

COURSES FOR RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Religious Studies Courses

REL501 Social Theory and Religious Studies

Hours 3

This three credit hour graduate seminar introduces students to terms and ideas from social theory and their relevance to the academic study of religion. Throughout the course, students will apply theories to analyze examples relevant in Religious Studies, both ancient and modern. Each student will also select an important work in their chosen field of study in consultation with their advisor and analyze that work in depth in relation to the various issues discussed in the course.

Prerequisite(s): None, except admission to degree program

REL502 Public Humanities and Religious Studies

Hours 3

This graduate seminar introduces students to public humanities and digital humanities approaches to the study of religion. Students learn methods and tools for conducting digital research and explore ways to communicate theoretical and religious studies research to public audiences through digital media. Students are introduced to a number of digital tools for research, scholarly communication, and public engagement and will work to apply those tools to their individual research interests and goals.

Prerequisite(s): None, except admission to degree program

REL503 Methods for the Digital Study of Religion

Hours 3

This graduate seminar introduces students to methods for the digital study of religion with a focus on the interfaces that enable computationally mediated scholarship.

REL504 Special Topics in Religion in Culture

SP

Hours 3

To illustrate the gains of applying social theory to the study of religion, this course will draw upon current examples to study in light of the skills gained in the social theory foundations course. Specific content will be determined by faculty responsible for the course each semester. This course may be repeated for a maximum of 9 hours for differing topics.

Prerequisite(s): None, except admission to degree program

Special Topics Course

REL511 History of Religious Studies

Hours 3

This graduate seminar surveys the origins, objects of study, and pivotal thinkers that scholars often highlight when outlining the historical development/current shape of Religious Studies. By course end, each student will narrate the study of religion in light of their own research interests.

REL512 Debates in Method and Theory

Hours 3

This graduate seminar will acquaint students with contemporary debates and authors, emphasizing the work of a newer generation of scholars, in order to consider more closely the tools that scholars use to study religion, the various contexts in which they carry out their work, and some of their wider implications.

REL521 Self & Society

Hours 3

This graduate seminar introduces students to terms and ideas related to constructions of the self and society and their relevance to the academic study of religion. Towards the end of the semester, a specific case study will serve as a site where students will apply theories discussed to analyze examples relevant in Religious Studies. Each student will also select an important work or issue in their chosen field of study in consultation with their advisor and analyze that work in depth in relation to the various issues discussed in the course.

REL522 Power & Persuasion

Hours 3

This graduate seminar introduces students to terms and ideas related to expressions of power and persuasion and their relevance to the academic study of religion. Throughout the course, a specific case study will serve as a site where students will apply theories discussed to analyze examples relevant in Religious Studies. Each student will also select an important work or issue in their chosen field of study in consultation with their advisor and analyze that work in depth in relation to the various issues discussed in the course.

REL523 Discourse & Practice

Hours 3

This graduate seminar introduces students to terms and ideas related to discourse and practice and their relevance to the academic study of religion. Throughout the course, students will apply theories to analyze examples relevant in Religious Studies, both ancient and modern. Each student will also select an important work in their chosen field of study in consultation with their advisor and analyze that work in depth in relation to the various issues discussed in the course.

REL524 Past & Present

Hours 3

This graduate seminar introduces students to terms and ideas related to the construction of the past and its relation to the present and their relevance to the academic study of religion. Throughout the course, students will apply theories to analyze examples relevant in Religious Studies, both ancient and modern. Each student will also select an important work in their chosen field of study in consultation with their advisor and analyze that work in depth in relation to the various issues discussed in the course.

REL525 Identity & Place

Hours 3

This graduate seminar introduces students to terms and ideas related to issues of identification and place and their relevance to the academic study of religion. Throughout the course, a specific case study will serve as a site where students will apply theories discussed to analyze examples relevant in Religious Studies. Each student will also select an important work or issue in their chosen field of study in consultation with their advisor and analyze that work in depth in relation to the various issues discussed in the course.

REL560 Independent Study in Social Theory in Religious Studies

SP

Hours 1-9

This variable credit hour graduate course provides students with the opportunity to pursue a topic of their choosing in relation to social theory and its relevance to the academic study of religion. Throughout the course, students will meet with the professor to select and discuss readings and writing assignments.

Prerequisite(s): None, except admission to degree program

Special Topics Course

REL561 Independent Study in Social Theory in Religious Studies

SP

Hours 1-9

This variable credit hour graduate course provides students with the opportunity to pursue a topic of their choosing in relation to social theory and its relevance to the academic study of religion. Throughout the course, students will meet with the professor to select and discuss readings and writing assignments.

Prerequisite(s): None, except for admission to degree program

Special Topics Course

REL565 Religion in Culture Applied

Hours 1-9

This course reflects the Department's aim to help prepare students with a wide variety of research and professional interests for futures beyond their M.A. To that end, the Department has established relationships with a variety of offices on- and off-campus whose workplaces rely on the kinds of skills students learn in the M.A. degree program. When students sign up for this course, they will be assigned to a supervisor working in one of these professional settings. This assignment will consist of participating in at least five hours per week of hands-on training, while also applying the analytical and digital skills gained in their M.A. coursework. Various projects will be determined by the supervisor overseeing the graduate student's work, in conversation with the Graduate Director. By the end of the semester, the student will have not only completed a number of site-specific tasks but also written at least one blog post for the Department's website synthesizing their take-aways from the experience.

REL580 Academic Writing in the Study of Religion

Hours 3

The purpose of this seminar is to shape a piece of each student's critical writing into publishable form. To this end the class will be run as a workshop, with the students' own writing as the primary material. On days when there is focus on a single student's essay, another class member will be assigned to present that essay to the class, by identifying its thesis, describing its situation in a larger critical field of religious studies, and outlining its argument. At other times students will be asked to bring in pieces of their essays for more intense focus. At the end of the class each student will submit their essay to a refereed journal in the academic study of religion.

REL590 Capstone Seminar in Social Theory in Religious Studies

Hours 3

In this culmination class experience, normally enrolled in final Spring semester, students will present their ongoing original thesis research for the purposes of soliciting feedback from the instructor and classmates. In light of the feedback, students will respond and revise their work. Having begun the degree with two common foundations courses (one on social theory and one on public humanities digital skills), students in this course will integrate and apply the skills learned throughout the degree.

Prerequisite(s): None, except admission to degree program

REL599 Religious Studies Masters Thesis

Hours 1-9

This independent research course which partially fulfills required master's-level thesis hours for students completing a formal thesis project as part of their degree program. The course is conducted under the guidance of the student's thesis advisor. Material covered will be of an advanced nature aimed at providing master's students with an understanding of the latest research and current developments within the field. Discussion and advisor guidance will be directed towards readings of research articles and development of research methodology, with the aim of producing an original research contribution that represents a novel development in the field, or a novel perspective on a pre-existing topic in the field. Research projects will result in the production of an article length essay or equivalent digital project (as approved by the thesis advisor), as well as an oral presentation of the research. Students will meet regularly with the thesis advisor throughout the semester during which the course is undertaken.