Religious Studies

Department Website: https://divinity.uchicago.edu/undergraduate-program-religious-studies-0

Program of Study

The program in Religious Studies introduces students to the academic study of religion. Students in Religious Studies learn how to think, talk, and write about religion in a way that is well-informed, rigorously critical, and responsibly engaged. The study of religion investigates the way human societies construct practices, seek meanings, and pose questions about their world. These investigations may be constructive, cultural, and/or historical. Since it touches all facets of human experience, the study of religion is a crucial conversation partner with other fields of study and draws on the entire range of humanistic and social scientific disciplines. Students in the program are able to explore numerous religious traditions, including Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism, and are exposed to the sources, problems, methods, and methodologies of our diverse areas of study, including Biblical and Historical Studies; Ethics, Theology, and the Philosophy of Religions; as well as History of Religions, Anthropology, Sociology, and Religion and Literature. The interests of our students may be descriptive, explanatory, and/or normative.

Program Requirements

A major in Religious Studies consists of twelve courses, including one introductory course and a two-quarter senior seminar. It is preferable that students consult the Director of Undergraduate Studies and declare their major in Religious Studies before the end of their second year. Students and the Director of Undergraduate Studies will work together to create a program of study. The goal is to develop depth in one area so that a satisfactory BA paper will be written in the fourth year. Students are encouraged to explore more than one religious tradition in their courses.

Students with permission to enroll in graduate Divinity courses may count these toward the major. Students who wish to receive credit in the major for non-departmental courses must submit a petition to the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Such requests are decided on a case-by-case basis. NOTE: The Office of the Dean of Students in the College must also approve the transfer of all courses taken at institutions other than those in which students are enrolled as part of a study abroad program that is sponsored by the University of Chicago. For more information, visit Examination Credit and Transfer Credit (collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/archives/2016-2017/thecollege/examinationcreditandtransfercredit).

Introductory Course

Students in Religious Studies are required to take RLST 10100 Introduction to Religious Studies. It need not precede other course work in the major, but students are advised to have completed it by the end of their second year. It will typically be offered every year during Autumn Quarter. This course will introduce students to some of the central themes in
Religious Studies; its particular focus will vary according to the interests of the individual instructor.

Course Distribution

Religion is expressed in many forms throughout the world's cultures, and the academic study of religion therefore requires multiple perspectives on its subject. Students of religion should have some knowledge of the historical development of specific religious traditions, understand and critically engage the ethical and intellectual teachings of various religions, and begin to make some comparative appraisals of the roles that religions play in different cultures and historical periods. To introduce students to these multiple perspectives on religion and to provide a sense of the field as a whole, students are required to take at least one course in each of the following areas. To identify the areas, refer to the RLST number range (see below).

A. Historical Studies in Religious Traditions: courses that explore the development of particular religious traditions, including their social practices, rituals, scriptures, and beliefs in historical context (RLST 11000 through 15000, 20000 through 22900).

B. Constructive Studies in Religion: courses that investigate constructive or normative questions about the nature and conduct of human life that are raised by religious traditions, including work in philosophy of religion, ethics, and theology (RLST 23000 through 25900).

C. Cultural Studies in Religion: courses that introduce issues in the social and cultural contingencies of religious thought and practice by emphasizing sociological, anthropological, and literary-critical perspectives on religion, and by raising comparative questions about differing religious and cultural traditions (RLST 26000 through 28900).

Senior Seminar and BA Paper

The two-quarter senior sequence (RLST 29800 BA Paper Seminar and RLST 29900 BA Paper) will assist students with the preparation of the required BA paper. During May of their third year, students will work with the preceptor to choose a faculty adviser and a topic for research, and to plan a course of study for the following year. These must be approved by the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Students will take part in the BA Paper Seminar convened by a preceptor during Autumn and Winter Quarters. This seminar will allow students to prepare their bibliographies, hone their writing, and present their research. Students will register for RLST 29800 BA Paper Seminar in the Autumn Quarter and for RLST 29900 BA Paper in the Winter Quarter. The BA paper will be due the second week of Spring Quarter. The length is typically between thirty and forty pages, with the upward limit being firm.

This program may accept a BA paper or project used to satisfy the same requirement in another major if certain conditions are met and with the consent of the other program. Approval from both departments is required. Students should consult with the departments by the earliest BA proposal deadline (or by the end of their third year, if neither program
publishes a deadline). A consent form, to be signed by both departments, is available from
the College adviser. It must be completed and returned to the College adviser by the end of
Autumn Quarter of the student’s year of graduation.

Grading

Religious Studies majors must receive quality grades in all courses in the major. With
consent of instructor, nonmajors may take Religious Studies courses for P/F grading. Faculty
will determine the criteria that constitute a Pass.

Honors

Honors are awarded by the Divinity School’s Committee on Undergraduate Studies.
Students who write senior papers deemed exceptional by their faculty advisers will be
eligible for consideration for graduation with honors. To be considered for honors, students
must also have a 3.5 GPA or higher in the major and a 3.25 GPA or higher overall.

Summary of Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Units</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RLST 10100</td>
<td>Introduction to Religious Studies</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One course in historical studies in religious traditions</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td></td>
<td>One course in constructive studies in religion</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One course in cultural studies in religion</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Six additional courses in Religious Studies</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLST 29800</td>
<td>BA Paper Seminar</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 29900</td>
<td>BA Paper</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total Units</td>
<td>1200</td>
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Minor Program in Religious Studies

The minor in Religious Studies requires a total of seven courses. RLST 10100 Introduction
to Religious Studies is required of all minors. The remaining six courses should be chosen
to reflect a broad understanding of the academic study of religion. Of these six, students
must take at least one course in each of our three areas of study [Historical Studies (A),
Constructive Studies (B), and Cultural Studies (C)]. Courses in the minor may not be double-
counted with the student’s major(s) or with other minors, and may not be counted toward
general education requirements. Courses in the minor must be taken for quality grades, and
more than half of the requirements for the minor must be met by registering for courses
bearing University of Chicago course numbers.

The student must complete a substantial (at least 10–15 pages) paper or project. This
work should engage critically with primary source materials and exemplify methodological
sophistication in the study of religion, and should earn a grade no lower than B-. It is
expected that this paper will normally be written as part of the student’s course work for the
minor. The Director of Undergraduate Studies will approve the paper for fulfillment of this requirement.

Students who elect the minor program in Religious Studies must meet with the Director of Undergraduate Studies before the end of Spring Quarter of their third year to declare their intention to complete the minor. Consent to complete a minor forms are available from the student’s College adviser or online at https://college.uchicago.edu/sites/college.uchicago.edu/files/attachments/consent_minor_program.pdf.

Sample Program
The following group of courses would satisfy a minor in Religious Studies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RLST 10100</td>
<td>Introduction to Religious Studies</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 11004</td>
<td>Introduction to the Hebrew Bible</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLST 21801</td>
<td>Religion and Society in the Middle Ages</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLST 23603</td>
<td>Cosmos and Conscience: Looking for Ourselves Elsewhere</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 23900</td>
<td>Buddhist Thought in India and Tibet</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLST 22505</td>
<td>Histories of Japanese Religion</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLST 26800</td>
<td>The Mahabharata in English Translation</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Units: 700

Religious Studies Courses

**RLST 10100. Introduction to Religious Studies. 100 Units.**
What are we talking about when we talk about religion? There are a multitude of answers to that question, and this course provides students with an entry way into a longstanding conversation—involving insiders, outsiders, and those in between—around the meanings of a word that indexes ideas of god and the gods, of origins and ends, and of the proper places of humans (and everything else, including animals) above, in, and below the globe. Talk about religion today is, in fact, cheap: this course will aim to promote a grammatical currency (morphology, vocabulary, syntax) to enhance the value of such talk.
Instructor(s): R. Rosengarten Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): Required of students who are majoring in Religious Studies.
RLST 11004. Introduction to the Hebrew Bible. 100 Units.
The Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) is a complex anthology of disparate texts and reflects a diversity of religious, political, and historical perspectives from ancient Israel, Judah, and Yehud. Because this collection of texts continues to play an important role in modern religions, new meanings are often imposed upon it. In this course, we will attempt to read biblical texts apart from modern preconceptions about them. We will also contextualize their ideas and goals through comparison with texts from ancient Mesopotamia, Syro-Palestine, and Egypt. Such comparisons will demonstrate that the Hebrew Bible is fully part of the cultural milieu of the Ancient Near East. To accomplish these goals, we will read a significant portion of the Hebrew Bible in English, along with representative selections from secondary literature. We will also spend some time thinking about the nature of biblical interpretation.

Instructor(s): Jeffrey Stackert
Terms Offered: Autumn

Note(s): This course may be used to fulfill the College’s general education requirement in civilization studies.
Equivalent Course(s): BIBL 31000, JWSC 20120, NEHC 20504, NEHC 30504

RLST 11030. Introduction to the Qur’an. 100 Units.
This course introduces the historical context, thematic and literary features, major biblical figures, and exegetical literature on the Qur’an, with a focus on the early (8th-10th century CE) and medieval periods (11th - 15th century CE). We will read select English translations from the Qur’an and its commentators, accompanied by academic secondary literature that emphasize the Qur’an’s literary structure, theological underpinnings, historical, geographical, social, political and cultural contexts in early and medieval Islamic civilization, and the role of the Qur’an as both a fixed and a living and dynamic text in Muslim devotional life.

Instructor(s): Yousef Casewit
Terms Offered: Autumn

Prerequisite(s): Knowledge of Arabic is not a prerequisite, but general knowledge about Islam or an "Introduction to Islam" course is highly recommended.
Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 30030, NEHC 20030, ISLM 30030

RLST 12602. Introduction to the New Testament. 100 Units.
This is an introductory course to the history and literature of the New Testament. Our primary focus will be to read select texts of the New Testament, with an emphasis on their literary nature, their historical problems and sources, their theological visions, and their historical, geographic, social, religious, political, and cultural contexts in early Jewish and Greco-Roman worlds. One will have the opportunity to situate one's questions about and approaches to these texts in light of the history of scholarly research and through critical reflection about the methods and goals of interpretation. Discussions groups will meet on Fridays.

Instructor(s): Jeff Jay
Terms Offered: Winter

Equivalent Course(s): FNDL 28205, BIBL 32602
RLST 20150. Jewish Thought in the Medieval Islamic World. 100 Units.
Jewish thinkers participated actively in the multicultural Islamic world of the ninth to thirteenth centuries. This course explores the impact of diverse cultural currents on the development of medieval Jewish thought. Specifically, the course will focus on such aspects of Jewish thought as philosophy, theology, and pietism, through the examination of individual thinkers in their cultural contexts.
Instructor(s): Sarah Stroumsa, Greenberg Visiting Professor of Jewish Studies
Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): HIJD 30150, NEHC 20583, NEHC 30583, JWSC 20150

RLST 20231. Jews and Christians in the Middle East. 100 Units.
Minorities around the world today invite questions about the prospects of pluralism and tolerance in modern societies. This course will explore these long-studied questions by examining the case of Jews and Christians in the Middle East, as well as its tangled histories with Muslims and Jews in Mediterranean Europe. Co-taught by a historian of Jews in Iraq and an anthropologist of Copts in Egypt, we will explore histories and ethnographies to consider the political, social, and religious dimensions of minority communities. Our syllabus also blends various literary genres and forms of media with academic scholarship to explore various voices in the conversation about Jews and Christians in the Middle East—from novels, films, and poetry to theological tracts and political treatises. We raise the following questions throughout our course: What terms for coexistence have governed Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Mediterranean? How are religious practices and traditions linked to histories of rule? How do ideologies (e.g., nationalism, secularism, communism) shape the way minorities understand themselves and how society understands them?
Instructor(s): O. Bashkin, A. Heo
Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Third- or fourth-year standing
Equivalent Course(s): JWSC 26215, NEHC 20585, BPRO 25400

RLST 20401-20402-20403. Islamic Thought and Literature I-II-III.
This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies. Taking these courses in sequence is recommended but not required.

RLST 20401. Islamic Thought and Literature I. 100 Units.
This course covers the period from ca. 600 to 950, concentrating on the career of the Prophet Muhammad; Qur’an and Hadith; the Caliphate; the development of Islamic legal, theological, philosophical, and mystical discourses; sectarian movements; and Arabic literature.
Instructor(s): A. El Shamsy
Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 30601, SOSC 22000, HIST 25610, HIST 35610, ISLM 30601, NEHC 20601
RLST 20402. Islamic Thought and Literature II. 100 Units.
This course covers the period from ca. 950 to 1700, surveying works of literature, theology, philosophy, sufism, politics, history, etc., written in Arabic, Persian and Turkish, as well as the art, architecture and music of the Islamicate traditions. Through primary texts, secondary sources and lectures, we will trace the cultural, social, religious, political and institutional evolution through the period of the Fatimids, the Crusades, the Mongol invasions, and the "gunpowder empires" (Ottomans, Safavids, Mughals).
Instructor(s): F. Lewis Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): Taking these courses in sequence is recommended but not required. This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies.
Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 30602,SOSC 22100,ISLM 30602,CMES 30602,NEHC 20602

RLST 20403. Islamic Thought and Literature III. 100 Units.
This course covers the period from ca. 1700 to the present, exploring works of Arab intellectuals who interpreted various aspects of Islamic philosophy, political theory, and law in the modern age. We look at diverse interpretations concerning the role of religion in a modern society, at secularized and historicized approaches to religion, and at the critique of both religious establishments and nation-states as articulated by Arab intellectuals. Generally, we discuss secondary literature first and the primary sources later.
Instructor(s): A. El Shamsy Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): This course does not apply to the medieval studies major or minor.
Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 30603,SOSC 22200,NEHC 20603

RLST 20408. The Bible and Archaeology. 100 Units.
In this course we will look at how interpretation of evidence unearthed by archaeologists contributes to a historical-critical reading of the Bible, and vice versa. We will focus on the cultural background of the biblical narratives, from the stories of Creation and Flood to the destruction of the Jerusalem temple by the Romans in the year 70. No prior coursework in archaeology or biblical studies is required, although it will be helpful for students to have taken JWSC 20120 (Introduction to the Hebrew Bible).
Instructor(s): David Schloen Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): This course may be used to fulfill the College’s general education requirement in civilization studies.
Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 20121,NEHC 30121,JWSC 20121

RLST 20501. Islamic History and Society I: The Rise of Islam and the Caliphate. 100 Units.
This course covers the period from ca. 600 to 1100, including the rise and spread of Islam, the Islamic empire under the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs, and the emergence of regional Islamic states from Afghanistan and eastern Iran to North Africa and Spain.
Instructor(s): F. Donner Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): Taking these courses in sequence is recommended but not required. This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies.
Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 30501,HIST 25704,HIST 35704,ISLM 30500,NEHC 20501
RLST 20505. Pagans and Christians: Greek Backgrounds to Early Christianity. 100 Units.
This course will examine some of the Greco-Roman roots of early Christianity. We will focus on affinities between Christianity and the classical tradition as well as ways in which the Christian faith may be considered radically different. Some of the more important issues that we will analyze are: “The spell of Homer.” How the Homeric poems exerted immeasurable influence on the religious attitudes and practices of the Greeks. The theme of creation in Greek and Roman authors such as Hesiod and Ovid. The Orphic account of human origins. The Early Christian theme of Christ as creator/savior. Greek and Roman conceptions of the afterlife. The response to the Homeric orientation in the form of the great mystery cults of Demeter, Dionysus, and Orpheus. The views of the philosophers (esp. Plato). The New Testament conception of resurrection. Greek and Roman conceptions of sacrifice, the crucifixion of Christ as archetypal sacrifice and early Christian reflection upon it. The world of ancient magic and the Christian response. The attempted synthesis of Jewish and Greek thought by Philo of Alexandria and its important to early Christianity.
Instructor(s): D. Martinez Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): CLCV 26200, CLAS 36200

RLST 20702. Calvin's Institutes. 100 Units.
This course examines the key concepts of Calvin’s theology through his major work: the definitive 1559 edition of the Institutes of the Christian Religion.
Instructor(s): Susan Schreiner Terms Offered: Spring 2016-2017
Equivalent Course(s): HCHR 41700, FNDL 23113, THEO 41300

RLST 21107. Readings in Maimonides' Guide of the Perplexed. 100 Units.
A careful study of select passages in Maimonides’ Guide of the Perplexed focusing on the method of the work, its exegetical framework, and its major philosophical-theological themes, including divine attributes, creation vs. eternity, prophecy, the problem of evil and providence, law and ethics, and the final aim of human existence. There is no language requirement; all readings will be in English. There will be an extra optional session for students who want to read the text in the original.
Instructor(s): James Robinson Terms Offered: Spring 2017
Equivalent Course(s): ISLM 45400, FNDL 24106, RLIT 45402, NEHC 40470, JWSC 21107, HREL 45401, HIJD 45400
RLST 21203. Temple State to People of the Book: Judeans/Jews in History. 100 Units.
From Temple State to People of the Book: On Judeans and Jews in Antiquity. A survey course on ancient Jewish history, from the sixth century BCE to the fourth century CE, from the construction of the Second Temple to the Christianization of the Roman Empire. It will focus on the major dichotomies that were played out in the period, between religion and state, priestly religion and rabbinic religion, nature and law, East and West — processes that eventually issued in the transformation of Judeans into Jews, the rise of Christianity and of rabbinic Judaism, and the shift of the center of Jewish culture from the Greek-speaking West, and from Palestine, to the Aramaic-speaking East. The course will also introduce students to the relevant historical sources and to the philological-historical methods that can allow us to read the sources, interpret their words and their messages, assess their testimony, and determine what questions they can allow us to answer.
Instructor(s): Daniel Schwartz (Greenberg Visiting Professor) Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): BIBL 30151, HIJD 30151, HIST 20506, NEHC 30410, JWSC 20151

RLST 21400. Latin American Religions, New and Old. 100 Units.
This course will consider select pre-twentieth-century issues, such as the transformations of Christianity in colonial society and the Catholic Church as a state institution. It will emphasize twentieth-century developments: religious rebellions; conversion to evangelical Protestant churches; Afro-diasporan religions; reformist and revolutionary Catholicism; new and New-Age religions.
Instructor(s): D. Borges Terms Offered: Spring

RLST 21801. Religion and Society in the Middle Ages. 100 Units.
This course examines some of the roles played by religion within medieval society. We consider topics such as the conversion of Europe to Christianity, monasticism, the cult of saints, the rise of the papacy, and the rise of heresy and religious dissent. We study medieval religious ideals as well as the institutions created to perpetuate those ideals, weighing the experience of the individual and the group. We read autobiographies, saints' lives, chronicles, miracle collections, and papal documents, among other kinds of sources.
Instructor(s): L. Pick Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 27905

RLST 22400. Tolkien: Medieval and Modern. 100 Units.
J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is one of the most popular works of imaginative literature of the twentieth century. This course seeks to understand its appeal by situating Tolkien's creation within the context of Tolkien's own work as both artist and scholar and alongside its medieval sources and modern parallels. Themes to be addressed include the problem of genre and the uses of tradition; the nature of history and its relationship to place; the activity of creation and its relationship to language, beauty, evil, and power; the role of monsters in imagination and criticism; the twinned challenges of death and immortality, fate and free will; and the interaction between the world of "faerie" and religious belief.
Instructor(s): R. Fulton Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Students must have read "The Lord of the Rings" prior to first day of class.
Equivalent Course(s): FNDL 24901, HIST 29902
RLST 22505. Histories of Japanese Religion. 100 Units.
An examination of select texts, moments, and problems to explore aspects of religion, religiosity, and religious institutions of Japan’s history.
Instructor(s): J. Ketelaar Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 34700, EALC 24700, EALC 34700, HREL 34705, HIST 24700

RLST 23400. Introduction to Christian Theology. 100 Units.
This course is designed to introduce students to the various sources, styles, and methods employed throughout the history of Christian theology, from early Christianity to the present. We will begin by considering the foundations of Christian thought with a special emphasis on the history of biblical interpretation as well as the use of ancient philosophical sources in early Christian writings. We will then survey the rise of dogmatic theology, scholasticism, mysticism, and vernacular medieval theologies. The last half of the course will focus on the place of Christian theology in modernity, with a special emphasis on twentieth century developments in theological method including liberation and feminist theologies.
Instructor(s): R. Coyne Terms Offered: Autumn

RLST 23605. Aquinas on God, Being, and Human Nature. 100 Units.
This course considers sections from Saint Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica*. Among the topics considered are God's existence; the relationship between God and Being; and human nature.
Instructor(s): S. Meredith Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): Required of all incoming Fundamentals majors
Equivalent Course(s): CLCV 23712, FNDL 20700

RLST 23900. Buddhist Thought in India and Tibet. 100 Units.
The purpose of this course is to introduce students to something of the range of Buddhist philosophical thought and doctrine that developed in first-millennium India—developments that were decisive for the philosophical curricula of still vibrant Tibetan traditions of Buddhism, which may also be considered. The aim will be not only to appreciate the history of these developments, but also (and especially) to engage them philosophically, taking them seriously in the same way that (e.g.) Aristotle and Kant are still taken seriously in philosophy departments.
Instructor(s): D. Arnold Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): SALC 23903
RLST 23904. Ethical and Theological Issues in Hinduism. 100 Units.
An exploration of Hindu attitudes to, and mythologies of, women, animals, people of low caste, members of various religious groups, homosexuals, foreigners, criminals, and in general violators of the codes of dharma. The course is designed around the new Norton Anthology of Hinduism, supplemented by a history of the Hindus. The readings will focus closely on a few texts, some Sanskrit and some from vernacular literatures, from several different historical periods. It will situate each major idea in the context of the historical events to which it responded: the Rig Veda in the Indo-European migrations, the Upanishads in the social crisis of the first great cities on the Ganges, and so forth, up to the present day BJP revisionist tactics. And it will emphasize the alternative traditions of women and the lower classes.
Instructor(s): Wendy Doniger Terms Offered: Spring 2017
Prerequisite(s): Permission of instructor. 15-20 page paper at the end of the course.
Note(s): A seminar suitable for BA, MA and PhD students
Equivalent Course(s): SALC 38304,SCTH 32202,HREL 33702

RLST 24050. Understanding Wisdom. 100 Units.
Thinking about the nature of wisdom goes back to the Greek philosophers and the classical religious sages, but the concept of wisdom has changed in many ways over the history of thought. While wisdom has received less scholarly attention in modern times, it has recently re-emerged in popular discourse with a growing recognition of its potential importance for addressing complex issues in many domains. But what is wisdom? It’s often used with a meaning more akin to "smart" or "clever." Is it just vast knowledge? This course will examine the nature of wisdom—how it has been defined, how its meaning has changed, and what its essential components might be. We will examine how current psychological theories conceptualize wisdom and consider whether, and how, wisdom can be studied scientifically; that is, can wisdom be measured and experimentally manipulated to illuminate its underlying mechanisms and understand its functions? Finally, we will explore how concepts of wisdom can be applied in business, education, medicine, the law, and in the course of our everyday lives. Readings will be drawn from a wide array of disciplines including philosophy, classics, history, psychology, behavioral economics, medicine, and public policy.
Instructor(s): C. Gilpin, A. Henly Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Third- or fourth-year standing
Equivalent Course(s): HUMA 24005,PSYC 24050,BPRO 24000

RLST 24201. Indian Philosophy I: Origins and Orientations. 100 Units.
The early development of philosophical thought in India will be traced through readings in the Upanishads, early Buddhist works, and the primary texts of the Samkhya and Yoga traditions, together with readings from contemporary philosophical interpreters of these sources. The emergence of systems of logic and the philosophy of language will be among topics surveyed.
Instructor(s): Matthew Kapstein Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Although there is no formal prerequisite for the course, some background in Western philosophy is desirable.
Equivalent Course(s): HREL 30200,SALC 20901,SALC 30901,DVPR 30201
RLST 24202. Indian Philosophy II: The Classical Traditions. 100 Units.
Following on the Indian Philosophy I course offered winter term, this course will survey major developments in the mature period of scholastic philosophy in India — a period, beginning a little before the middle of the first millennium C.E., that is characterized by extensive and sophisticated debate (made possible by the emergence of a largely shared vocabulary of key philosophical concepts) among philosophers from a great variety of schools of thought.
Instructor(s): Dan Arnold Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Students are encouraged (but not required) to take Indian Philosophy I before taking this course.
Equivalent Course(s): HREL 30300,SALC 20902,SALC 30902,DVPR 30302

RLST 24910. Pascal and Simone Weil. 100 Units.
The course will examine two major French existential thinkers, Blaise Pascal and Simone Weil, focusing on their intellectual background, their strong originality, and their religious perspective.
Instructor(s): T. Pavel Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Third- or fourth-year standing. Instructor consent required for first- and second-year undergraduates.
Note(s): Taught in English, with a special weekly session in French for students seeking French credit.
Equivalent Course(s): CMLT 29101,CMLT 39101,FREN 39100,SCTH 38201,FNDL 21812,FREN 29100

RLST 25120. The "Science of Letters" in Judaism and Islam. 100 Units.
No description available.
Instructor(s): James Robinson Terms Offered: Winter 2017
Note(s): FNDL and NEHC forthcoming
Equivalent Course(s): HREL 44908,ISLM 44908,FNDL 25120,HJJD 44908

RLST 25405. Milton. 100 Units.
A study of Milton’s major writings in lyric, epic, tragedy, and political prose, with emphasis upon his evolving sense of his poetic vocation and career in relation to his vision of literary, political, and cosmic history. (C, E, F)
Instructor(s): J. Scodel Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): FNDL 21201,ENGL 17501

RLST 25903. Judah Halevi's Kuzari. 100 Units.
A close reading of select passages from this classic work of medieval Jewish philosophy and apologetics. The focus will be on Book 1, which presents the frame narrative -- a dialogue between the King of Kazaria and a philosopher, Christian, Muslim, and Jew -- along with the main ideas: the manifestation of the God of Israel in history, the chosenness of the people in the chosen land. The work will be read in light of its sources in the Islamic world (especially works of Ismaili and Sufi spirituality and anti-Aristotelianism) and the contemporary intellectual culture.
Instructor(s): James Robinson and Ralph Lerner Terms Offered: Winter 2017
Equivalent Course(s): ISLM 45712,FNDL 25903,SCTH 45712,HJJD 45712
RLST 26150. Introduction to Buddhism. 100 Units.
This course will be an introduction to the ideas and meditative practices of the Theravada school of South and Southeast Asian Buddhism, from ancient to modern times. It will study both classical texts and modern ethnography.
Instructor(s): S. Collins Terms Offered: TBD
Equivalent Course(s): CHDV 29701, SALC 29700

RLST 26310. Islam and Biomedicine. 100 Units.
While modern medicine is typically imagined as a solution to public health problems, it also transforms people’s experiences of their bodies, rearranges social relationships, and raises a range of moral questions and controversies. This course deals with the transformations and conundrums that biomedical practice has brought about in Muslim-majority societies, with particular attention to Islamic law, policy, and everyday life. We will read texts from anthropology and Islamic bioethics on a variety of topics, including but not limited to mental health, reproductive technologies, organ transplantation, and cloning.
Instructor(s): Elham Mireshghi Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): ISLM 33900, AASR 33900

RLST 26623. Narratives of Assimilation. 100 Units.
Engaging the concept of liminality—of a community at the threshold of radical transformation—the course analyzes how East Central European Jewry, facing economic uncertainties and dangers of modern anti-Semitism, seeks another diasporic space in North America. Projected against the historical backdrop of the end of the nineteenth century and the twentieth century, the immigration narratives are viewed through the lens of assimilation, its trials and failures; in particular, we investigate why efforts of social, cultural and economic inclusion cannot be mistaken with imposing on a given minority the values of majority. One of the main points of interests is the creative self’s reaction to the challenges of radical otherness, such as the new environment, its cultural codes and language barriers. We discuss the manifold strategies of artistic (self)-representations of the Jewish writers, many of whom came from East Central European shtetls to be confronted again with economic hardship and assimilation to the American metropolitan space and life style. During this course, we inquire how the condition called assimilation and its attendants—integration, secularization, acculturation, cosmopolitanism, etc.—are adapted or resisted according to the generational differences, a given historical moment or inherited strategies of survival and adaptation. The course draws on the writings of Polish-Jewish, Russian-Jewish, and American-Jewish authors in English translation.
Instructor(s): Bośena Shallcross Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): This course may be used to fulfill the general education requirement in civilization studies.
Equivalent Course(s): REES 27003, REES 37003, NEHC 20223, NEHC 30223, JWSC 20223

RLST 26800. The Mahabharata in English Translation. 100 Units.
A reading of the Mahabharata in English translation (van Buitenen, Narasimhan, Ganguli, and Doniger [ms.]), with special attention to issues of mythology, feminism, and theodicy.
Instructor(s): W. Doniger Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): FNDL 24400, HREL 35000, SALC 20400, SALC 48200
RLST 27500. Medicine and Culture. 100 Units.
This course examines diverse systems of thought and practice concerning health, illness, and the management of the body and person in everyday and ritual contexts. We seek to develop a framework for studying the cultural and historical constitution of healing practices, especially the evolution of Western biomedicine.
Instructor(s): J. Comaroff Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): ANTH 40300, GNDR 24300, GNDR 40300, HIPS 27300, ANTH 24300

RLST 27516. Religious Lyric in England & America: from Donne to T.S. Eliot. 100 Units.
This course will study five major poets, English and American, who wrote about their personal relation to God, religion, and/or the transcendent. It will treat the poets as writers and as religious thinkers. The approach will be both internal—reading selected poems carefully—and comparative, reading the poets in relation to one another. The course will require a final paper and perhaps a mid-term exercise. (C, E, G)
Instructor(s): R. Strier Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): ENGL 37516, RLST 37516, ENGL 17516

RLST 28020. Animals, Ethics, and Religion. 100 Units.
Why are some animals considered food and others objects of religious devotion? Why do we treat dogs like family and kill flies without a second thought? Why do animals appear so frequently as metaphors in our everyday speech? In this course, students will explore these questions by reading texts featuring animals in literature, scripture, and theory, ranging from the Bible, Zora Neale Hurston, and Franz Kafka to Flannery O'Connor and J.M. Coetzee. We will bring these diverse texts together in order to investigate how animals illuminate religious questions about the relationship among humans, animals, and the divine.
Instructor(s): K. Mershon Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): Religious Studies majors and minors may petition to have this course counted towards the Constructive Studies requirement rather than the Cultural Studies requirement., English majors: this course meets the Fiction (B) distribution requirement. Equivalent Course(s): ENGL 24951

RLST 28215. Thomas Mann's Joseph and His Brothers. 100 Units.
Thomas Mann’s novel Joseph and His Brothers, a modern rewriting of the biblical story, was written over sixteen years (1926 - 1943) that shook German and European history through the assumption of power by the National Socialist party and the Second World War. Mann began the novel under the Weimar Republic and continued working on the novel in exile. The writer himself saw his novel as an act of resistance to his country’s anti-Semitic policies. In this course, we will closely read the novel, explore its relation to its biblical and other sources, learn about the history of its writing and publication and contextualize its genesis in Mann’s complicated involvement with German and world politics.
Instructor(s): O. Solovieva Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): GRMN 25117, CMLT 25103, JWSC 23402, FNDL 25100
RLST 28610. Topics in EALC: Major Works of East Asian Buddhism. 100 Units.
An exploration of key textual and artistic works of East Asian Buddhism, including Chinese translations of Indic scriptures such as the Lotus and Vimalakirti sutras, Chan/Soen/Zen treatises and dialogues, and important works of Buddhist visual and material culture, including shrine murals, devotional prints, reliquaries, and sculptures.
Instructor(s): P. Copp Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): EALC 10500

RLST 28617. The Dao De Jing: Text, Philosophy, and Religion. 100 Units.
In this course, we will introduce the foundational text of the Daoist tradition: the Dao De Jing or Classic of Way and Virtue attributed to Laozi. One of the most translated classics in the world, the Dao De Jing contains a bewildering array of ideas written in terse and cryptic language. After a few introductory sessions examining the text’s historical background, date, and authorship, we will move on to consider critical analyses of the text and its manuscript counterparts excavated in China in the past few decades. As we will see, these manuscripts call into question the assumptions of traditional textual scholarship and pose new problems that are still being debated. The second half of the quarter will be devoted to the philosophical and religious aspects of the Dao De Jing. We will explore issues such as the meaning(s) of dao and de, the relationship between opposites, the concept of wu-wei (nonaction), the use of paradox and irony, mysticism, and self-cultivation. In the last two weeks, we will turn to look at the commentarial history of Dao De Jing in China as well as its reception in the West.
Instructor(s): B. Zhou Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): EALC 35405,EALC 15405

RLST 28704. The Veneration of Icons in Byzantium: History, Theory, & Practice. 100 Units.
In order to appreciate the pivotal religious significance icons had in Byzantium for private devotion, in the liturgy, in civic ritual, and in military campaigns, we will survey the visual evidence along with a vast array of written sources. We will explore the origins of the Christian cult of icons in the Early Byzantine period and its roots in the Greco-Roman world of paganism. Through close analysis of icons executed over the centuries in different artistic techniques, we will examine matters of iconography, style and aesthetics. We will also have a close look at Byzantine image theory, as developed by theologians from early on and codified in the era of Iconoclasm.
Instructor(s): Karin Krause Terms Offered: Winter 2017
Equivalent Course(s): ARTH 44014,RLIT 44004,HCHR 44004
RLST 28716. Veiling the Image: Sacred & Profane – Antiquity to Modernity. 100 Units.
This course will explore the fascinating culture of covering and veiling sacred icons, or images that were thought to cause trauma or outrage in the European tradition. It will begin in the ancient world and explore medieval, Renaissance and modern art – both paintings and sculptures, as well as images that represent the covering of images… It will attempt to restore the sensual, the tactile and the performative to the experience of viewing art and engaging with its powers, by contrast to the prevailing regime of disinterested contemplation encouraged by the modernist art gallery.
Instructor(s): J. Elsner Terms Offered: Spring. The course will be taught in an accelerated format twice per week for the first five weeks of the quarter.
Equivalent Course(s): ARTH 39150, RLIT 39150, ARTH 29150

RLST 29700. Reading and Research Course. 100 Units.
No description available.
Terms Offered: Autumn, Winter, Spring
Prerequisite(s): Consent of faculty supervisor and Director of Undergraduate Studies.
Note(s): Students are required to submit the College Reading and Research Course Form.

RLST 29800. BA Paper Seminar. 100 Units.
This class meets weekly to provide guidance for planning, researching, and writing the BA paper.
Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Consent of faculty supervisor and Director of Undergraduate Studies.
Note(s): RLST 29800 and 29900 form a two-quarter sequence that is required of fourth-year students who are majoring in Religious Studies. Students will register via pink slip.

RLST 29900. BA Paper. 100 Units.
This class meets weekly to assist students in the preparation of drafts of their BA paper, which are formally presented and critiqued.
Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): RLST 29800 and 29900 form a two-quarter sequence that is required of fourth-year students who are majoring in Religious Studies. Students will register via pink slip.
Font Notice

This document should contain certain fonts with restrictive licenses. For this draft, substitutions were made using less legally restrictive fonts. Specifically:

Times was used instead of Trajan.

Times was used instead of Palatino.

The editor may contact Leepfrog for a draft with the correct fonts in place.