

REL 101.01, *Introduction to Religious Studies*

HART 3:30-4:45, T/Th

Credits, gl/gpr

This course provides a basic introduction to religious studies (the ABCs and XYZs) by exploring various traditions, practices, and beliefs from around the world.

REL 101.02, *Introduction to Religious Studies*

SOPPER 9:30-10:45, T/Th

Credits, gl/gpr

This course introduces students to the academic study of religion through a survey of the major beliefs, values, ritual practices, sacred writings and historical developments of the major western religions, namely, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. We approach these religions as things that *humans* do. In other words, we look at religion as an aspect of the societies, cultures and behavior of those human beings (past and present) who describe themselves as Jews, Christians and Muslims. Our main goal is to learn more about the different ways Jews, Christians and Muslims have thought, felt and acted over the course of their long histories. While we may have religious commitments and questions of our own, in this class we are not asked to “be religious.” Rather we are asked to be thorough investigators seeking to know, understand and appreciate our chosen subject matter. The course will consist mainly of regular lectures on relevant topics; regular assigned readings and periodic exams which require students to demonstrate detailed knowledge of the material presented in lectures and assigned readings. Required Texts: weekly readings from text book chapters and scholarly articles and essays accessed from the library e-reserve system.

REL 109.01, 02, *Religion and Contemporary Culture*

MCKINNON 10:00-10:50, 11:00-11:50, MWF

Credits, gpr

This course is an attempt to address religious issues within our contemporary Western context. We will explore divergent voices and practices that have arisen between the religious and the secular, within certain “traditional” Western religions, as well as within “new age” religions. Specific issues in past semesters have included truth and relativity, language and reality, racism and religion, feminist religious thought, and the role of the Internet in contemporary religion. Classes are designed to include large-group lectures as well as small-group discussions and activities.

REL 190.01, *Introduction to Scriptural Language: Hebrew (Beginning)*

NATKIN 9:30-10:45, T/Th

The first of two courses, Hebrew 190-01, is intended for beginners, with little or no knowledge of Hebrew. The goals are to learn to read Hebrew, to understand the basic grammatical forms and to introduce the written text of the Bible. The course is for students interested in reading the Hebrew Bible and liturgy and also for those wanting to develop skills in contemporary

conversational Hebrew.

REL 202.01, 02, *Hebrew Bible: Experiencing the Hebrew Bible: History, Theology, Ideology*
HASKELL 12:30-1:45, 3:30-4:45, T/Th

Credits, ghp/ gpm,wi

This course offers an introduction to the Hebrew Bible and the religion of ancient Israel. Through critical reading of primary and secondary sources, as well as group discussion, we will come to understand this complex text not only as a work of literature, but also as the product of distinct cultural and historical environments. We will not be reading the Bible in its entirety! Rather, we will be exploring a selection of the Bible's key elements and themes. Central concerns of the course will be the relationship between history, theology and ideology in this diverse text, as well as topics in Biblical spirituality such as covenant, prayer, prophecy, doubt, and love.

REL 204.01, *New Testament and Origins of Christianity*

BIRD 2:00-3:15 MW

Credits, ghp/gl/gpm

This course will guide students through an academic study of the New Testament. It is intended to be an engagement with these texts, which includes asking questions about its origin, its authors, its content and its role in informing our modern social structures and expectations, in particular because we live in the Western world that has been significantly shaped by the Bible.

REL 209.01, 02, *Elements of Christian Thought*

ROGERS 11:00-12:15, 4:00-5:15, T/Th

Credits, gl/gpr

Why you should take this course: 1. You want to know why Christians think God is three, how they think Jesus saves, why they think God permits evil, what they think God does about it, what they think God does about death, what they think God wants with sex, or what they mean by "salvation." 2. It's a good first course in Christianity, designed to be informative to those who know little. 3. It's a good advanced course in Christianity, designed to be interesting, even surprising to those who know a lot. 4. The readings are great! We read some of the greatest hits in Christian thought. 5. You want to read classic old stuff, like Augustine and Calvin. 6. You want to read the latest new stuff, published recently. 7. Fresh couldn't take courses like this in high school. 8. Seniors need training for jobs that involve thinking, writing, or supplying reasons. Theologians think about theology much as lawyers think about law or doctors go about diagnosis. Students go on to law school, divinity school, architecture school, medical school, graduate school, consulting, business. 9. It's part of the citizens' education that Jefferson

envisioned that they should know something about religion. 10. There is a good mix of lecture and discussion.11. The course needs a variety of backgrounds to work.

Why you should not take this course: 1. The reading runs 60 pages a week. 2. Other students have found the reading difficult. 3. Past students have compared it to "a philosophy course." 4. You think of it as Sunday School. 5. You can't pass it without doing the reading. 6. You figure you know it all already because you went to church. 7. It's very reading-intensive. 8. You're afraid to talk about sex, death, or evil. 9. You're hoping not to come very often. 10. You're hoping not to do the reading very often. 11. You're afraid thinking is incompatible with Christianity.12. You intend to write sermons for or test essays.13. You don't like surprises. 14. You don't like reading. 15. You don't like tests and quizzes. 16. Did I mention there was a lot of reading?

REL 212.01, *Christ: Reformation to the Present*
RAMSEY 9:30-10:45, T/Th
Credits, ghp/gl/gmo/wi

This course is a survey of Christian thought from the Protestant Reformation(s) to the present, focusing primarily on Protestant and Roman Catholic theology in Europe and America, but also including Eastern Orthodox and more recent "Liberation" movements. We will read and discuss important primary texts representative of various forms of Christianity that have arisen since the sixteenth century. While not a course on the history of the church, some attention will be given to the social context of our readings. Our concern will be the ways in which Christianity has changed from context to context, on the conditions and ideals that have influenced these changes, and on the problems that arise within these various movements.

REL 215.01, .02, *Judaism*
BREGMAN 11:00-12:15, 2:00-3:15, T/Th
Credits, cmo/ghp/gl/gpm/hp

This course provides an initial orientation to Judaism as a religion and as a culture. Students will be introduced to the development of basic Jewish practices, beliefs and institutions and to the major works of Jewish literature. The broad historical survey of Judaism from its beginnings until modern times will be concretized by focusing selectively on a number of specific texts, themes and topics.

REL 221.02, *Buddhism*
GRIEVE 6:00-8:45, M
Credits, gn/gpr

Buddhism has been one of the major connective links among the varied cultures of South, Southeast, and East Asia for over two millennia, and in this century it has established a solid presence in Europe and North America. This course will survey the history, doctrines, and

practices of Buddhism in South Asia, Southeast Asia, Tibet, and East Asia. Readings will be in both primary texts and secondary sources, and will be supplemented by films. The format will be a combination of lecture and discussion.

REL 225.01, .02, *Islam*

BUCAR 2:00-3:15, 3:30-4:45, MW

Credits, gn/gpr/igs

Since September 11th, interest in Islam has grown tremendously, especially in the United States where it has been the subject of much media commentary and political debate. This course seeks to prepare students to read these public discussions with a critical eye by providing an introduction to the major concepts and practices of Islam and the meta-narratives built into particular intra-Muslim debates. We will think about Islam in terms of its diversity by focusing on a series of key debates in Islamic thought and practice from its early history to the present day. Assuming satisfactory completion of the course, students will have an introductory knowledge of Islamic concepts, practices, and debates. They will have exposure to Islam in its historical, geographic, and philosophical diversity. Students will be able to comment thoughtfully and critically on various Muslim positions on important issues of our time such as jihad and gender roles. By grounding a number of intra-Muslim debates within Islamic history and politics, the hope is that the student will learn the fundamentals of Islamic theology and practice not as timeless abstracts, but rather as dynamic forces that exist in conversation with the past, from which they emerge, the present, in which they are situated, and the diversity of futures, towards which they are directed.

REL 231.01, *Religion in America*

RAMSEY 11:00-11:50, MWF

Credits, afs/ghp/gmo

Diverse religious traditions and thinkers that have played a significant role in the history of the United States from Native American beginnings to the present. (Formerly REL 131)

REL 250.01, *Religious Traditions and Care of the Earth*

HEADINGTON 3:30-4:45, MW

Credits, env/gn/gpr

This course introduces the student to the study of religion by focusing on the ways that various religious traditions view and treat the natural world. Religious rituals, symbols, stories, and ethical systems generate different cultural and social responses to nature. In our present age, when species and natural systems are threatened with extinction, we need to understand the

biases of various religious traditions, especially those of the West, and offer proposals for an ethic of sustainability. We will study indigenous people and western and eastern religions. We will also look at current attempts in the West to fashion a more life-enhancing ethic.

Our study will take up three major themes: The Great Work, Food, and Simple Living. Each will comprise a third of the course. For each theme or third of the course, you will have a test on the material we've covered in class and readings, and you'll have two projects to complete on Food and Simple Living. Thus, you'll have a theoretical and an experiential way of understanding the material.

REL 251.01, *Topics in Religion and Social Ethics*

SOPPER 11:00-12:15, T/TR

Credits, gpr/svl

This course examines the connections between contemporary ecological and social justice concerns on the one hand, and religion on the other. We examine the fundamental worldviews and traditional ethics of several major world religions (Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam). In looking at these religious traditions, we seek to understand how their different beliefs and practices influence the way followers understand and respond to the ecological and social justice issues currently facing humanity in the context of rapid globalization.

REL 258.01, *Darwin, Evolution, and Human Nature*

HART 12:30-1:45, T/Th

Credits, gpr

Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* revolutionized our understanding of life. This course explores the religious, philosophical, and ethical implications of Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection.

REL 298.01, *Thinking about Religion*

GRIEVE, RAMSEY 2:00-3:15, MW

Credits, wi

This course takes an imaginative and critical approach to introducing Religious Studies by focusing on case studies that illustrate how diverse religious ideas and practices may be interpreted as ways of "world construction." Additionally, this course investigates how Religious Studies "maps" religious phenomena. Cases studies will be used to demonstrate how religious life in different times and places has been shaped by the dynamic interplay of social, political, economic, environmental, aesthetic, and personal factors, and by peoples' efforts to represent or "map" this interplay in order to bring meaning, purpose, and order to their personal and collective lives. In considering these religious mappings, the course will also attend to the ways in which students of religion are themselves map-makers and users. The course introduces the

methods and materials that scholars, as students of religion, use to make sense of the religious worlds of their and other cultures.

This course is, therefore, not a survey of religious traditions, but rather an extended reflection on how scholars of religion imagine “religion” as an object of study, and how we frame our studies in a self-conscious and responsible way. This course is not, in the first instance, about description, though this is an essential part of the enterprise. It is, rather, about responsible interpretation—about how to productively approach the raw data of religious phenomenon and how to locate our perspectives in the larger context of humanistic inquiry. In short, this course is designed to introduce the problem of interpretation through selected case studies that challenge our assumptions and illuminate our subjectivity.

This course is designed as a seminar and writing workshop. Student participation is essential, and while the professor will lead discussion and occasionally lecture, student-led discussion will drive the course. Students will also engage in library research, as well as study the craft of writing academic research papers.

REL 309.01, *Spirituality and Culture in the West*

ROGERS 5:30-6:45, T/Th

Credits, wgs/wi

Most weeks will have a primary (historical) source reading for Tuesday and a secondary (theoretical) source reading for Thursday. That is, the Thursday readings comment on the Tuesday readings. You get to figure out how they apply. We follow several questions the history of Christianity.

- 1) The question of human **growth**. What is it, how does it happen, where does it lead, how does it surprise?
- 2) The question of human **experience**. How do individual and communal experience relate? How do texts and practices shape experience?
- 3) The question of human **frailty, death, and failure**. How does Christianity seek to make sense of these things? Does the death of Jesus mean that God undergoes them, too? How do themes of vulnerability and failure implicate Christian accounts of how sexuality fits into spirituality?
- 4) How do students of religion read Christian texts, focused on questions of **social meaning**. How do Christian texts and practices render time, sexuality, suffering, misfortune, joy, anger, pathology, and other things socially useful?

We follow these questions using as a guide Rowan Williams, *The Wound of Knowledge*, reading many of the original texts that he reads, as well as some others.

Why you should not take this course. This course is not only writing intensive. This course is also reading-intensive and thinking-intensive. If you don't enjoy long, difficult, and regular reading, don't take this course. If you don't want to work on your writing, don't take this course.

If you hope to sit back and be entertained in class, instead of verbalizing your thinking out loud, don't take this course.

REL 311.01, *Topics in Biblical Studies: The Sacrifice of Isaac*

BREGMAN 6:00-8:45, T

Credits, wi

This course will survey the broad spectrum of interpretation of one biblical narrative, “The Sacrifice of Isaac” (Genesis 22:1-19), that is foundational for Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Students will learn how the biblical text can be approached both objectively and subjectively through classroom discussion and guided writing assignments.

REL 314.01, *Saint and Society in the Early Middle Ages*

KRUEGER 6:00-8:45, W

Credits, wi

This course examines the rise and function of the veneration of Christian holy men and women between the fourth and eighth centuries in the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium) and the Latin West. We will consider the concept of sanctity in Late Ancient, early Byzantine, and early Medieval society. What is holiness? How is it related to the ordinary? What makes something, someone, or someplace holy? We will explore the location of sanctity both in people and in places by considering the rise of Christian pilgrimage and the cult of the saints both living and dead. We will investigate the use of religious language, imagery, and symbolism, turning our attention to topics such as the Christian virtues, asceticism and the monastic life, the performance of miracles, and models for religious authority and power. Above all we will be concerned to understand hagiography, the composition of accounts of the saints, as a literary exercise, an attempt to convey in narrative form a system of religious values to an audience. Readings will be drawn from primary literary sources originally composed in Greek, Latin, and Syriac, as well as from the work of modern historians of religion.

This course is designed for undergraduate Religious Studies majors and others with a strong interest in Christianity in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the early Middle Ages. Class will be run as a seminar discussion with everyone expected to contribute to our common task of interpreting the primary texts. This course is writing intensive; it is also reading intensive. Reading assignments will average 125 pages per week. Students should expect to spend 5 or 6 hours a week preparing for our three hour class meetings.

REL 327.01, *American Religious Thought II: Whitman*

LEVINSON 6:00-8:45 R

Credits, gpr/wi

