



*UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI*

# **DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES**



**Fall  
2023  
COURSES**

REL 101: Introduction to Religion  
Shockley | T, TR 3:30pm-4:45pm (on-line)

An overview of religious perspectives concerning ultimate reality, humankind, and the world, with special attention to major Asian and Abrahamic religions.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Introducing Religion: Traditions and Texts (NEW!)
- Religion and Contemporary Issues: Culture, Society, and Identity (NEW!)
- Individualized Cognate (NEW!)
- Introduction to Religion
- Asian Religions: South and East Asia
- Religion, Identity, and Pop Culture

REL 101: Introduction to Religion  
Callender | on-line asynchronous

An overview of religious perspectives concerning ultimate reality, humankind, and the world, with special attention to major Asian and Abrahamic religions.

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REL 102: Problem of God  
Maklakiewicz | TH 5:05pm-7:50pm (on-line)

Contemporary religious issues related to the concept of God. Foundational to this course is an examination of the religious dimension of human experience and consciousness in relation to a number of historical and contemporary problems and challenges. This

course approaches "the problem of God" from the angle of human experience, focusing on the various historical, social, and existential determinants of belief. Topics include: globalized religion, the challenge of atheism and humanism, the impact of secularization on religion, and an exploration of the historical, social, and theological images of creation and the divine.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Introducing Religion: Traditions and Texts (NEW!)
- Religion and Contemporary Issues: Culture, Society, and Identity (NEW!)
- Individualized Cognate (NEW!)
- Ethics in the Humanities: Religion, Philosophy, Politics
- Introduction to Religion
- Religion, Myth, and Interpretation

REL 151: Religion and Moral Choices

Papadakis | T 6:35pm – 9:20pm (on-line)

Using a narrative approach, this course introduces students to religious responses to dilemmas raised by issues such as capital punishment, biotechnology, abortion, euthanasia, and war. In this course, we will focus on formative narratives and biographies in Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Because this course is part of the Religion and Health Care program, it will highlight issues related to health care. Key topics include reproductive planning/care, eugenics, abortion, gender vs. sex, vaccinations, mental health, end of life care, euthanasia, and organ donation. The course will be divided into two parts: 1. Formative religious narratives and 2. Health care topics in relation to religious ethics.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Introducing Religion: Traditions and Texts (NEW!)
- Religion and Contemporary Issues: Culture, Society, and Identity (NEW!)
- Individualized Cognate (NEW!)
- Politics and Religion
- Introduction to Religion
- Religion and Medicine
- Ethics in the Humanities: Religion, Philosophy, Politics

REL 231/JUS 231: Jewish Civilization and Intro to Judaism, Jews, and Jewishness from Abraham to Wonder Woman

H. Green | T, TH 9:30am-10:45am

Introduction to Jewish Civilization from Abraham to present.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Introducing Religion: Traditions and Texts (NEW!)
- Individualized Cognate (NEW!)
- Judaism, Christianity, Islam
- The Evolution of the Jewish People in their Homeland and the Diaspora

REL 244/ARC 583/ARC 683/JUS 301: Special Topics Sacred Space

W. Green | T 5:05pm-7:50pm

An inter-disciplinary seminar, SACRED SPACE explores the multiple, layered intersections of religion and architecture, through case-studies of contemporary and historic religious buildings across culture, time and place. Students from across the University and the faculty investigate if, how, and to what extent architecture and the sacred are connected and if they require one another. Over the course of the semester, students prepare a case study for group discussion. This course is offered in the Harkness Table format which emphasizes discussion-based learning.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Religion and Contemporary Issues: Culture, Society, and Identity (NEW!)
- Individualized Cognate (NEW!)

REL 271: Introduction to Islam

Husayn | M, W 3:35pm – 4:50pm

Interested in learning about Islam? In this introductory course, students will learn about the religion, culture, and history of Islam. The course examines Muslim beliefs about God, the Prophet Muhammad, the Qur'an, the caliphate and the emergence of various sects. No prior knowledge is assumed.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Introducing Religion: Traditions and Texts (NEW!)
- Individualized Cognate (NEW!)
- Introduction to Religion
- Islam and the Arab World

REL 288: Chinese Religions

Ritzinger | T, TH 2:00pm – 3:15pm

Over the last generation, China has largely thrown off communist ideology, becoming an economic powerhouse that will shape the 21st century. Alongside economic growth has come a rediscovery and revitalization of its religious heritage. But what is this religious heritage? What makes it unique? What does it offer? And how does this heritage shape China's religious scene today? This course addresses these questions through a survey of Chinese religion focusing on the "Three Teachings"-Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism-as well as popular religion.

We will examine their development and mutual interaction, attending to their thought and practice as well as their historical and social context. Students will gain not only a familiarity with the religious traditions of China, but also cultivate their ability to think historically and to balance sympathetic and critical understanding.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Introducing Religion: Traditions and Texts (NEW!)
- Individualized Cognate (NEW!)
- Asian Religions: South and East Asia
- China Studies

REL 308: J The Greco-Roman Context of Early Christianity

Walsh | T, TH 12:30pm – 1:45pm

An examination of a range of first-century CE practices and texts that informed the lives of the people who we now call early Christians. Emphasis will be given to the historical, moral psychological, political, religious, rhetorical, archaeological and social contexts of

early Christianity. From practices like animal sacrifice, to discourses on the role of the gods in human activity, we will consider what aspects of Greco-Roman religion Christianity adapted or rejected. We will also discuss how people conducted their daily lives, and how they understood larger issues such as how the body worked, the significance of gender, morality and philosophy and how these discourses are reflected in the early theology of the Jesus movement.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Introducing Religion: Traditions and Texts (NEW!)
- Individualized Cognate (NEW!)
- Religion in the Ancient World

REL 311/JUS 301: J Prophecy and Prophetic Literature in the Hebrew Bible  
Callender | T, TH 12:30pm – 1:45pm

Prophecy in ancient Israel and Judah and the prophetic literature of the Hebrew Bible in relation to its ancient near-eastern historical, religious, and social context.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Introducing Religion: Traditions and Texts (NEW!)
- Individualized Cognate (NEW!)
- A Survey of Jewish Literature
- Judaism, Christianity, Islam
- Religion, Myth, and Interpretation
- Religion in the Ancient World

REL 330/AAS 390: Caribbean Religion  
Nwokocha | M, W 6:35pm – 7:50pm

Caribbean Religion with an emphasis on African Diaspora, Atlantic, and Creole religions and spirituality. Some of the religious traditions we will cover include Lucumí or La Regla de Ocha (Santería), Haitian Vodou, Spiritism, Regla de Palo Mayombe, Abakua, and Obeah. We will explore race; gender; material and visual culture; healing; as well as issues of stigma, marginalization, and activism.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Introducing Religion: Traditions and Texts (NEW!)
- Individualized Cognate (NEW!)
- Religion in the Americas
- The Caribbean through Literature, History, & the Arts
- Latin America Art and Culture
- Exploring the Caribbean through the Social Sciences
- Africa and the African Diaspora
- Spirituality

REL 345/CLA 222/GSS 350: Religion and Gender

Walsh | T, TR 11:00am – 12:15pm

Examination of what we know about the lives of women (and men) from the classical period through modernity, with an emphasis on sexuality and gender in ancient Greece and Rome. Using cross-cultural analysis and a variety of ancient literature, scholarship, and material culture, together we will reconstruct and (re)examine the socio-cultural environments and practices that have fostered Western discourses on sexual difference and gender identity over time, paying particular attention to how religion and religious practices are integral to understandings of the natural world, natural law and the self. Some of the questions we will ask include: What does it mean to be male or female? What can we discover about ourselves from the way(s) we have sex? How are all these things related to life, love, power?

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Religion and Contemporary Issues: Culture, Society, and Identity (NEW!)
- Individualized Cognate (NEW!)
- Religion, Myth and Interpretation
- Religion, Identity and Pop Culture
- A Cross-Cultural and Historic Examination of Sexuality
- Ethics in the Humanities, Religion, Philosophy, Politics

REL 354/PHI 351: Religion and the Problem of Evil

Shockley | T, TH 5:05pm – 6:20pm (on-line)

Major religious perspectives on the origin and nature of evil and human suffering.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Religion and Contemporary Issues: Culture, Society, and Identity (NEW!)
- Individualized Cognate (NEW!)
- Religion, Myth and Interpretation
- Ethics in the Humanities: Religion, Philosophy, Politics

REL 367: Black Religion in Literature: Afrofuturism and Africanjujuism

Nwokocha | M, W 8:05pm – 9:20pm

We will explore the history and religious creative genre of Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism and Africanjujuism. We begin by considering the literary and scholastic works on Afrofuturism by focusing on the works of three writers and scholars: N.K. Jeminsin, Nnedi Okorafor and Toni Morrison. In between, we will discuss issues of religion, language, dialect, political art, music, genre, and gender as we read poems, novels, speeches and short stories. Additionally, we will consider questions like what role has writing by Black religion played in the sci-fi and fantasy? How has this genre of writing been shaped by different ways of thinking about race and religion? How has race and religion, in turn, been shaped or constructed by that writing? And how do representations of gender and sexuality participate in a literary construction of race and religion?

Counts towards the following cognates:

- Religion and Contemporary Issues: Culture, Society, and Identify (NEW!)
- Individualized Cognate (NEW!)
- Spirituality
- Religion, Myth and Interpretation
- Religion, Identity, and Pop Culture
- Africa and the African Diaspora

REL 371/GSS 350: Women, Gender, and Islam

Husayn | M, W 5:05pm – 6:20pm

An examination of issues related to women and gender with an emphasis upon themes pertaining to the Muslim world. We will study the contributions of progressive/feminist Muslim writers in addition to secular academic research on the subject. Topics include



Qur'anic revelations concerning women; gendered ideals that developed after the founder's death; understanding how Islamic texts, rituals, and doctrines have both reinforced and challenged certain gender categories; and the experience of Muslims living in the U.S. and the Middle East, addressing racial as well as gendered hierarchies.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Introducing Religion: Traditions and Texts (NEW!)
- Religion and Contemporary Issues: Culture, Society, and Identity (NEW!)
- Individualized Cognate (NEW!)
- Islam and the Arab World
- Judaism, Christianity, Islam
- Religion, Identity, and Pop Culture
- A Cross-Cultural and Historic Examination of Sexuality

REL 375/JUS 301: Democracy and Religion in Israel and Palestine

H. Green | T, TH 11:00am – 12:55pm

Israel's evolution as a nation and a society by focusing on the impact of religion on ethnicity, culture, and democracy.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Religion and Contemporary Issues: Culture, Society, and Identity (NEW!)
- Individualized Cognate (NEW!)
- Politics and Religion
- Judaism, Christianity, Islam
- Studies of Modern Day Israel
- Religion, Identity and Pop Culture
- Ethics in the Humanities, Religion, Philosophy, Politics
- The Evolution of the Jewish People in their Homeland and the Diaspora

REL 384: Karma

Ritzinger | T, TH 11:00am – 12:15pm

Karma is one of the most central doctrines of Buddhism and by far the most viral. Through lip jars, pop songs, and TV shows, the concept has become familiar to many. But what is karma? How does it work? What does it mean to live in a karmic universe? This course will examine these questions through a consideration of Buddhist

doctrine, ritual, ethics, and narrative.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Introducing Religion: Traditions and Texts (NEW!)
- Individualized Cognate (NEW!)
- Ethics in the Humanities: Religion, Philosophy, Politics
- Spirituality
- Asian Religions South and East Asia

REL 399: Method and Theory in the Study of Religion

Callender | T, TH 9:30am – 10:45am

An examination of central issues and texts in the academic study of religion, with special focus on the rise of the discipline, its axioms, and its several schools of interpretation.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Individualized Cognate (NEW!)

REL 403: Supervised Readings in Religious Issues or Problems

W. Green | TBA

Independent study to enable students to read extensively in an area of personal interest in religious issues or problems.