Religious Studies

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 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/thecollege/examinationcreditandtransfercredit). Students with permission to enroll in graduate Divinity courses may count these toward the major.

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 Number</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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One course in historical studies in religious traditions</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One course in constructive studies in religion</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One course in cultural studies in religion</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six additional courses in Religious Studies</td>
<td>600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLST 29800</td>
<td>BA Paper Seminar</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLST 29900</td>
<td>BA Paper</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Units</td>
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</table>

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
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>
</tr>
<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLST 23620</td>
<td>The Problem of Evil</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLST 28502</td>
<td>Interpretations of Myth</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLST 28900</td>
<td>Magic, Science, and Religion</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Units</td>
<td></td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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: Spring

Note(s): Required of students who are majoring in Religious Studies.

**RLST 11004. Introduction to the Hebrew Bible. 100 Units.**

The course will survey the contents of all twenty-four books of the Hebrew Bible, and introduce critical questions regarding its central and marginal figures, events, and ideas, its literary qualities and anomalies, the history of its composition and transmission, its relation to other artifacts from the biblical period, its place in the history and society of ancient Israel, and its relation to the larger culture of the ancient Near East.

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

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 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): BIBL 32602

What does it mean to know another person? On what measures of creditworthiness and moral character might we rely when deciding where to invest our trust? To what extent do people count as reading material, texts to be interpreted? This course explores the economic implications and theological inheritance of these questions as they unfold within eighteenth-century British novels. Authors will include John Bunyan, Daniel Defoe, Aphra Behn, Eliza Haywood, Henry Fielding, and Tobias Smollett. (B, F)
Instructor(s): D. Diamond Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): ENGL 17812

RLST 20222. Writing the Jewish Body: Health, Disease, Literature. 100 Units.
This course investigates the representation of the Jewish body in twentieth-century prose. We will focus on the European, American and Israeli contexts, exploring how the figures of health and illness are mobilized as commentaries on Jewish identity. We will also consider how representations of physical strength, physiological frailty, contagion and susceptibility shift in different landscapes and in different languages, paying particular attention to such figures as the ailing shtetl dweller, the Central European Jewish patient and the Zionist “New Jew.” Readings include works by Mendele Mocher Sforim, Franz Kafka, Philip Roth and Orly Castel-Bloom in conversation with theoretical texts by Susan Sontag, Walter Benjamin and Arthur Kleinman. All readings are in English. A section may be organized for reading sources in Yiddish.
Instructor(s): Sunny Yudkoff
Note(s): This course may be used to fulfill the College’s general education requirement in civilization studies.
Equivalent Course(s): GRMN 24216, YDDH 24216, REES 27023, CMLT 20222, ENGL 24216, JWSC 20222
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): NEHC 30601, SOSC 22000, NEHC 20601

RLST 20402. Islamic Thought and Literature II. 100 Units.
Survey of Islamic thought and literature during the “middle periods,” from about 950 to 1750 C.E., stretching across a broad geographic area, from Morocco and Iberia to the Maldives and India, and even into the New World. The course engages with a broad selection of primary texts in English translation, and various visual, aural and material artifacts, contextualizing them through lectures, secondary readings and discussion. We explore the notion of Islamicate culture(s) and civilization in its many facets – the intellectual milieu; literary, artistic and musical production; political, social, scientific, philosophical and theological thought; concepts of the heroic, the beautiful, the good, the poetic; piety, devotion and spirituality; religious, educational, governmental, commercial and social institutions; geographic, ethnic, confessional, gender, social and spatial constructs. In brief, how did noteworthy Muslims at various points and places think through questions of life death, man God, faith belief, the sacred the profane, law ethics, tradition vs. innovation, power politics, class gender, self other? How did they think about and wage war, make love, eat drink, tell stories, educate their youth, preserve the past, imagine the future, etc.?
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, 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
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 20485. Jews in Graeco Roman Egypt. 100 Units.
This course will revise the sources, literary and documentary, for the history of the Jews in Egypt from the 5th cent. BCE (the Elephantine papyri) to the 4th cent CE (Jews and Christians in Egypt). We will revise both the papyrological evidence and the literary evidence that we have for each period, and will focus on historical and social questions. The sources will be read in translation.
Instructor(s): S. Torallas-Tovar Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 30485, HIJD 30485, JWSC 20485, CLCV 25315, CLAS 35315, NEHC 20485

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): HIST 25704, HIST 35704, ISLM 30500, NEHC 30501, NEHC 20501

RLST 20701. The Autobiography of Teresa of Avila. 100 Units.
In this course we will do a close reading of the autobiography of Teresa of Avila in which we will pay attention to her attitudes towards prayer and religious practice, mystical experience, community organization, sin and redemption, and gender. Our reading will be supplemented by other texts written by Teresa as well as secondary works that will help us interpret her in her historical context.
Instructor(s): L. Pick Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): FNDL 23112, HIST 19801, GNDR 20701
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 21610. Carolingian Renaissance. 100 Units.
The Carolingian Renaissance flowered thanks to the leadership of a new royal (AD 751) and then (from Christmas 800) imperial dynasty. Expansive political and cultural initiatives reshaped Europe into a distinct space, not least, though paradoxically, through its fragmentation after AD 843. We shall study the actors and trends at play, the important role of Classical models and Latin book culture, and consider the relevant sources in all their physical, textual, and imaginative variety.
Instructor(s): M. Allen Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): CLCV 22115, CLAS 32115, HIST 22115, HIST 32115

RLST 22111. Mary and Mariology. 100 Units.
More than a saint but less than God, no figure of Christian devotion other than Jesus Christ has inspired as much piety or excited as much controversy as the Virgin Mother of God. In this course, we will study the development of the Virgin Mary’s image and cult from her descriptions in the Gospels through the modern papal definitions of Marian dogma so as to come to some understanding how and why this woman "about whom the Gospels say so little" has become a figure of such popular and theological significance. We will consider both the medieval flowering of her cult and its dismantling, transformation, transmission, and reinvention in the centuries since.
Instructor(s): R. Fulton Brown Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 22111, HIST 32111, HCHR 32111

RLST 22501. Foundations of Chinese Buddhism. 100 Units.
An introduction to the Buddhism of premodern China, examined through lenses of philosophy, texts, and art. We will examine important sources for the major currents of Chinese Buddhist thought and practice stretching from the earliest days of the religion in China through around the 13th century (with some attention to modern connections), giving special consideration to major textual and artistic monuments, such as translated scriptures, Chan literature, and the cave-shrines of Dunhuang.
Instructor(s): P. Copp Terms Offered: Autumn 2015
Equivalent Course(s): EALC 35811, EALC 25811
RLST 23020. The Tragic Sense of Life. 100 Units.
This course studies texts from antiquity to the present that discuss the various ways that people conceived of the tragic aspects of human life. This is not, strictly speaking, a course of the definition of "tragedy," but, rather, an explorations of what thinkers such as Unamuno labelled the "tragic sense of life" and Gabriel Garcia Marquez described as a "universe drenched in grief." Themes such as tragedy, suffering, fate, transience, time, death, meaninglessness, the absurd, and the silence of God will be among the subjects discussed. Although the course is not intended to define "tragedy," nonetheless we will be looking at a few classic tragedies by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Shakespeare. We will then turn to more modern thinkers who have tried to diagnose the so-called "crisis of man" or the "crisis of the modern age." This section will include such topics of the human being in history, and the silence or absence of God and will include thinkers who have reflected on the aftermath of World War II as well as literary figures such as Albert Camus, Franz Kafka, Reinhold Niebuhr, and the films of such writers and directors as Ingmar Bergman and Clint Eastwood.
Instructor(s): S. Schreiner Terms Offered: Spring

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 23620. The Problem of Evil. 100 Units.
"Epicurus's old questions are yet unanswered. Is he [God] willing to prevent evil, but not able? then is he impotent. Is he able, but not willing? then is he malevolent. Is he both able and willing? whence then is evil?" This course will consider the challenge posed by the existence of evil to the rationality of traditional theistic belief. Drawing on both classic and contemporary readings, we will discuss atheistic arguments from evil in both "logical" and "evidential" forms. We will analyze attempts by theistic philosophers to construct "theodies" and "defenses" in response to these arguments, including the "free-will defense" and "soul-making theodies." We will also consider critiques of such theodies as philosophically confused, morally depraved, or both; and we will discuss the problems of divinely commanded or enacted evil and of divine hiddenness.
Instructor(s): M. Kremer Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 21620
RLST 23804. The Autobiographies of Dorothy Day and Malcolm X. 100 Units.
A close reading of Dorothy Day’s “The Long Loneliness” (1952) and of “The Autobiography of Malcolm X” (1964) will allow the exploration of the relation between self-creating and re-invention, on the one hand, and social critique and change, on the other. Day was a social radical who, motivated by the cause of the poor, became the founder of the Catholic Worker movement; Malcolm X was a revolutionary who became an iconic figure in the global Black freedom struggle. The reconstruction of memory, the relation of narration and consciousness, the appropriation of cultural and religious narratives, the diagnosis of personal fault and social ill, and the arc of conversion are among the themes to be considered.
Instructor(s): K. Culp Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): CRES 23804, GNSE 23814, FNDL 23804

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: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): SALC 23903

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: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Third- or fourth-year standing
Equivalent Course(s): HUMA 24005, PSYC 24050, BPRO 24000
RLST 24051. Moral Agency and Social Transformation. 100 Units.
The world today is marked by the complexity and vastness of the social and political systems within which individuals live. Within such complexity, what role can the single person play in transforming the systems of which she is a part? How can individual action play a role in social melioration? This course investigates the relationship between theological and philosophical understandings of the human person and conceptions of the social order, particularly considering how this relationship informs theories of social change. The focus will be on historic moral anthropologies, considering Plato, Augustine, Luther, Menno Simons, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Walter Rauschenbusch. The intention of the examination of these thinkers will be, in part, to interrogate our own ways of conceptualizing the human in relation to the current social order.
Instructor(s): Lengyel, Willa Terms Offered: Spring

RLST 24601. Martin and Malcolm: Life and Belief. 100 Units.
This course examines the religious, social, cultural, political, and personal factors behind the two most prominent public leaders and public intellectuals emerging from the African American community in the 1950s and 1960s: Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. We review their autobiographies, domestic trends within the United States, and larger international forces operating during their times. Their life stories provide the contexts for the sharp differences and surprising commonalities in their political thought and religious beliefs. The operative question is: What can Malcolm and Martin tell us about America during one of the most dynamic periods in the nation’s personality metamorphosis? We use documentary videos of each man’s speeches and of the social contexts in which they lived. (B)
Instructor(s): D. Hopkins Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): CRES 24601

RLST 25105. Readings in Ibn Tufayl’s Hayy b. Yaqzan. 100 Units.
No description available.
Instructor(s): J. Robinson Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): HIJD 35004,FNDL 25105,ISLM 35004

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: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): FNDL 21201,ENGL 17501

RLST 25900. Medieval Philosophy. 100 Units.
This course involves a study of the development of philosophy in the West in the first thirteen centuries of the common era with focus on Neoplatonism. Early Christian philosophical, Islamic Kalam, Jewish philosophy, and Christian philosophical theology. Readings include works of Plotinus, Augustine, Al-Farabi, Avicenna, Maimonides, Averroes, and Thomas Aquinas. (IV)
Instructor(s): J. Stern Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): PHIL 25000
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 23600,JWSC 24600,JWSC 34600,PHIL 33600
RLST 26200. Reading Buddhist Scripture as Literature: The Lotus Sūtra. 100 Units.
The Lotus Sūtra, an early Mahayana Buddhist scripture that propounded startling new Buddhist beliefs and practices, is one of the most influential and widely read scriptures in the world, especially in East Asia: Its champions have touted it as profoundly meaningful, beautiful, and emancipatory. How and why is it good to read? To answer these questions, we will read an English translation of the work over the first half of the course, alongside some scholars who say that it should be read “as literature.” After completing our initial reading of the Lotus, we will turn to thinkers who attempt to destabilize our notions of what “reading,” “Buddhism,” “literature,” or “scripture” can even be said to consist of. As a final project, we will weigh in by developing our own readings of the Lotus, its history of interpretations, or the course itself. All texts in English.
Instructor(s): A. Hsu Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): EALC 26202, FNDL 26207

RLST 26501. Renaissance Demonology. 100 Units.
In this course we analyze the complex concept of demonology according to early modern European culture from a theological, historical, philosophical, and literary point of view. The term ‘demon’ in the Renaissance encompasses a vast variety of meanings. Demons are hybrids. They are both the Christian devils, but also synonyms for classical deities, and Neo-platonic spiritual beings. As far as Christian theology is concerned, we read selections from Augustine’s and Thomas Aquinas’s treatises, some complex exorcisms written in Italy, and a recent translation of the infamous Malleus maleficarum, the most important treatise on witch-hunt. We pay close attention to the historical evolution of the so-called witch-craze in Europe through a selection of the best secondary literature on this subject, with special emphasis on Michel de Certeau’s The Possession at Loudun. We also study how major Italian and Spanish women mystics, such as Maria Maddalena de’ Pazzi and Teresa of Avila, approach the issue of demonic temptation and possession. As far as Renaissance Neoplatonic philosophy is concerned, we read selections from Marsilio Ficino’s Platonic Theology and Girolamo Cardano’s mesmerizing autobiography. We also investigate the connection between demonology and melancholy through a close reading of the initial section of Robert Burton’s Anatomy of Melancholy and Cervantes’s short story The Glass Graduate (El licenciado Vidriera).
Instructor(s): A. Maggi Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): Taught in English
Equivalent Course(s): CMLT 27602, HIST 22110, ITAL 26500
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 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 how the creative self reacts to the challenges of radical otherness, such as the new environment, its cultural codes and language barriers. During this course, we inquire how the condition called assimilation and its attendants—secularization, acculturation, cosmopolitanism, etc.—is adapted or critically resisted according to the generational differences, a given historical moment or inherited strategies of survival and adaptation. Students are acquainted with problems of cultural identity formation and cultural transmission through a wide array of artistic genres—a novel, short story, memoir, photograph, and illustration. The course draws on the autobiographical writings of Russian-Jewish, Polish-Jewish and American-Jewish authors such as Aleichem, Yezierska, Antin, Singer, Hoffman and others; all texts are read in English.

Instructor(s): Bozena Shallcross

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 26680. Introduction to Comparative Literature II: Case Study: Davidismo. 100 Units.
This course will examine the story of David in 1 and 2 Samuel in combination with some of its myriad literary and artistic afterlives in order to explore the nature of biblical narrative and (biblical) rewriting. The narrative’s familial drama, political intrigue, subtle characterization, and philological challenges have inspired a wide variety of reinterpretations in disparate literary traditions and historical periods, providing fertile ground for comparative analysis. Students will initially gain some of the skills and perspectives needed to approach the biblical text in translation as a literary artifact as well as an appreciation of the difficulties inherent in such a task. Subsequently, students will engage with literary reworkings of the narrative organized around such issues as gender, political power, and Jewish/Christian identity-formation and accompanied by select theoretical works treating rewriting and intertextuality. Why has this story — and David himself — had such lasting resonance? How do later works from different periods and linguistic traditions both capitalize on certain aspects of the ‘original’ and redefine it in important ways? What role do rewritings play in literature, and what does it mean to read these distinct interpretations together? The David Story offers rich opportunities for thinking through these and other comparative literary questions.
Instructor(s): Chloe Blackshear Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): Literary works will include plays and novels by Tirso de Molina, Gide, Faulkner, Heym, Weil, and Kalisky as well as selections from NBC’s critically-acclaimed 2009 drama, Kings; theorists may include Curtius, Warburg, Tynianov, Genette, Ben-Porat, and Rabau, among others.
Equivalent Course(s): JWSC 28800, CMLT 29705

RLST 26801. Many Ramayanas. 100 Units.
This course is a close reading of the great Hindu Epic, the story of Rama’s recovery of his wife, Sita, from the demon Ravana on the island of Lanka, with special attention to the changes in the telling of the story throughout Indian history. Readings are in Paula Richman, Many Ramayanas and Questioning Ramayanas; the Ramayanas of Valmiki (in translation by Goldman, Sattar, Shastri, and R. K. Narayan), Kampan, and Tulsi; the Yogavasistha-Maharamayana; and contemporary comic books and films.
Instructor(s): W. Doniger Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Consent of instructor
Equivalent Course(s): HREL 42501, FNDL 22901, SALC 42501, SCTH 40701
RLST 27111. Psychology and Religion: Two Problem Children of Modernity. 100 Units.
Most courses devoted to the intersection of psychology and religion either provide an introduction to the contemporary field of the psychology of religion or else examine the works of more well-known authors who are its supposed historical antecedents (most notably William James, Sigmund Freud, and Carl Jung). The present course aims to take a broader view of this topic: Beginning with the genesis of the problematics of religion and psychology in the sixteenth century and focusing in particular on the relation between the two in 18th and 19th century Western thought, we will attempt to sketch a history of their strange coincidence up to the time of James, Freud, and Jung, with whose well-known works we will end the course.
Instructor(s): B. Fong Terms Offered: Autumn 
Equivalent Course(s): AASR 36004

RLST 27411. Introduction to Hinduism. 100 Units.
In this course we will acquaint ourselves with the basic beliefs, practices, scriptures and varieties of the religion that goes by the name of “Hinduism.” We will follow its course through history, beginning with the earliest, most hallowed, little understood sources, the Vedas. We will look into the formation and peculiarities of its different branches such as the schools of Vaishnavism and Saivism, and learn about some of its central figures such as Shankara, Ramanuja and Chaitanya. Significant part of the course will be dedicated to the attempts to define and redefine Hinduism and its unity in the context of modernity, the encounter with colonialism and the course of globalization. We will explore some of its fundamental tensions, for instance between religion and liberation (dharma and moksha), social restrictions and freedom, knowledge and devotion. Finally, we will spend some time on the philosophical underpinnings of Hinduism, particularly the doctrine of karma, re incarnation and theodicy.
Instructor(s): A. Uskokov Terms Offered: Autumn 
Equivalent Course(s): SALC 25304

RLST 27604. Religion and Gender. 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 course 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): L. Pick Terms Offered: Winter
RLST 27615. Political Religions. 100 Units.
Italian Fascism and German National Socialism were more than just political parties or regimes; rather, they had many of the characteristics of religious movements. Moreover, these “political” or “secular religions” were not unprecedented, but had deep cultural and intellectual roots in European modernity. In this course we will trace the history of the sacralization of politics from the French Revolution to World War II. We will look at primary sources in a variety of media—drawing examples from France (Rousseau, Maistre, and Sorel), Germany (Wagner, Nietzsche, Jünger, and Riefenstahl), and Italy (Pareto, D’Annunzio, G. Gentile, and Marinetti)—as well as some of the most important scholarly literature on this topic (Benjamin, Voegelin, and Aron). No prerequisites; all texts will be read in English translation.
Instructor(s): Colasacco, Brett Terms Offered: Winter

RLST 28011. Religions of the African Diaspora. 100 Units.
This course is intended as an introduction to religions of the African Diaspora. We will engage a range of themes relevant to the history, beliefs and practices, world-views, and communities of African-derived religions around the globe, including issues of race and race-making, class, gender, sexuality, the body, and representations in the media. We will begin with a discussion of the central terms and major challenges of the field. With those concerns in mind, we will trace the historical movements of Africans across the globe, examining the spread and development of religions through key themes and case studies. We will address a large number traditions, including Santeria, Condomble, Vodoun, Palo, Obeah, Christianity, Islam, and Judaism.
Instructor(s): E. Crews Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): CRES 28011

RLST 28310. Byzantium: Art, Religion, Culture. 100 Units.
An introductory seminar exploring works of art and architecture as primary sources for Byzantine civilization. Through the close investigation of artifacts of different media and techniques, students will gain insight into the artistic production of the Byzantine Empire from its foundation in the 4th century A.D. to the Ottoman conquest in 1453. We will employ different methodological approaches and resources that are relevant for the fruitful investigation of artifacts in their respective cultural setting. In order to fully assess the pivotal importance of the visual arts in Byzantine culture, we will address a wide array of topics, including art and ritual, patronage, the interrelation of art and text, classical heritage, art and theology, Iconoclasm, etc.
Instructor(s): K. Krause Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): RLIT 32302, ARTH 22302, ARTH 32302, HCHR 32302
RLST 28315. Early Christian Art. 100 Units.
This course will focus on the visual arts as ubiquitous, understanding them as an essential part of early Christian culture and identity. Close attention will be paid throughout to interdisciplinary scholarly methods that have been developed in order to approach early Christian art within the larger framework of late antique culture and to decode the symbolism that characterizes it. Some sample questions we are going to discuss include: What do the earliest Christian images in the catacombs and on sarcophagi convey about the hopes and fears of those who commissioned them? In which ways did the design and furnishings of religious architecture respond directly to needs associated with the celebration of the liturgy or other cultic activities? What were the functions and messages of the splendid mosaic programs that survive, for instance, in various churches in Rome and Ravenna? To what extent may they be understood (possibly until today) as an aid to religious imagination and worship? How were visual means employed to provide complex theological exegesis, and what is the relation of the imagery to religious writings? What is the place of early Christian manuscript illumination within the larger context of late antique book culture? What do we know about viewer response to Christian art both in the private and the public spheres?
Instructor(s): K. Krause Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): RLIT 43107, ARTH 22303, ARTH 32303, HCHR 43107

RLST 28320. Introduction to the Study of Iconography. 100 Units.
This survey course is designed to familiarize students with a wide variety of subjects depicted in Western art from Antiquity to today through imagery representing different epochs, styles, artistic media, and techniques. The subject matter we are going to investigate comprises both religious and profane realms, with images illustrating, for instance, the Bible, the Apocrypha, myth, history, allegory, typology, and hagiography. Whereas the chief focus of our investigation is on the intersection of art and literature, we will simultaneously appreciate the potential to convey meaning that is intrinsic to the visual arts. Students will acquire skills that enable them to describe images of different subject matter and style in a systematic and comprehensive manner. They will acquaint themselves with established methodology and with scholarly tools designed for iconographical investigations of any given topic.
Instructor(s): K. Krause Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): RLIT 32106, HCHR 32106
RLST 28502. Interpretations of Myth. 100 Units.
Mythic narratives figure prominently in virtually all religions and depending on one’s definition, in much historical, political, and cultural discourse as well. Given the ubiquity of myths, the fascination they exercise, and the privileged position they often enjoy, mythic discourse has received much critical attention, and a wide range of theories have been advanced, treating myths as true stories, false stories, sacred stories, disease of language, means of revelation, the origin of philosophy and poetry alike, second order semiosis, and ideology in narrative form. This course will survey some of the most influential theories and test them against a wide range of myths drawn from various cultures, religions, and historic eras.
Instructor(s): B. Lincoln Terms Offered: Spring

RLST 28715. Blood & Ink: Art at the Time of the Protestant Reformation. 100 Units.
The course treats the problems of image making and breaking at the time of the European Reformation(s). Since early Lutheran theology emphasizes the primacy of the Word, learning and interrogating the history of the Reformation also provides the perfect opportunity to question the role of the image in worship and daily life. This course will touch on named figures such as Cranach, Dürer, and Henry VIII, but will also probe the many anonymous printers, peasants, provocateurs, and ideas of monstrosity that made the Reformation both so interesting, and so turbulent, to live through. Other topics include witches, markets and commerce, popes and Anti-Christ, death, disease, famine, sex, court intrigue, and vivid instantiations of moral allegory. In lieu of exams, students will be expected to make a strong commitment to a research-based methodology, and the course will provide an introduction to working with primary sources in the Regenstein Library's Special Collections Research Center.
Instructor(s): A. Marraccini Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): Students must attend first class to confirm enrollment. For nonmajors, any ARTH 14000 through 16999 course meets the general education requirement in the dramatic, musical, and visual arts.
Equivalent Course(s): ARTH 14800

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.