

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 Transfer Credit.

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 I and RLST 29900 BA Paper II) 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 I in the Autumn Quarter and for RLST 29900 BA Paper II 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

RLST 10100	Introduction to Religious Studies	100
One course in historical studies in religious traditions		100
One course in constructive studies in religion		100
One course in cultural studies in religion		100
Six additional courses in Religious Studies		600
RLST 29800	BA Paper Seminar I	100
RLST 29900	BA Paper II	100
Total Units		1200

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:

RLST 10100	Introduction to Religious Studies	100
RLST 11004	Introduction to the Hebrew Bible	100
RLST 21801	Religion and Society in the Middle Ages	100
RLST 23603	Cosmos and Conscience: Looking for Ourselves Elsewhere	100
RLST 23900	Buddhist Thought in India and Tibet	100
RLST 22505	Histories of Japanese Religion	100
RLST 26800	The Mahabharata in English Translation	100
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): Sarah Hammerschlag Terms Offered: Autumn

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): J. Stackert Terms Offered: Autumn

Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 30504, BIBL 31000, JWSC 20120, NEHC 20504

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): ISLM 30030, NEHC 30030

RLST 12000. Introduction to the New Testament: Texts and Contexts. 100 Units.

An immersion in the texts of the New Testament with the following goals: 1. through careful reading to come to know well some representative pieces of this literature; 2. to gain useful knowledge of the historical, geographical, social, religious, cultural and political contexts of these texts and the events they relate; 3. to learn the major literary genres represented in the canon ("gospels," "acts," "letters," and "apocalypses") and strategies for reading them; 4. to comprehend the various theological visions and cultural worldviews to which these texts give expression; 5. to situate oneself and one's prevailing questions about this material in the history of research, and to reflect on the goals and methods of interpretation; 6. to raise questions for further study.

Instructor(s): M. Mitchell Terms Offered: Winter

Prerequisite(s): Interest in this literature, and willingness to enter into conversation with like- and non-like-minded others on the texts and the issues involved in their interpretation.

Equivalent Course(s): BIBL 32500, FNLD 28202

RLST 20111. History of Death. 100 Units.

From the treatment of mortal remains to the built environment of cemeteries, tombs, and memorials, the dead have always played a role in the lives of the living. This course examines how beliefs and practices surrounding death have been a source of meaning making for individuals, institutions, religious communities, and modern nations. It will ask students to consider how examining death makes it possible to better understand the values and concerns of societies across time and space.

This course will consider case studies from Africa, the Middle East, the Caribbean, North America, Europe, and Asia, from the Middle Ages to the Vietnam War. It introduces students to the methods and debates that animate the historical study of death-coming from histories of the body, social history, and the study of slavery-and ends by asking the question: "Is it possible to have a global history of death?"

Instructor(s): K. Hickerson Terms Offered: Spring

Equivalent Course(s): HIST 20111, CRES 20111, GNSE 20111

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): T. Qutbuddin Terms Offered: Autumn

Equivalent Course(s): SOSC 22000, NEHC 20601, CMES 30601, HIST 25610, HIST 35610, NEHC 30601, ISLM 30601

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): A. El Shamsy 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): SOSC 22100, NEHC 20602, NEHC 30602, CMES 30602, HIST 35615, ISLM 30602, HIST 25615

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

Equivalent Course(s): SOSC 22200, HIST 25616, NEHC 30603, ISLM 30603, NEHC 20603, HIST 35616

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): Orit Bashkin Terms Offered: Autumn

Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 30501, HIST 35704, NEHC 20501, ISLM 30500, HIST 25704, CMES 30501

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: 1. "The spell of Homer." How the Homeric poems exerted immeasurable influence on the religious attitudes and practices of the Greeks. 2. 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. 3. 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. 4. Greek and Roman conceptions of sacrifice, the crucifixion of Christ as archetypal sacrifice and early Christian reflection upon it. 5. The world of ancient magic and the Christian response.

Instructor(s): David Martinez Terms Offered: Spring

Equivalent Course(s): CLCV 26216

RLST 21107. Rdg: 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 and its major philosophical-theological themes, including: divine attributes, creation vs. eternity, prophecy, the problem of evil and divine providence, law and ethics, the final aim of human existence.

Instructor(s): James Robinson Terms Offered: Winter

Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 40470, FNLD 24106, HREL 45401, RLVC 45400, ISLM 45400, JWSC 21107, HIJD 45400

RLST 21303. Christianity and Slavery in America, 1619-1865. 100 Units.

This course examines the history of Christian thought and practice regarding slavery in the United States. Particular attention is paid to Christian missions to slaves, debates about the abolition of slavery, the pro-slavery Christian defense, and the practice and evolution of slave religion.

Instructor(s): Curtis Evans Terms Offered: Autumn

Equivalent Course(s): HCHR 42901, RAME 42901

RLST 21450. Coptic Bible. 100 Units.

The Coptic versions of the Bible present one of the earliest translations of Christian scripture as the new religion spread. Understanding how the Bible (canonical and non-canonical) was read and used in Egypt at this early stage implies studying the development of Christian communities in those agitated times, as well as paying attention to questions of literacy and linguistic environment, book production, Bible (both Greek and Coptic) on papyrus, and translation and interpretation in Antiquity. The course will draw on materials assembled from my work on the critical edition of the Gospel of Mark, but will also look into other materials like the Coptic Old Testament, and non-canonical scriptures such as Nag Hammadi and the Gnostic scriptures. No previous knowledge of Coptic is required. A brief introduction to the Coptic language will be part of the class, and parallel sessions of additional language instruction will be planned for those who are interested in learning more.

Instructor(s): S. Torallas Terms Offered: Autumn

Equivalent Course(s): BIBL 31418, NEHC 34118, NEHC 24118, CLAS 34118, CLCV 24118

RLST 22010. Jewish Civilization I: Ancient Beginnings to Early Medieval Period. 100 Units.

Jewish Civilization is a two-quarter sequence that explores the development of Jewish culture and tradition from its ancient beginnings through its rabbinic and medieval transformations to its modern manifestations. Through investigation of primary texts-biblical, Talmudic, philosophical, mystical, historical, documentary, and literary-students will acquire a broad overview of Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness while reflecting in greater depth on major themes, ideas, and events in Jewish history. The Autumn course will deal with antiquity to the early medieval periods. Its readings will include works from the Bible, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Philo, Josephus, the Rabbis, Yehudah Halevy, and Maimonides. All sections of each course will share a common core of readings; individual instructors will supplement with other materials. It is recommended, though not required, that students take these two courses in sequence. Students who register for the Autumn Quarter course will automatically be pre-registered for the winter segment.

Instructor(s): Chavel Terms Offered: Autumn

Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 22010, JWSC 12000

RLST 21600. Early Monasticism. 100 Units.

This course examines early monasticism from its origins among the desert fathers of the Greek and Syriac East to its development in the Latin West, especially in Italy and Spain, concluding with the Carolingian reformation of monasticism in the ninth century. We will examine such themes as monastic rules, monastic hagiography, women in monasticism, ideas of virginity, and the economics of monasticism. (A)

Instructor(s): L. Pick Terms Offered: Spring

Equivalent Course(s): HIST 11900

RLST 22011. Jewish Civilization II: Late Medieval to Modern Period. 100 Units.

Jewish Civilization is a two-quarter sequence that explores the development of Jewish culture and tradition from its ancient beginnings through its rabbinic and medieval transformations to its modern manifestations. Through investigation of primary texts-biblical, Talmudic, philosophical, mystical, historical, documentary, and literary-students will acquire a broad overview of Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness while reflecting in greater depth on major themes, ideas, and events in Jewish history. The Winter quarter will begin with the late medieval period and continue to the present. It will include discussions of mysticism, the works of Spinoza and Mendelssohn, the nineteenth-century reform, the Holocaust and its reflection in writers such as Primo Levi and Paul Celan, and literary pieces from postwar American Jewish and Israeli authors. All sections of each course will share a common core of readings; individual instructors will supplement with other materials. It is recommended, though not required, that students take these two courses in sequence. Students who register for the Autumn Quarter course will automatically be pre-registered for the winter segment.

Instructor(s): Rokem Terms Offered: Winter

Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 22011, JWSC 12001

RLST 23026. Suffering, Tragedy, and the Human Condition. 100 Units.

This course examines the various ways in which various authors have understood the nature of suffering and its role in human wisdom and human tragedy. In so doing we will gather various understandings of how the Western past and present have conceived of the human condition, especially in its relation to fate, the gods, and the Christian God and salvation.

Instructor(s): Susan Schreiner Terms Offered: Winter

RLST 22800. African American Religion: Themes and Issues. 100 Units.

This course explores themes and topics that have marked the study of African American religion including but not limited to enslavement and Christianization, resistance and adjustment to slavery and Jim Crow segregation, urbanization and diversification of religious communities, and the lived experience of religious believers and practitioners. This class is a broad survey of religious beliefs and practices from the 17th century to the late 20th century.

Instructor(s): Curtis Evans Terms Offered: Winter

Equivalent Course(s): HIST 20003, CRES 22800

RLST 23100. Introduction to Christian Thought. 100 Units.

This course is designed to give an introduction to Christian thought by means of a historical overview. It will focus on what it is that establishes thinkers as Christian thinkers, what that does to the profile of their thought, how we ought to situate them vis-a-vis established academic disciplines (theology, philosophy and beyond), and how we can best assess their overall contribution in evaluative terms (academic, ecclesial, social, foundational). The course will deliberately reach across confessional and cultural divides. The thinkers on whom we focus are Augustine, Maximus the Confessor, Thomas Aquinas, John Calvin, Kierkegaard, John Henry Newman, William James, Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Instructor(s): W. Otten Terms Offered: Winter

RLST 23905. Is Buddhism a Religion? 100 Units.

One often hears it said that "Buddhism is not a religion, it's [...]" - with the ellipsis variously filled in as (e.g.) "a philosophy," "a kind of mind science," "a spiritual practice," etc. This course will explore the origins and function of this meme, as well as the question of what, if anything, distinguishes a tradition as "religious." It is hoped that we will, along the way, learn a bit about Buddhism, and/or about various Asian encounters with colonialism, empire, and modernity. And also maybe about being human in today's world.

Instructor(s): Daniel A. Arnold Terms Offered: Spring

Equivalent Course(s): SALC 23905

RLST 23505. Environmental Ethics. 100 Units.

This course examines foundational issues of environmental ethics. What kind of values (economic, aesthetic, existence) are important? What kind of value do individual biota, humans, other species, ecosystems, humans, or inorganic entities have? What is the relationship of humans to the rest of the world? What should it be? Do religious and philosophical traditions contribute to or help address environmental degradation?

Instructor(s): S. Fredericks Terms Offered: Winter

Equivalent Course(s): ENST 23505

RLST 24110. The Ethics of War: Reading Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations. 100 Units.

This course will involve a close reading of Michael Walzer's classic text on the ethics of war and his constructive account of the just-war tradition. Among the topics to be addressed are: moral relativism, human rights, and the ethics of various cases, e.g., terrorism, interventions, war crimes, blockades, assassinations, guerrilla warfare, reprisals, pre-emptive warfare, and nuclear deterrence. Relevant now no less than when it was first published in 1977, Walzer's work raises basic questions about the rights of nations and their moral obligations to their citizens and to others during times of war.

Instructor(s): Richard B. Miller Terms Offered: Autumn

Equivalent Course(s): FNLD 24500

RLST 24201. Indian Philosophy I: Origins and Orientations. 100 Units.

A survey of the origins of Indian philosophical thought, emphasizing the Vedas, Upanisads, and early Buddhist literature. Topics include concepts of causality and freedom, the nature of the self and ultimate reality, and the relationship between philosophical thought and ritual or ascetic religious practice.

Instructor(s): D. Arnold Terms Offered: Winter

Equivalent Course(s): SALC 20901, HREL 30200, DVPR 30201, SALC 30901

RLST 24202. Indian Philosophy II: The Classical Traditions. 100 Units.

Following on the Indian Philosophy I course, 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 shared philosophical vocabulary and methods) among Buddhist, Brahmanical, and Jain philosophers. Students are encouraged (but not required) to take Indian Philosophy I before taking this course.

Instructor(s): M. Kapstein Terms Offered: Spring

Equivalent Course(s): SALC 30902, SALC 20902, HREL 30300, DVPR 30302

RLST 25105. Readings in Ibn Tufayl's Hayy b. Yaqzan. 100 Units.

A study of Ibn Tufayl's twelfth-century philosophical/mystical romance about a boy spontaneously generated on a desert island who achieves knowledge of God through empirical study of nature. The many themes in Hayy ibn Yaqzan will be studied in relation to the philosophical literature that formed it and in light of recent modern scholarship about it.

Instructor(s): James T. Robinson Terms Offered: Winter

Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 35004, HIJD 35004, FNLD 25105, ISLM 35004

RLST 26002. Literature and Hunger. 100 Units.

This course pursues themes of hunger the consumption of food, the formation of community, and relation to the sacred, through a sequence of readings in the Western tradition. By reading classic works (The Odyssey, selections from the Hebrew Bible and Christian Scriptures, selections from The Divine Comedy, the Letters of St. Catherine of Siena, Paradise Lost), and modern works by Kafka, Simone Weil, and Louise Gluck, we will examine how different philosophies have imagined the acceptance or rejection of love, life, and the sacred in terms of the symbolism of food. Class work will involve close analysis of literary works, even those in translation; intensive critical writing; and secondary readings in literary criticism, anthropology, theology, and psychology.

Instructor(s): Rosanna Warren Terms Offered: Autumn. Course will be taught Autumn 2018

Note(s): Open to grads

Equivalent Course(s): SCTH 26002, ENGL 26002

RLST 27250. Religious Trials. 100 Units.

The rhetoric and practice of "trial" -- as testing and as adjudication -- is central to religious thought and religious practice. This course will examine the idea and the act of "trial" comparatively, via the classics of the religious literatures of Judaism and of Christianity (Genesis 22, Job, the Gospel of Mark, "The Pilgrim's Progress," Kafka), and also cinema (Dreyer's "Joan of Arc," R. S. Elkabetz's "Gett").

Instructor(s): R. Rosengarten Terms Offered: Winter

Equivalent Course(s): LLSO 27250

RLST 27614. Problems in the Study of Gender and Sexuality: Gender and Religion. 100 Units.

In what ways are notions of ideas about religion and the sacred gendered and what are the consequences of this for how we live our lives? This class will be an introduction to the study of the relationships between religion and gender and the way these relationships play out in specific historical situations. Attention will also be paid to the relationships between religions and sexualities. Examples will be drawn from medieval to modern periods, and our attention will primarily be on Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Instructor(s): Lucy Pick Terms Offered: Autumn

Equivalent Course(s): GNSE 11008

RLST 27650. Anthropology of Religion. 100 Units.

This course explores classic theories and methods in the anthropology of religion. We will cover core themes that have defined the field such as ethics, epistemology, language and political economy.

Instructor(s): A. Heo Terms Offered: Winter

Equivalent Course(s): ANTH 23911

RLST 28206. Dostoevsky's Brothers Karamazov. 100 Units.

We will read and interpret *The Brothers Karamazov* by Dostoevsky. Among major themes are the relation to God and religion to the larger society and state; the problem of evil; and the nature of sin and how it enters into religious beliefs; human "freedom," and what the word might have meant to Dostoevsky; and love.

Instructor(s): S. Meredith Terms Offered: Autumn

Prerequisite(s): Required of new Fundamentals majors; open to others with consent of instructor.

Note(s): Fundamentals majors get first priority

Equivalent Course(s): FNDL 20200

RLST 28511. Star Wars and Religion. 100 Units.

This course is an introduction to comparative religious ethics, using the Star Wars film franchise as a point of reference to discuss different conceptions of heroism. The course focuses on the role of myth-both religious and secular-and the unique power of stories to bestow meaning on human life and express that which transcends ordinary existence. Screenwriter George Lucas said that he combined elements of many religious traditions to create the world of Star Wars. This course analyzes these elements to ask what the Force and the Jedi have in common with Taoism, Buddhism, Christianity, and other religions.

Instructor(s): R. Johnson Terms Offered: Spring

RLST 28900. Magic, Science, and Religion. 100 Units.

The relationship between the categories of magic, science, and religion has been a problem for modern social science since its inception in the nineteenth century. In the first half of this course, we will critically examine some of the classical and contemporary approaches to these concepts. In the second half, we will explore a number of detailed historical and ethnographic studies about modern phenomena that call some of the fundamental assumptions behind these categories into question.

Instructor(s): A. Doostdar Terms Offered: Winter

Equivalent Course(s): ANTH 23906, KNOW 28900

RLST 29700. Reading/Research: Rlst. 100 Units.

No description available. 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.

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 I. 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 are required to submit the College Reading and Research Course Form.

RLST 29900. BA Paper II. 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 are required to submit the College Reading and Research Course Form.



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.