



# DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

*SPRING  
2019  
COURSES*

**REL 101: Introduction to Religion- URome Students ONLY**

Callender, H. Green, W. Green, Kling, Pals, Stampino, Walsh | Study Abroad

This course gives students an introductory exposure to various religions of the world as seen from the perspective of the academic study of religion. It takes an objective and non-sectarian approach and is intended to inform rather than to persuade. The course assumes that students are capable of understanding worldviews and value systems different from their own and that sympathetic exposure to such alternatives is both an integral part of a university education and an essential component of functioning as a responsible citizen of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Counts toward the following cognates:

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

**REL 101: Introduction to Religion**

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 101: Introduction to Religion**

Billings | MWF 10:10AM - 11:00AM

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 111/ JUS 301: Introduction to the Old Testament / Hebrew Scriptures**

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

An introduction to the content and background of the Hebrew Bible and to modern approaches to its study. The course will examine what some of these approaches have suggested about the origin and growth of the Hebrew Bible in its ancient Near Eastern context. The course will include a study of (a) the history of ancient Israel, including its religious and social institutions, (b) the literary forms and themes of the Hebrew Bible, and (c) some of the sociological forces involved in its formation.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Introduction to Religion
- Religion, Myth, and Interpretation
- A survey of Jewish Literature
- Religion in the Ancient World
- Judaism, Christianity, Islam
- The Evolution of the Jewish People in their Homeland and the Diaspora

**REL 151: Religion and Moral Choices**

Billings | W 5:00PM-7:40PM

An introduction to major themes and important figures in religious and philosophical ethics. We will read, discuss, and write about ethical issues ranging from abortion to war, including topics such as the death penalty, environmentalism, and stem cell research.

Counts toward the following cognates:

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

**REL 232: A Global History of Christianity**

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

An introduction to the history, themes, and issues in the history of Christianity from the first century to the present. Attention will be given to a variety of issues: theological (the formulation of beliefs); social (the formation of Christian communities); political (the interaction between political structures and the Christian church); biographical (the personal dimension of faith); and the role of Scripture.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Introduction to Religion
- Western Civilization: Historical Approaches
- Judaism, Christianity, Islam

**REL 236: Cults and New Religious Movements in America (January Intersession)**

Kling | WRF 5:30PM - 9:45PM & Sa: 9:00AM - 1:00PM

Twentieth and twenty-first century religious groups in America, so-called “cults” or new religious movements (NRMs), 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.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Spirituality
- Religion in the Americas

**REL 242: Religion in Revolutionary History**

Pals | Online Course

Explores the pivotal role of religion in the revolutions that have shaped the modern Western world: the Puritan Revolt in 17th-century England, the American/French Revolutions of 1776 and 1789, and the Russian (Communist) Revolution of 1917.

**REL 288: Chinese Religions**

Ritzinger | TR 9:30AM - 10:45AM

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:

- Asian Religions: South and East Asia
- China Studies

**REL 302: The Hellenistic Age**

Graf | TR 9:30AM - 10:45AM

Conquests of Alexander the Great and the spread of Greek culture in the Near East under Alexander's successors until the death of Cleopatra in 31 B.C.E.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Religion in the Ancient World

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

Walsh | TR 2:00PM - 3:15PM

This course will explore 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:

- Religion in the Ancient World

**REL 314 / JUS 314: The Rise of Judaism**

Billings | MWF 1:25PM - 2:15PM

The history and literature of early Judaism, covering the period from the fall of Jerusalem in 587/586 BCE to the beginnings of rabbinic Judaism and the formation of the Mishnah (ca.200 CE).

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Judaism, Christianity, Islam

**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 334/JUS 360: The American Jewish Experience**

H. Green | T 6:25PM - 9:05PM

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.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- American Studies: Politics and Religion
- Popular Culture
- The Evolution of the Jewish People in their Homeland and the Diaspora

**REL 351: Death and Dying**

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

For as long as we have documented history on the subject, human beings have debated issues about what it means to be mortal, what it means to live well, how to die well and whether death is truly the end of life. This

course surveys discourses about death and death rituals from the ancient Mediterranean (ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome) to the present day. Some of the issues we will discuss include (but are not limited to): the history of certain perspectives on illness, death and burial; the relationship between organized religious systems and death and dying; personhood; theodicy; euthanasia; suicide; and the afterlife.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Ethics in the Humanities: Religion, Philosophy, Politics
- Religion, Identity, and Pop Culture
- Religion and Medicine

### **REL 352: Religion and Science**

Maklakiewicz | R 5:00PM - 7:40PM

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

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Religion and Medicine

### **REL 354: Religion and the Problem of Evil**

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

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

Counts toward the following cognates:

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

### **REL 356: Myth and Religion**

Callender | M 5:00PM - 7:40PM

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.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Religion, Myth, and Interpretation

### **REL 358/AAS 390: The Color of God: Race and Religion**

Maldonado | TR 11:00AM - 12:15PM

This course will examine the role of race and ethnicity within the discipline of religious studies. We will emphasize the manner in which racial and ethnic identity have contributed to religious identity, and the way in which religion has functioned within the struggles of racially and ethnically marginalized peoples. This course will focus on the Americas and draw from diverse racial, ethnic, and religious traditions.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Religion in the Americas
- Religion, Identity, and Pop Culture

- Africa and the African Diaspora
- Spirituality

**REL 362: The Sanctity of Life: Selected Themes from the Ancient World to the Present - URome Students ONLY**  
Callender, H. Green, W. Green, Kling, Pals, Stampino, Walsh | Study Abroad

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. 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.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Ethics in the Humanities: Religion, Philosophy, Politics

**REL 370: Islam in the Modern World**  
Homayounvash | TR 8:00AM - 9:15AM

Islam's encounter with the west, the impact of modernization on the Muslim World, and the rise of Islamic Fundamentalism. Islam in America and the Afro-American Islamic movements will also be discussed.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Judaism, Christianity, Islam
- Religion, Identity, and Pop Culture

**REL 372/AAS 390: Islam and the United States: The Politics of Race, Media and Terrorism**  
Homayounvash | TR 9:30AM - 10:45AM

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.

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Judaism, Christianity, Islam
- Religion in the Americas

**REL 384: Karma**  
Ritzinger | TR 12:30PM - 1:45PM

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:

- Asian Religions: South and East Asia



- Ethics in the Humanities: Religion, Philosophy, Politics
- Spirituality

**REL 406: Sacred Spaces**

W. Green and D. Hector | T 5:45PM – 8:00PM

This course explores the intersections of religion and architecture. Through a close study of a global range of contemporary and historic religious buildings, it will ask if, how, and to what extent the sacred and architecture need one another. The course will be a discussion-based seminar.

**REL 409: Human Rights in the Middle East: Refugees and Displacement**

H. Green | M 3:00PM - 5:30PM

Over the last 70 years, millions of people have been displaced from North Africa and the Middle East: Copts (Egypt), Jews (from the Atlantic Ocean to the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers), Kurds and Yazidis in Iraq, and Syrians (Christian and Moslem). The course examines the reasons why these minorities and populations have been displaced. Highlighting the International Declaration of Human Rights ratified by the United Nations in the wake of the Holocaust (1951), the course also engages students in collecting and documenting the testimonies and stories of these refugees within South Florida. The narratives include life in their countries of origin, their story of leaving and their experience of resettling in a new country. Core themes such as transnational identity, exile, diaspora, migration and the “other” are central to the course. Internship opportunities for students are also available. The course is part of an international project, Sephardic Voices, and mirrors Spielberg’s Holocaust/Shoah Project but with an emphasis on non-Europeans and Islamic countries.”

Counts toward the following cognates:

- Community Engagement and Social Change
- Study of Aspects of the Holocaust

**REL 505 / CLA 505: Seminar in Ancient Studies: Age of Augustus**

Dr. David Graf | T 6:25PM – 9:05PM

The Age of Augustus saw revolutionary changes that transformed Rome, Romanized the provinces, and witnessed an unequalled era of peace and prosperity across the Mediterranean world. This course will track these developments between 27 BCE and 68 CE, from Augustus to Nero, by analysis of the major sources, films, and a survey of the archaeological remains of the early empire.