

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (REL)

REL 101 Comparative Religion (3 credits)

An Introduction to the comparative study of religion which examines the historical evolution of religions, nature and diversity of religious experience, the concept of a religious world and the diverse types of religious worldviews, the role of myth and ritual in the maintenance of religious worlds, the problem of religious change and the concept of transcendence.

Attributes: Religious Difference Course, Theology Level 2, Undergraduate

REL 102 What is Religion? (3 credits)

This course is an opportunity for students to be initiated into the critical study of religion. Best described as intensive and experimental, this class offers students an opportunity to analyze classical and contemporary theories of religion. We will challenge attempts to classify an experience as mythic, mystical, magical, functional, or numinous. All readings, evaluations, and discussions will address the contested question, what is religion?

Attributes: Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 150 First Year Seminar (3 credits)

Seminar subjects vary.

Attributes: First-Year Seminar, Undergraduate

REL 170 Special Topics (3 credits)

Topic and content varies from semester to semester. Course may be taken twice for credit as the topic changes. Certifications differ by section.

Attributes: Undergraduate

REL 211 Hebrew Bible (3 credits)

This course will examine the biblical traditions and texts of the Hebrew Scriptures as products of particular historical and cultural communities, and as literary and theological documents.

Attributes: Ancient Studies Course, Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 212 Israelite Religion (3 credits)

Combining the evidence of biblical texts and ancient Near Eastern texts, this course analyzes the historical and social context of religion in ancient Israel. Special topics include the worship of different deities; the priesthood and the system of sacrifices in the Temple; the relationship between politics and religion, and some specific religious practices maintained by kings David, Solomon and their successors (such as prophecy, holy war and child sacrifice); popular religious practices (such as devotion to the dead and magic); and the origins and development of monotheism, the concept of the messiah and other ideas central to the origins of Judaism and Christianity.

Attributes: Ancient Studies Course, Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 221 Intro to the New Testament (3 credits)

This course will examine the biblical traditions and texts of the Christian Scriptures as products of particular historical and cultural communities, and as literary and theological documents.

Attributes: Ancient Studies Course, Undergraduate

REL 229 Indigenous Ecologies & Religion (3 credits)

This course offers case studies in relationships between indigenous traditions and their environments. Sample cultures may include African foragers, Pacific islanders, tribes of the Amazon rainforests, Mesoamerican farmers, and First Nations communities in North America. The approach is anthropological and historical. Typical themes are the paleohistory of religion; Traditional Ecological Knowledge; gender roles in food systems; relations between medicinal plants, animals, and shamans; adapting to climate change and colonialism; and ways that environments shape rituals and beliefs. These reveal alternatives to western assumptions that distinguish "natural" from "supernatural" and "science" from "religion." Implications for environmental policy will be explored.

Attributes: Diversity Course, Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 231 Judaism (3 credits)

A comprehensive survey of the development of Judaism from its pre-exilic roots to the present, to include the evolution of its theology, ethics, and traditions. The impact of the modern world upon traditional Judaism; major movements within Judaism today and their beliefs about God, Torah, and Israel.

Attributes: Religious Difference Course, Theology Level 2, Undergraduate

REL 241 Islam (3 credits)

An introduction to the historical development of Islam together with its basic beliefs and practices, from the time of Muhammad to the modern period. The prophet Muhammad, the Qur'an and Hadith, the Shari'ah, Kalam, Shiism, Sufism, and Islamic modernism will be examined.

Attributes: Asian Studies Course, Medieval, Ren & Reform Studies, Non-Western Studies (GEP), Religious Difference Course, Theology Level 2, Undergraduate

REL 261 Hinduism (3 credits)

A survey of the Hindu religious traditions on the Indian subcontinent with a focus on the period from the Epic (c. 200 BCE-200 CE) until modern times. The major forms of Hindu belief and practice will be covered: Vaishnavism, Shaivism, traditions of the Goddess, and popular village traditions.

Attributes: Asian Studies Course, Non-Western Studies (GEP), Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 262 Modern Hinduism (3 credits)

This course explores the ideas, beliefs, and practices of lived Hinduism. We will compare and contrast diverse Hindu cultures that are found in rural and urban India, in the United States, and here on campus. Our study will include a variety of examples taken from the expressive arts and architecture, literature, rituals and festivals, fashion and film, current events, online communities and bloggers.

Attributes: Asian Studies Course, Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 265 Daoism (3 credits)

In an effort to see and experience Daoist thought and practice on its own terms, approximating the worldview of its practitioners, this course takes an interdisciplinary approach, examining three distinct kinds of religious phenomena: 1) ritual performance, 2) sacred scripture, and 3) art and material culture. Through this interdisciplinary approach, students will learn how to investigate these phenomena according to corresponding sets of methodologies, namely 1) ethnography; 2) translation and hermeneutics; and 3) art-historical and visual and material analyses. Because both scripture and art cannot be removed from liturgy in the Daoist tradition, students will also learn to engage with and employ frameworks from the field of ritual theory, specifically anthropological approaches to ritual practice.

Attributes: Asian Studies Course, Non-Western Studies (GEP), Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 270 Special Topics in Relig Stud (3 credits)

Concentrated focus on a selected theme in theology or religion at an advanced level. Topic and content varies from semester to semester. Course may be taken twice for credit as the topic changes. Certifications differ by section.

Attributes: Undergraduate

REL 271 African & Caribbean Religions (3 credits)

An examination of selected indigenous African religious traditions in their native contexts and/or religious traditions of indigenous African origin that have developed in the Caribbean and related contexts outside of Africa. Topics may vary, but representative samples may include a focus on individual systems (such as Haitian Vodou) or phenomena found in a number of systems (such as rites of passage).

Attributes: Africana Studies Course, Non-Western Studies (GEP), Religious Difference Course, Theology Level 2, Undergraduate

REL 272 Religion/Global/Rights-Bolivia (3 credits)

This class will first examine central religious beliefs of indigenous Bolivian religions (e.g., cosmology, communal origin myths, spirits and divine figures, rituals and ritual spaces, and the relationship of natural and supernatural). Along the way, the class will wrestle with broader questions in the study of religion, such as interpreting the archaeological record, inducing religious experience, and the relationship between religious authority and social or political power. The class will then explore the moral implications of these beliefs alongside the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. The course will pay particular attention to the economic sphere, using case studies to explore how indigenous beliefs and practices are shaping distinctive economic forms that contrast those promoted by global capitalism.

Attributes: Diversity Course, Globalization Course, International Business Course, Non-Western Studies (GEP), Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 275 Religion, Violence & Terrorism (3 credits)

This course will explore when, why, and how religion devolves into justifying violence and terrorism. The course will focus on the following issues: 1) an understanding of the fundamental elements of religion; 2) what constitutes "terrorism"; 3) historical and social catalysts for religious violence; 4) historic and contemporary manifestations of religiously oriented violence and terrorism, both domestic and foreign.

Attributes: Globalization Course, Irish Studies Course, Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 300 Religious Song and Poetry (3 credits)

How do we express love, loyalty, and devotion to people, saints, and God/gods? This class will explore poetry, hymns, pop music, and visual arts that praise various divine beings and religious figures. Our study will include diverse expressions and acts of devotion, the lives of the artists who created them, and their religious and historical contexts. Examples will be taken from Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, and American pop culture (be prepared to share your playlist!).

Attributes: Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 310 Welcoming the Stranger (3 credits)

This course will examine how ancient communities grappled with welcoming the stranger and how various communities negotiated interpersonal relations. In addition, the course will focus on how to articulate an ethical response to the issue of migration in light of the diverse theological and philosophical ethical perspectives on the topic. Key themes in the historical and religious traditions will include: the biblical representation of the ger (stranger); ancient comparative hospitality rituals; and legal discourse in rabbinic and contemporary Jewish sources. Key topics in the theological and philosophical ethical traditions will include: distinctions between forced migrants in theory and law— including internally displaced people, asylum seekers, refugees, economic migrants, and ecological/environmental migrants. These distinctions will be explored through both an empirical/legal lens as well as an ethical lens informed by the overlapping consensus of the post-war Universal Declaration of Human Rights tradition and Catholic Social Teaching.

Attributes: Ethics Intensive, Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 311 Comparative Religious Ethics (3 credits)

Comparative religious ethics is a field of study that explores what different religious traditions say (and have said) about important ethical and moral questions, past and present. This course aims to provide students with the tools and knowledge to understand, comparatively analyze, and evaluate the ethical teachings and moral prescriptions of the religious traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Students will examine the similarities and differences between the ways in which each of these religious traditions form and inform the ethical and moral aspects of the lives of their adherents. Prior knowledge of Judaism, Christianity, and/or Islam is preferred but not required. Students with no knowledge of one or more of these traditions will be assigned extra readings for the first few weeks of class.

Prerequisites: PHL 154

Attributes: Ethics Intensive, Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 312 Spirit Disc in Compar Perspect (3 credits)

Throughout the world's religious traditions we find a variety of spiritual disciplines pursued by individuals in the hope of transforming an existence experienced as sinful, delusory, fragmented or otherwise unsatisfactory into one that is graced, enlightened, whole. The specific methods employed vary widely, as do their specific goals. Nevertheless, when viewed from a comparative perspective many of these practices share elements in common. This course will examine a number of such spiritual disciplines, drawn from the traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Greco-Roman Hellenism, and Christianity. Attention will be given to issues of their historical development, diversity of form, points of similarity and contemporary relevance.

Attributes: Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 321 Religion & Law in the Anc World (3 credits)

This course looks at the world's earliest known law: the law of ancient Sumer, Babylon, Egypt, and other ancient Near Eastern societies. The course goes on to examine the relationship between these legal systems and the legal texts of ancient Israel and Judah found in the Hebrew Bible, as well as other issues related to the study of biblical law. Finally, the course considers the legacy of ancient Near Eastern law and its impact on the development of modern legal institutions and systems.

Attributes: Ancient Studies Course, Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 322 Myth and History in the Bible (3 credits)

This course examines a range of narratives from the Bible and considers how they functioned in the ancient communities from which they come. It looks at the role of myth and the nature of history writing in the ancient world and explores ways to identify both genres in biblical texts. It also examines current debates over what should count as history in the Bible and the impact of archaeological and extra-biblical literary evidence on these debates. The course will focus primarily on narratives from the Hebrew Bible (e.g., creation myths, ancestral and royal legends, political-historical narratives), though some stories from the New Testament may be considered as well. Please note: This course can be used to satisfy the GEP Religious Difference requirement or the GEP Faith and Reason requirement, but not both.

Prerequisites: PHL 154 and (THE 153 or THE 154 or THE 155 or THE 221)

Attributes: Ancient Studies Course, Faith-Reason Course, Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 323 Psalms (3 credits)

The most influential of all Old Testament books for Christian spirituality, the Psalms offer a special glimpse into the religious life of ancient Israel. Placed within their larger historical background, psalms of various types (laments, hymns, royal and wisdom psalms, etc.) will be studied for their literary and religious character. The question of the Psalter's theology as a whole will be addressed as well.

Attributes: Ancient Studies Course, Undergraduate

REL 325 Synoptic Gospels (3 credits)

This course will progress in two movements. It first will investigate the historical background of the growth of the gospel tradition. It then will read the Gospels as viable literary texts, making use of the most recent advances in the literary critical study of Matthew, Mark, and Luke-Acts. In this way, the course will focus upon the theological uniqueness of each book, as well as tracing their interrelatedness.

Attributes: Ancient Studies Course, Undergraduate

REL 326 Letters of Paul (3 credits)

The aim of this course is to examine the main characteristics of Paul's faith as found in his epistles. The course will establish the broad argument of each of the letters, their historical setting, and their literary and rhetorical character, and demonstrate how these elements work together to express Paul's gospel.

Prerequisites: PHL 154 and (THE 153 or THE 154 or THE 155 or THE 221)

Attributes: Ancient Studies Course, Faith-Reason Course, Undergraduate

REL 327 Religion & Race in Phila (3 credits)

This course examines the co-constitution of religious beliefs, racial identities, and regional cultures from an historical perspective primarily in the urban Northeast. We will examine how transatlantic and transnational African and European religious traditions (real, imagined, historical, invented) shaped that history. Because this is a religious studies course, we will think about religions as institutions that profoundly influence individual's epistemologies and actions, as well as the communities, societies, and nations, in which they are located. We will understand race as a social construction that emerged in recent centuries in concert with religious (and scientific) ideas about human origins and anthropologies. Most importantly, we will see how these two constructs - "race" and "religion" - developed and evolved in a particular region of the United States to make visible place-based distinctions and geo-cultural histories. A complicated, multi-scalar picture will emerge of the varied ways in which beliefs, identities, and places influence and are implicated by one another.

Prerequisites: ENG 101

Attributes: Africana Studies Course, American Studies Course, Diversity Course, Undergraduate

REL 328 Global Christianities (3 credits)

Africa is home to the largest population of many Christian denominations in the world and home of the fastest growing concentration of Christians in the world. This course will examine the variety of Christianities in Africa in their global context and explore how Christianity there is influencing and being influenced by Christianity worldwide. Students will learn to problematize, to complicate, and to relentlessly question prevailing religious and cultural ideas about the other, where those ideas originate, how they are constructed and maintained, and who that maintenance and construction serves.

Attributes: Diversity Course, Undergraduate

REL 331 Topics in Ancient Judaism (3 credits)

Study of a selected topic in Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman periods. Sample topics include collections of texts, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls or works of Josephus; regions or cities, such as Judaism in Egypt or Jerusalem; a series of events, such as the Maccabean Revolt; an individual or group, such as the Herodian dynasty; or a theme, such as Judean interactions with imperial powers. Course may be taken more than once for credit as topic changes.

Attributes: Ancient Studies Course, Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 332 Past/Present in ISR and PLS (3 credits)

Digging at Tel Dor: This study tour combines excavating the archeological site of Tel Dor, Israel with travel in the country before, during, and after the excavation season. By participating on a dig, students gain first-hand knowledge of both historical and modern day Israel and the rich history that gives rise to the complexities of the modern Middle East. Digging brings the social, economic, political, intellectual, and religious history of the site "to life" through uncovering and then analyzing the ancient remains-the architecture with associated vestiges of daily life. Students will be part of every step of the archeological process from digging, processing, and analyzing to recording and storage. To witness the full range of historical periods presented in lectures, we will visit the archeological sites of Caesarea, Megiddo, Sepphoris, Beth Shean, Belvoir, Masada and Qumran, spanning the Canaanite through the Crusader periods (20th c. BC - 12th c. AD: the Early, Middle and Late Bronze and Iron Ages, and the Persian Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, First Muslim, and Crusader Periods). Before, during and after the excavation season the group will tour the cities of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Nazareth, focusing on the historical interaction of Christians, Jews, and Muslims.

Attributes: Ancient Studies Course, Religious Difference Course, Study Tour, Undergraduate

REL 333 Jerusalem: History & Holiness (3 credits)

The city of Jerusalem has had a nearly unsurpassed historical and religious prominence for three millennia, right up through the present. In this course we will explore Jerusalem from multiple, complementary perspectives. We will consider the history of the city as well as religious developments within the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions. We will begin with biblical Jerusalem and then move forward in time, highlighting periods, events, and ideas that have lasting influence through close studies and discussions of selected topics. We will draw on theoretical approaches to the study of sacred space using tools from the field of comparative religion.

Attributes: Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 334 Rise of Rab Judaism & Xianity (3 credits)

In the aftermath of the Nazi genocide of Jews in the 20th century, and with new discoveries such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, scholars from many disciplines have sought to better understand the origins of Rabbinic Judaism and Christianity. A growing consensus sees their emergence in the Roman period as the result of a complex series of responses to historical events, particularly the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in the year 70 C.E. Not only were defining features of each tradition established, but the basic dynamic of their interrelationship was set and would prevail for nearly two millennia. This course provides an in-depth study of religious differentiation by surveying the history, beliefs, and practices of biblical Israel, late Second Temple Judaism, the church as a Jewish eschatological movement, and ultimately Rabbinic Judaism and patristic Christianity in the post-Temple Roman world. Special attention is devoted to the construction of their distinctive and sometimes opposed religious identities.

Attributes: Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 335 Christian Origins (3 credits)

A study of the cultural and historical matrices of the early Jesus movement, its rise and early developments, and the emergence of institutionalized practices and belief systems that coalesced in the formation of Christianity. The course is organized chronologically and employs the standard tools and theoretical approaches of modern historical-critical methodology, such as those derived from anthropology, sociology, literary criticism, and classical archaeology.

Attributes: Ancient Studies Course, European Studies Course, Medieval, Ren & Reform Studies, Undergraduate

REL 336 Jewish Thought (3 credits)

This course will introduce students to Jewish theology from biblical to modern times. It will focus on selected topics such as God, revelation, ethics and human nature, chosenness, Jewish views of other religions, messianism, the afterlife, and suffering and evil (with special reference to the Holocaust).

Attributes: Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 337 Sabbath in Judaism&Christianity (3 credits)

In our modern lives, it is hard to imagine 'shutting off'. However, the observance of a Sabbath is valued in Judaism and Christianity. This course considers the Sabbath as not just abstention from work but entry into sacred time. It covers the biblical period through the present, and includes diverse forms of observance and claims for its significance. We will study the Sabbath primarily in the Jewish tradition, and explore the tensions between adherence to biblical models and adaptation to new circumstances. We will focus on biblical interpretation as context within which the Sabbath evolved and was (re)defined, and consider the Sabbath as mythological time, as a marker of social identity, and as a practice governed by religious law. We will also consider the Sabbath in the Christian tradition, especially where Christian observance diverges from Jewish observance, such as the shift from Saturday to Sunday.

Attributes: Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 338 Jew&Chr Responses to Holocaust (3 credits)

The Jewish Holocaust represents the classic negative event of our age, a manifestation of evil transcending the human imagination. This course will examine how Jews and Christians have responded to this event and why it caused changes in both Jewish and Christian self-understandings. The course will introduce students to the personages, issues and events of the Holocaust, before turning to religious and moral issues such as suffering and guilt.

Attributes: European Studies Course, Faith Justice Course, Religious Difference Course, Theology Level 3, Undergraduate

REL 341 The Quran and Its Interpreters (3 credits)

This course will explore a basic source of Islamic faith and practice, the Quran and its interpretation. We will examine compilation of the Quran, its major themes, and samples from its reception history, both classical and modern. We shall investigate how this 1400-years old text has been interpreted in many different ways, by analyzing legal, theological, mystical, existential, feminist and critical perspectives on it. We shall also make occasional comparisons with the bible and its interpretation. The course will enable the student to have better insight not only on the Quran, but also on the process of interpretation of sacred texts.

Attributes: Africana Studies Course, Asian Studies Course, Non-Western Studies (GEP), Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 342 Women in Muslim Tradition (3 credits)

This course will seek to comprehend and explain some of the major aspects of the life and culture of Muslim women. Women are and have always been an integral part of the Muslim society, contrary to what might be generally portrayed and perceived. Far from being a monolithic culture or society, the Muslim world comprises many diverse cultural tendencies, which makes it difficult to generalize. Thus in order to study Muslim women and their status, role and situation, we will touch upon the difference historical, political, and economic forces that have shaped the culture of the Muslim world as a whole. We will be exploring the religious and social issues that have been central during the modern transformation of Muslims societies and will touch upon how Muslim women are portrayed in the media and the ramification of such portrayal.

Attributes: Africana Studies Course, Asian Studies Course, Non-Western Studies (GEP), Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 343 Reason Science&Faith in Islam (3 credits)

This course has three major parts. In the first part, we shall look at primary sources of Islam tradition, that of Qur'an and hadith, which will give us a starting point as we turn to the ways in which miracles have been discussed in the tradition. In the second part, we shall look at two classical Muslim thinkers, Ghazali and Ibn Rushd, who differed on miracles as well as on the relation between reason and faith. Analyzing their disagreement will offer us critical insights about common sense, science, rationality and dynamics of Quranic interpretation. In the third part, we shall look at contemporary interpretation of miracles as well as the relation between faith and reason by looking at a crucial Muslim thinker, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, as well as some of the other approaches to science in modern era. In this part we shall also engage with the epistemological and scientific implications of Islamic understandings of miracles with the help of two Western thinkers, David Hume and Charles S. Peirce. In the final portion of the course, students will present their research on the issue of the relation between reason, science and faith in Muslim context. Please note: This course can be used to satisfy the GEP Religious Difference requirement or the GEP Faith and Reason requirement, but not both.

Prerequisites: PHL 154 and (THE 153 or THE 154 or THE 155 or THE 221)

Attributes: Asian Studies Course, Faith-Reason Course, Medieval, Ren & Reform Studies, Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 351 Introduction to Buddhism (3 credits)

As a religion named after the title of its ancient Indian founder, the "Buddha" or the "awakened one," for over two millennia Buddhism has offer numerous paths to spiritual awakening for committed seekers while at the same time adapting itself to a variety of different cultures and addressing the local needs of ordinary people, from kings and emperors to merchants and peasants. Buddhism grew into a pan-Asian religious tradition, developing initially in India but spreading to Southeast Asia, to China, Korea, Japan, Tibet and most recently to the West. This course will be an introduction to the history, teachings and practices of Buddhism with an emphasis on its development in South Asia, its original homeland, but with attention as well as to selected developments in other cultural contexts in Asia and the West. Attention will be given to Buddhist meditation in its various forms, both ancient and modern.

Attributes: Asian Studies Course, Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 352 East Asian Buddhism (3 credits)

The focus of this course will be on the form of Buddhism that has been dominant in East Asia, a form known as "Great Vehicle" or Mahayana Buddhism. After quickly examining the origin and development of Buddhism in India this course will examine its development in China in some depth, as well as its spread to Korea and Japan.

Attributes: Asian Studies Course, Non-Western Studies (GEP), Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 355 Superhumans in Chinese Relig (3 credits)

Immortals, Ancestors, Ghosts and Gods: This course examines four religions of China-Confucianism, Daoism, Chinese "folk" or popular religion, and Buddhism-in their historical and contemporary contexts. As its title suggests, the class is built around an exploration of the important role that superhumans such as demons, dragons, buddhas, and ghosts play in each of these traditions. Taking as our starting point the Ming period (1368-1644) popular novel, Monkey, in this class we will examine a wide range of primary and secondary sources including paintings, websites, poetry, scripture, articles of clothing, miracle stories, newspapers, statuary, and ritual implements. By combining an historical overview of the topic with a hands-on exploration of the manner in which practices and 445 beliefs related to superhumans remains relevant in China today, the class aims to deepen students' appreciation of the ways religion continues to shape world events, national policy, daily life, and cultural production within and beyond the region.

Attributes: Non-Western Studies (GEP), Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 356 Death & Afterlife Chinese Rel (3 credits)

Across regions and millennia, human beings have pondered the perennial question of what happens when we die. This class takes a close look at the fascinating ways this question has been answered in the part of the world now called China. From the very outset, we enter into a world of tombs and transcendence, exploring some of China's earliest burial sites. As the course progresses, we turn to the Daoist quest for immortality, the Buddhist conception of reincarnation, and the Confucian practice of ancestor worship. The class considers points where these worldviews diverge, but takes a more interested look at the places where they have harmonized throughout China's long history. Upon completion of the course, students will have a map of China's afterlife, and an introduction to the beings who preside there, from the Supreme Gods of its Heavens, to the Ten Kings of its Hells.

Attributes: Asian Studies Course, Non-Western Studies (GEP), Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 357 Food Practices & Chinese Relig (3 credits)

This course examines the practices and beliefs surrounding food associated with Chinese religious traditions such as Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, Chinese "folk" or "popular" religion, and Islam. The topics we will cover include religious prescriptions and prohibitions related to food, connections between food-practices and hierarchy, and the roles that food plays in creating and sustaining relationships between, for instance, the living and dead or humans and nonhumans. In addition to studying a variety of texts and objects, we will learn about religious observances related to food cultivation, storage, distribution, preparation, and consumption from guest speakers and through field trips to Philadelphia area sites including a restaurant and a temple.

Attributes: Asian Studies Course, Non-Western Studies (GEP), Religious Difference Course

REL 358 Yoga: Ancient & Modern Paths to Freedom (3 credits)

In this course we will explore the fascinating world of yoga as it has evolved in South Asia (the Indian subcontinent), where it has for millennia been associated with a pronounced South Asian interest in both "world renunciation," and "Axial Age" value that has significantly shaped the worldviews of at least three religions of South Asian origin: Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, as well as in the acquisition of power, both "worldly" and "supernatural." We will also examine how yoga traditions were transformed by India's encounter with the West both during colonial times and during the second half of the 20th century. Issues of particular concern, as we trace these developments, will be the historical and cultural contexts of yoga in South Asia, the relationship between yoga practice and South Asian religious beliefs, in particular traditions of religious renunciation, the role of South Asian constructions of concepts of the role of "body" and "mind" in spiritual practice (and the relationships of health, spirituality and religion), the role of yoga as a symbol of the "spiritual East" in the contexts of colonialism and post-colonial nationalism in India as well as its commodification in the contemporary global environment. We will also be examining yoga's "journey to the West" and its status in contemporary American life by examining the genesis of "modern postural yoga," the form of yoga with which most people are familiar (the form of yoga that focuses on the performance of various yoga postures or asana, such as triangle pose, head stand, etc.) While the focus will be on the specific traditions labeled "yoga," the course will also serve as an introduction of the religious of South Asia, since historically yoga and all its varieties has been embedded in specific South Asian religious worldviews. While some attention will be given to Buddhist forms of yoga, the principal focus will be on the traditions associated with the Vedic and Hindu religious traditions, and their modern transformations.

Attributes: Asian Studies Course, Non-Western Studies (GEP), Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 359 Meditation, Yoga, and the Dao (3 credits)

Asian Spiritual Practices and their Modern Concepts: What is the purpose of life, and how is this purpose to be realized? This course will examine four influential Asian spiritual traditions that offer a variety of answers to these questions, two of which originated in ancient India (Buddhism and that component of the Hindu religious traditions known as yoga) and two in China (Confucian and Daoist traditions of self-cultivation). Each of these traditions in its own way argues that the true potential of a human being is realized only through a process of transformation, which leads from a condition of deficiency (characterized variously as suffering, ignorance, lack of vitality, imbalance, and ultimately mortality) to a condition of true freedom and happiness. The course will examine these traditions both in their original Asian contexts and in the adaptations in Western culture, paying particular attention to research that provides scientific models for thinking about the value of such transformative practices.

Attributes: Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 360 Religion & Art in East Asia (3 credits)

Vision and Visualization: This class is about ways of seeing in East Asian religions, with an emphasis on the Buddhist and Daoist traditions. It investigates the visual arts of these religious traditions with special attention to how these materials function in the context of ritual practice. Specific topics include the production of mandalas (or sacred circles) and their uses in the visualization practices of China, Tibet, and Japan; the uses of maps, charts, diagrams, and talismans in the Daoist ritual traditions of China and Taiwan; the relationship between sacred texts and ritual visualizations in late imperial Daoism; the religious and ritual dimensions of Chinese landscape painting; and the practices surrounding sacred icons in the Buddhist and Shinto traditions of Japan. In addition to providing a comprehensive introduction to the visual culture of several East Asian religions, this class also asks students to consider the implications these diverse practices have for how we ourselves perceive, understand, and engage with the visual world around us.

Attributes: Asian Studies Course, Non-Western Studies (GEP), Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 365 Sacred Stuff Material Religion (3 credits)

Sacred Stuff approaches the study of religious experience through the material world, objects, feelings, and sensations. What does religion feel like? How does it taste or smell? We will explore varieties of religion through our senses and study sacred objects crafted by artists inspired by the divine.

Attributes: Asian Studies Course, Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 370 Spec Topics in Relig Studies (3 credits)

Concentrated focus on a selected theme in theology or religion at an advanced level. Topic and content varies from semester to semester. Course may be taken twice for credit as the topic changes. Certifications vary by section. Does not fulfill the GEP.

Attributes: Undergraduate

REL 380 Prophecy in the Ancient World (3 credits)

Who were the ancient prophets, both biblical and non-biblical? When do gods speak directly to humans via prophets, and when is a third-party human intermediary necessary to mediate between that prophet and the ruler? This course will probe the scope of political authority in Mesopotamia, Ancient Israel, and Ancient Greece with a particular focus on the role of prophets and diviners in society. Through critical analysis of a spectrum of ancient sources from Mari (modern-day Syria), Ancient Israel and Judah, and Delphi and Claros (Greece), we will investigate the system of mediation among prophets, intermediaries, and kings to undertake an interdisciplinary study of ancient prophecy.

Attributes: Ancient Studies Course, Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 382 Women & Religion in Anc Wrlld (3 credits)

An investigation of issues related to women and gender through case studies from the Ancient Near East and Ancient Israel through Late Antiquity. In addition to literary sources, students will also consider the importance of archaeology in the discussion of ancient religions and women's ritual practices. Primary sources will illustrate issues such as gender identity, difference, sameness, subordination, privilege, cultural dynamics, marginalization, oppression, resistance, and the role of women in historical and social change. Emphasis will be placed on developing epistemological theoretical, and methodological awareness and critical understanding of the implications for the broader study of religion, gender, and human diversity.

Attributes: Ancient Studies Course, Diversity Course, Gender Studies Course, Religious Difference Course, Theology Level 3, Undergraduate

REL 383 Ancient Greek Religions (3 credits)

This course will be an introduction to the world of thought and practice that contemporary scholars call ancient Greek religion. The main materials of the course will be drawn from the ancient Greeks themselves—from poets, artists, playwrights, and mythographers. Emphasis will be placed on the myths and festivals that formed the fabric of ancient Greek religious practice and outlook. Ancient perspectives on cosmos (universe), polis (city and its society), psyche (self) and theos (gods) will be explored.

Attributes: Ancient Studies Course, Religious Difference Course, Undergraduate

REL 392 Directed Readings in Religion (3 credits)

A study of significant themes or issues in Theology or Religious Studies under the direction of faculty in the department. Frequent consultations and written reports are required. Prior written permission of the instructor and approval from the chair is required. Does not fulfill the Theology/Religious Studies GEP.

Attributes: Undergraduate

REL 395 Approaches to Study of Religion (3 credits)

A selected survey of the variety of theories and methodological approaches employed in the modern academic study of religion. Approaches to be examined in class include the psychological, sociological, anthropological, archeological, theological, feminist, and socio-biological. Classic thinkers may be included, but most of the course will focus on authors who represent recent developments, such as the new evolutionary approaches to religion. Course work will emphasize direct engagement with the writings of the major theorists themselves (reading and analysis of primary texts).

Prerequisites: PHL 154 and (THE 153 or THE 154 or THE 155 or THE 221)

Attributes: Faith-Reason Course, Undergraduate

REL 470 Spec Topics in Religs Studies (3 credits)

Concentrated focus on a selected theme in theology or religion at a highly-advanced level. Topic and content varies from semester to semester. Course may be taken twice for credit as the topic changes. Certifications vary by section. Does not fulfill the GEP.

Attributes: Undergraduate

REL 491 Intern in Religious Studies I (3 credits)

This course is an experiential learning experience in which students work 10 hours per week (total 130 hours) in an organization related to the Religious Studies. The internship is a way to see how different areas of religious studies are used "on the ground" in public, private, non-profit, community, and church-related organizations. In addition to their hours, students must keep a journal, meet regularly with their faculty adviser, and complete a final essay that connects their learning experience in the internship to their other coursework and the goals of the major. For the required application, please see the department chair.

Attributes: Undergraduate

REL 492 Intern in Religious Studies II (3 credits)

This course is an experiential learning experience in which students work 10 hours per week (total 130 hours) in an organization related to the Religious Studies. The internship is a way to see how different areas of religious studies are used "on the ground" in public, private, non-profit, community, and church-related organizations. In addition to their hours, students must keep a journal, meet regularly with their faculty adviser, and complete a final essay that connects their learning experience in the internship to their other coursework and the goals of the major. For the required application, please see the department chair.

Attributes: Undergraduate

REL 493 Ind Research in Religion (3 credits)

Directed independent reading and research supported by discussion with other students and instructors. Open to senior theology majors and minors and other senior students by permission of the Chair. Does not fulfill the Theology/Religious Studies GEP.

Attributes: Undergraduate

REL 494 Ind Research in Religion (3 credits)

Directed independent reading and research supported by discussion with other students and instructors. Open to senior theology majors and minors and other senior students by permission of the Chair. Does not fulfill the Theology/Religious Studies GEP.

Attributes: Undergraduate

REL 495 Theory & Method Study Religion (3 credits)

A survey of a wide array of theories and methods employed in the modern study of religion, such as psychological, sociological, anthropological, phenomenological, feminist, socio-biological, and other approaches. Both classic and recent theoretical models will be discussed, with special interest in current methodological developments in the academic study of religion. Emphasis will be placed on direct engagement with the writings of the major theorists themselves. Open to junior and senior theology majors and minors and other junior and senior students by permission of the Chair.

Prerequisites: PHL 154 and (THE 153 or THE 154 or THE 155 or THE 221)

Attributes: Faith-Reason Course, Undergraduate