

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

# DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES



## FALL 2026 COURSES

For further information, visit our website: <https://religion.as.miami.edu/>  
For advising appointments call 305-284-1634 or visit the Religious Studies office,  
Administration Building 521.

Classes available in Canelink March 9, 2026  
Registration begins March 30, 2026

**STUDENTS, PLEASE NOTE:** Since you will want to attend to the matter of cognates when you enroll, we are providing you with the current active cognates linked to the REL courses that are listed below, as of the printing of this Course Guide. Please be sure to check all your other course cognates. If you have already declared a cognate that is now deactivated, you WILL be able to complete the requirements. You may search for active and deactivated cognates by course at <https://cognates.miami.edu/> or consult the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

### **REL 101: Introduction to Religion**

[Callender | on-line](#)

An introduction to the study of religion focusing on the texts, peoples, and events identified with the traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The course includes an examination of the analytical category “religion” and considers how these well-known Asian and Abrahamic texts and traditions address a range of human concerns from spiritual and emotional to social and political.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Individualized Cognate in Arts & Humanities
- Islam and the Arab World
- Religious Traditions and Texts
- Contemporary Issues in Religion

### **REL 101: Introduction to Religion**

[Shockley | T, TH 3:30 pm – 4:45 pm | on-line](#)

This introductory course introduces students to the critical study of religious traditions. This course provides an overview of Abrahamic and Asian faith traditions (e.g., Judaism; Christianity; Islam; Zoroastrianism; Hinduism; Buddhism; Confucianism; Taoism) as worldviews. We explore religious perspectives concerning ultimate reality, humanity, and the world with their cultural, historical, moral, philosophical, practical, spiritual, and textual distinctiveness, similarities, and practices. Emphasis is also given to the nature, definitions, and contributions that religious studies makes in human thought and life. Lastly, we also consider how these faith traditions address a wide range of human concerns from spiritual and emotional to social and political.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Individualized Cognate in Arts & Humanities
- Islam and the Arab World
- Religious Traditions and Texts
- Contemporary Issues in Religion

## **REL 111: Introduction to the Bible: Tanakh, Old Testament**

**Callender | T, TH 9:30 am – 10:45 am**

An examination of the earliest form of the Bible, known to Judaism as the Tanakh and to Christianity as the Old Testament. The course will consider what traditional and modern approaches have suggested about the origins and growth of the Tanakh/OT within the historical and cultural context of ancient Western Asia and Northern Africa (Egypt), and how the texts of Tanakh/OT have functioned in different historical periods for different communities through today. Through close readings of biblical and other texts we will give special attention to issues such as: law, ethics, and justice; conceptions of God and other divine beings (angels, demons, etc.); divine revelation; and the analytical category "religion". Using various media we will consider the Bible both as a religious document and as a force in popular and political culture today.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Individualized Cognate in Arts & Humanities
- Religious Traditions and Texts
- The Evolution of the Jewish People in their Homeland and the Diaspora

## **REL 131/AMS 324: Religion in America**

**Kling | T, TH 11:00 am – 12:15 pm**

The history of religion in the U.S. from the pre-colonial period to the present. Includes study of the religion of Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, women, Protestants, Catholics, Jews, and members of cults.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Individualized Cognate in Arts & Humanities
- Religious Traditions and Texts

## **REL 231/JUS 231/AMS 324: Jewish Civilization and Intro to Judaism, Jews, and Jewishness from Abraham to Wonder Woman**

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

Introduction to Jewish Civilization from Abraham to present.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Individualized Cognate in Arts & Humanities
- Religious Traditions and Texts
- The Evolution of the Jewish People in their Homeland and the Diaspora

**REL 244/ARC 589: Sacred Space**  
Green, W. | TH 2:00 pm – 4:45 pm

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:

- Individualized Cognate in Arts & Humanities
- Individualized Cognate in People & Society
- Contemporary Issues in Religion

**REL 271: Introduction to Islam**  
Husayn | T, TH 3:30 pm – 4:45 pm

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:

- Individualized Cognate in Arts & Humanities
- Islam and the Arab World
- Religious Traditions and Texts

**REL 322: The Apostle Paul: Letters, Controversies, and Philosophy**  
Walsh | T, TH 12:30 pm – 1:45 pm

This course offers a close study of the first-century apostle Paul, whose letters—together with later pseudepigraphic letters—shaped early Christian thought and practice. We read selections from the undisputed letters alongside Deutero-/Pastoral epistles and early narratives about Paul to situate his voice within the ethical, philosophical, and social debates of the Greco-Roman world. Special attention is given to Paul's ethical reasoning, kinship language, and philosophical vocabulary, and to how his authority has been constructed, contested, and reimagined from antiquity to the present.

Fall 2026 focus: with reserved seats for Da Vinci Scholars, we will place added emphasis on ancient physics and medicine (e.g., Stoic and medical theories of the body, motion, *pneuma*)

to illuminate Paul's conceptual environment and later reception. Students gain historical literacy in Paul's world and the analytical tools to evaluate claims about his influence across time.

Counts for writing credit

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Individualized Cognate in Arts & Humanities
- Religious Traditions and Texts

### **REL 325: Jesus in Myth and History**

[Walsh | T, TH 2:00 pm – 3:15 pm](#)

Who was Jesus? This course surveys portrayals of Jesus of Nazareth from the earliest extant biographies to modern film and music, tracking how depictions shift with changing cultural, political, and devotional needs. We begin with first- and second-century lives of Jesus and the ancient Mediterranean context of their authors, then follow the figure through patristic theology, martyrdom discourse, and material culture (catacomb art, icons, relics), including debates over the "sexualization" of Jesus in modernity.

The second half examines nineteenth- and twentieth-century reconstructions—Jesus as moral philosopher, the "muscular Christianity" ideal—and culminates in contemporary media where earlier portrayals are reframed. Students develop methods for reading texts and images historically while asking the guiding question: Is Jesus who we make him?

Counts for writing credit.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Individualized Cognate in Arts & Humanities
- Individualized Cognate in People & Society
- Religious Traditions and Texts

### **REL 353: Religion and American Politics**

[Homayounvash | M, W 10:10 am – 11:25 am](#)

This course offers an in-depth exploration of the dynamic interplay between religion and politics in the United States, examining how religious ideas, institutions, and communities have shaped the nation's political imagination, public discourse, and policy landscape. Grounded in historical analysis and contemporary scholarship, students engage foundational constitutional debates surrounding church-state relations while also tracing the evolving role of religion in electoral politics, social movements, and civic life. Particular attention is given to the ways religious traditions have informed struggles over civil rights,

immigration, education, and foreign policy, as well as to the political mobilization of diverse faith communities in an increasingly pluralistic society. The course also addresses emerging challenges, including religious nationalism, secularization, interfaith engagement, and the negotiation of religious differences within democratic frameworks. Emphasizing interactive learning, the course integrates structured discussions, debates, case studies, and collaborative activities that invite students to engage actively with course themes and with one another. Through dialogue and reflective inquiry, students are encouraged to analyze competing perspectives, connect theoretical insights to contemporary issues, and cultivate skills in critical thinking, respectful discourse, and civic engagement.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Individualized Cognate in Arts & Humanities
- Individualized Cognate in People & Society

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

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

We will explore the origin and nature of evil, cruelty and suffering as it relates to various religious and philosophical worldviews in both Western and Eastern thought (e.g., nature of G-d, reality; humanity; ethics; beauty; happiness). Some of the major problems we will consider include moral evil, natural evil, pointless evil, G-d as author of evil; G-d as finite being, the non-existence of evil, and the non-existence of G-d. We will also study the logical and evidential problem of evil. We will also read and discuss insights made by thinkers such as St. Augustine, Buddha, Albert Camus, Philip Hallie, Laozi, C. S. Lewis, Blaise Pascal, Alvin Plantinga, Desmond Tutu, and a wide array of Jewish thinkers on the European Holocaust (e.g., Martin Buber; Ignaz Maybaum; R. L. Rubenstein).

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Individualized Cognate in Arts & Humanities
- Contemporary Issues in Religion

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

[Husayn | T, TH 5:05 pm – 6:20 pm](#)

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; understanding how Islamic texts 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:

- Individualized Cognate in Arts & Humanities
- Individualized Cognate in People & Society
- A Cross-Cultural and Historic Examination of Sexuality
- Islam and the Arab World

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

[Green, H. | T, TH 11:00 am – 12:15 pm](#)

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

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Individualized Cognate in Arts & Humanities
- Individualized Cognate in People & Society
- Politics and Religion
- Studies of Modern Day Israel
- The Evolution of the Jewish People in their Homeland and the Diaspora
- Contemporary Issues in Religion

### **REL399: Method and Theory in the Study of Religion**

[Callender | T, TH 2:00 pm – 3:15 pm](#)

This course is an introduction to fundamental issues of theory and method in the academic study of religion. Religion is at once the newest and oldest subject in the humanities, and its study experiences persistent redefinition and recasting. We will critically examine some of the more important modern and contemporary theories of religion, assessing not only their rigor and persuasiveness, but also how they help us to think about and address a range of issues humans face in society today and in life.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Individualized Cognate in Arts & Humanities
- Contemporary Issues in Religion
- Religious Traditions and Texts

### **REL 403: Supervised Reading in Religious Issues or Problems**

[Green, W. | Does Not Meet | By Instructor Permission](#)

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

### **REL 406/ Special Topics in Religious Issues or Problems: Religion and Human Evolution**

[Green, W. | W 5:05 pm – 7:50 pm](#)

If humans are part of the order of nature, and if evolutionary theories offer the most comprehensive and empirical description of that order, how do these theories explain the origin and persistence of religion in human experience? In this course we will work together to understand, analyze, and assess different contemporary answers to that question.

Counts toward the following cognate:

- Individualized Cognate in Arts & Humanities

### **REL 452: Ethics and Genetics**

Newell | T 5:05 pm – 7:50 pm

Pressing social, ethical, and legal issues raised by our constantly increasing knowledge of genetics, and the applications of this knowledge already available or being proposed. Access to and use of personal genetic information; race and genetics; the diagnosis and treatment of inherited diseases; new modalities of healthcare delivery becoming available through genetics; the current state of stem cell research; genetically modified animals and plants as sources of food, medicines, and fuel; and the use of genomics.