

Course Catalog

Religion

Faculty

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Requirements

The Major

The requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts with a major in Religion are as follows:

I. Departmental requirements:

A. 32 credit hours in Religion including at least one course from each of the following two groups:

1. RELI 1320, RELI 1330, or RELI 1360
2. RELI 2354, RELI 2355, or RELI 2356

B. RELI 2400: What is Religion?

C. At least 16 of the credit hours in Religion to be upper-division courses selected in consultation with a faculty adviser in the Department of Religion.

D. RELI 4494: Religion Capstone.

E. A total of no more than 16 credit hours from RELI 3-90 and 3-91 may be counted toward the major without approval of the adviser and the Department.

II. University requirements: completion of all other required elements of the Pathways Curriculum and at least 120 credit hours.

The Minor

The requirements for a minor in Religion are as follows:

- I. At least 18 credit hours in Religion.
- II. At least 12 of the credit hours in Religion to be upper-division courses selected in consultation with a faculty adviser in the Department of Religion.
- III. A total of no more than 8 credit hours from RELI 3-90 and 3-91 may be counted toward the minor without approval of the adviser and the Department.

Courses

Lower Division Courses at the 1000 Level

RELI-1320 Ethical Issues in Religious Perspective

Inquiry into the religious dimension of issues such as environmental pollution, violence, capital punishment, economic injustice, hunger, homosexuality, feminism, pornography, abortion, and euthanasia.

RELI-1330 Asian Religions

A study of Hindu, Buddhist, and East Asian religious traditions in theory and practice; attention to such topics as reincarnation, yoga and meditation, shamanism, ritual, salvation, personal religious experience, gender roles, spiritual ideals of art, and the relation of humankind to nature and the cosmos.

RELI-1340 Judaism, Christianity, and Islam

This course is an introduction to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, surveying their formative histories, scriptures, and core beliefs and practices-with each religion taken on its own terms but also considered in comparison and connection with these and other Western traditions. (Offered every Fall.)

RELI-1360 Religion in the United States

A study of religious diversity in the United States with emphasis on the Protestant, Catholic, Jewish and Islamic traditions. Attention may be given to such topics as Native American religion, civil religion, new religious movements, women in religion, and televangelism.

Lower Division Courses at the 2000 Level

RELI-2400 What Is Religion?

This course examines the question of what religion is, including those aspects that today some people refer to as spiritual. Attention will be given to such related questions as: How do you think about or define religion? How have scholars thought about and defined religion? What are common elements of religious life found throughout the world? What are the various functions of religion for societies and for individuals? How have scholars studied religion? How does one study a religion, or religion, if one is an outsider or is non-religious?

RELI-2101 Biblical Hebrew

The primary goal of this course is to introduce students to ancient Hebrew so they will be able to read parts of the Hebrew Bible in the original language. This course begins with an introduction to the Hebrew alphabet and vowel system and therefore requires no prior knowledge of Hebrew. (Also listed as LAC 2101).

RELI-2354 The Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

A study of the books of the Old Testament/Hebrew Scriptures in English translation. Some of the books will be read in their entirety, and substantial excerpts of most of the others will also be read so that all of the major types of literature present in the Old Testament/Hebrew Scriptures will be represented. The course will approach its subject matter primarily as literature, but attention will be given to the historical, cultural, and religious aspects of its production. The course will also consider the trajectory of its subject matter in Jewish and Christian thought, and in Western Culture.

RELI-2355 The New Testament

A study of the writings that comprise the New Testament, with attention also to certain other early Christian documents not included in the New Testament. Most of the writings are read in their entirety, and they are examined with reference to their historical, cultural, religious, and literary contexts; their use as historical sources for the reconstruction of Christian origins; their role as a basis for Christian belief and practice; and their wider influence in Western and world cultures.

RELI-2356 The Qur'an

Islam and Muslims have been embroiled in some of the most searing controversies of our age, and the Islamic scripture, the Qur'an, has been at the center of a number of these controversies. This course introduces students to the Qur'an, and how it is perceived by Muslims themselves. Religion 2356 deals with the importance of this sacred text for the religion of Islam, including its beliefs, rituals, and rites. The course also covers the history of the Qur'an and engages with key themes of the scripture. Students will be introduced to the content of the primary text and a selection of accessible secondary readings. Current hot-button questions such as "What does the Qur'an say about women?" or "Does the Qur'an legitimate violence?" will also be addressed.

RELI-2359 Pagans, Jews, and Christians

This course explores the development of early Christian and Jewish beliefs, practices and cultures in the contexts of the larger Mediterranean world. Through a combination of readings and visits to archaeological sites and

museums in Rome and its surroundings, students will learn to locate emerging Jewish and Christian literature, ideas, and debates within Roman imperial social and religious practices, institutions and ideology. This course is part of a faculty-led study abroad program in Italy offered in the summer. Co-requisite: THTR 1343: Improvisation: Performance and the City.

RELI-2460 Philosophy of Religion

A critical discussion of philosophical issues arising in religion and theology. Typical topics covered include: religious language, arguments for God's existence, religious experience, miracles and revelation, the relationship of faith and reason, the nature of God, the problem of evil, death and immortality. (Also listed as PHIL 2438.) (Offered every other year).

RELI-2371 Introduction to Islam

This course is an introduction to the Islamic tradition. In addition to a survey of the historical and contemporary development of the religion, we will examine the wide variety of beliefs and practices associated with Islam, highlighting the diversity of global Muslim communities. Topics include the significance of the Prophet Muhammad, the importance of the Qur'an, the development of Islamic law, theology, and philosophy, the Islamic mystical tradition, and Shi'ism. Additionally, this course will investigate issues related to Islam and modernity. (Offered every other year.)

Upper Division Courses at the 3000 Level

RELI-3401 Gender and Religion

An examination of the cultural expectations placed upon women and men in various religious traditions; the historical prevalence of patriarchy and differentiated gender roles; feminist and liberation movements for gender equality with a religious basis; challenges to heterosexism and the development of gay, lesbian, and transgender religious perspectives. (Offered every other year). Prerequisite: 1 course in Religion or consent of instructor

RELI-3403 Death and Beyond

An examination of the significance of death for human existence and how various religious traditions find meaning in mortality; the ritual practices involved in the dying process, the disposition of the body, grieving, last rites, and the remembrance of the dead; cross-cultural concepts of heaven, hell, reincarnation, the soul, near-death experience, good and evil, salvation, enlightenment, and the ethical implications of religious notions of death. (Offered every other year). Prerequisite: 1 course in Religion or consent of instructor

RELI-3415 Economics of Religion

This class surveys how market forces have both shaped institutionalized religion(s) and have also been shaped by institutionalized religion(s). Religion has often been studied and portrayed as either extremely hostile toward economic concerns and practices or radically fundamental to such concerns and practices. In this class, students will think of a middle way between these extremes and investigate ways religious and economic forces are intertwined in premodern and modern contexts. Learning old and new theories pertaining to the economics of religion, students will take a deep dive into three case studies from around the world to deploy the theories.

(Offered every other year.) Prerequisite: 1 course in Religion or consent of the instructor

RELI-3418 Religion and Film

This course introduces some of the many issues and theoretical perspectives in the study of religion and film. We explore images of religion and religious people in film and trace a number of recurring religious themes in recent popular films. We also examine popular films that do not have explicit religious themes through the lenses of theories of religion, myth, and ritual. (Offered every other year). Prerequisite: 1 course in Religion or consent of instructor.

RELI-3431 The Hindu Tradition

A study of the major developments and schools within the tradition, from ancient times to the present; attention to mythological/theological perceptions and interpretations of the world, as well as to meditational, devotional, and ritual practices. Emphasized throughout the course is the interplay between contemporary insider and outsider perspectives. (Offered every other year) Prerequisite: RELI 1330 or consent of instructor

RELI-3432 Buddhist Ecology

This course explores a central teaching of the Buddha, as well as a primary focus of Engaged Buddhism or Buddhist practice: the inter-relationship between humans and their environment. Buddhist Ecology examines the foundations of Buddhist ecological thinking through analysis of the Buddhist scriptural and historical traditions, as well as its applications in the modern world. Course texts include the sutras or discourses of the Buddha, the monastic code, contemporary statements by Buddhist thinkers and activists worldwide, and scholarly treatments of Buddhist thought and practice, Engaged Buddhism, and Buddhist Ecology. (Offered every other year)

RELI-3433 Chinese Religions: Unity and Diversity

Religion 3433 explores Chinese religion through an in-depth study of its formative texts and historical evolution to the modern era. Emphasizing original sources in translation as well as critical studies by modern scholars, the course examines the cosmological framework of Chinese Religion as well as attitudes towards religious belief and practice reflected in scripture, commentaries, and philosophical works. Students will conduct original research on Chinese religion in its contemporary manifestations. (Offered every other year.) (also listed as CHIN 3433.) Prerequisite: RELI 1330 or consent of instructor.

RELI-3434 Japanese Literature of the Spirit World

An examination of Japanese religions through the lens of Japanese literature, focusing on the modern period. The course will focus on Japanese consciousness, whether this is expressed as supernaturalism (ghost stories and other supernatural phenomena), religiously inspired aesthetic form (in poetic genres), mystical experience (in Japanese magical realism), or religious vocation (monastic practice and new religious movement). (Offered every other year.) Prerequisite: RELI 1330 or consent of instructor.

RELI-3435 Nonviolent Warriors: Jainism in South Asian Religious History

This course examines the religious beliefs and practices of the Jains, a minority tradition in India that has had a profound impact on the religious, philosophical, artistic, and literary landscapes of South Asia. Beginning with the teachings of Lord Mahavira and the basic doctrines of Jainism, the course will consider the historical foundations

of the Jain tradition through philosophical and doctrinal texts and the rich corpus of Jain narrative literature. The course highlights how Jains, alongside their better-known Hindu, Buddhist, and Muslim counterparts, participated in and contributed to every major religious and philosophical innovation in South Asian history, including tantra, yoga, and bhakti devotionalism. The course will also focus on contemporary Jain life and religious practice, both monastic and lay, through examination of the religious lives of ascetics and Jain laity, ritual practices of temple worship and pilgrimage, as well as sectarian movements within the tradition and the emerging Jain interest in environmentalism. (Offered every other year.) Prerequisite: RELI 1330

RELI-3338 Greek Religious Experience

A study of Greek religious festivals designed to produce a coherent image of a year in the religious life of the ancient Greeks. Through a combination of archaeological and literary evidence, we will attempt to reconstruct the rituals performed at the various festivals and explore the ways in which they organized and articulated the community through shared religious experience. We shall also consider the ways in which religion organized civic space and gave it meaning. (Also listed as CLAS 3338.)

RELI-3441 Creating Judaism

This course introduces the student to the cultural, religious, political and social lives of Jews, covering the entirety of Jewish history. Using historical and religious studies approaches, students in this course will discuss Judaism(s) at different times and in different geographical locations focusing on questions of identifications and definition. (Offered every Spring) Prerequisite: RELI 2354 or consent of instructor.

RELI-3442 Global Christianities

A study of Christianity within its modern socio-historical contexts. Possible topics within the course include the development of indigenous Christians in the two-thirds world, the rise of global Pentecostal-charismatic movements, the shift to the global south within Catholicism, the growth of post-communist Orthodoxy, mainline Protestant missionary endeavors, and evangelical Christian influence on political and social policies worldwide. (Offered every other year). Prerequisite: One Religion course

RELI-3444 Islam in North America

This seminar focuses on significant movements in the history of Islam in North America, including the forced arrival of African Muslim slaves to the "New World," the evolution of various African American ethno-religious communities, and various waves of Muslim immigration. We will look at processes of community building, institution building, and constructions of diverse North American Muslim identities. This course also examines how Islam has been and continues to be talked about and represented in North American society, for example, in political rhetoric and in the media. Special attention will be given to the issues of race, gender, and citizenship. (Offered every Spring.)

RELI-3445 Islam, Gender, and Power

Gender is crucial to understanding the religious, political, social, economic, and intellectual life of Muslim communities throughout history. This course explores how gender impacts the construction of authority in public and private domains. How are conceptions of gender and gender ideals interpreted from diverse authoritative sources of Islam, such as the Qur'an, the Sunna, and the classical intellectual tradition? How do contemporary

Muslim thinkers from the colonial and post-colonial eras uphold, reject, or negotiate these discourses? This course thus uses gender as an analytical category to better understand Muslim thought and practice, as well as non-Muslim perceptions of Islam. (Offered every other year.) Prerequisite: 1 Course in Religion or consent of instructor.

RELI-3452 Jewish & Christian Apocalyptic Literature

This course examines ancient Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature by (a) placing some of the texts that make up the genre within their larger historical and cultural contexts, (b) studying some of its major Jewish and Christian literary expressions, and (c) exploring its possible social, cultural and religious function. We also explore the legacies of apocalyptic thought in Western culture, especially in recent political discourse and in film. (Offered every other year). Prerequisite: 1 course in Religion or consent of instructor

RELI-3353 The Gospels, Jesus, and Christian Origins

A study of the earliest extant literary portrayals of Jesus, with attention to what can be known about his life, message, activity, and fate as well as his significance for the origins of Christianity. Prerequisite: RELI 2355 or consent of instructor.

RELI-3454 The Letters of Paul

A study of the extant writings attributed to Paul and included in the New Testament, with attention to the historical, cultural, religious, and literary context of these writings and to Paul's influence in early Christianity and in the history of Christian thought. Prerequisite: RELI 2354 or RELI 2355 or consent of instructor.

RELI-3455 Early Christian Literature Beyond the Canon

This course explores the diversity of early Christianity in the first few centuries of the movement by examining early Christian texts not included in what eventually becomes the canon of Christian scripture, the New Testament. The course also explores the various methods and approaches used by scholars to study early Christian literature and history. (Offered every other year). Prerequisites: RELI 2354, or RELI 2355, or consent of instructor.

RELI-3456 Digging for the Truth: Archaeology, Bibles, and Popular Media

This course explores the intersection of archaeology, the bibles, and popular media. More specifically, it explores how the popular media uses archaeology and the bibles to create history, and how their process differs from an academic approach. Some questions that will be addressed include: What is archaeology and how is it done? What can archaeology teach us? What can't archaeology teach us? What role should the biblical literature play in writing history? How does popular media's use of archaeology and the bibles differ from the historian's use of archaeology and the bibles? What kinds of motives - political, economic and religious - factor into the equation? Prerequisite: RELI 2354, or RELI 2355, or consent of instructor

RELI-3457 Jerusalem

This is a course about the city of Jerusalem and the roles it has played (and continues to play) in lives of Jews, Christians, and Muslims. In order to learn about the city in this manner, we will explore not only the religious, but also the cultural, political, economic, and architectural histories of Jerusalem. What does Jerusalem mean to different religious communities? Has the meaning changed over time? How and why did this particular city become central to Judaism, Christianity and Islam?

RELI-3458 Medieval Christian Mysticism

A survey of writings in the tradition of medieval Christian mysticism, from Augustine (d. 430) to John of the Cross (d. 1591). Major themes include the use of violent and erotic imagery, the move from Latin to vernacular languages like English, German, Spanish, and French, the importance of gender (whether the author's or the audience's) in the shaping of this literature, and the relevance of medieval mysticism to modern thought. (Also listed as ENGL 3457)
Prerequisite: Completion of at least one English course.

RELI-3480 United States Latino Religious Practices and Traditions

This course examines the beliefs, theologies, and practices of diverse U.S. Latino communities. In addition to Catholicism and Protestantism, the course will review the impact of African and Native American religious traditions. The course critically examines how U.S. Latino religious experiences impact race, class, gender, and sexuality with a particular emphasis on examining the Latino community in San Antonio. (Offered every other year)
Prerequisite: RELI 1360 or consent of instructor

RELI-3481 Native American Religions

This course is an overview of Native American religious traditions in the United States. Topics covered may include Native revitalization movements, traditional Pueblo and Sioux dances, Native Christianity, modern Native religious thought, Peyote religion, issues of gender in Native American religion, boarding schools and Americanization, the role of white Christian missionaries, and the modern Native American evangelical movement. (Offered every other year.) Prerequisites: RELI 1360 or HIST 1360 or consent of instructor

RELI-3482 African American Religions

This course will explore a wide variety of African American faiths that have grown into a diversity of religious traditions in the United States. This will include but not be limited to: African American Christianity, Voodoo, Hoodoo, Conjure, Black Hebrews, Santeria, Nation of Islam, Father Divine and more. The goal of this class will be to introduce students to a variety of Afro-American traditions, explore issues of race and power within religious institutions, examine how African Americans have adapted to the American religious marketplace, and expose students to a variety of methods in the field of religion. (Offered every other year.) Prerequisite: RELI 1360 or consent of instructor

RELI-3-90 Reading and Conference

Individual work under supervision in areas not covered by other courses. Prerequisites: 12 semester hours in religion and approval of the department chair and instructor

RELI-3-91 Special Topics in Religion

From time to time, the department will offer special topic courses not described in the Bulletin. The topics may be in any area and may be offered at the initiative of departmental faculty or upon petition of interested students. Announcements of such courses will be by special prospectus. May be repeated on different topics. Prerequisite: Consent of instructor

RELI-3160 Roman World Lab

This humanities lab offers students research opportunities relating to Latin literature and Roman culture, with two main points of focus: ancient Roman religious culture and Latin literature. Students work together with faculty on long-term research projects, including the production of scholarly commentaries on ancient texts and the development of databases and other tools for philological and rhetorical analysis. Students in this course will work with texts in English translation, using the research methods of classical studies. This course typically meets in conjunction with LATN 3160 and RELI 3160. May be repeated for up to six credit hours. (Offered every semester.)

Prerequisite: Consent of Instructor

Upper Division Courses at the 4000 Level

RELI-4494 Religion Capstone

This course provides a capstone experience for students of Religion. During the semester students will: 1) reflect on, analyze, and evaluate the different approaches to the study of Religion encountered and utilized in Religion courses; 2) examine how experiences as a Religion major prepare students for the future; 3) develop their own project that "caps" their academic experience; and 4) organize an end-of-semester Colloquium. (Offered every year). This course is normally taken in the Junior or Senior year. Prerequisite: 4 courses in Religion
