



DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

F A L L
2 0 1 9
COURSES

REL 101: Introduction to Religion

Maldonado | TR 11:00AM – 12:15PM // Callender | Online Course

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:

- Asian Religions: South and East Asia
- Introduction to Religion
- Religion, Identity, and Pop Culture

REL 102: Problem of God

Maklakiewicz | R 5:00PM – 7:40PM

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:

- Ethics in the Humanities: Religion, Philosophy, Politics
- Introduction to Religion
- Religion, Myth, and Interpretation

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

Ritzinger | TR 9:30AM – 10:45AM

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.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Introduction to Religion
- Spirituality
- China Studies
- Asian Religions: South and East Asia

REL 121: Introduction to the New Testament

Walsh | TR 2:00PM – 3:15PM

What do we know about the beginnings of Christianity and how do we know it? This course is designed to introduce you to the historical circumstances that gave rise to the religious movement we now call Christianity. Through the close and careful reading of both New Testament literature and a variety of relevant ancient sources from outside of the Christian canon, we will work together to understand the world of the first through third centuries CE. Beyond literary evidence, we will also use tools from other disciplines such as archaeology, art history, anthropology, the social sciences, and the cognitive sciences to help us understand

how the Jesus movement took root and flourished in the Roman world. This course does not presuppose any prior knowledge of Christian, Roman or Jewish history. All texts will be read in translation.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Introduction to Religion
- Judaism, Christianity, Islam
- Religion in the Ancient World

REL 131: Religion in America

Kling | TR 3:30PM - 4:45PM

An introductory survey of the history of religion in America, including religions that have been most prominent (Protestantism, Catholicism, Judaism), native to the land (Native American), and non-traditional ("cults," Buddhism, Islam).

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Introduction to Religion
- Judaism, Christianity, Islam
- Religion in the Americas

REL 151: Religion and Moral Choices

Swanson | T 5:00PM - 7:40PM

An introduction to major themes and important figures in religious and philosophical ethics. We will read, discuss, and write about moral issues in the major religions.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Introduction to Religion
- Ethics in the Humanities: Religion, Philosophy, Politics
- Religion and Medicine
- Politics and Religion

REL 161 - Religion and Medicine: Health Care as Spiritual Practice

Newell | TR 3:30PM - 4:45PM

An exploration of the history of medical care and the history of medicine as calling, as well as the changing professionalism of health care; the role of virtue ethics in the practice of medicine; the tensions between religion and medicine; the place of personal religious beliefs in health care; and the changing landscape of health, holism, healing, faith, and the science of medicine.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Religion and Medicine
- Spirituality

REL 231/JUS 231: Jewish Civilization: Culture, Society and Religion

H. Green | TR 9:30AM - 10:45AM

A survey of the development of Judaism from antiquity to modern times.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Judaism, Christianity, Islam
- The Evolution of the Jewish People in their Homeland and the Diaspora

REL 250: Spiritual, Not Religious: Spirituality in the 21st Century

Newell | TR 12:30PM – 1:45PM

An examination of the spiritual outlets and the fabric of religious life in the 21st century, including the New Age movement, the rise of yoga as a spiritual practice, the growth of the self-help phenomenon, the influence of spiritually-oriented figures like Oprah, and the adaptation of religious practice to spiritual seeking. In particular, we will filter this discussion through the experience of the growing percentage of relatively young Americans have no affiliation with religious institutions, many of whom feel attracted to an uncoordinated and decentralized spirituality directed by an individual's life and practice, rather than a church or particular religion.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Religion in the Americas
- Spirituality

REL 271: Introduction to Islam

Husayn | TR 11:00AM – 12:15PM

An introduction to the religion, culture, and history of Islam. This course examines Muslim beliefs about God, the Prophet Muhammad, the Qur'an, the caliphate and the emergence of various sects.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Introduction to Religion
- Judaism, Christianity, Islam
- Islam and the Arab World

REL 311: Prophecy and Prophetic Literature in the Hebrew Bible

Callender | TR 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:

- Judaism, Christianity, Islam
- Religion, Myth and Interpretation
- Religion in the Ancient World
- A Survey of Jewish Literature

REL 330: Caribbean Religion

Maldonado | Online Course

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

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Religion in the Americas
- Spirituality
- Africa and the African Diaspora
- The Caribbean through Literature, History, and the Arts
- Latin American Art and Culture
- Exploring the Caribbean through the Social Sciences

REL 345/CLA 322/WGS 350: Religion and Gender

Walsh | W 3:35PM – 6:05PM

Examination of what we know about the lives of woman (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.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Religion, Myth, and Interpretation
- A Cross-Cultural and Historic Examination of Sexuality
- Religion, Identity, and Pop Culture
- Ethics in the Humanities: Religion, Philosophy, Politics

REL 371: Women, Gender, and Islam

Husayn | TR 12:30PM – 1:45PM

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:

- Judaism, Christianity, Islam
- A Cross-Cultural and Historic Examination of Sexuality
- Religion, Identity, and Pop Culture
- Islam and the Arab World

REL 375: Democracy and Religion in Israel and Palestine

H. Green | TR 11:00AM – 12:15PM

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:

- Judaism, Christianity, Islam
- Ethics in the Humanities: Religion, Philosophy, Politics
- Politics and Religion
- Studies of Modern Day Israel
- The Evolution of the Jewish People in their Homeland and the Diaspora
- Religion, Identity, and Pop Culture

REL 388: Living Stories: Narrative in Asian Traditions

Ritzinger | TR 2:00PM – 3:15PM

In popular culture, Asian religions are referred to as "Eastern Philosophy." Yet, philosophical doctrine is only one part of Asian religious traditions and for many not the most prominent. Oftentimes narrative, key stories or modes of storytelling, occupies a more central role. But what is that role? How do narratives

transmit religious ideas and values and inform ritual life? How do they evolve over time? And how do religious individuals and communities drawn upon them to work in the world? This course will address these questions through a focus on a few narratives selected Asian religions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. We will attend to these stories as living phenomena that evolve over time and play a vital role in their communities and also as something that those communities live with as they make their way through the world.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Asian Religions: South and East Asia
- China Studies
- Religion, Myth and Interpretation

REL 406: Religion, Mind, and Society

W. Green and M. McCullough | T 5:45PM – 8:15PM

The course applies major approaches of cognitive science and cultural evolution to the understanding of religion.

REL 499: Method and Theory in the Study of Religion

Callender | R 5:00PM – 7:40PM

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.

REL 505 / CLA 505: Seminar in Ancient Studies: Archaeology of the Holy Land during the Second Temple Period

Dr. David Graf | T 6:25PM – 9:05PM

The focus of this course will be the Jewish community from the rise of the Hasmonean Dynasty until the Bar Kokhba Revolt (167 BCE to 135 CE). The emphasis will be the Late Hellenistic and early Roman imperial periods, particularly the Herodian kingdom during which time Judaism was transformed and Christianity emerged. The aim of the course is to acquaint you with the significant archaeological discoveries that illuminate the era, the method and theory used in interpreting material culture, including comparative, contextual and problem-oriented approaches currently used in Near Eastern archaeology.