on a carefully organized legal system. But can we justify punishment for those who break the law? And what legal challenges do mass incarceration and the war on terror pose to a democracy? This course will also identify arguments put forward by groups, such as anarchists, pirates and terrorists, who rebuke some or all legal authority, and who thus see themselves to be acting somehow outside it.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: PEM**Typically offered:** Fall Only**PHI-2342 Business Ethics (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one course in PHI.

An introduction to the philosophical questions and theories associated with business ethics, with discussions based on the study of sample actual business cases. Topics include: applying moral philosophy to business ethics, social responsibility, organizational culture and ethical decision-making, development of an effective ethics program and business ethics in a global economy.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: PEM**Typically offered:** All Sessions**PHI-2343 Philosophy of Sport (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one course in PHI.

This course will examine the history and theory of sport, and athletic excellence, through the lens of philosophical texts, selections from world literature, and scholarly articles from the fields of cultural studies. By reading, and analyzing such works, it is to be hoped that students will come to understand the important features of the history, theory, and social relevance of sport and athletics.

Typically offered: All Sessions**PHI-2344 Philosophy and the Nature World Ethical Perspectives (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** PHI-1101 or PHI-1114

Scientists have begun to refer to our current geological age as the Anthropocene to denote the degree to which human life now dominates the planet. They draw from climatology, geology, hydrology, ecology and other earth systems to make their case. This course introduces students to the study of nature. In antiquity nature was understood to be the internal principle of an entity as it moves, grows and dies. Modern figures dreamed of mastering nature. Today's conservationists and ecological theorists often speak of nature as a whole. What is nature, and what is our relation to it? What are our moral responsibilities to the natural world? For our planet and our species to survive future challenges, we must rehabilitate our relation to nature at a very basic level. Accordingly, this interdisciplinary course examines themes of emergence, environmental responsibility, stewardship for the natural world, and themes of devastation, extinction and collapse.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: PEM**Typically offered:** All Sessions**PHI-2403 The Good Life (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one course in PHI.

Moral reasoning is a function of education more than training. We all have to make up our minds about what is good and what is worth doing. This course focuses on theory and practice as it examines the basic questions of moral philosophy and the positions taken up in response to them with particular attention to the question of the relationship between a given ethic and its corresponding conceptions of humankind and reality. Readings draw from philosophers from antiquity to the present.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: PEM**Typically offered:** All Sessions**PHI-2404 Political Philosophy (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one course in PHI.

Aristotle says we are political animals by nature. But it is not obvious what he means with this designation. What does it mean to be political, especially today, when so many presume politics obstructs the good? Does the meaning of the political change, and if so, why? Beginning with Plato and Aristotle, this course surveys the fundamental concepts of political philosophy by way of their origin, history and contemporary relevance. Topics include authority, justice, freedom, violence and the state.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: PEM**Typically offered:** All Sessions**PHI-2431 Ancient Greek Philosophy (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one course in PHI.

The major figures and issues in classical philosophy from the Pre-Socratics to the Hellenistic schools, with particular emphasis on Plato and Aristotle. Analysis of representative texts.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: PEM**Typically offered:** Fall Only**PHI-2441 Early Modern Philosophy (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one course in PHI.

This intermediate course guides students through the contentious history, key concepts and influential personalities of modern European philosophy. Its focus is the 17th- and 18th-century texts of the period, especially the rationalisms of Descartes and Spinoza and the empiricisms of Hume and Locke. Particular attention will be devoted to questions about mind, reality and the foundations of science.

Typically offered: All Sessions**PHI-2502 Medical Ethics (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one course in PHI. ,PHI 1101 or PHI 1114 strongly recommended.

This course studies moral issues in the health professions with special attention to practitioners and patients. Some of these issues are recent, such as those surrounding pharmaceutical use and abuse, organ transplantation, gene therapies, and other issues surrounding emerging technologies. Other topics are more enduring and include meta-ethical accounts of personhood, animal and human experimentation, the doctor-patient relationship, informed consent, euthanasia, and, more broadly, careful decision-making in the context of medicine and health care.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: PEM**Typically offered:** All Sessions

PHI-3308 Introduction to Jewish Thought (3 Credits)**Requisite(s):** Take one course in PHI.

The Western tradition can be viewed as the encounter of two seemingly irreconcilable ways of understanding the world, whether by philosophy, or by faith. The former relies on the autonomous exercise of the speculative mind; the latter trust 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**PHI-3312 Gender and Philosophy (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one course in PHI (2000-level recommended) or ENG-2150, or WGS-2001 or COM-2030.

Gender is an important aspect of our personal lives, social experiences, cultural norms, and political issues. This course offers and critically examines a variety of philosophical perspectives on gender, including feminist theory and how gender intersects with race, class, age, ability, sex, and sexuality. Issues concerning self-identity, gender expression, representation in film and other media, oppression, privilege, justice, the patriarchal and heteronormative structures of society, and the roles of women and gender in philosophy itself may be explored in some historical but mainly contemporary texts.

Typically offered: As Needed**PHI-3315 Meaning of History (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one course in PHI (2000 level recommended).

History may often appear to be a series of accidents. The decisions by some in the past make the present unsustainable and the human future unlikely. But is it possible to understand history as an intelligible process, or as a narrative? Is the process cyclical or directional? How does historicism, the idea that things are consequences of their development, challenge our expectations about realism? Is history, when understood as anything more than sound and fury signifying nothing, just another myth? This course examines philosophical accounts of history from antiquity to today.

Typically offered: As Needed**PHI-3316 Philosophy of Art (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one course in PHI.

The course examines the nature of art and the character of our experience of art. It deals with such issues as the concept of beauty, imagination and taste; the roles of imitation, representation and expression; style; the relation of works of art to knowledge and truth; the meaning of symbol and metaphor; the nature of narrative and genre; the philosophical status of works of art; the emotional responses to art. The course concentrates on the texts of selected major figures in the history of philosophy from Plato to Hans Urs von Balthasar.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: PEM**Typically offered:** As Needed**PHI-3317 Renaissance Philosophy (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one course in PHI (2000 level recommended).

Renaissance philosophy is neither the tail end of Medieval philosophy nor the first chapter of Modern Philosophy. It is not merely a transitional period, but a philosophical period in its own right, covering essentially the 15th and 16th centuries in Europe. It possesses an inner consistency, connected with other aspects of Renaissance culture and occupying a unique place in the general history of Western philosophy. This upper-level course will examine the key figures, trends and themes of Renaissance philosophy in the areas of metaphysics, natural philosophy, epistemology, philosophical psychology, moral philosophy and political philosophy. Special emphasis will be placed on Renaissance Platonism and Neoplatonism, which has produced some of the greatest figures in the history of philosophy as a whole. The role of humanism in the development of Renaissance philosophy, and the expression of philosophical concepts in poetry and art during the Renaissance, will also be examined.

Typically offered: As Needed**PHI-3318 19th-Century Philosophy (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one PHI course (2000 level recommended).

The rich period in Western philosophy that begins with the intellectual revolution started by Kant offers us such seminal and diverse thinkers as Hegel, Marx, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche, just to name a few. The focus will be on idealisms and reactions to them, for example from materialist, pessimist, and romantic perspectives, among others. Issues concerning the nature of reason, knowledge, self, and freedom, and their relationships to social formations and to nature will be examined. Problems in logic, ethics, and aesthetics and topics in religion, politics, history, and economics may also arise in these examinations. .

Typically offered: All Sessions**PHI-3319 Philosophy and Literature (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one PHI course (2000 level recommended).

Are literature and philosophy rivals in asking big questions or seeking a deeper truth? If so, is one better at these pursuits? If not, what sort of relationship should they have? This course explores various conversations between literature and philosophy, such as philosophy's suspicion of art and literature's supposed disdain of philosophy. It may focus on philosophy of literature, philosophical theories as they appear in literature, or both. We critically engage diverse perspectives on issues in ethics, aesthetics, and metaphysics. Topics covered may include imagination, authorship, appropriation, genre, truth, fiction, intention, meaning, emotion, freedom, morality, or human nature. Philosophy and literature will mutually illuminate each other as new insights on works of literature are gained through philosophy, and as literary imagination complements the rigor of philosophical thought.

Typically offered: As Needed**PHI-3326 Philosophy of Science (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one course in PHI (2000 level recommended).

Why and how does science work? This course examines epistemological and ontological requirements of natural science. This examination is carried out by means of a consideration of the idea of science in Greek philosophy, the emergence of modern natural science in the 17th century, logical positivism's account of natural science, and recent criticisms of the logical positivist account. Readings from ancient, modern, and contemporary sources.

Typically offered: As Needed

PHI-3333 Philosophical Theology (3 Credits)**Requisite(s):** Take one course in PHI (2000 level recommended).

This course studies major themes in the western tradition about the existence and nature of God. Religion brings out the best and the worst in people. Philosophy purports to be guided by reason and careful argument. Are our religious commitments subject to rational scrutiny? How compatible are faith and reason? What does God's existence or lack of existence have to do with our living? God's existence or non-existence may have important implications for morality and the ground of careful decision-making as well as, more generally, the meaning, value and ongoing determination and differentiation of human life.

Typically offered: Spring Only**PHI-3340 Special Problems in Ethics (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one course in PHI.

Examination of selected contemporary and traditional ethical problems, such as abortion, sex-education, euthanasia, censorship, war, and capital punishment; some study of the presuppositions, instruments; and procedures of ethical analysis will be involved.

Typically offered: As Needed**PHI-3344 The Environment: Philosophical and Ethical Perspectives (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one course in PHI.

This course aims to elucidate contemporary environmental issues by examining them in the light of a range of philosophical and ethical perspectives. Through readings and discussions, students will be introduced to a variety of religious, philosophical, and cultural views of the relationship between human beings and their environment, and will consider the ethical implications of the various approaches. A basic introduction to ethical theory will serve as the ground for the application of ethical principles to a broad spectrum of contemporary environmental problems. Students mastery of the material is exhibited through their performance on objective tests, as well as in a short paper in which they are expected to take a position on one of the issues raised in the readings, developing their own arguments and applying relevant ethical principles. Students are not specifically graded on class participation, but questions and discussion are strongly encouraged. In borderline situations, class participation which is particularly strong, or clearly lacking, will be taken into account in determining the final grade.

Typically offered: All Sessions**PHI-3354 The Holocaust and Forgiveness: Looking In the Abyss (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one course in PHI.

Forgiveness is not a theoretical attitude- it is a decision that one must make. However one ultimately decides, to make this decision in a properly informed way, it is necessary to reflect on the evil against which the possibility of forgiveness is be measured, and what- if anything- would constitute repenance for such an evil. This course will examine the efforts to address these matters with respect to the holocaust. Among the questions to be considered are: What are the evil of Naziam? Why does it remain a source of fascination? Is it possible for Germany to repent of its past? Is forgiveness possible after Auschwitz?

Typically offered: As Needed**PHI-3432 Medieval Philosophy (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one course in PHI (2000 level recommended).

This course offers an examination and analysis of representative texts of major figures from Christian, Arabic, and Jewish traditions with particular attention to the question of the relation between philosophical inquiry and religious beliefs. Other topics may include the nature of basic reality, the existence and attributes of transcendent being, and the relation of faith to reason.

Typically offered: Spring Only**PHI-3442 Twentieth-Century Philosophy (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one course in PHI (2000 level recommended).

A survey of some major figures or movements in twentieth-century American and European philosophy, such as postmodernism, phenomenology, logical positivism, ordinary language analysis, and pragmatism.

Typically offered: Spring Only**PHI-3443 Philosophy and the Moving Image (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one course in PHI.

Throughout history, philosophy has attempted to address a number of questions. Why are we here? What type of beings are we? Is there a purpose to the lives we lead? What is the nature of evil? How can we live moral, purposeful lives- and is it necessary for us to attempt to do so? With the invention of moving pictures, these philosophical questions began to be addressed within the context of commercial films and, later, television, raising the possibility that the very nature of these questions becomes altered through the lens of the movingimage. In this course, we will combine philosophical readings with the viewing of films and television programs in an attempt to address the question, Has the moving image changed the way we think?

Typically offered: As Needed**PHI-4000 Special Topics in Philosophy (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one PHI course.

The course wil explore specific identified topics in the discipline of philosophy. The subject matter will be selected by the instructor and chairman. Students may be granted for multiple sections of PHI-4000, provided the topic differs.

Typically offered: As Needed**PHI-4001 Special Topics in Philosophy: Philosophical Principles in Catholicism (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one 2000-level PHI course**Typically offered:** As Needed**PHI-4002 Special Problems in Philosophy: Justice And Piety (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** Take one 2000-level PHI course**Typically offered:** As Needed**PHI-4004 Topic: Franciscan Signposts On the Road to Modernity (3 Credits)****Requisite(s):** 2000-level PHI course

An examination of some of the writings of St. Francis of Assisi, Roger Bacon, St. Bonaventure, Alexander of Hales, Duns Scotus, and William of Ockham. The emphasis will be on the contribution of each of these to the formation of philosophical modernity.

Typically offered: As Needed

PHI-4005 Special Topic: Radial Issues (3 Credits)

Requisite(s): Take one PHI course.

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s greatest philosophical influence was Hegel, whom he studied at Harvard and Boston University. Angela Davis to this day advocates the ideas of Herbert Marcuse, who mentored her while studying for her PhD in Philosophy. Philosopher Simone Weil died on a hunger strike for her belief in our duty to have sympathy for others. Meanwhile, today's radical acceptance movement comes from Ancient Stoic Philosophy. This discussion-based course examines the influence of philosophy from antiquity to the present on our personal choices and social change, and offers students the chance to explore any related ideas or people they are interested in. No tests or quizzes.

Typically offered: All Sessions

PHI-4006 Special Topic: Philosophers and Society (3 Credits)

How can philosophy help us reframe how we think about society and about ourselves, and possible change our world or how we live? What issues are contemporary philosophers interested in? Which philosophers have influenced famous artists, activists, or politicians? For example, are there connections between Angela Davis's activism and the philosophy of Herbert Marcuse, her PhD Mentor? What about other Black activists? And other feminist philosopher? Why is Hegel always popping up in discussions or revolution? And why was he Martin Luther King's favorite philosopher? This self-directed and discussion-based course offers students the change to explore these questions, and more. We'll examine relationships between philosophy, personal choice, and social change. You're invited to choose ideas or people you'd like to explore. No tests or quizzes. This course counts towards the Philosophy major and minor.

Typically offered: As Needed

PHI-4995 Independent Study in Philosophy (1-4 Credits)

Requisite(s): One 2000 level PHI course and Chairperson's approval. allows the student to engage in a semester-long detailed examination of a philosophical topic of their choice under the direction of a faculty member.

Typically offered: As Needed

PHI-5401 Plato and Neo-Platonism (3 Credits)

Neoplatonism, a philosophical movement beginning with Plotinus, offers itself as an elucidation of what Plato really meant and a continuation of his thought. Along with Plato's philosophy itself, it has been profoundly influential on Western philosophy, mysticism, and literature. The two major sections of this seminar will be (a) a study of Plato, with particular attention given to the aspects of his thought emphasized by Neoplatonic thinkers; and (b) a study of Plotinus's philosophy in its triple dimension - as a reading of Plato, as a metaphysical system, and as a religious path. Since Neoplatonism did not immediately grow out of Plato, the seminar will examine more briefly, between these two sections, the key concepts of intervening philosophical systems that Neoplatonism either built itself against or incorporated (or both). The last section will be devoted to the later pagan Neoplatonists, and to the synthesis of Christian doctrine and Neoplatonic themes in two towering figures at the juncture of ancient and early-Medieval thought.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: HON

Typically offered: All Sessions

PHI-5402 The Infinite (3 Credits)

Cross-listed with: MAT-5400. The infinite is a rich and dynamic notion situated at the crossroads of several fields of study and reflection. This team-taught interdisciplinary seminar approaches the infinite from two distinct perspectives: that of philosophy, and that of mathematics.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: NPW,PEM,HON

Typically offered: As Needed

PHI-5403 Science Fiction and the Examined Life (3 Credits)

What is the nature of man? Does the existence of evil indicate the non-existence of God? How can a person tell reality from illusion? Why are we here? This seminar will examine these classic philosophical questions through significant works of science fiction that guide students toward ways of thinking about issues such as free will vs. determinism, cloning and genetic manipulation, the question of evil, reality vs. illusion, and the question of being itself (perhaps philosophy's largest and most significant question of all).

Fulfills General Education Requirement: HON

Typically offered: As Needed

PHI-5404 Existentialism: Philosophical Analysis Of Human Experience (3 Credits)

This course is designed to provide the student with an experience of reading, critically analyzing and discussing primary philosophical texts, in translation, which highlight the existentialist movement through the 19th and 20th centuries. Beginning with the premise that philosophy itself is less a body of rigid ideas or a mere collection of information, the so-called existentialist tradition portrays a wide range of perspectives on human experience and the uniqueness of human existence. This philosophical text-based study will be complemented by additional literary sources as well as films which serve to provide the student with a firm grounding in philosophical concepts, terminology and historical continuity of ideas in the Modern era.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: HON

Typically offered: As Needed

PHI-5405 Philosophy of Gender in Film (3 Credits)

By reinforcing, bending, or breaking stereotypes, gender in film can perpetuate prejudice, oppression, and discrimination, or can open new possibilities for expression, re-evaluation, and acceptance. Philosophy allows us to understand just how and why this is so. The philosophy of gender when applied to film articulates the meaning and ethical import of various representations of gender in movies. Readings in this course explore ethical and aesthetic issues of representations of gender in film, including but not limited to feminist criticisms of popular film, transgender characters and actors, masculine stereotyping in superhero and action film, and alternative or progressive representations of gender in specific films. Through the lens of philosophy, we will critically analyze creative works of cinema, being mindful of their social, cultural, and historical context, and discuss the ways they inform our understanding and experiences of gender, which also intersects with sexuality, race, class, and other related categories.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: PEM,HCE,HON

Typically offered: As Needed

PHI-5406 Myth and Social Order (3 Credits)

Philosophy is said to originate in mythology. But during the Enlightenment, philosophers imagined a world finally free from myth. The traditional superstitions inhibiting scientific and political progress could be set aside once and for all, they hoped. By the 19th century this fantasy was exposed as a myth too. Recent scholarship has rehabilitated myths and other traditional forms of discourse, refusing to dismiss them as mere products of the primitive mind. This seminar studies the stories we tell ourselves and each other about where we came from and where we are going. It does so through an examination of the development of reason in history. Such stories are the rhetorical vehicle for communicating important existential truths about us. Myths have the capacity to inspire but also to control, to promote as well as to threaten human maturity.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: HON,PEM

Typically offered: As Needed

PHI-5407 Genesis and the Meaning of Life (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: HON,PEM

Typically offered: As Needed

PHI-5433 Neo-Platonism (Honors) (3 Credits)

Honors seminar. An examination of the philosophical movement, beginning with Plotinus, and of its influence on Western philosophy, mysticism, and literature. The foundation of the course will be laid with a study of Plotinus's philosophy, in its triple dimension-as a reading of Plato, as a metaphysical system, and as a religious path. The Neo-Platonic vein will then be traced through medieval philosophy in the Christian, Jewish, and Islamic worlds; connections with Indian thought will also be considered. The continuing life of Neo-Platonic themes in modern philosophy and literature will finally be brought to light.

Fulfills General Education Requirement: HON

Typically offered: As Needed

PHI-6995 Independent Study in Philosophy (1-3 Credits)

Independent research and study in a topic in Philosophy including submission of a written report. Prerequisites: graduate standing and approval of the department chairperson.

Typically offered: On Demand

PHI-7342 Business Ethics (3 Credits)

This graduate course is designed to illustrate the importance and nuances of ethical behavior in our various roles in today's competitive business world and our complex consumer society. We learn fundamental ethical theories in philosophy and apply them to issues in business with sample cases. Issues examined include the merits of affirmative action, privacy rights of employees, environmentalism, social responsibility, consumer rights, whether cost savings justify outsourcing production to countries with little or no protection for workers, and whether whistle blowers are protecting the public or betraying others.

Typically offered: Fall Only

Religious Studies

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, Neo-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 India's 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 I. 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

Faculty

Chairperson

Dr. Clayton Shoppa

Professor

Edwards

Associate Professors

Falkenstern

Labendz

Shoppa

Lecturers

Freeman

Garrera-Tobert

Professors Emeriti

Berman

Galgan

Pedersen

Udoff

Adjuncts

Delescu

Jove

Keskin-Saglam

LaForge

Mixon

Warden