

# RELS-RELIGIOUS STUDIES

## **RELS 1113 Introduction to Religious Studies 3 Credit Hours**

Facilitates understanding of human behaviors and products that are identified as religious. Includes critical engagements with ideas and practices of authority, transcendence, value, meaning, and collectivity. Provides strong foundation in culturally-grounded critical thinking, a nuanced understanding of how humans construct their worlds, and the ability to interrogate forms of power. (F, Sp, Su) [IV-WC].

## **RELS 1213 Judaism and Christianity in Conversation and Conflict 3 Credit Hours**

This course introduces students to academic study of Judaism and Christianity, including their relationship to one another in antiquity and today. Our approach is comparative, historical, and analytical as we examine the development of these major religious traditions over time and the diversity both between and within them. (Irreg.) [IV-WC].

## **RELS 2133 History of Christian Traditions 3 Credit Hours**

Explores Christian beliefs and practices from ancient origins to the present day. Examines key texts and observes how and why certain thinkers and events were crucial to the development of the Christian religious tradition, and how ideas and practices were contested (internally and externally) and adapted according to cultural context. (Sp) [IV-WC].

## **RELS 2303 Islamic Religious Tradition 3 Credit Hours**

An exploration of the historical development of the world's second largest religious tradition. Investigation of the major tenets of Islam, the Qur'an, the life of Muhammad, ritual and worship, development of Islamic law and the spread of Islamic civilization and ideas. (Irreg.) [IV-WDC].

## **RELS 2313 Religion and Black Popular Music 3 Credit Hours**

Examines the relationship between black religions and black popular music in the U.S. Key areas of emphasis include the cultural, social, religious, political, and economic dimensions (the "context") of genres from spirituals to ragtime, blues, jazz, gospel, rock & roll, rhythm and blues, reggae, soul, disco, house, and hip hop. (Sp)

## **RELS 2403 Introduction to Comparative Religion 3 Credit Hours**

A general study of the world's most representative religious traditions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. A comparative consideration of the differences and similarities among the religions. (Irreg.) [IV-WDC].

## **RELS 2413 Religion, Culture, and the Meaning of Life 3 Credit Hours**

Develops the terms and concepts to engage critically powerful sources of meaning-making. Key images, stories, religious and philosophical texts, primarily from Christianity and Judaism, will inform the study of the way traditions interpret and configure important assumptions to meet the needs of their own times, as personal and social crisis demand new ways of understanding suffering and human purpose. (F, Sp) [IV-WC].

## **RELS 2653 Approaches to the Study of Religion 3 Credit Hours**

Examines ways religion may be studied in order to better understand it. The course will include theory and the methodologies of the social sciences and humanities. (Sp)

## **RELS 2703 History of Buddhist Traditions 3 Credit Hours**

An introductory study of Buddhist traditions focusing on sacred texts and core concepts. Examines the historical development of Buddhism in India, the formation of Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana Buddhism, and local variations in Southeast Asia, East Asia, and the modern West. (Irreg.) [IV-WDC].

## **RELS 2713 History of Hindu Traditions 3 Credit Hours**

Introduces students to the historical development of the many traditions that come under the umbrella of what we now call "Hinduism." Particular attention paid to the ways in which Hindu ways of being have been influenced by many factors in South Asian history, and have constantly been debated and in flux. (Irreg.) [IV-WDC].

## **RELS 2960 Directed Readings 1-3 Credit Hours**

1 to 3 hours. Prerequisite: permission of instructor. May be repeated; maximum credit six hours. Consists of topics designated by the instructor in keeping with the student's major. Topics will cover materials not usually presented in the regular course offerings. (F, Sp, Su)

## **RELS 2970 Special Topics 1-3 Credit Hours**

1 to 3 hours. Prerequisite: May be repeated; maximum credit nine hours. Special topics course for content not currently offered in regularly scheduled courses. May include library and/or laboratory research, and field projects. (Irreg.)

## **RELS 3013 Special Topics in Religious Texts 3 Credit Hours**

Prerequisite: junior standing or permission of instructor. May be repeated with change of text; maximum credit nine hours. An examination of religious texts, and may include the Koran, Jewish scriptures, Christian scriptures, Bhagavad Gita, Vedas, etc. (Irreg.)

## **RELS 3043 Special Topics in Religion, Social Organization & Politics 3 Credit Hours**

Prerequisite: junior standing or permission of instructor. May be repeated with a change of content; maximum credit nine hours. An examination of issues and topics in religion, social organization and politics. (Irreg.)

## **RELS 3053 Special Topics in Religion and History 3 Credit Hours**

Prerequisite: junior standing or permission of instructor. May be repeated with a change of content; maximum credit nine hours. An examination of religious phenomena throughout history, appearance and development of religious traditions, or special issues or topics in religion and history. (Irreg.)

## **RELS 3153 Jesus of Nazareth 3 Credit Hours**

Prerequisite: junior standing or permission of instructor. Examines varied portrayals of Jesus of Nazareth in literature, scholarship, and film, ranging from ancient gospels to contemporary scholarly and cinematic portrayals. Primary texts include canonical and non-canonical gospels from antiquity, modern scholarly reconstructions of the historical Jesus, and contemporary Jesus films. (Irreg.)

## **RELS 3173 Women and the Bible 3 Credit Hours**

Prerequisite: Junior standing or permission of instructor. A study of biblical literature through narratives from the Bible featuring women. Using a variety of perspectives, including historical, literary, and ideological approaches, we consider what these texts tell us about sex, gender, masculinity, and femininity in the ancient world and also how these texts have been interpreted through time to shape attitudes about women, gender, and sexuality. (Irreg.)

## **RELS 3183 Lost Scriptures and the Formation of the Bible 3 Credit Hours**

Prerequisite: Junior standing or permission of instructor. How did the Bible become the Bible? Survey of Jewish and Christian literary activity c. 300 BCE-c. 200 CE, especially texts whose inclusion in the Bible was contested or denied, such as Tobit; the books of the Maccabees; apocalypses; Dead Sea Scroll biblical interpretations, and non-canonical gospels. Historical questions surrounding how and when particular texts in antiquity were ascribed authority. (Irreg.) [IV-WC].

- RELS 3193 Biblical Literature 3 Credit Hours**  
Prerequisite: junior standing or permission of instructor. Examines Biblical texts to observe the Bible as the scriptural background of both Judaism and Christianity; modern scholarship and current debates surrounding the composition, themes, content, and dating of Biblical texts; historical and geographic circumstances surrounding the composition of biblical texts; the Bible as cultural inscription, the various ways the Bible is read today, and its impact on modern culture. (Irreg.)
- RELS 3223 Religion and Nationalism in India 3 Credit Hours**  
Prerequisite: junior standing or permission of instructor. A study of how the major religions of India (Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Zoroastrianism, and Sikhism) change under various political regimes; a case study of how these religions transformed under British colonial rule and in nationalist and post-independence India, hardened religious boundaries, and the partition of India into two nation-states, and one (Pakistan) divided again (into Pakistan and Bangladesh). (Irreg.) [IV-WDC].
- RELS 3233 Money, Power, and God(s): Religion and Economy East and West 3 Credit Hours**  
Prerequisite: Junior standing or permission of instructor. An exploration of the intertwining of religious and economic modes of human life, particularly in Euro-American and South Asian contexts. The course disrupts the received categories of "religion" and "economy" to uncover the ways that humans think about what is valuable, good, and precious and how they seek to create a world in which each emerges. (Sp)
- RELS 3303 Conceptions of the Afterlife 3 Credit Hours**  
Prerequisite: junior standing or permission of instructor. An examination of the variety of answers given to the question, "what happens after death?" Particular attention is given to the views of Jews, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists and the ways these views related to life in this world. Conducted in a seminar format. Students will also explore ways the afterlife is presented in popular movies. (Irreg.) [IV-WDC].
- RELS 3423 Gender, Sex, and the Body in the Christian Tradition 3 Credit Hours**  
Prerequisite: junior standing or permission of instructor. An overview of some topics where issues of gender and sexuality intersect with a particular religious tradition. Topics have to do with gender, sexuality, and religion, including purity and power, celibacy and virginity, marriage, reproductive rights, gender fluidity, and religious leadership and ordination. (F) [IV-WC].
- RELS 3440 Mentored Research Experience 3 Credit Hours**  
0 to 3 hours. Prerequisites: ENGL 1113 or equivalent, and permission of instructor. May be repeated; maximum credit 12 hours. For the inquisitive student to apply the scholarly processes of the discipline to a research or creative project under the mentorship of a faculty member. Student and instructor should complete an Undergraduate Research & Creative Projects (URCP) Mentoring Agreement and file it with the URCP office. Not for honors credit. (F, Sp, Su)
- RELS 3533 The Qur'an 3 Credit Hours**  
Prerequisite: Junior standing or permission of instructor. Intensive study of the Qur'an, its major themes, and literary forms, with attention to a range of classical and contemporary discourses about the Qur'an, emphasizing the great variety of ways in which Muslims and non-Muslims have analyzed and interpreted the Qur'an. (Irreg.) [IV-WDC].
- RELS 3543 Islamic Law 3 Credit Hours**  
Prerequisite: Junior standing or permission of instructor. A close reading and discussion of primary texts (scriptural, classical, and modern) and accounts of court cases, focused on one aspect of Islamic law such as equity, violence, authority, or gender. (Irreg.) [IV-WDC].
- RELS 3563 Islamic Theology 3 Credit Hours**  
Prerequisite: junior standing or permission of instructor. A close reading and discussion of primary texts (the Qur'an creeds, classical theological arguments, and modern writings) on major theological problems such as salvation, God, revelation, and religious pluralism. (Irreg.) [IV-WDC].
- RELS 3573 Jesus in the World's Religions 3 Credit Hours**  
Prerequisite: junior standing or permission of instructor. This seminar examines some of the great diversity of ways in which Jesus has been understood and imagined by adherents of five religious traditions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism). Rather than asking who Jesus actually was, we will focus on how he has been represented, and why. (Irreg.)
- RELS 3593 Hermeneutics: Approaches to Interpreting the Bible and the Qur'an 3 Credit Hours**  
Prerequisite: Junior standing or permission of instructor. A historical and philosophical excursion through the landscape of hermeneutics--the theory of how to interpret texts, especially scriptures. We will explore how Christians, Muslims, and modern European philosophers have answered the question of where meaning comes from and how it should be discovered (or created), focusing on how to interpret the Bible and the Qur'an. (Sp)
- RELS 3613 Roman Religion 3 Credit Hours**  
(Crosslisted with HIST 3613) Prerequisite: junior standing or permission of instructor. The course examines religious practices and beliefs in the Roman world from the founding of the Roman Republic to Late Antiquity, including conceptions of the divine, ways of worshiping the gods, civic and private religion, conceptions of the afterlife, magic, the mystery religions and salvation, and philosophical religions, through a survey of literary and archaeological evidence. (Irreg.)
- RELS 3623 Discovering the Apostle Paul: His Life and Thoughts 3 Credit Hours**  
Prerequisite: junior standing or permission of the instructor. Explores who Paul claimed to be within his own Jewish and then Greco-Roman first-century context. Explores the letter-writing medium, his view of law, the role of women, resurrection and afterlife, and his goals for the church. (Irreg.)
- RELS 3633 Religious Leaders for Social Justice 3 Credit Hours**  
Prerequisite: junior standing or permission of instructor. Examines social and political leaders taking a stand against injustice by both speaking and acting against it. They are called religious in that they derive part of their inspiration and motivation from their faith tradition. Surveys the writing of activists from among various faith traditions for life experiences and personal attributes that give rise to their ability to speak out and lead. (Irreg.)
- RELS 3733 Tibetan Buddhism 3 Credit Hours**  
Prerequisite: junior standing or permission of instructor. A survey of Tibetan Buddhism, sometimes referred to as "Vajrayana" or "Tantric Buddhism," considered in relation to the socio-cultural history of late Medieval India. Themes include monastic institutions, incarnate lama traditions, death and dying, and contemporary political issues. A major theme will be the "image of Tibet"--the mythologization of Tibet, the Tibetan people, and their culture in foreign imagination. (Irreg.) [IV-WDC].

- RELS 3743 History of Daoist Traditions 3 Credit Hours**  
Prerequisite: junior standing or permission of instructor. Examines history, practices, and worldviews of the greater Daoist tradition as it developed and took shape over Chinese history focusing on the social and cultural forces that shaped its development, and the views, practices, and goals of specific Daoist schools. A study of the formation of Daoist identity and community, material culture, construction of sacred space, and self-cultivation techniques. (Irreg.) [IV-WDC].
- RELS 3753 Zen Buddhism 3 Credit Hours**  
Prerequisite: junior standing or permission of instructor. The development and growth of Chan Buddhism (China), Zen Buddhism (Japan); and the introduction and representation of Zen in the United States, through critical, post-modern historiography. This approach highlights the way Chan/Zen Buddhists have defined and redefined themselves through the construction and reconstruction of their history, and the representation of the Zen tradition by scholars, apologists, and adherents. (Irreg.) [IV-WDC].
- RELS 3763 Chinese Religions 3 Credit Hours**  
Prerequisite: Junior standing or permission of instructor. This course introduces students to major religious traditions of China: Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, and popular religion. These religious traditions are considered in reference to the historical development of their respective worldviews, practices, and institutions as well as the manner in which they have mutually influenced each other over the course of that historical development. (Sp) [IV-WDC].
- RELS 3833 Archaeology of the Lands of the Bible 3 Credit Hours**  
(Crosslisted with HIST 3833) Prerequisite: junior standing. Examines the lands, cultures, and people associated with the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament through a chronological survey of archaeological evidence and investigates the relationship between archaeology and biblical texts. The course also investigates archaeological evidence for Jewish and Christian practices in late Roman Palestine as well as archaeological and architectural evidence for early Islamic Jerusalem. (Sp) [IV-WC].
- RELS 3893 Greek Religion 3 Credit Hours**  
(Crosslisted with HIST 3893) Prerequisite: junior standing or permission of instructor. Examines the religious rituals, beliefs, and sacred sites of the ancient Greeks. Considers such topics as the relationship between myths and ritual, sacred time and space, concepts of the afterlife, and the role of religion in the family and city-state. (Irreg.)
- RELS 3900 Special Topics 1-4 Credit Hours**  
1 to 4 hours. Prerequisite: junior standing or permission of instructor. May be repeated with change of topic; maximum credit nine hours. Topics in Religious Studies not accommodated by the existing curriculum. (Irreg.)
- RELS 3960 Honors Reading 1-3 Credit Hours**  
1 to 3 hours. Prerequisite: Admission to Honors Program. May be repeated; maximum credit six hours. Consists of topics designated by the instructor in keeping with the student's major program. Topics will cover materials not usually presented in the regular course offerings. Will provide an opportunity for the gifted Honors candidate to work at a special project in the student's field. (F, Sp, Su)
- RELS 3970 Honors Seminar 1-3 Credit Hours**  
1 to 3 hours. Prerequisite: admission to Honors Program. May be repeated; maximum credit six hours. Subjects covered vary. Deals with concepts not usually treated in regular courses. (Irreg.)
- RELS 3980 Honors Research 1-3 Credit Hours**  
1 to 3 hours. Prerequisite: Admission to Honors Program. May be repeated; maximum credit six hours. Consists of topics designated by the instructor in keeping with the student's major program. Topics will cover materials not usually presented in the regular offerings. Will provide an opportunity for the gifted Honors candidate to work at a special project in the student's field. (F, Sp, Su)
- RELS 3990 Independent Study 1-3 Credit Hours**  
1 to 3 hours. Prerequisite: 1113, Anthropology 1823, Philosophy 1203 or 2403; junior standing, and permission of instructor. May be repeated; maximum credit six hours. Through a written contract, independent study may be arranged for a topic not currently offered in regularly scheduled courses. Independent study may include library and/or field projects. (F, Sp, Su)
- RELS 4323 Capstone 3 Credit Hours**  
Prerequisite: Major in Religious Studies and permission of instructor. Capstone provides the opportunity to integrate knowledge about the major and apply it to a project culminating in a presentation and senior paper. The project will develop a selected problem, issue, or controversy in religious studies. (F, Sp) [V].
- RELS 4640 Field Study in Religious Studies 1-6 Credit Hours**  
(Slashlisted with RELS 5640) 1 to 6 hours. Prerequisite: junior standing and permission of instructor or RELS program. May be repeated with change of content/location; maximum credit 12 hours. Students participate in excavation and field study of material culture. Course combines lectures, lab, discussion, and/or research. The subject matter depends upon the specific summer session. No student may earn credit for both 4640 and 5640 for the same content/location. (Su)
- RELS 4960 Directed Readings 1-4 Credit Hours**  
1 to 4 hours. Prerequisite: good standing in University; permission of instructor and dean. May be repeated; maximum credit four hours. Designed for upper-division students who need opportunity to study a specific problem in greater depth than formal course content permits. (Irreg.)
- RELS 4970 Special Topics/Seminar 1-3 Credit Hours**  
1 to 3 hours. Prerequisite: Senior standing or permission of instructor. May be repeated; maximum credit nine hours. Special topics or seminar course for content not currently offered in regularly scheduled courses. May include library and/or laboratory research and field projects. (Irreg.)
- RELS 4990 Independent Study 1-3 Credit Hours**  
1 to 3 hours. Prerequisite: 1113, Anthropology 1823, Philosophy 1203 or 2403; senior standing, and permission of instructor. May be repeated; maximum credit six hours. Through a written contract, independent study may be arranged for a topic not currently offered in regularly scheduled courses. Independent study may include library and/or field projects. (F, Sp, Su)
- RELS 5640 Field Study in Religious Studies 1-6 Credit Hours**  
(Slashlisted with RELS 4640) 1 to 6 hours. Prerequisite: graduate standing, permission of instructor or RELS program. May be repeated with a change of content/location; maximum credit twelve hours. Students will participate in excavation and field study of material, social, and visual culture. Combines lectures, lab, discussion, and/or research. The subject matter depends upon the specific summer session. No student may earn credit for both 4640 and 5640. (Su)

**RELS 5960 Independent Study In Religious Studies 1-3 Credit Hours**

1 to 3 hours. Prerequisite: graduate standing and/or permission of instructor. May be repeated with change of content; maximum credit nine hours, maximum of six hours with one professor/instructor. Independent study/directed reading arranged between the professor and student on a special topic in religious studies, to give students the opportunity to complete intensive readings in field of study under direct guidance of the student's advisory committee. (F, Sp, Su)

**RELS 5970 Special Topics/Seminar 1-3 Credit Hours**

1 to 3 hours. Prerequisite: Graduate standing or permission of instructor. May be repeated; maximum credit nine hours. Special topics or seminar course for content not currently offered in regularly scheduled courses. May include library and/or laboratory research and field projects. (Irreg.)

**RELS 5990 Independent Study 1-3 Credit Hours**

1 to 3 hours. Prerequisite: Graduate standing and permission of instructor. May be repeated; maximum credit nine hours. Contracted independent study for a topic not currently offered in regularly scheduled courses. Independent study may include library and/or laboratory research and field projects. (Irreg.)

**RELS 6960 Advanced Readings in Religious Studies 1-3 Credit Hours**

1 To 3 Hours. Prerequisite: permission of instructor; student must be at PhD level. May be repeated with change of content; maximum credit nine hours. Advanced independent study/directed reading, arranged between the professor and student on a special topics in religious studies. Designed to give students the opportunity to complete intensive readings in field of study under direct guidance of his/her advisory committee. (F, Sp, Su)

**RELS 6970 Special Topics/Seminar 1-3 Credit Hours**

1 to 3 hours. Prerequisite: graduate standing or permission of instructor. May be repeated; maximum credit 12 hours. Special topics or seminar course for content not currently offered in regularly scheduled courses. May include library and/or research and field projects. (Irreg.)

**RELS 6990 Independent Study 1-3 Credit Hours**

1 to 3 hours. Prerequisite: Graduate standing and permission of instructor. May be repeated; maximum credit nine hours. Contracted independent study for a topic not currently offered in regularly scheduled courses. Independent study may include library and/or laboratory research and field projects. (Irreg.)