Courses in Religious Studies

Spring 2020

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**REL 1000: RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD**

This course provides a general introduction to the world’s religions, including major traditions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, as well as smaller indigenous traditions. The approach of the course is objective and academic; it is not designed to advocate any particular religious perspective or ideology. This course fulfills the General Education Humanities requirement and may count toward a concentration in Religious Studies.

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<td>001</td>
<td>M W F</td>
<td>11:30-12:20</td>
<td>Coates 209</td>
<td>Kenny Smith</td>
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<td>002</td>
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<td>12:30-1:20</td>
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<td>005</td>
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<td>Coates 220</td>
<td>Madhuri Yadlapati</td>
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**REL 1004: OLD TESTAMENT**

This course is a broad survey that covers most of the literature of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) and addresses literary, historical, archaeological, and theological issues. We will employ historical-critical methods to examine the religious ideas and practices of ancient Israel against the background of the cultures of its near eastern neighbors, including Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Greece, and Syria. To prepare for each topic of lecture/discussion, we will read numerous narratives from the Bible, related passages from the required textbook, and selected articles by modern scholars.

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<td>001</td>
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<td>7:30-8:50</td>
<td>Stubbs 116</td>
<td>Stuart Irvine</td>
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<td>002</td>
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<td>Coates 209</td>
<td>Charles Isbell</td>
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**REL 1005: NEW TESTAMENT**

This course will introduce you to the history, literature, and religion of the earliest period of Christianity (from about 30 to 150 CE). We will see how Christianity arose out of the Jewish religion and how it spread in the Greco-Roman world. We will examine a variety of writings from this period, including the collection of early Christian literature known as the New Testament. You will learn the historical, critical methods by which scholars study these writings as sources for our knowledge of the origins of Christianity.

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<td>001</td>
<td>M W F</td>
<td>10:30-11:20</td>
<td>Williams 215</td>
<td>Delbert Burkett</td>
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<td>002</td>
<td>T Th</td>
<td>12:00-1:20</td>
<td>BEC 1735</td>
<td>Bradley K. Storin</td>
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REL 2000: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF RELIGION

This course provides a general introduction to the study of religion as an academic and humanistic subject. Though it discusses many different religions, it does not survey the religions of the world. Instead it investigates the nature and scope of religion itself, raising the question, “What is religion?” In the process it introduces students to various theories about religion and the various methods used by scholars who study religion.

Section 001: M W F 12:00-1:20 Audubon 104 Instructor: Michael Pasquier

REL 2027: ASIAN RELIGIONS

Asian civilizations have a long history with far-reaching impact and influence on our global community today. One does not need to travel to Asia to be affected by Asian people, economic and political activities, cuisine, arts and entertainment, health treatment options, and religious orientations. The religious landscape of Asia is crucial to understanding Asian civilizations. This course focuses on a variety of Asian religious traditions, including fundamental teachings of the Hindu, Confucian, Taoist, Shinto, and Buddhist traditions of India, Tibet, China, and Japan. We explore how religious values influence decision-making processes in personal and public spheres.

Section 001: T Th 1:30-2:50 Coates 236 Instructor: Paula Arai

REL 2029: JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND ISLAM

This course introduces students to the histories, teachings, beliefs and practices Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Additionally, students will have the opportunity to engage with guest speakers, take field trips to synagogues, churches and mosques, and watch a number of videos pertaining to contemporary issues (e.g. women’s roles, waging war) within these religions.

Section 001: T Th 10:30-11:50 Tureaud 109 Instructor: Maria Rethelyi

REL 3004/ANTH 3004: ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE BIBLE

Since Napoleon’s expedition to Egypt and Palestine in 1798, archaeologists have discovered a vast quantity of artifacts and texts from the ancient Near East. This course examines a selection of the archaeological finds that relate to the historical study of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament). Specific topics include Israel’s settlement in Palestine, the United Monarchy of David and Solomon, tenth-century Jerusalem, the Omride kings as builders and their role in international politics, Israelite sanctuaries, the veneration of the goddess Asherah, sacred pillars in Israelite religion, and the cult of the dead. The main goal of the course is to become conversant with the interpretive issues and scholarly debates.

Section 001: T Th 3:00-4:20 Coates 111 Instructor: Stuart Irvine
Rel 3090/CLST 3090: Comparative Mythology

Comparative Mythology offers a wonderful opportunity to explore myths from various cultures, past and present. Students will be introduced to theories of myth and asked to apply these theories to the myths in order to gain insight into the different thought patterns. Students will also learn methods of comparison so that students will be able to recognize both the similarities and differences of myths from different cultures. Textual and visual sources will be examined.

Section 001:  T Th 1:30-2:50 Allen 123  Instructor: Albert Watanabe

Rel 3100: Judaism

This course is designed to familiarize the student with Judaism as a religion, culture and history in the Modern Period from the 18th century Enlightenment until the post Holocaust era. Our study will particularly emphasize how new trends emerged in Judaism due to the influence of historical and sociological changes in the surrounding society, and how these changes led to a variety of possible Jewish identities and expressions. We will consider many texts that reveal the precarious position Jewry in the modern world and that called for intellectual and ideological responses to scurrilous charges woven by Anti-Semitism. These charges dictated a need to establish new strategies to affirm Jewish identity and religious commitments. The discussion will primarily focus upon Western European Judaism, where the confrontation between Jewish and modern European identities occurred in a particularly intense fashion and will serve as the most powerful basis for a contemporary investigation. We will also watch some movies that demonstrate contemporary issues of Jews and Judaism, and maybe even cook some kosher food.

Section 001:  T Th 9:00-10:20 Tureaud 109  Instructor: Mari Rethelyi

Rel 3104: Hebrew Prophets

Who were the prophets of the Old Testament and what did they do? This course begins with an examination of the role of Old Testament prophets and compares their actions to the function of religious professionals in other Near Eastern countries, including Egypt, Babylonia, and Canaan. We will also compare the role of biblical prophets with that of magic, divination, astrology, and other methods of seeking to understand the world of the divine. But the major focus of the course will involve reading and interpreting the messages of Israelite prophecy that are found in the Bible of Jews and Christians. The following questions are addressed: Did Hebrew prophets predict the future? What was their relationship to the Israelite monarchy and to common people? How did they view their role as social critics? Are their messages still relevant?

Section 001:  T Th 10:30-11:50 Coates 111  Instructor: Charles Isbell
**REL 3203: RELIGION AND PARAPSYCHOLOGY**

This course will study the paranormal and how it was an important aspect at many prominent universities in the discipline of parapsychology. The course offers alternate ways of understanding the world and phenomena and experiences that register outside the norms and methods of contemporary thought and science.

Section 001:  M W 1:00-2:20  Tureaud 215  Instructor: Stephen Finley

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**REL/INTL 3786: RELIGION OF ISLAM**

This course examines the development of Islam from its origins in sixth-century Arabia to the modern world. After delving into the sacred biography of the Prophet Muhammad and reading selections from the Quran, we will study the rise of an Islamic Empire over much of Asia and Africa. We will explore classical Islamic civilization through examples of theological debates, mystical music, and art. We will then study Islam in non-Arab societies. Finally, we will address Islam’s encounter with modern Europe and the emergence of Political Islam.

Section 001:  T Th 10:30-11:50  0145 Elec. Engr.  Instructor: Mark Wagner

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**REL/HIST 4011: AGE OF REFORMATION**

This course will examine the course of religious change in Europe between 1400 and 1650, and how it brought about the end of medieval Latin Christendom. Subjects covered include the reforming movements of Martin Luther, John Calvin and the Anabaptists, as well as Catholic reform. We will examine not just theology but the complicated political, social and cultural changes in Europe and abroad brought about the splintering of European Christianity.

Section 001:  M W F 10:30-11:50  Lockett 239  Instructor: Christine Kooi

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**REL/HIST 4161: HISTORY OF RELIGION IN THE UNITED STATES**

This course is a chronological and thematic survey of American religious history, with special consideration given to the diversity of religion in the United States. The course begins with the European colonization of the Americas and moves through topics such as the Great Awakenings, slave religions, Mormonism, Native American religions, fundamentalism, Roman Catholicism, and Judaism, as well as new immigrant religions like Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam. Students will learn how religious groups influenced and were influenced by American culture. An assortment of reading materials, writing assignments, and creative projects will allow students to engage a variety of religious issues and understand the significance and relevance of religion in the history of the United States.

Section 001:  T Th 10:30-11:50  Audubon 212  Instructor: Michael Pasquier
REL/ENGL 4236: STUDIES IN LITERATURE AND RELIGION: THE GOSPEL OF MARK
The earliest account of the ministry and death of Jesus, according to most scholars, is the Gospel of Mark. Consequently, the significance of this gospel for understanding Jesus and the origins of Christianity cannot be overstated. Yet most people have never read this work, though many have heard selections read in a confessional or devotional setting. For those who read the gospel for the first time, it often comes as a shock to find that the Jesus encountered in this work does not correspond to the traditional image of Jesus with which they are familiar. It comes as a further surprise to find that scholars have analyzed this work by a variety of methods, using principles that do not correspond to those presupposed in a confessional or devotional approach. This course introduces students to the critical methods used by scholars within the discipline of academic biblical studies and applies those methods to the Gospel of Mark. For example, using genre criticism, we will examine the individual stories and sayings that make up the gospel, identifying the different genres, such as parable, miracle story, and controversy dialogue. Using narrative criticism, we will examine the gospel as a work of literature, as a story with its own plot and characters. Using socio-historical criticism, we will consider the purpose of Mark’s story within the context of early Christianity. Course requirements will emphasize helping students to develop their writing skills.

Section 001: W 6:00-8:50 Lockett 130 Instructor: Delbert Burkett

REL 4301: THEORIES OF RELIGION
We will explore what theories, methods, approaches, and concepts have helped develop the scholarship on human religiosity. The range of lenses will include cultural anthropology, theology, philosophy, psychology, sociology, art, ritual, gender, race, class, and science. Each approach illuminates a dimension at the same time it obscures another dimension. No single tool enables a scholar to see and understand all dimensions of human religiosity. We will consider which approaches would be well suited to which types of research projects. Cultivating the commensurate level of communication skills is central to our endeavor. The objective of the course is to learn how to think as a religiously literate person with nuanced skills of analysis and critical reasoning. REL 4301 is a required course for Religious Studies concentrators. It is also a certified Communication-Intensive course.

Section 001: T Th 12:00-1:20 Coates 236 Instructor: Paula Arai
REL 4600: HINDUISM

Over a billion people around the world identify as Hindu, but to someone unfamiliar with this tradition, Hinduism is a dizzying array of millions of gods and endless festivals full of color and ritual. Why do many claim that Hinduism is not a religion but a way of life? How many gods do Hindus worship? Is yoga a religious practice? Do Hindus worship idols? What do Hindus think about Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad? What do Hindus find meaningful about karma and rebirth? How is Hinduism in the U.S. different from that practiced in India? These are just some of the interesting questions we will address. There are no prerequisites for this course. We will begin with a basic overview of Hinduism and then focus on the rich traditions of mythology, rituals, poetry, and philosophy that have defined the world’s third largest religious community.

Section 001: M W F 1:30-2:20 Coates 220 Instructor: Madhuri Yadlapati