

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES (RELS)

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## **RELS 108. Human Spirituality. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A study of the manifestations of one or more of the themes of religious studies in a diverse group of religious communities. The themes may include such wide-ranging topics as the sacred and profane, the epistemology of faith and knowledge, creation stories, human identity, the nature of the divine, the possibility of liberation or salvation, mythology, ritual, ethics, religion and art, religion and law, and religion and politics.

## **RELS 250. Death: Myth and Reality. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A study of intellectual and emotional responses to death and dying with emphasis upon their role in the development of religious thought and practice. Special attention will be paid to the death theme in literature, funeral practices and beliefs concerning the afterlife in selected world religions. Crosslisted as: ANTH 250.

## **RELS 280. Introduction to Catholic Studies. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. This course provides an introduction to Catholicism's major doctrines, figures, historical events, philosophy and ethics from its beginnings in the first centuries of the Common Era through contemporary debates over such issues as abortion, sexuality and war. Students will learn about scripture, doctrine, theology, the sacraments, art and architectures, saints, social justice and gender, and the history and role of the Church.

## **RELS 291. Topics in Religious Studies. 1-3 Hours.**

Semester course; variable hours. 1-3 credits. May be repeated with different topics for a maximum of six credits. Focused study of selected ideas, institutions, movements, time periods and/or thinkers. See Schedule of Classes for specific topic to be offered each semester.

## **RELS 300. What is Religion?. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Explores the origins, nature and function of religion and religious phenomena through a critical engagement with a diversity of theories of religion that have shaped the field of religious studies. Examines how academic scholars collect, assemble and interpret religions/cultures, including oral and written stories, art, architecture, symbolism, rituals, ethics and morals, and basic ideas about the nature of existence. Also considers the practical consequences, including the politics and ethics, of different theories employed by scholars in the study of religion and religious phenomena.

## **RELS 301. Introduction to the Hebrew Bible. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A survey of the Hebrew Bible from its beginning through the post-Exile period. Emphasis given to the literary and historical development of the text. Crosslisted as: HIST 305.

## **RELS 302. Introduction to the New Testament. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A survey of the New Testament with particular emphasis given to the historical development of the Canon. Crosslisted as: HIST 306.

## **RELS 305. Hebrew Prophets. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A survey of the literature and history of Israel as seen through the work of the writing prophets. Emphasis will be placed on the second part of the Hebrew Canon and the Book of Daniel.

## **RELS 306. Judaism. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A general survey of the dynamics and characteristic patterns of Jewish civilization encompassing history, practices and beliefs. Crosslisted as: INTL 306.

## **RELS 307. Black Religion. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. An analysis of the role of religion in the lives of blacks with an emphasis on African religions and philosophies, the black church in America, and the roles of the various faiths, sects and cults. Crosslisted as: AFAM 307/INTL 307.

## **RELS 308. High and Later Middle Ages. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A detailed historical overview of developments in Western Europe from the end of the first millennium through the end of the 15th century. Crosslisted as: HIST 311.

## **RELS 309. Greek and Roman Religion. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Explores the range of practices, beliefs, philosophies, rituals and narratives that made up the religious life of ancient inhabitants of the greater Mediterranean world, from the Homeric and archaic periods, through the rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire. Crosslisted as: HIST 307.

## **RELS 310. Mediterranean Religions. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Explores the earliest evidence of religious practice and belief in the Mediterranean region and probes the ways that the ancient traditions shaped the religions that still endure today. Also investigates the effect of religion in the Mediterranean region on related issues of intercultural relations, peace and conflict, and migration.

## **RELS 315. The Ancient Near East. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A study of the ancient Near Eastern civilizations from the preliterate period to the end of Kassite rule in Babylonia (c. 1160 B.C.). Crosslisted as: HIST 301.

## **RELS 317. Islam. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A study of the emergence of Islam in Arabia in the seventh century and its subsequent developments, including a look at the Qur'an (the holy book), the Prophetic traditions, the concept of God, and mysticism (sufism) and law (shari'ah) and an overview of ritual practices, fundamental beliefs, theological principles and current issues in Islam and international relationship. Crosslisted as: INTL 317.

## **RELS 318. History of the Jewish People I. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A study of the Jewish people from the biblical period to the early modern period, including the Israelite conquest of Canaan, Judea in Hellenistic and Roman times, the Diaspora in Islam and in Europe, social and cultural trends, and Jewish settlement in the Ottoman Empire. Crosslisted as: HIST 333.

## **RELS 319. History of the Jewish People II. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A study of the Jewish people from the early modern to the present, including the impact of the Emancipation, the rise of the American Jewish community, the impact of modernism and growth of Reform, the beginnings and growth of Zionism, restoration in Palestine, the Holocaust, the creation of Israel, and the relations of Israel and world Jewry. Crosslisted as: HIST 334.

## **RELS 320. Taoism. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A study of one of the most fundamental and influential philosophies of life in Chinese culture, focusing on the theory and practice of the basic principles of Taoism as formulated by the legendary Lao Tzu and further developed by Chuang Tzu.

## **RELS 321. Buddhism. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A critical survey of the origins, basic beliefs, sacred text, themes, practices, history, key figures, subject matters, schools of thought and current issues in Buddhism. Crosslisted as: INTL 321.

**RELS 322. Tibetan Buddhism. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A basic introduction to the history, development and mythology of the Buddhism of Tibet focusing on the Indian heritage and shared basis of all Buddhist practices, a clear identification of the three vehicles found in Buddhism, and a careful consideration of the path of the Bodhisattva, the hero of Great Vehicle Buddhism. Crosslisted as: PHIL 322.

**RELS 324. Indian Religious Traditions. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A systematic analysis of the major theories of Indian religious and philosophical thought: Vedas, Upanishads, Gita, Charvaka, Jainism, Buddhism, the six systems of Hinduism and contemporary developments. Crosslisted as: INTL 324/ PHIL 324.

**RELS 326. Existentialism. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHIL 101, PHIL 103, PHIL 104, PHIL 201, PHIL 211, PHIL 212, PHIL 213, PHIL 214, PHIL 221 or PHIL 222. An examination of the nature of truth, freedom, responsibility, individuality and interpersonal relations as found in some principal writings of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Jaspers, Sartre, Heidegger, Camus, Buber and Marcel. Crosslisted as: PHIL 326.

**RELS 327. History of Christianity I. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A historical and theological examination of Christianity from its origin to the early modern period, or the age of the Reformations. Emphasis is placed upon an understanding of leading events, ideas, movements and persons in their historical settings. Crosslisted as: HIST 335.

**RELS 328. History of Christianity II. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A historical and theological examination of Christianity from ca. 1500 to the present. Emphasis is placed upon an understanding of leading events, ideas, movements and persons in their historical settings. Crosslisted as: HIST 336.

**RELS 329. The Early Middle Ages. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A topical, thematic, integrative and problems approach to the emergence of a distinctive European community during the period frequently alluded to as the "Dark Ages." Crosslisted as: HIST 310.

**RELS 333. Psychology and Religious Experience. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. Religious belief and experience as viewed by major psychological theorists. How psychological methodology has been used to study religious experience. Topics include personality factors and development, conversion experiences, religious experiences and mental health and human values. Crosslisted as: PSYC 333.

**RELS 334. Religion in Contemporary America. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. This course studies the history, literature, belief patterns and unique traits of religion in the United States. The evolution of religion and religious sentiment in a modern pluralistic, democratic society, including the varieties of religious experiences in contemporary America will be reviewed.

**RELS 335. The American Jewish Experience. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. The religious, social and cultural structure of American Jewry from the Colonial era to the present.

**RELS 336. Religions in Latin America. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. An interdisciplinary survey of the major religious groups of Latin America, with a focus on the development of Catholicism, Protestantism and the traditions of the African diaspora, such as Santeria and Vodou, during the 20th century.

**RELS 337. Contemporary Cults and New Religious Movements. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. An overview of contemporary religious movements. Focuses on new groups that have emerged in the context of globalization. Involves understanding of what gives rise to these movements, how they are distinctive and how they develop.

**RELS 338. Eastern Religions. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. An introductory survey of Eastern religions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism and Shinto, including their historical formation and foundational ideas, symbols, stories, and rituals and influence on personal and social life. Crosslisted as: INTL 338.

**RELS 339. Western Religions. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. An introductory survey of Western religions, such as Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, including their historical formation and foundational ideas, symbols, stories, and rituals and influence on personal and social life. Crosslisted as: INTL 339.

**RELS 340. Global Ethics and the World's Religions. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A critical survey of ethical concepts and issues in the thought and practice of major religious traditions. Comparison of ethical perspectives on selected themes and attention to cooperative efforts toward a global ethic. Crosslisted as: INTL 341.

**RELS 350. World Religions' Classics. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A critical reading of selected works from among the spiritual classics of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Taoism and other religious traditions. Crosslisted as: INTL 360.

**RELS 354. Religion and Film: \_\_\_\_ 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. May be repeated with different themes for a total of six credits. Explores central themes present in all global religious traditions, such as ritual, faith, myth, suffering, redemption, the religious quest/pilgrimage, the nature of good and evil and perceptions of the sacred. Using readings from sacred texts and contemporary film critiques, the course juxtaposes ancient story and wisdom with contemporary narratives in film. Possible themes would include women and religion in world cinema, Christology in world cinema, and violence and redemption in film. See the Schedule of Classes for specific topics to be offered each semester. Crosslisted as: CINE 354/ WRLD 354.

**RELS 360. Sociology of Religion. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A systematic review and assessment of major sociological theories of and empirical research on religious behavior and groups. Topics include the structure of religious organizations; social correlates and functions of religion; denominationalism; religion and social class, social change and population. Crosslisted as: SOCY 360.

**RELS 361. The Bible as Literature. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Literary aspects of the Bible will be considered. Also, attention will be given to the history of the English Bible. Crosslisted as: ENGL 361.

**RELS 362. Shakespeare and Religion. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. An examination of the religious ideas in selected plays by William Shakespeare and their relevance to contemporary religious thought and experience. Topics include the nature of God, the meaning of life, the problem of evil, moral authority and the question of immortality as found in Shakespeare's plays.

**RELS 365. Archaeology and Religion: \_\_\_\_ 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. May be repeated with different topics for a maximum of six credits. Explores the archaeological record as evidence for the religious life of past and present societies with emphasis on the study of religion anthropologically. Topics may include thematic and/or geographical and/or literary approaches. See the Schedule of Classes for specific topics to be offered each semester. Crosslisted as: ANTH 365.

**RELS 366. American Religious History I. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A survey of religious movements, events and ideas in North America from indigenous and colonial traditions to the U.S. Civil War, with attention to the diversity of religious expression and the relationship between church and state. Crosslisted as: HIST 363.

**RELS 367. American Religious History II. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A survey of religious movements, events and ideas in the United States from the Civil War to the present, with attention to the diversity of religious expression and the relationship between church and state. Crosslisted as: HIST 364.

**RELS 371. Women in Islam. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200, RELS 108, GSWS 201 or ENGL 215. Critical study of the roles and rights of women in Islam. Crosslisted as: GSWS 371.

**RELS 380. Global Catholic Thought. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. A study of the contemporary Catholic Christian response to the questions, "Who is God?" and "Where/how do we experience the Sacred?" Methods of Catholic theology will be explicated and applied to the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and current responses to those teachings in such areas as sacramental worship and liturgy and moral/ethical teachings of the Church.

**RELS 391. Topics in Religious Studies. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. May be repeated with different topics for a maximum of 6 credits. A study of a selected ideas or concepts, religious thinkers or significant movements in the field of religion. See the Schedule of Classes for specific topics to be offered each semester and prerequisites.

**RELS 398. Directed Study Abroad. 1-8 Hours.**

Semester course; 1-8 field experience hours. 1-8 credits. May be repeated for a maximum of eight credits. A course involving travel and/or study in a foreign country. Intended primarily for students participating in pre-arranged projects, directed study abroad and/or exchange programs. The course meets the experiential learning requirement for the religious studies major.

**RELS 401. Faith and Life Sciences. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. Open to students of any school or program. Explores the complex relationships between faith traditions and the life sciences. Topics include epistemology, impact of life sciences on ideas of fate and responsibility, limits of science and technology, and scientific and religious perspectives on human origins, consciousness, aggression, forgiveness, health, illness and death. Crosslisted as: LFSC 401.

**RELS 407. Modern Jewish Thought. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. A study of the writings of the leading Jewish thinkers of the 19th and 20th centuries. Special reference will be made to the issues arising from the encounter of Judaism with the modern world: the nature of revelation and the authority of the Torah, the nature of God, the impact of the Holocaust, the meaning of redemption and the significance of the state of Israel.

**RELS 409. Modern Islamic Thought and Global Trends. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. Introduces students to the integral relationship of Islam to major events of global concern and contextualizes these events into the wider modern and postmodern developments of Islamic thought and its intellectual and ideological self-interrogation. This course will provide students with the opportunity to study both the background of modern Islamic thought and selected contemporary events. Crosslisted as: INTL 409.

**RELS 412. Zen Buddhism. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. A study of Zen Buddhism, including backgrounds in Indian philosophy and practice, development in China and Korea, and present-day Zen theory and practice in Japan and in Western countries. Crosslisted as: PHIL 412/INTL 412.

**RELS 414. Incarceration and Spirituality: \_\_\_\_ 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. Enrollment requires permission of the instructor. Experiential seminar held at a local correctional institution that connects students to residents as learning partners. Examines themes, topics and problems in the world religions and social justice supplementing theoretical studies with the lived experiences of inmates and university students. See the Schedule of Classes for specific topics to be offered.

**RELS 425. Religion, Magic and Witchcraft. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online or face-to-face). 3 credits. Prerequisites: ANTH/INTL 103 and UNIV 200 or HONR 200 with a minimum grade of C. A survey of the nature and variety of beliefs outside of the major streams of religious thought. Among topics considered are myth, totemism, taboo and sorcery. Emphasis on understanding supernatural beliefs and practices in relation to culture and society. Crosslisted as: ANTH 425/INTL 425.

**RELS 430. Philosophy of Religion. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHIL 101, PHIL 103, PHIL 104, PHIL 201, PHIL 211, PHIL 212, PHIL 213, PHIL 214, PHIL 221 or PHIL 222. An introduction to the major problems and questions of religion and reason. Special reference will be made to the nature of God, the nature of man, the problem of evil, the source of good, immortality and the basis of authority. Crosslisted as: PHIL 430.

**RELS 440. Mysticism. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. A critical analysis of the varieties of mysticism in world religions. Arguments for and against mysticism will be emphasized. Mysticism will be related to art, psychology, science, philosophy, theology and magic. Crosslisted as: PHIL 440.

**RELS 441. Islamic Mysticism: the Sufis. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. Introduces students to the major Sufi masters and their works. It covers ideological and practical development of Islamic mysticism as compared to the developments within Islam itself. Crosslisted as: INTL 441.

**RELS 450. Religion, Globalization and Social Justice. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. Explores the role religions are playing in the work of building a socially just and environmentally sustainable world community. Crosslisted as: INTL 449.

**RELS 451. Religion, Racism and Social Justice. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. Explores the complex history and contemporary relationships between religion, racism and social justice. Graded as pass/fail. Crosslisted as: AFAM 451/INTL 451.

**RELS 453. Religions, Women and Social Justice. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisites: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. Explores the experience and portrayal of women and gender-nonconforming people in varied religious and spiritual traditions. Study focuses on how these traditions' practices, teachings and aesthetic traditions bear upon people's social, economic, political, creative and spiritual lives. Special attention is given to social justice movements that emerge in connection with globalization and religious fundamentalism. Crosslisted as: GSWS 453/INTL 453.

**RELS 458. Religion and Ecojustice. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. Explores Eastern, Western and indigenous religious traditions' understanding of the meaning of nature, including human nature; our ethical obligations to nature, including other species; and how different traditions imagine, value and interact with nature. Considers how diverse religious communities are involved in efforts to address socio-environmental issues like the climate crisis, consumerism, environmental racism, indigenous sovereignty, protection of forests and oceans, access to healthy air, water, land and food, and the establishment of an ecological society. Crosslisted as: INTL 458.

**RELS 459. Gender, Sexuality, and Religion. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. Explores gender and sexuality in diverse religious and spiritual traditions. Study focuses on how these religions' practices, teachings, and aesthetic traditions bear upon people's experiences and understandings of gender, sexuality and reproduction. Specific attention is given to the experience and portrayal of women and queer people. Crosslisted as: GSWS 459/INTL 459.

**RELS 460. Contemporary Issues in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies: \_\_\_\_\_. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. May be repeated once, with a different topic, for credit. Provides advanced study and analysis of contemporary issues in Middle Eastern and Islamic studies. Crosslisted as: INTL 460.

**RELS 490. Senior Capstone Seminar. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: RELS 340/INTL 341; senior standing in religious studies major with a minimum of 85 credits earned toward the degree. Senior research project; written thesis and oral presentations using established concepts, theories and research methods in religious studies. Students will select the religious groups/traditions as the focus of their research, writing and oral presentations in consultation with the course instructor.

**RELS 491. Topics in Religious Studies. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. May be repeated with different topics for maximum of 6 credits. Prerequisite: written permission of instructor. An in-depth study of selected ideas or concepts, religious thinkers or significant movements in the field of religion. See the Schedule of Classes for specific topics to be offered each semester.

**RELS 492. Independent Study. 1-4 Hours.**

Semester course; variable hours. Variable credit. Maximum of 4 credits per semester; maximum total of 6 credits for all independent study courses. Open generally to students of only junior or senior standing who have acquired at least 12 credits in the departmental discipline. Determination of the amount of credit and permission of instructor and department chair must be procured prior to registration of the course. An independent study course to allow interested students in religious studies to do research in an area of major interest under the direction of a professor qualified in that field.

**RELS 493. Religious Studies Internship. 1-3 Hours.**

Semester course; 1-3 field experience hours. 1-3 credits (40 clock hours per credit). May be repeated for a maximum of six credits, however only three credits can count toward the major. Enrollment requires permission of the internship coordinator. Student must be in good academic standing with a minimum major GPA of 2.25. Designed for the advanced student to gain workplace experience in a local, national or international organization offering opportunities in religious studies.

**RELS 499. Senior Seminar. 1 Hour.**

Semester course; 1 lecture hour. 1 credit. Prerequisites: RELS 340/INTL 341; senior standing in religious studies major with a minimum of 85 credits earned toward the degree. Pre- or corequisite: RELS 490. Focuses on self-assessment, compilation of a portfolio and curriculum vitae, career and graduate school preparation, and on the lifelong application of skills and knowledge acquired in the program. Students will critically assess their experience in the religious studies program.

**RELS 592. Independent Study. 1-4 Hours.**

Semester course; 1-4 credits. Determination of the amount of credit and permission of the instructor and department chair must be procured prior to registration for the course. Open only to graduate students. An independent study course to allow qualified graduate students to do research in an area of major interest.