

REL 101.01, *Introduction to Religious Studies*

MARQUIS 2:00-3:15, MW

Credits, gl/gpr

What is “religion?” How do we know a “religion” when we see it? How do scholars study this varied and complex concept and the phenomena it attempts to encompass? We will examine these questions by looking at some of the world’s major religious traditions in their historical and contemporary expressions. This course will introduce you to the interdisciplinary approaches employed by Religious Studies scholars and offer a broad overview of some major world religions. In order to mirror the diversity of our subject matter, we will not only read primary and secondary texts but also engage the sights and sounds pertaining to various traditions. Concepts and methods will be reinforced through in-class and online discussions.

REL 101.02, *Introduction to Religious Studies*

MARQUIS 3:30-4:45, MW

Credits, gl/gpr

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REL 104.01, *Religion, Ritual and the Arts*

LOFTIN 7:00-9:45, R

Credits, gl/gpr

This is an introductory course about the experience and expression of that aspect of human existence called religion. Concentrating primarily on the myth, art, and ritual of Native American communities, the course will examine the meaning, value and purpose of religious orientations to the world. The course will additionally draw examples from a number of cultures both past and present from around the world in order to seek an understanding of the religious dimension of humanity that makes sense across time and space. Examples from ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, China, Greece and Rome will all be examined as well as the great world religions including Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Taoism and Islam. The course will also examine the religious experience of everyday activities, such as work, food production, eating, sleeping and sexual activity and the course will also examine the religious dimension of what Arnold van Gennep called the rights of passage: birth, naming, initiation, marriage and death.

REL 109, *Religion in Contemporary Culture: American Jesus*
MACKINNON 11:00-11:50, MWF
Credits, gpr

“Who do you say that I am?” Jesus asks his disciples in a rhetorically important scene in all three synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke). Portrayals of Jesus in American popular culture answer this question in decidedly different ways, telling us more about those who portray Jesus than they do about Jesus himself. This course is a study of contemporary representations of Jesus across media (theology, literature, art, film, music) set within an historical context of the various ways Jesus has been portrayed in America over the last century or so. This is a religious studies course in a secular state university: it is not Church school, Bible School, Sunday school, or Sabbath school. You do not have to be Christian to take the course; you do not have to know anything about Jesus to take the course. We are interested in the differences in historical and contemporary portrayals of Jesus, why these differences arise, and what these differences tell us: we are not interested in what you BELIEVE about Jesus.

REL 111.01, *Non-Western Religions*
GRIEVE 6:00-8:45, T
Credits, gn/gpr

This course introduces you to the study of non-Western religions and their contributions to modern religious self-understanding, focusing critically and evaluatively on such patterns of expression as myth, ritual, and social forms. [NW, CNW]. Concentrating on Buddhism and Hinduism, the course uses a nonsectarian, unbiased approach that employs various methods and theories to understand the religious life of others.

REL 111.02, *Non-Western Religions*
ZUBKO 9:00-9:50, MWF
Credits, gn/gpr

This course is an introduction to three major religious traditions of Asia: the traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, and religions of China. This course offers a window to these religious traditions in a historical perspective. The basic ideas and practices of these traditions will be presented in a way that students will have the opportunity to learn about important facets of these traditions while gaining familiarity with some of the tools of the academic discipline of Religious Studies. Through the course of the semester, students will become more familiar with these traditions and be challenged to think about religion in different ways.

REL 191.01, *Biblical Hebrew II*
NATKIN 9:30-10:50, TR

This course is a follow-on course from the previous semester's Beginners' class. We continue our practice of Conversational Hebrew, adding to our repertoire for use in everyday situations. In addition, we continue our study of the grammar and syntax of Hebrew. We shall study actual

texts from the Bible, giving us an opportunity to read, analyze and comprehend the Hebrew. In this way you will reach an understanding of how the commentators were able to look inside the text for inner meanings. We shall also be comparing different translations with the Hebrew text.

Prerequisites: This course requires the ability to read and write Hebrew and also a basic vocabulary and grammar.

REL 201.01, *The Bible in Western Culture: Biblical Travel*

MARQUIS 6:00-8:45, M

Credits, gl/gpr

Judaism and Christianity—religions that have traversed the world from their beginnings in the Middle East—were founded upon stories about wandering heroes. From the journeys of Abraham and the patriarchs, to the Exodus, to the exilic developments among Jewish communities, to Jesus as the messiah who “has nowhere to lay his head,” to heavenly journeys of various visionaries, *travel* constituted not just the means by which the traditions were spread but a central figure and act through which practitioners expressed the significance of their lifestyles. This course will investigate the role played by travel and travelers in various forms of Christianity and Judaism. Grounding our inquiries in a basic understanding of travel in the ancient world, we will examine myths of ancient nomads, the adaptability of Jews and Christians in Diaspora, accounts of traveling gods and foreign cults, itinerancy in the early Jesus movement, and early Christian pilgrimage. We will also inquire into how traveling (and reading and writing about travel) allowed various groups to explore larger truths about society and form their communities around specific values and ideas. Our explorations will be guided by in-class discussions, writing exercises, and exams.

REL 207.01, *Modern Problems of Belief*

ROGERS 12:30-1:45, TR

Credits, gpr

This course examines challenges to traditional Christian thought from within and outside it during the 19th and 20th Centuries, including changing views of God, changing views of freedom, the social study of religion, the psychology of belief, Christian views of women, feminine language for God, Christian views of Judaism and other religions, historical views of scripture, revivals of trinitarian thinking, the problem of evil, and controversies over ordination and marriage for sexual minorities. Previous students have found the reading difficult, and compared it to a philosophy course. *This is not a course in ethics, and most contemporary ethical controversies will not appear.* Rather, it is a course about how Christian doctrine and ritual change.

REL 212.01, *Christ: Reformation to the Present*
RAMSEY 11:00-11:50, MWF
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, *Judaism*
HASKELL 2:00-3:15, MW
Credits, ghp/gl/gpm

This course will provide a broad introduction to the religious tradition of Judaism. Central topics for the course include Jewish text, history, ritual, thought and culture. Course readings and discussions will stress the creative tension between tradition and innovation that has allowed Judaism to endure as a vital religion in an ever-changing world.

REL 218.01 and 218.02, *Non-Western Religion: Chinese Religion*
ORZECH 11:00-12:15 and 2:00-3:15, TR
Credits, gn/gpr/igs

This course is an introduction to Chinese Religion, both in the past and the present. I will use the results of the best recent scholarship to introduce you to current issues and methods in the study of religions and to provide an in-depth exploration of a culture quite foreign to most of you. While we will, to some extent, be looking at Chinese Buddhism, the course will focus on the indigenous religions of China including Confucianism, Daoism, and folk traditions. A major element of this course is the reading of three case studies that link traditional Chinese religion with the modern world. The course makes extensive use of films, online texts and images, and slides. There will be one timed Mini-exam early in the term, and two comprehensive exams. There is also an online writing component.

REL 221.01, *Buddhism*
ZUBKO 11:00-11:50, MWF
Credits, gn/gpr

This course explores the life of the Buddha and his primary teachings on suffering, impermanence, compassion, and mindfulness. Focusing first on classical Buddhist teachings in South Asia, we will then trace these teachings as they disseminate across China, Japan, and the modern West. Particular attention will be paid to the development of different practices of meditation, the participation of women in Buddhist traditions, the emergence of ‘socially

engaged Buddhism' and the application of Buddhist ethical principles to contemporary issues of war and ecology.

REL 225.01 and 02, *Islam*

SOPPER 2:00-3:15 and 3:30-4:45, MW

Credits, gn/gpr/igs

Nearly one fifth of the world's population identifies as Muslim, making Islam one of the most widely practiced religions in the modern world. The traditional centers of this vast and important Islamic community are currently experiencing a vibrant and sometimes violent resurgence of religious devotion and reform that is making Islam increasingly central to both everyday life and politics for many people. Therefore, the need to understand and engage thoughtfully and constructively with Islam is a pressing one for Muslims and non-Muslims alike. To address that need, the course examines the main beliefs, values, sacred texts, rituals, and "holy days" of classical Islam. We also examine the history of Islamic civilization as it developed from the time of Muhammad to the present with particular emphasis on the role of Islam in shaping society, law and politics. Finally we examine some important debates among contemporary Muslims on such important topics as the quest for a truly "Islamic" state and society under modern conditions, the place of democracy in modern Islam, the meaning and requirements of social justice, gender roles, the doctrine of jihad and the status of international Human Rights Codes in a modern Islamic context.

REL 231.01, *Religion in America*

RAMSEY 10:00-10:50 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 TR

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, *Does Human Rights Need God?*

BUCAR 9:30-10:45, TR

Credits, gpr/wi

During the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, French Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain commented "we agree on these rights, providing we are not asked why. With the 'why,' the dispute begins." The text of the Declaration itself remained intentionally vague on "the why" of human rights, and the world community has to some extent continued to agree to disagree, fearing that any discussion of the differences among the various rationales for human rights would undermine the consensus of the Declaration. In contrast, this course will delve into the foundational questions of "the why" of human rights, focusing our inquiry on the relationship of religion and human rights and guided by the assumption that attention to the rationale of human rights might help us to understand these rights more fully in theory and practice. The course is organized into three units. First, we explore the religious arguments for resonance between religious values and human rights ideals. Second, we consider accounts that deny a legitimate role for religion in "the why" of human rights. Third, we discuss specific regional examples of ways in which religion has been implicated in human rights.

REL 301.01, *Early Christianity*

KRUEGER 6:00-8:45, W

Credits, wi

This year, this course will examine the practice of Christianity in the Mediterranean basin from the second to the eighth centuries, exploring rituals, like baptism and eucharist, and modes of life, including monasticism. We will read and discuss primary sources including service books, church orders, theological and apologetic writings, and sermons. We will consider contemporaneous theological reflection on these practices and impact of and context for early Christian art and architecture. Topics of investigation will include the development of Christian institutions and structures, of Christian attitudes about the body and the human person, the Christianization of the city and the landscape, and the use of sacred space. 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 150 pages per week. Students should expect to spend 5 or 6 hours a week preparing for our three-hour class meetings.

REL 323.01, *Religious Movements and Communities: Kabbalah in Popular Culture*

HASKELL 6:00-8:45, M

Credits, wi

This course will focus on Jewish mysticism's role in popular culture. Drawing on a variety of

sources, including religious documents, popular literature, internet, music and film, we will explore the ways in which modernity has transformed traditional modes of Jewish mystical spirituality.

REL 324.01, *Philosophical Issues in Religion*

ORZECH 9:30-10:45, TR

Credits, wi

Philosophical Issues in Religion: Language, Image, and Sign is an introduction to the study of semiotics, and particularly of the role, function, and conception of language and images in religion and society. In this course we will examine major theories concerning the nature of language and images, and the implications of contemporary theories of language for the study of religion. REL 324 is aimed primarily at majors in Religious Studies and cognate fields (history, sociology, anthropology, etc.). It provides a solid foundation in Religious Studies as a discipline in the Liberal Arts and gives students detailed familiarity with key theoretical issues in the study of religion. Classroom and on-line discussion, group work, and formal and informal writing are used to sharpen analytical and communications skills. The class is writing intensive and will have an online writing component as well as two essays, one of which must be redrafted.

REL 327.01, *American Religious Thought, II*

LEVINSON 6:00-8:45, R

Credits, gpr/wi

The topic for Spring, 2009 is religious reflections in the essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Emerson was a classic transcendentalist and grandfather of American pragmatism. He is well known for his essays concerning self-reliance, compensation, 'the over soul,' divinity, life's finitude, slavery in America, the westering spirit breaking loose from conventions, and reflections on poetry, love and death in capitalistic society.

REL 382.01, *God, Body, and Sexual Orientation*

ROGERS 6:00-8:45 T

Credits, wgs/wi

Christianity has much to say about bodies. The creation of human beings, the incarnation of God in Jesus, the sacraments of baptism, communion and marriage, and the resurrection of the dead all involve physical bodies. What does God want with bodies in Christianity? and what do the social sciences say about that? Current controversies about the body in Christianity center on gender and sexual orientation. Arguments for and against same-sex marriage will play a prominent role. Fulfills the Writing Requirement. 3 five-page papers, weekly postings on Blackboard participation, seminar discussion. This is not a bull session or a soapbox, but will require heavy reading, careful writing, and willingness to speak up thoughtfully in seminar. A one-page paper will be due at the end of the first week. Don't take this course if you don't like reading, thinking, and writing.

REL 410.01, *Senior Seminar*
HART and BUCAR 3:30-4:45 TR
Credits, si/wi

This is Religious Studies capstone seminar and it is both writing and speaking intensive. We will read critique two or three books, including *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion*, by Thomas A. Tweed.

REL 503, *Special Topics: Human Sacrifice*
HART 12:30-1:45, TR

This course explores human sacrifice, killing and dying for God, in religion and in statecraft. We focus, in particular, on two aspects of statecraft: warfare and capital punishment.