

RELIGIOUS STUDIES, BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A.)

worldstudies.vcu.edu/academics/relstudies (<http://worldstudies.vcu.edu/academics/religious-studies/>)

The mission of the Religious Studies Program at VCU is to advance understanding of the nature, history and diversity of religious traditions.

Religious studies is guided by the idea that studying humanity's diverse and developing religious traditions is vital to understanding what it means to be human and how to live wisely as members of the world community. Students explore the artistic, ethical, literary, psychological and social dimensions of religions, as well as the relationship between religious ideas, institutions, and practices and matters of gender, sexuality, race, nationality, health, social justice, human rights and nature.

Religious studies emphasizes excellence in written, oral and visual interpretation and communication, critical thinking, informed dialogue, and global citizenship. Combining classroom- and community-based learning through study-abroad programs, internships and community service, religious studies empowers students to engage intellectually and practically with diverse communities and work to build a peaceful, generous and affirming society.

Student learning outcomes

1. Demonstrate knowledge of diverse religious traditions
2. Utilize the vocabulary, concepts and research methods of the academic study of religion
3. Analyze the influence of religions on ethics, society and culture
4. Make clear, well-organized and substantive written and oral presentations

Experiential learning and study abroad

Each student completing a degree program within the School of World Studies is required to complete a World ePass as part of their experiential learning requirement; students are also encouraged to participate in a study abroad program. For more information on the ePass portfolio and study abroad opportunities, students may visit the overview page for the School of World Studies (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/college-humanities-sciences/school-worldstudies/>).

Special requirements

The Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies requires a minimum of 120 credits, with at least 30 credits in religious studies courses or in courses listed as acceptable for religious studies credit. Up to six of the 30 credits may be taken in language studies relevant to one's area of research interest and with the appropriate approval through the School of World Studies Advising Office. Other courses occasionally may be substituted should the needs and background of an individual student warrant substitutions. Religious studies majors are encouraged to consider a second major or minor that complements their study of religions (e.g. English, international studies), as well as study-abroad opportunities to enrich their studies.

Degree requirements Religious Studies, Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)

Course	Title	Hours
General education (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/undergraduate-study/general-education-curriculum/)		
Select 12-13 credits from general education foundations and 17-18 credits from areas of inquiry.		30
Major requirements		
• Major core requirements		
RELS/INTL 311	Religions of the World	3
RELS/INTL 312	Religions of the World	3
RELS 340/INTL 341	Global Ethics and the World's Religions	3
RELS 490	Senior Capstone Seminar	3
• Major electives		
RELS electives: Select an additional four courses from the list below, with at least six credits at the 400 level.		12
Select two religion, society and culture electives from the list below.		6
Ancillary requirements		
HUMS 202	Choices in a Consumer Society	1
RELS 108	Human Spirituality (satisfies general education BOK for humanities/fine arts and AOI for diversities in the human experience)	3
• Experiential fine arts ¹		1-3
• Experiential learning		0-3
Select one of the following:		
Major-specific service-learning course		
Study abroad program		
Internship (FRLG 493, INTL 493, RELS 493, WRLD 493 or other preapproved internship opportunities)		
• Foreign language through the 102 level (by course or placement)		0-6
• World ePass completion		0
Open electives		
Select any course.		47-58
Total Hours		120

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Course offered by the School of the Arts

The minimum number of credit hours required for this degree is 120.

Electives

Course	Title	Hours
Religion, society and culture		
RELS 250	Death: Myth and Reality	3
RELS 310	Mediterranean Religions	3
RELS/PSYC 333	Psychology and Religious Experience	3
RELS 334	Religion in Contemporary America	3
RELS 336	Religions in Latin America	3
RELS 337	Contemporary Cults and New Religious Movements	3
RELS/SOCY 360	Sociology of Religion	3

RELS 361	The Bible as Literature	3	RELS/ANTH/INTL 425	Religion, Magic and Witchcraft	3
RELS/GSWS 371	Women in Islam	3	RELS/PHIL 430	Philosophy of Religion	3
RELS/GSWS/INTL 372	Global Women's Spirituality	3	RELS/PHIL 440	Mysticism	3
RELS 414	Incarceration and Spirituality: _____	3	RELS/INTL 441	Islamic Mysticism: the Sufis	3
RELS 422	Religion and Film	3	RELS 442	Seminar in Hinduism	3
RELS 450/INTL 449	Religion, Globalization and Social Justice	3	RELS 491	Topics in Religious Studies	3
RELS/AFAM/INTL 451	Religion, Racism and Social Justice	3	RELS 492	Independent Study	1-3
RELS/GSWS/INTL 453	Western Religions, Women and Social Justice	3	RELS 493	Religious Studies Internship	1-3
RELS 455/INTL 456	Catholic Ethics and Social Justice	3	HIST 311	High and Later Middle Ages	3
RELS electives			HIST 335/RELS 327	History of Christianity I	3
RELS 101	Introduction to Religious Studies	3	HIST 336	History of Christianity II	3
RELS 201	Biblical Hebrew	3	What follows is a sample plan that meets the prescribed requirements within a four-year course of study at VCU. Please contact your adviser before beginning course work toward a degree.		
RELS 202	Biblical Hebrew	3	Freshman year		
RELS 282	Introduction to Buddhism	3	Fall semester		
RELS 280	Introduction to Catholic Studies	3	RELS 108	Human Spirituality (satisfies general education BOK for humanities/fine arts and AOI for diversities in the human experience)	3
RELS 291	Topics in Religious Studies	1-3	UNIV 101	Introduction to the University	1
RELS 301	Introduction to the Hebrew Bible	3	UNIV 111	Focused Inquiry I (satisfies general education UNIV foundations)	3
RELS 302	Introduction to the New Testament	3	Play course	video for Focused Inquiry I	
RELS 303	Intertestamental Literature and Thought	3	Experiential fine arts		1-3
RELS 305	Hebrew Prophets	3	Foreign language 101		3
RELS 306	Introduction to Judaism	3	General education course (select quantitative foundations)		3-4
RELS/AFAM/INTL 307	Black Religion	3	Term Hours: 14-17		
RELS 313	Life and Literature of Paul	3	Spring semester		
RELS 314	Jesus in the New Testament	3	HUMS 202	Choices in a Consumer Society	1
RELS 315/HIST 301	The Ancient Near East	3	RELS 311	Religions of the World	3
RELS/INTL 317	Islam	3	or	or Religions of the World	
RELS 318/HIST 333	History of the Jewish People I	3	RELS 312		
RELS 319/HIST 334	History of the Jewish People II	3	UNIV 112	Focused Inquiry II (satisfies general education UNIV foundations)	3
RELS 320	Taoism	3	Play course	video for Focused Inquiry II	
RELS/PHIL 322	Tibetan Buddhism	3	Foreign language 102		3
RELS/PHIL 326	Existentialism	3	General education course (select AOI for global perspectives)		3
RELS 327/HIST 335	History of Christianity I	3	Open elective		3
RELS 335	The American Jewish Experience	3	Term Hours: 16		
RELS 350/INTL 360	World Classics of Spirituality	3	Sophomore year		
RELS 362	Shakespeare and Religion	3	Fall semester		
RELS 363	Archaeology and Sacred Texts	3	RELS 311	Religions of the World	3
RELS/GSWS 373	Gender and the Bible	3	or	or Religions of the World	
RELS 380	Global Catholic Thought	3	RELS 312		
RELS 391	Topics in Religious Studies	3	UNIV 200	Inquiry and the Craft of Argument (satisfies general education UNIV foundations)	3
RELS/LFSC 401	Faith and Life Sciences	3			
RELS 407	Modern Jewish Thought	3			
RELS/PHIL 408	Indian Tradition	3			
RELS/INTL 409	Modern Islamic Thought and Global Trends	3			
RELS/PHIL/INTL 410	The Chinese Tradition in Philosophy	3			
RELS/PHIL/INTL 412	Zen Buddhism	3			

General education course (select AOI for creativity, innovation and aesthetic inquiry)	3
General education course (select AOI for scientific and logical reasoning)	3
Open elective	3
Term Hours:	15
Spring semester	
RELS 340 Global Ethics and the World's Religions	3
General education course (select BOK to complete breadth of knowledge requirement)	3
General education course (select BOK to complete breadth of knowledge requirement)	3
Open elective	3
Religion, society and culture elective	3
Term Hours:	15
Junior year	
Fall semester	
RELS elective	3
Open electives	9
Religion, society and culture elective	3
Term Hours:	15
Spring semester	
On-campus or study abroad semester	
RELS elective	3
Open electives	12
Term Hours:	15
Summer semester	
Study abroad (recommended); credits completed during study abroad will decrease open electives needed in subsequent semesters	0-6
Term Hours:	0-6
Senior year	
Fall semester	
RELS 493 Religious Studies Internship (or other experiential learning opportunity if not already met) RELS 490 or Senior Capstone Seminar	1-3
RELS elective (400-level)	3
Open electives	11-12
World ePass completion	
Term Hours:	15-18
Spring semester	
RELS 490 Senior Capstone Seminar (if not taken in the fall) or RELS 493 or Religious Studies Internship	3
RELS elective (400-level)	3
Open electives	9
Term Hours:	15
Total Hours:	120-132

RELS 101. Introduction to Religious Studies. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. This course examines the phenomenon of religion and religious experience. Through a phenomenological approach definitions and descriptions of the major features of the religious experience and of religious establishments, including concepts of the sacred, the numinous, religious language, texts, symbols, rituals and myths are reviewed. In addition, the social, political and spiritual dimensions of religion in human culture will be investigated.

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 201. Biblical Hebrew. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Vocabulary, elementary grammar, introduction to lexica and reading of biblical texts.

RELS 202. Biblical Hebrew. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: RELS 201. Vocabulary, elementary grammar, introduction to lexica and reading of biblical texts.

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.

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 282. Introduction to Buddhism. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Introduces Buddhism from its origins in India and addresses its major schools of thought, practice, ritual and philosophy, in Asia and beyond, particularly the United States.

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 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.

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.

The minimum number of credit hours required for this degree is 120.

RELS 303. Intertestamental Literature and Thought. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. The period between the Old and New Testaments as seen through the literature of the era, with emphasis on the writings of the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha and Josephus.

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. Introduction to 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 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 311. Religions of the World. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. An investigation of the historical, cultural and theological foundations and development of major world religions including Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism and Shinto. Crosslisted as: INTL 311.

RELS 312. Religions of the World. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. An investigation of the historical, cultural and theological foundations and development of major world religions including Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Crosslisted as: INTL 312.

RELS 313. Life and Literature of Paul. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A survey of the life and literature of Paul as given in Acts and the Epistles, involving special consideration of Paul's contribution to the expansion of Christianity.

RELS 314. Jesus in the New Testament. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A study of the Christ of faith and the Jesus of history as presented in New Testament literature and as interpreted in the works of selected scholars from the church fathers to the present.

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 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 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 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 Voduo, 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 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 Classics of Spirituality. 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 360. Sociology of Religion. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: SOCY 101. 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 363. Archaeology and Sacred Texts. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lectures hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. Explores past and present archaeological research as it relates to events, persons, and places described in ancient sacred texts of the Mediterranean.

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 372. Global Women's Spirituality. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Explores the spiritual writings of women in various cultures and religious traditions. Crosslisted as: GSWS 372/INTL 372.

RELS 373. Gender and the Bible. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: RELS 108 or GSWS 201 or RELS 301 or RELS 302; and ENGL 215 or UNIV 200 or HONR 200. Studies the Hebrew and Christian scriptures with emphasis on gender. Attention to traditional, feminist, womanist and postcolonial interpretation. Crosslisted as: GSWS 373.

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 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 408. Indian Tradition. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: at least six credits from philosophy or religious studies courses. 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: PHIL 408.

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

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: INTL/RELS 312 or INTL/RELS 317; 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 410. The Chinese Tradition in Philosophy. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A study of the development of Confucianism, of alternative ways of thought prior to the fall of the Han Dynasty and of neo-Confucianism. The systems of thought are examined in the light of their social, political and religious impact on China, Korea and Japan. Crosslisted as: PHIL 410/INTL 410.

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 422. Religion and Film. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. May be repeated with different themes for a total of six credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. 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.

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

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 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: INTL/RELS 312 or INTL/RELS 317; 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 442. Seminar in Hinduism. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A survey of Hinduism, taking up the earliest origins of Hinduism, the Hindu creation myth, the various conceptions of the divine, the speculation regarding human nature, the stages of life, development of family and monastic codes, the great epics of Hinduism including the Bhagavad-Gita, the six schools of Hindu philosophy and modern Hinduism as it has developed in response to Western influences.

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

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: RELS 340/INTL 341, WRLD 210 or WRLD 220; 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. 3 credits. Prerequisites: RELS 340/INTL 341, WRLD 210 or WRLD 220; UNIV 200 or HONR 200. Explores the complex history and contemporary relationships between religion, racism and social justice. Crosslisted as: AFAM 451/INTL 451.

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

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: UNIV 200 or HONR 200; and RELS 108, GSWS 201 or WRLD 210. Explores the experience and portrayal of women in the three Abrahamic traditions: Judaism, Islam and Christianity. Study focuses on how these religions and their texts bear upon the social, economic, political and spiritual lives of women. Special attention is given to the impact of globalization and religious fundamentalism on women. Crosslisted as: GSWS 453/INTL 453.

RELS 455. Catholic Ethics and Social Justice. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: RELS 280 or 380, or RELS/INTL 312, or RELS 340/INTL 341; UNIV 200 or HONR 200. An exploration of the Catholic church's major theological, ethical, constitutional and strategic concerns, and an analysis of Catholic social teaching and its relation to current social issues such as abortion, peace and conflict, poverty, and human rights. Crosslisted as: INTL 456.

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; variable hours. 1-3 credits (40 clock hours per credit). May be repeated for a maximum of 6 credits, however only 3 credits can count toward the major. Prerequisites: completion of 9 credits of upper-level (300- or above) course work in religious studies, and 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.