



UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES



**S P R I N G
2 0 2 2
COURSES**

Religious Studies Faculty Teaching Spring 2022



David W. Kling



Dexter E. Callender, Jr.



Justin Ritzinger



Lacy Crocker Papadakis



Catherine Newell



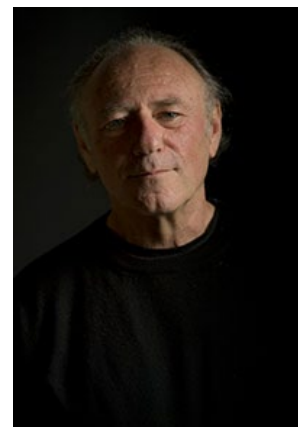
Daniel L. Pals



Robyn Walsh



Nebil Husayn



Henry A. Green



Paul Shockley



William Scott Green



Henry Maklakiewicz

Other Participating Faculty



Martin Tsang
Cuban Heritage Collection Librarian



Maria Galli Stampino
Dean of Undergraduate Affairs



Kim Grinfeder
School of Communication



Denis H. Hector
School of Architecture



Rula Jebreal
International Journalist



John Paul Russo
Department of Classics

REL 101: Introduction to Religion

Callender | Online

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

REL 101: Introduction to Religion

Shockley | MWF 10:30 – 11:20

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

REL 105: One Goal: Transforming the Self in Asian Religions

Ritzinger | T, TR 1:00 – 2:15

A selective survey of some of the continent's major religious traditions that attempts to provide a sense of their diversity, including a hint of their internal diversity. We will encounter major figures, doctrines, and ethical precepts, but special attention will be paid to one key element shared that distinguishes them from their Abrahamic counterparts (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam): the one goal of self-transformation and the techniques for achieving it. Here we will find the differences among traditions thrown into stark relief even as we encounter surprising parallels and continuities. Along the way students will be exposed to major concepts and approaches to the academic study of religion.

REL 111: Introduction to the Old Testament/Hebrew Scriptures

Callender | T, TR 11:20 – 12:35

The history and literature of ancient Israel and early Judaism.

REL 151: Religion and Moral Choices

Papadakis | T 6:00 – 9:00

Religious responses to dilemmas raised by issues such as capital punishment, biotechnology, abortion, euthanasia, and war.

REL 232: A Global History of Christianity

Kling | T, TR 9:40

A survey of the historical development of Christianity from the first century to the present, focusing on the many adaptations of Christianity in diverse social and cultural contexts.

REL 330: Caribbean Religion

Tsang | Online

Caribbean religion with an emphasis on African Diaspora and Creole religions. The religious traditions we will cover: Rastafarianism, Regla de Ocha (Santeria), Voodoo, Espiritismo, Regla de Palo, and Obeah.

REL 334: The American Jewish Experience: Hollywood and Popular Culture

Halpern | TR 6:00 – 8:55

Analysis and interpretation of the image of the Jew and the Jewish experience in American cinema, with emphasis on how the experience and attitudes of Americans in general and the American Jewish community in particular have been reflected on the screen from the pre-World War II period until the present and on the tension between maintaining an ethnic identity and assimilating.

REL 345: Religion and Gender

Walsh | T, TR 11:20 – 12:35

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?

**REL 349: All Roads Lead to Rome: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Religion and Rome
(Taught at the American University of Rome)**

Russo, Newell, Pals, Kling, Callender, H. Green, Stampino

This course examines Rome's role as importer, exporter, cultivator, and transformer of religion and the religious life, giving attention to both the past and the present. Students will increase their awareness of the important elements of the major religions discussed in class—their myths, symbols, rituals, doctrines, moral codes, and artistic expressions—and the ways in which Rome has influenced them.

REL 352: Religion and Science

Maklakiewicz | T 6:00 – 8:55

The religious and ethical issues created by modern science and technology.

REL 354: Religion and the Problem of Evil

Shockley | MWF 1:00 – 1:50

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

REL 356: Myth and Religion

Callender | T, TR 2:40 – 3:55

How humans use language to form and communicate conceptions of reality, focusing on the highly elusive concept "myth"; special attention to the concept's usefulness for thinking about religion.

REL 360: Religion and Bioethics

Newell | T, TR 2:40 – 3:55

The implications of religious thought for contemporary problems of biomedical ethics.

REL 362: The Sanctity of Life: Selected Themes from the Ancient World to the Present
(Taught at the American University of Rome)

Newell, Pals, Kling, Callender, H. Green, Stampino, W.S. Green

This course examines the religious foundation of the idea that human life is “sacred” and considers a wide range of historical and ethical issues associated with this central concept of Western thought. It explores the meaning of the multi-faceted phrase “sanctity of life,” including its implications for such ethical and legal concerns as conception, birth, and termination of life; human dignity and human rights; the quality of life; and social justice. Some of the issues considered will include bigotry and prejudice; economic and social injustice; euthanasia, infanticide, and suicide; genocide, holy war, jihad, terrorism, and violence; health care and its cost; human trafficking and slavery; social stratification; and the afterlife, especially in Dante’s *Inferno*. We will examine how “life” is defined and described in different cultures at different times in history, and how various religions have influenced these matters.

REL 369: Is Star Wars a Religion?

Walsh | T, TR 2:40 – 3:55

From a mysterious force that links the universe, to the resurrection of power figures, from supernatural adoptions to the clothes and the ruins of its holy cities, the Star Wars franchise both invokes and evokes associations with what we might call religious themes and imagery. This course will explore the possible intersections between the Star Wars universe and the category of religion to test the proposition that Star Wars is- or perhaps one day might become- a religion. Among the questions we will ask through this case study are: what does it take for something to be a religion? How do new religious movements start? How do we theorize the study of religion? What turns certain narratives into canon? And, crucially, do the similarities between Star Wars and religion represent intentional strategy on the part of the filmmakers, writers, artists, imagineers, or does it reflect a larger social phenomenon?

REL 371: Women, Gender, and Islam

Husayn | T, TR 9:40 – 10:55

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.

REL 372: Islam and the United States: The Politics of Race, Media, and Terrorism

Husayn | T, TR 1:00 – 2:15

A critical review of the cultural and political history of U.S. relations with various Muslim communities both domestic and foreign. Major themes include the experience of Muslims in North America, xenophobia, racism, national security, law enforcement and violence.

REL 383: Activist Bodhisattvas: Buddhist Ethics and Social Engagement

Ritzinger | T, TR 4:20 – 5:35

One of the most important developments in modern Buddhism has been the turn toward social engagement and activism. Across Asia and beyond, Buddhist organizations and movements have emerged that consider improving society to be an intrinsic Buddhist concern alongside the classic focus on perfecting the self. Where does this development come from? To what degree is it a departure from previous tradition? How do these movements reconceive and rearticulate Buddhist teachings and practices to address the problems of their societies and the global community? What perspectives does socially engaged Buddhism offer to other movements seeking to address the ills of our time? This course will explore these questions through a consideration of selected examples drawn from several Buddhist traditions.

REL 401: Supervised Reading in Religious Literature or Texts

W. Green | TBA

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

REL 403: Supervised Reading 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.

REL 406/COM 406: Special Topics in Religious Issues or Problems: Persuasion, Propaganda, and Genocide

W. Green, R. Jebreal (internationally recognized journalist) | T 6:00 – 8:30

The course examines how governments and other groups use propaganda to persuade citizens to murder or harm other citizens. It covers theories of propaganda and persuasion and examines case studies such as the Holocaust, Rwanda, China, and aspects of American media and society. It is a discussion-based course.

REL 406: Special Topics in Religious Issues or Problems

Hector (Architecture), Grinfeder (Communication), W. Green | TR 6:00 – 8:45

The course explores how artificial intelligence and virtual reality will affect the future of religion in both practice and spatial experience. It involves student-designed collaborative projects.

*****JANUARY INTERSESSION COURSE*****

REL 236: Cults and New Religious Movements in America

Kling | Winter Session B | Online, Asynchronous

Twentieth and twenty-first century religious groups in America, so-called “cults” or new religious movements (NRM’s), located on the periphery of “mainstream” religion. An examination of the origins, beliefs, attraction, and interaction of the NRMs from a variety of disciplinary perspectives (historical, psychological, sociological) as well as from another variety of disciplinary perspectives (potential for violence, “brainwashing”, involvement of women, and charismatic leadership). The goal is to increase our understanding of certain aspects of contemporary religious activity and the general societal response to them, and hence, of religion in general. The task is not to commend or condemn particular religious’ groups, but rather to attempt to reach some understanding of them, first on their terms, then on ours in the appropriate disciplinary contexts.