Religion Studies

Department Home Page

The religion studies department is committed to the academic investigation of religion as an intrinsic and vital dimension of human culture. The scholarly study of religion is an integral facet of a liberal arts education. The student of religion is engaged in the critical and interpretive task of understanding patterns of religious thought and behavior as aspects of the human cultural experience.

Religion studies is interdisciplinary in that it draws upon humanistic and social scientific modes of inquiry. These include historical, philosophical, sociological, anthropological, and psychological perspectives. Religion studies is a cross-cultural, comparative discipline concerned with the character and significance of the major religious traditions of the world. The student of religion confronts ethical problems and basic issues of value and meaning raised by modern multicultural and technological society.

Professors. Dena S Davis, JD (University of Virginia); Michael L. Raposa, PHD (University of Pennsylvania); Lloyd H Steffen, PHD (Brown University); Benjamin G. Wright, Ill, PHD (University of Pennsylvania)

Associate Professors. Jodi Eichler-Levine, PHD (Columbia University); Hartley Lachter, PHD (New York University); Robert Thomas Rozenhal, PHD (Duke University)

Assistant Professors. Khurram Hussain, PHD (Yale University); Monica R. Miller, PHD (Chicago Theological Seminary); Annabella Pitkin, PHD (Columbia University)

Emeriti. Alice L. Eckardt, MA (Lehigh University); Norman J. Girardot, PHD (University of Chicago); Kenneth L. Kraft, PHD (Princeton University); Laurence J. Silberman, PHD (Brandeis University); Lenore E. Chava Weissler, PHD (University of Pennsylvania)

MAJOR IN RELIGION STUDIES

The major in religion studies consists of 32 credit hours of coursework (eight courses). Requirements include:

- In consultation with a major advisor from the departmental faculty, students will devise a balanced plan of study responsive to individual needs and interests. The curriculum for each major will demonstrate exposure to a diversity of approaches to the interdisciplinary, trans-cultural field of religion studies.
- At least four courses at the 100 level or above.
- REL 374 Seminar for Majors

The department recommends that in consultation with a major advisor, students concentrate in one of the major religious traditions, or in a comparative or thematic approach to the study of religion. The concentration should include at least four courses. Language study appropriate to the concentration is also desirable.

Students are particularly encouraged to consider a joint or double major with another major field from any of the three colleges at the university.

DEPARTMENTAL HONORS

Religion studies majors are admitted to honors by invitation of the departmental faculty toward the end of the student's junior year. To be eligible, a student must have attained at least a 3.25 average in his or her major program by the end of the junior year. Upon admittance to honors, the student will work out a special program of studies for the senior year with the major advisor, culminating in the writing of a senior essay.

MINOR IN RELIGION STUDIES

The minor in religion studies consists of a total of 16 credits. The specific courses to be taken by each student are to be decided upon jointly by the student and the departmental advisor. Ordinarily, the student will be expected to take one introductory course unless specifically exempted by the department chair.

Courses

REL 001 Sacred Scriptures in Religious Traditions 4 Credits
An encounter with the different sacred books of the world’s major religions. Both the books and differing attitudes in these traditions towards sacred books are examined. Books investigated include the Bhagavad Gita, the Analects of Confucius, the Qur’an and the Jewish and Christian Bibles.

Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 002 Death In Religious Traditions 4 Credits
Introduces students to the study of religion through an exploration of what different religious traditions have to say about the great mystery that we all face, death. Because we all must die, all religions must deal with the challenge and sense of crisis provoked by the deaths of those close to us, of innocent victims of disaster, disease, and crime, and our own imminent deaths. Death thus provides an excellent point of comparison among the various religious traditions.

Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 003 (GCP 003, PHIL 003) Global Religion, Global Ethics 4 Credits
Introduction to philosophical and religious modes of moral thinking, with attention given to ethical issues as they arise cross-culturally and through religious traditions. The course will reference the United Nations Millennium Goals to consider family life and the role of women, social justice, the environment, and ethical ideals. Particular focus varies but may include one or more of the following: abortion and reproductive health, the death penalty, religiously motivated violence, and problems of personal disorder (heavy drinking, anorexia, vengeance). A Global Citizenship course.

Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 004 How To Study Religion 4 Credits
How do sociologists, psychologists and philosophers answer such questions as: Why and how do religions arise? Why and how do people develop beliefs in God? Where do religious scriptures come from? Why do people ascribe authority to religious traditions? Why has religious faith declined in modern society?

Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 005 Spiritual Exercises in Religious Traditions 4 Credits
Explores a variety of religious disciplines developed in various traditions, ranging from the practice of yoga and the martial arts to various forms of prayer, meditation, and asceticism.

Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 006 Religion and Ecological Crisis 4 Credits
Past and present responses to nature in world religions. Contemporary topics include the animal rights debate, ecofeminism, and the development of environmental ethics. Is “the end of nature” at hand? Why is the environment a religious issue?

Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 008 (WGSS 008) Prehistoric Religion, Art, and Technology 4 Credits
Origins and early development of religions, with focus on interactions of religion, art, and technology in the Paleolithic and Neolithic periods. Special attention to the emergence of patriarchal social forms and the figure of the goddess. Interdisciplinary methods with a consideration of feminist theories of cultural development.

Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 009 Spiritual Journeys 4 Credits
A comparative survey of spiritual traveling-from overland pilgrimages to inward journeys in search of truth. Through autobiographies, diaries, poetry and films, students encounter the experiences of seekers from diverse religious traditions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam.

Attribute/Distribution: HU
REL 012 (ASIA 012) Introduction to Asian Religions 4 Credits
This course explores the principal religions of Asia, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, and Shinto. What is each tradition’s view of human potential? How is ultimate reality depicted and experienced? What do home altars, boisterous festivals, and silent meditation halls have in common? Several primary texts are read in translation.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 013 (GS 013) Food and the Sacred 4 Credits
Examines the role of food in religious life through the study of feasts, holy foods and forbidden foods. Case studies may include the Eucharist, the Passover Seder, Ramadan, and Buddhist teachings on vegetarianism. The class will attend special events such as Moravian Love Feast and the iftar meal during Ramadan. If possible, the class will cook together, ending the semester with a Ukrainian twelve-meatless Christmas Eve meal.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 014 "Virtual" Religion 4 Credits
The contemporary world is replete with social phenomena that resemble religious thought and practice — sports fandom, trekkies, nationalistic rituals, online gaming, military camaraderie and codes, environmental activism, etc. In this course we will explore and discuss many of these “virtually” religious phenomena through the lens of the study of religion.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 025 (AAS 025) Introduction to Black Religions and Hip-Hop 4 Credits
Rapper KRS ONE once stated that, “Rap is something you do and Hip-Hop is something you live.” This course thinks through the global evolution of Hip-Hop culture and the public and academic study of Black Religions as responses to structural and historical inequality and the search for meaning in culture by considering themes of resistance, constraint, power, the body, deviance, and morality over and against race, class, gender, and sexuality from a range of academic and cultural sources.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 044 (GS 044) Religious Fundamentalism in Global Perspective 4 Credits
This course will explore the rise of fundamentalist religious movements and their involvement in violent conflicts. Topics to be considered will include the relationship between fundamentalist religious ideologies and terrorism, and the kinds of responses that fundamentalist religious movements present to the development of a global marketplace and the spread of secular nationalism.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 060 (ASIA 060) Religions of South Asia 4 Credits
A thematic introduction to the foundational religious traditions of South Asia: Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Islam. Students explore the social and spiritual dimensions of these religious worlds through scripture, ritual practices, narrative and teaching traditions, music and art.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 062 Explorations in Dialogue 4 Credits
Course critically investigates inter-religious dialogue, an important issue in the contemporary academic study of religion. The will focus on the problem of inter-religious encounter; the limitations of the eight different models of dialogue; the questions of power and identity as they arise both within religious traditions and between religious people who intentionally engage in conversation about their religions with those from other traditions. Course description will identify at least two traditions that will be put into conversation for any proposed offering (e.g., Christian-Buddhist, Jewish-Muslim, Jewish-Christian). Course materials will focus on critical assessment of those engaged in dialogue across religious traditions, including those ideologically or religiously opposed to such encounter.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 064 (ASIA 064) Religions of China 4 Credits
History and meaning of the major forms of Chinese religion—especially Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism, Taoist mysticism, Buddhism (Ch‘an/Zen), and popular religion.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 065 (ASIA 065) Religions of Japan 4 Credits
A survey of Japan’s diverse religious heritage and its impact on contemporary culture. Japanese approaches to the self, the world, and the sacred are considered in comparative perspective. Topics covered include: Shinto, Buddhism, Zen, Confucianism, the way of the warrior, folklore, and postwar movements.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 067 (ASIA 067) Japanese Civilization 4 Credits
This course explores the history and culture of Japan from the sixth century to the nineteenth century. How did Japan develop its distinct sense of itself? What aspects of Japanese culture have gained recognition on an international scale? Special consideration is given to the rise of the warrior class, the flowering of religious expression, and the dynamics of family life. (H/S).
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 073 The Jewish Tradition 4 Credits
Judaism is both a textual tradition and a lived religion. Students read basic Jewish texts—Bible, Talmud, Midrash—and study the ways Jews sanctify the life cycle through rites of passage, and the round of the year through the festival cycle.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 074 The Christian Tradition 4 Credits
Introduction to the Christian tradition from its early variety and subsequent classical definition in the church councils up to the enlightenment. Special emphasis will be placed on the multiform interpretations of the Christian message.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 076 Reading the Bible in the Contemporary World 4 Credits
Reading passages from the Bible with an eye toward distinguishing and understanding different sorts of questions that can be asked of them and various perspectives that can be adopted when reading them. What are these stories about? What do they mean, when, and to whom?
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 077 (ASIA 077, GS 077) The Islamic Tradition 4 Credits
A thematic introduction to Islamic history, doctrine and practice. Topics include: Qur’an; prophecy and sacred history; ritual practices; community life; legal interpretation; art and aesthetics; mysticism; politics and polemics.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 079 Religion and Fantasy Literature 4 Credits
A survey of the religious themes that entered fantasy literature in the 1950s in the works of C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien, and the humanist resistance to those themes in works by J. K. Rowling, Philip Pullman, or others.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 081 Jewish Mysticism 4 Credits
This course will examine both the history and the central texts and ideas of the Jewish mystical tradition. We will read a broad range of texts, including the ancient Sefer Yetzirah or Book of Creation, the Zohar, the works of Isaac Luria and his disciples, and the writings of some of the 18th and 19th century Hasidic rabbis. We will also explore the contemporary emergence of Kabbalah and the activities of the Kabbalah Center in contemporary America.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 099 Special Topics 1-4 Credits
Repeat Status: Course may be repeated.
REL 111 Jewish Scriptures/Old Testament 4 Credits
The religious expression of the Hebrews, Israelites, and Jews as found in the Jewish Scriptures (TANAK/Christian Old Testament). Near Eastern context of Hebrew religion, the Patriarchs, the Exodus, the monarchy, prophecy, Exile and Return. Emphasis on historical, literary, critical problems, and newer socio-historical methods.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 112 The Beginnings of Judaism and Jewish Origins: Jewish Diversity in the Greco-Roman World 4 Credits
The variety of approaches to Judaism in the period following the Babylonian exile through the second century C.E. The literature studied will include Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, and the Dead Sea Scrolls.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

Early Christianity from its beginnings until the end of the second century. Coverage includes the Jewish and Hellenistic matrices of Christianity, traditions about the life of Jesus and his significance, and the variety of belief and practice of early Christians. Emphasis on encountering primary texts.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 115 Religion and Psychology 4 Credits
A study of the origins, development and consequences of religion from a psychological perspective. Attention will be given to classic and contemporary sources, with a focus on major psychoanalytic theorists of religion (Freud, Jung, Erikson); psychological analyses of religious experience (e.g., Wm. James, Victor Frankl); and the diverse cultural and religious forms that structure the connection between religion and psychology (e.g., Buddhist psychology, Japanese Morita therapy).
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 116 (HMS 116, PHIL 116) Bioethics 4 Credits
Moral issues that arise in the context of health care and related biomedical fields in the United States today, examined in the light of the nature and foundation of moral rights and obligations. Topics include: confidentiality, informed consent, euthanasia, medical research and experimentation, genetics, and the distribution of health care.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 118 Ethics in Practice 1-4 Credits
A variable content course focusing on ethical issues arising in a particular profession, such as law, health, business, engineering, military. Variable credit. May be taken more than once. Repeat Status: Course may be repeated.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 120 Newish Jewish: New Forms of Judaism in North America 4 Credits
The new millennium has seen the emergence of new forms of Judaism and of Jewishness in North America: Jewish hip hop music, graphic novels, zines, performance arts, blogs, earth-based spirituality, and ecological activism. The course will examine the roots of these phenomena in Jewish traditions and texts and in American popular culture, and explore the uses of hybridity and pastiche in the forms of Jewish identity they create.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 121 Sources for the Life of Jesus: the Jewish and Christian Context 4 Credits
Ancient sources that claim to provide information about Jesus of Nazareth. Approaches taken to Jesus’ life and career; early Christian interpretations of the significance of Jesus; methodology in assessing evidence for the historical Jesus and his message.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 124 (PHIL 124) Philosophy Of Religion 4 Credits
A critical look, from a philosophical perspective, at some fundamental problems of religion: The nature of religious experience and belief, reason and revelation, the existence and nature of God, the problem of evil, and religious truth.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 125 Comparative Religious Ethics 4 Credits
How have thinkers within the three major Abrahamic traditions handled ethical questions and dilemmas throughout history? This course will focus on many issues including but not limited to violence and pacifism, debates concerning revelation versus reason, the different accounts of justice and peace, the nature of scripture and the divine. We will look comparatively both within and across these traditions.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 129 (PHIL 129) Jewish Philosophy 4 Credits
How major Jewish thinkers from the first to the 20th centuries confronted questions at the intersection of religion and philosophy: the existence and nature of God, free will, evil, divine providence, miracles, creation, revelation, and religious obligation.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 132 Hasidic Tales 4 Credits
Examines the mysterious and beautiful tales told by Hasidim, participants in the movement of spiritual revival which arose within 18th century Judaism. Compares Hasidic tales to European fairy tales, and shows how later writers transformed Hasidic narratives to express their own religious or literary meanings.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 133 Alternative Religions in the 21st Century 4 Credits
An exploration of alternative religious beliefs and practices in the 21st century. Topics include the new pluralism, adaptations of Asian traditions, goddess religion, and spiritual environmentalism. What distinguishes a religion from a cult? What goes awry when violence is perpetrated in the name of religion?
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 138 (WGSS 138) Women in Jewish History 4 Credits
Contributions of, and limitations on, women at different stages of Jewish history, using both primary sources and secondary material. Experience of modern Jewish women, and the contemporary feminist critique of traditional gender roles.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 139 (ANTH 139) Jewish Folklore 4 Credits
Examines the transformation of folk and popular Judaism from the Old World, through the period of immigration to America, to ethnic and later forms of American Jewish culture. Attention paid to concept of folklore revivals and their meanings. Four case studies: folk tales and storytelling, klezmer music, life-cycle rituals, and food.
Attribute/Distribution: SS

REL 140 (GCP 140, GS 140) Globalization and Religion 4 Credits
This course examines the complexity of globalization and its multi-layered impact on religious identity and piety. Though comparative in methodology and historical framework, the class will give special attention to Islam and Hinduism in South Asia. Topics include: European colonialism; Orientalism and its legacy; religious nationalism; Islamophobia; and the Internet and mass media.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 141 (PHIL 141) Medieval Islamic Philosophy 4 Credits
The medieval era was the golden age of Islamic civilization. Science, mathematics, theology, philosophy, logic, jurisprudence, and many other disciplines flourished during that time. Islamic scientific and philosophical thoughts were greatly influenced by the Greek intellectual tradition, and in turn the Islamic intellectual tradition influenced European thoughts during the Middle Ages and beyond. The course is an introduction to medieval Islamic philosophy. There is no indigenous Islamic philosophy other than medieval Islamic philosophy. Reading selections include works by al-Kindi, al-Razi, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Avicenna, al-Ghazali, Ibn Rushd (Averroes). The goal is to attain a thorough understanding of the reading selections instead of covering a large number of treatises.
Attribute/Distribution: HU
REL 144 (ART 144) Raw Vision: Creativity and Ecstasy in the Work of Shamans, Mystics, and Artist Outsiders 4 Credits
Comparative exploration of the nature and meaning of religious and artistic experience as reflected in shamanism (both prehistoric and tribal), mystic traditions (especially Daoism and Christianity), and contemporary self-taught artistic visionaries (e.g., Jean Dubuffet, Howard Finster, Mr. Imagination, Lonnie Holley, Norbert Kox). Various disciplinary perspectives will be employed including comparative religions, anthropology, art history, and psychology.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 145 (ASIA 145, GCP 145, GS 145) Islam and the Modern World 4 Credits
Examines how numerous Muslim thinkers-religious scholars, modernists, and Islamists-have responded to the changes and challenges of the colonial and post-colonial eras. Special emphasis is placed on the public debates over Islamic authority and authenticity in contemporary South Asia.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 146 (ASIA 146, GS 146) Islam in South Asia 4 Credits
A survey of the dynamic encounter between Islamic and Indic civilizations. Topics include: Islamic identity, piety and practice; art and aesthetic traditions; inter-communal exchange and conflict; the colonial legacy; and the politics of contemporary religious nationalism.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 148 (GCP 148, GS 148) Islam Across Cultures 4 Credits
Explores the Muslim world’s diversity and dynamism in multiple cultural contests-from the Middle East and North Africa, to Asia and America-through literature, ethnography, and films. Topics include: travel and trade networks; education; women and gender; Islam and cultural pluralism; colonialism; and identity politics.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 149 Modern Islamic Ethics 4 Credits
This course will focus on developments in Islamic thinking and ethics that emerge from the modern encounter between Muslim societies and the West. We will discuss Islamic modernism and fundamentalism through short primary texts from a variety of modern Muslim thinkers.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 150 Judaism in the Modern World 4 Credits
Fundamental theses in the experience of modern Jewry; confrontation with secular culture; crisis of religious faith; Zionism and the renewal of Jewish nationalism; the problem of Jewish identity in America; and the impact of the Holocaust.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 152 American Judaism 4 Credits
Diverse cultural and social forms through which American Jews express their distinct identity. Is American Jewry an example of assimilation and decline or creative transformation? What, if anything, do American Jews share in common? Compatibility of Judaism with individualism, pluralism, and voluntarism. How have the Holocaust and the State of Israel shaped the self-understanding of American Jewry?
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 153 The Spiritual Quest in Contemporary Jewish Life 4 Credits
What factors explain the current growth of spirituality in American Jewish life? How does spirituality differ from conventional religion? What is the impact of Jewish spirituality on contemporary Jewish worship? How does the growth of Jewish spirituality relate to the broader issues of Jewish identity? What accounts for the growing interest in Buddhism among Jews? What is the impact of feminism on Jewish spirituality? How does the growth of spirituality among Jews relate to the growth of spirituality in general American culture?
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 154 (HIST 154) The Holocaust: History and Meaning 4 Credits
The Nazi Holocaust in its historical, political and religious setting. Emphasis upon moral, cultural and theological issues raised by the Holocaust.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 157 (HIST 157) Europe in the Age of the Reformation 4 Credits
The breakup of the religious culture of medieval Christian Europe in the reformation movements of the sixteenth century. The origins and varieties of Protestantism; the intersection of religious ideas and politics in Germany, Switzerland, Britain, France, and the Netherlands; the “wars of religion” and the emergence of the European state system.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 159 Roman Catholicism in the Modern World 4 Credits
A survey of the various intellectual, cultural, political and ecclesiastical developments that have shaped contemporary Roman Catholic life and thought.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 160 (ASIA 160) The Taoist Tradition 4 Credits
Consideration of the religious and cultural significance of Daoism in its various historical forms. Primary attention will be given to a close reading of some of the most important texts of the early philosophical tradition (e.g. Tao Te Ching, Chuang Tzu) and of the later religious tradition (e.g. Pao P’u Tzu and other selections from the Tao Tsang). Contemporary implications of Daoist thought will also be considered (e.g. “The Tao of Physics”, “a Taoist on Wall Street”, and “the Tao of Japanese Management”).
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 162 (ASIA 162) Zen Buddhism 4 Credits
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 166 (ASIA 166, GCP 166, GS 166) Religious Nationalism in South Asia 4 Credits
This course explores the conflation and conflict of religion and politics in one of the most complex, dynamic and volatile regions on the planet (South Asia). Through literature, film and scholarly writings, students will examine the history of cooperation and conflict between the Muslim and Hindu communities in South Asia-from the movements for national independence to twenty-first century identity politics.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 167 (ASIA 167) Engaged Buddhism 4 Credits
Examines a contemporary international movement that applies Buddhist teachings and practices to social, political, and environmental issues. Topics include: important thinkers, forms of engagement, and areas of controversy.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 168 (ASIA 168) Buddhism in the Modern World 4 Credits
Explores contemporary Buddhism in Asia, America, and Europe. Topics include the plight of Tibet, Buddhist environmentalism, and the emergence of a socially engaged Buddhism. How are Westerners adapting this ancient tradition to address present-day concerns?
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 171 (SOC 171) Religion And Society 4 Credits
An introduction to the sociology of religion. Covers classical and contemporary approaches to defining and studying the role of religion in society. Emphasis on understanding religious beliefs and practices in the United States, the sources and contours of religious change, and the effects of religion on individuals and society. Specific topics include religious fundamentalism, religious conversion, religious practices and authority, secularization, religion in public life, religion in social change, religious terrorism, and the ways in which religion impacts our personal health, educational attainment, and family life.
Attribute/Distribution: SS

REL 174 Contemporary Theology 4 Credits
Major 20th century movements within Christian and Jewish theology understood as responses to the problems of modern times. May be repeated for credit as the subject matter varies.
Repeat Status: Course may be repeated.
Attribute/Distribution: HU
REL 180 (HIST 180) Religion and the American Experience 4 Credits
The historic development of major American religious groups from colonial times to the present; their place in social and political life, and the impact of the national experience upon them.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 184 (WGSS 184) Religion, Gender and Power 4 Credits
Gender differences as one of the basic legitimations for the unequal distribution of power in Western society. Feminist critiques of the basic social structures, cultural forms, and hierarchies of power within religious communities, and the ways in which religious groups have responded.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 185 (HIST 185) Modern Jewish History 1800-2000 4 Credits
This course examines the emergence of distinct forms of Jewish culture in the modern age that challenge or depart from traditional Jewish sources and authority. Included are an examination of Freud’s psychology, Chagall’s paintings and Woody Allen’s films.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 187 Science, Technology, and the Religious Imagination 4 Credits
Impact of the scientific and technological culture on the Western religious imagination. Roots of science and technology in religious ideas and images. Ways of knowing and concepts of experience in religion and science.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 188 Religion and Literature 4 Credits
Religious themes in the modern novel or the spiritual autobiography. Melville, Tolstoy, Camus, Updike, Walker, and Morrison; or Woolman, Tolstoy, Malcolm X, Wiesel, Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, Kukai.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 189 Religion and the Visual Arts 4 Credits
To what extent does the process and production of artistic images relate to visionary experience in the history of world religions, and expose a religious dimension in life? In what sense is an artistic vocation similar to the religious vocation of a shaman, prophet, or saint? In what way do artists and religious figures respond to, change, and create the “real” world?
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 213 (CLSS 213, HIST 213) Ancient Roman Religion 4 Credits
Attribute/Distribution: SS

REL 221 (ASIA 221) Topics in Asian Religions 4 Credits
Selected thematic and comparative issues in different Asian religious traditions. May include Buddhism and Christianity, religion and martial arts, Asian religions in America, Taoist meditation, Zen and Japanese business, Buddhist ethics. (H/S).
Repeat Status: Course may be repeated.

REL 222 Topics In Western Religions 4 Credits
Selected historical, thematic, and comparative issues in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
Repeat Status: Course may be repeated.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 224 (PHIL 224) Topics in the Philosophy of Religion 4 Credits
Selected problems and issues in the philosophy of religion. Must have completed one HU designated course in Philosophy.
Repeat Status: Course may be repeated.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 225 Topics in Religion and Ethics 4 Credits
Analysis of various moral problems and social value questions. Possible topics include: environmental and non-human animal ethics; medical ethics; drug and alcohol abuse; spiritual meaning of anorexia.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 226 (HMS 226) From Black Death to AIDS:Plague, Pandemic, Ethics and Religion 4 Credits
An investigation into the way religion and morality shape interpretations of plague and pandemics. Three specific pandemics are examined: the bubonic plague of the 14th century, the 1918 influenza pandemic, and the current global AIDS crisis. Moral issues provoked by institutional, political and social responses to pandemic disease are also considered.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 228 Theories Of Religion 4 Credits
What is religion? Does it have a universal, cross-cultural and transcultural essence? Drawing on numerous academic disciples, the course engages the major issues and most influential authors in the academic study of comparative religions.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 230 Kabbalah: Jewish Mystical Tradition 4 Credits
Explores the history of the quest to know God, through mystical experience or theosophical speculation, as found in Jewish tradition. Examines such issues as the tensions between institutional religion and personal religious experience, between views of God as immanent in the world or transcending it, and between imagery for God and religious experience of God.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 231 Classic Jewish Texts 4 Credits
While many people know that the Hebrew Bible (“Old Testament”) is a foundational scripture for Judaism, fewer are familiar with the post-biblical Jewish classics. Yet these works shaped the understanding of God, the identity of the Jewish people, and the vision of history and of the ethical life that inform Judaism as we know it today. As students read the Talmud, Midrash, and traditional prayer-book, they will become familiar with the wisdom of the rabbinic sages, and the central concepts of Jewish tradition.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 234 (ASIA 234) Buddhist Visions of a Good Society 4 Credits
This course examines Buddhist visions of a better world. Present-day Buddhist teachers, most notably the Dalai Lama, propose “zones of peace,” advocate “a policy of kindness,” and extol “compassionate consumption.” Are there wiser ways to pursue happiness? What is the relation between individual transformation and social transformation? Can we imagine a community guided by altruism and nonviolence? The process of contemplating alternative societies is also a way to achieve a clearer understanding of one’s own highest ideals.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 241 (PHIL 241) Critics Of Religion 4 Credits
A seminar devoted to an analysis of the critiques of religion in the writings of Benedict Spinoza, Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud, Michel Foucault and William E. Connolly.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 243 Religious Nationalism in a Global Perspective 4 Credits
Religion has become a renewed political force on the world stage in recent years. This course will focus on how religion has often provided both the ideological language and the organizing principles for many modern nationalisms. Our exploration of this topic will take the form of case studies from various parts of the world, including but not limited to Pakistan, Israel, No. Ireland, India, Iran and the USA.
Attribute/Distribution: HU
REL 247 (ASIA 247, GS 247) Islamic Mysticism 4 Credits
Sufism, the inner or 'mystical' dimension of Islam, has deep historical roots and diverse expressions throughout the Muslim world. Students examine Sufi doctrine and ritual, the master-disciple relationship, and the tradition's impact on art and music, poetry and prose.
Attribute/Distribution: SS

REL 251 (CLSS 251) Classical Mythology 4 Credits
Attribute/Distribution: SS

REL 254 (ASIA 254, ES 254) Buddhism and Ecology 4 Credits
Buddhism's intellectual, ethical, and spiritual resources are reexamined in light of contemporary environmental problems. Is Buddhism the most green of the major world religions? What are the moral implications of actions that affect the environment?
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 262 Critics of Modernity 4 Credits
Many modern thinkers find modernity and its forms of social organization and politics to be deeply troubling. Including both religious and non-religious critiques, this course will explore the varying meanings of modernity and how these thinkers challenge such meanings. Critics including but not limited to Gandhi, Hannah Arendt, Reinhold Niebuhr, Sayyid Qutb, Alasdair MacIntyre and Ruhollah Khomeini.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 300 Apprentice Teaching 1-4 Credits

REL 317 (ENGL 317) Topics in Jewish Literature 4 Credits
Selected topics in Jewish literature, which may include: Contemporary Jewish Literature, Philip Roth's Complaint, and Jewish Women Writers.
Repeat Status: Course may be repeated.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 335 (ANTH 335) Religion, Witchcraft And Shamanism 4 Credits
Addresses broad questions about supernatural beliefs as systems of meaning and as practical and moral guides, with a focus on theoretical explanations for supernatural beliefs and the function of religious specialists in the social organization of cultures.
Attribute/Distribution: SS

REL 337 (ANTH 337, ASIA 337) Buddhism and Society 4 Credits
In this course we approach Buddhism as a lived tradition rather than as a textual tradition. We examine how Buddhist practices are integrated into local traditions and how religious practices become part of the larger social, political, and value systems. Societies examined may include Thailand, Nepal, Japan, China, and the United States. Students will develop a comparative framework that includes Theravada, Tibetan, and Zen Buddhism.
Attribute/Distribution: SS

REL 347 (AMST 347, PHIL 347) American Religious Thinkers 4 Credits
An examination of the writings of key figures in the history of American religious thought (such as Edwards, Emerson, Bushnell, Peirce, James, Royce, Dewey and the Niebuhrs). Attention will be directed both to the historical reception of these writings and to their contemporary significance.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 350 Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective 4 Credits
This research seminar attempts to identify the conditions under which religious parties arise and become influential, how religion influences popular understandings of secular politics and the extent to which religion is a necessary feature of modern public discourse. These topics are explored through country specific cases from around the world.
Attribute/Distribution: SS

REL 351 Fieldwork 1-4 Credits
Opportunity for students to work, or observe under supervision, religious organizations or institutions. Consent of chair required.
Attribute/Distribution: ND

REL 371 Directed Readings 1-4 Credits
Intensive study in areas appropriate to the interests and needs of students and staff.
Repeat Status: Course may be repeated.
Attribute/Distribution: ND

REL 374 Seminar for Majors 4 Credits
A capstone seminar for departmental majors. Considers the methodologies of religious studies and assesses current issues in the field. Offers opportunities for in-depth work on a particular tradition under the guidance of a faculty member. Offered in spring semester.
Repeat Status: Course may be repeated.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

REL 375 (SOC 375) Christian Right In America 4 Credits
What do we know about the Christian Right? Who are they? What do they believe? Where do they come from? Seminar explores answers to such questions through a focus on the history of the Christian Right as well as its ideologies and beliefs, the people who are a part of it, and its evolving relationship to the American political system. Topics include some of the most divisive social issues of our time: abortion, homosexuality, capital punishment, pornography, taxes, education, and the separation of church and state. Must have completed one 100-level SSP course.
Attribute/Distribution: SS

REL 389 Honors Project for Eckardt Scholars 1-8 Credits
Opportunity for Eckardt Scholars to pursue an extended project for senior honors. May be repeated for credit up to a maximum 12 credit hours. Transcript will identify department in which project was completed. Consent of department required.
Repeat Status: Course may be repeated.

REL 391 Senior Thesis in Religion 4 Credits
Repeat Status: Course may be repeated.
Attribute/Distribution: ND