Religion Courses (RELS)

Courses

RELS 1020. Religions of the World — 3 hrs.
Living religions with emphasis on texts, beliefs, tradition, values, and practices. (Fall, Spring, Summer)

RELS 1030. What is Religion? — 3 hrs.
Basic forms and views of religious phenomena, such as encounter, tradition, ritual, community, divine law, meditation, mysticism, response to life-crisis, and personal growth and fulfillment. (Variable)

RELS 1040. The Power of Myth: (Topic) — 3 hrs.
The Power of Myth examines the functions of "myth" in religious texts, beliefs, rituals, institutions, and communities. Drawing upon key methods and approaches in the Study of Religion, this course introduces students to myths and myth-making as a creative, historical-cultural expression found in many religious communities. Specific myths will be examined in this course as well as its relationship to specific cultural contexts and communities. Topic and theme will differ across sections, but will draw from a range of creative works from ancient sacred texts to popular US culture. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 hours on different topics. (Fall and Spring)

American Religious Diversity examines the meanings and functions of religion in the United States by focusing on marginalized religious identities, communities, and institutions. Drawing upon methods used in the cultural study of religion, students will gain greater awareness of the rich diversity of religious life in the United States while also learning about historical instances of religious intolerance within US history. (Fall and Spring)

RELS 1510. Religion, Ethics, and Film — 3 hrs.
Introduction to study of religion through critical examination of a variety of contemporary films. Draws on student visual literacy as an approach to the study of religion. (Variable)

RELS 1540. Ethics in Business — 3 hrs.
Application of ethical principles and analytic methods to contemporary issues in business. Topics include moral responsibility of corporations and their regulation; economic policy, business practices, and social justice; rights and obligations of employers and employees; meaningful work, motivation, and the worker; affirmative action and reverse discrimination; and environment and natural limits of capitalism. (Same as PHIL 1540) (Variable)

Introduction to history and ideas of Old Testament and other Hebrew scriptures. (Fall)

Introduction to history and ideas of New Testament and early Christian writings. (Spring)

RELS 2100. Great Living Religions: Hinduism and Buddhism — 3 hrs.
Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Islam. (Even Falls)

RELS 2110. Great Living Religions: Confucianism, Daoism, and Zen — 3 hrs.
Daoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Shintoism. (Odd Falls)

RELS 2120. Great Living Religions: Judaism and Islam — 3 hrs.
Study of the doctrines and practices of Judaism and Islam in their cultural context with attention to historical development and current situation. (Odd Springs)

RELS 2130. Great Living Religions: Christianity — 3 hrs.
Introductory survey of development, beliefs, practices, and varieties of Christianity. (Even Springs)

RELS 2140. Philosophy of Religion — 3 hrs.
Examination of philosophical discussions on the nature and function of religion and religious language; special attention to how philosophical frameworks and methods shape understanding of religion and talk about God and human fulfillment. (Same as PHIL 2140) (Variable)

RELS 2220. Faith and Reason: Philosophy in the Middle Ages — 3 hrs.
Traces the historical development of philosophical thought on the interrelation of religious faith and reason in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic philosophical traditions. (Same as PHIL 2220) (Even Springs)

RELS 2550. Environmental Ethics — 3 hrs.
Introduction to and application of ethical theory to environmental issues, including responsibility for plants and animals, pollution, natural resources, and population growth. (Same as PHIL 2550) (Variable)

RELS 2570. Good Sex: The Ethics of Human Sexuality — 3 hrs.
This course introduces students to a range of ethical perspectives (religious and non-) on what constitutes good sex, morally speaking. It then brings these perspectives to bear on a number of issues in the realm of sexual ethics including: homosexuality, casual sex, sex for sale, and abortion. (Same as PHIL 2570) (Even Springs)

RELS 2600. Religion and the Public Schools — 3 hrs.
This course is a study of the relationship between religion, law, and public education in the United States. Through this course, students will understand how and why the role of religion in public education has been lived, legislated, and adjudicated in complicated (and sometimes contradictory) ways. This interdisciplinary course draws from studies of education, law, political science, history, and religion. (Even Falls)

RELS 3110. Perspectives on Death and Dying — 3 hrs.
Multidisciplinary study of death, dying, and bereavement across cultures, religious and ethnic groups, and historical periods, with attention to ritual and memoir, ethical dilemmas at the end of life, and psychology of mourning. (Same as CAP 3194 and PHIL 3110) (Fall and Spring)

RELS 3120. Myth and Symbol — 3 hrs.
Investigation of meaning and significance of religious myths and symbols, and theories used to study them. (Variable)

RELS 3140. Religion and Its Critics — 3 hrs.
Issues raised by encounter between traditional Christian faith and modern concepts and methods of philosophy, science, history,
sociology, and cultural criticism. Examination of positions of both 19th- and 20th-century theologians. (Variable)

RELS 3150. Women and Christianity — 3 hrs.
Examination of history and function of gender in symbolization of Christian tradition; exploration of institutionalization of sex roles in Christianity; discussion of interaction between the Christian religion and cultural patterns that define the social role, status, and image of women. Interested students are encouraged to contact the instructor. (Variable)

As they read Religion and its Monsters by Timothy Beal and Frankenstein by Mary Shelley, students enhance their knowledge of the role monsters play in religion and develop proficiency in recognizing and analyzing religious undercurrents in our contemporary fascination with monsters. Students draw on skills/interests from their majors to complete a project about monsters in a contemporary novel. Prerequisite(s): junior standing. [Same as CAP 3157] (Summer)

RELS 3160. Religion and Society — 3 hrs.
Religious institutions and their social context; key issues located at the intersection of religion and society (e.g., violence), and social function of religion. (Variable)

RELS 3180. Religion and Politics: (Topics) — 3 hrs.
In this course, students will examine the relationship between religion and politics. Students will familiarize themselves with the ways religion shapes several aspects of political life, such as elections, public activism, policy-making, civil service, and civic discourse. Focusing on interactions within and among religious traditions, students will develop their knowledge of critical thinking methods in Religious Studies by analyzing the role of religion in political participation and political structures. Special emphasis will be given to understanding contemporary issues, rotating international and domestic topics each time it is offered. May be repeated for up to 6 hours. (Odd Falls)

RELS 3200. Religion and Law — 3 hrs.
Americans have long argued about the proper role of religion in public life: can the Bible be taught in schools? What about contemporary flashpoints like abortion and same-sex marriage? Why do religious groups receive special privileges and exemptions under American law? As a class, we will consider how religious groups work alongside and against U.S. law and how, in turn, American law engages, encourages, and restricts religious practice in America. Challenges and debates in American religion and law have reflected the changing nature of the people who make up the United States. We will explore these questions through examining how religion and law affects American politics, education, and the marketplace. (Even Springs)

RELS 3400. Religion and Race — 3 hrs.
This course is a study of the relationship between religion and race in the modern era. Through this course, students will understand how and why ideas about “race” have been invented and maintained, as well as how these ideas have themselves been co-constituted alongside longstanding religious ideas and practices. Particular attention will be paid to the way in which governments mark religious and racial differences through legislation and policing. This course argues that the study of religion is crucial to understanding how race intersects with law, government, gender, and history. (Odd Springs)

RELS 3500. Religion and Ethics — 3 hrs.
Examination of key issues having to do with religion and ethics, including the moral function of religion, religious pluralism, war and peace, freedom and responsibility, religion and politics, religion and gender, and social justice. (Variable)

RELS 3510. Bio-Medical Ethics — 3 hrs.
Application of principles and analytic methods of ethical theory to contemporary issues in medical practice and research. Topics include fundamental concepts of health and disease, life and death; rights and obligations of medical practitioners and their patients; informed consent and confidentiality; abortion and euthanasia; reproductive and transplantation technologies; and health policy and the provision and rationing of health care. (Same as CAP 3173 and PHIL 3510) (Fall and Spring)

RELS 4186/5186. Studies in Religion — 3 hrs.
Topics listed in Schedule of Classes. Prerequisite(s): junior standing. (Fall and Spring)

RELS 4230/5230. Religion in America — 3 hrs.
Investigation of religious movements and beliefs from colonial times to present, with attention to religion and the U.S. Constitution. Prerequisite(s): junior standing. (Same as HIST 4250/5250) (Odd Springs)

RELS 4490. Professional Development Seminar — 3 hrs.
Through reflection, integration, and professional discernment, majors in the study of religion will bring their work in the major to critical integration, clarifying what they have done and linking their achievements with life goals. Prerequisite(s): junior standing or consent of the instructor. (Even Falls)

RELS 4600. Internship in Religion — 1-3 hrs.
Experiential learning combined with skills and knowledge learned in the Study of Religion major. Prerequisite(s): 12 hours in RELS courses; junior standing. (Fall and Spring)