

# COURSES FOR RELIGIOUS STUDIES

## Religious Studies Courses

### REL100 Intro To Religious Studies

*HU, PWES*

Hours 3

Various methodological approaches to the academic study of religion, with examples of religious life and thought drawn from a variety of cultures. This course is required of all majors and minors.

Humanities, PW: Exec Systems Structures

### REL102 Intro to Religions of the World

*HU, PWGE*

Hours 3

This comparative study of religions highlights complexity in world religions. Topics, such as texts, practices, and deities, organize the study of different pairs of religions.

Humanities, PW: Global Engagement

### REL103 Religion in the News

*HU*

Hours 3

This introductory level course examines the place and function of religion in modern culture by examining the way stories are (or are not) identified as religious in news media. Drawing on various historical examples—from print to digital media—the course introduces students to the academic study of religion through case studies of how religion is commonly represented in the media, paying particular attention to the possible motives and practical consequences to classifying claims, actions and organizations as religious or not. As part of the core curriculum, this course addresses the ability of students to deal with questions of values, ethics, or aesthetics as they are represented in the humanistic fields of religious studies and history. The course is broad in scope and takes a global perspective of religion and news media and the relationship between all points of view on these subjects. The emphasis of the course is the history and appreciation of religion, media, and culture.

Humanities

### REL104 Religion in Pop Culture

*HU*

Hours 3

Instead of assuming that religion is a distinct aspect of the human, one that interacts only with elements of elite or high culture, this course examines the ways that the beliefs and behaviors that we commonly classify as religious are a part of everyday culture—in particular, the ways that they are produced by and in turn influence popular culture. Myths, rituals, and traditions circulate all throughout mass culture via print, radio, television, and now the web. The course therefore introduces students to a set of recent, historical examples where the scholar of religion can shed light on the workings of contemporary day-to-day life. As a part of the core curriculum, this course addresses the ability of students to deal with questions of values, ethics, or aesthetics as they are represented in the humanistic fields of learning regarding the study of religion, film, art, music, and online media. The course is broad in scope and takes a global perspective on religion and popular culture as well as the relationship between all points of view on these subjects. The emphasis of the course is the history and appreciation of religion and popular culture.

Humanities

### REL105 Honors Intro Relig Stdy

*HU, PWES, UH*

Hours 3

Honors version of REL 100.

Humanities, PW: Exec Systems Structures, University Honors

### REL106 Introduction to Ancient Greek Religions

*HU*

Hours 3

This course is an introduction to the myths and practices of what contemporary scholars call ancient Greek religion. It examines the problem of defining "religion," and translating specific ancient greek terms as "religion," and the implication involved in this process.

Humanities

### REL107 Religion in Digital Culture

*HU*

Hours 3

This course explores how digital environments work using the study of religion. The course will focus on the ways social and cultural practices operate in digital environments. The course will also introduce students to methods for studying digital culture.

Humanities

**REL108 Introduction to the Sociology of Religion**

*PWES, SB*

Hours 3

This course examines religion as both a social phenomenon (i.e. "something someone once called 'religion'") and as an exemplar of social formation (e.g. religion as cultural identity, legal classification, traditional practice, value system). It also introduces students to data sets experts use to examine the behavioral, structural, and economic impact of religion in society.

PW: Exec Systems Structures, Social and Behavioral Sciences

**REL110 Intro To The Old Testament**

*HU*

Hours 3

Introduction to the books of the Old Testament, or Hebrew Bible as it is known in Judaism, in their historical setting, with emphasis on textual analysis and on literary forms and their function and use in the past and present.

Humanities

**REL112 Intro To New Testament**

*HU*

Hours 3

Introduction to the Hellenistic world of early Christianity, examining the early traditions about Jesus that were organized into the Gospels and the letters of Paul.

Humanities

**REL120 Religion and Science**

*HU*

Hours 3

This course is a broad, interdisciplinary introduction to the ways in which "science" and "religion" have been defined.

Humanities

**REL121 Violence and Religion**

*PWGE, SB*

Hours 3

This introductory course examines how societies mobilize religious institutions and traditions in order to define what counts as "violence." To form and to test hypotheses about religion and violence cross-culturally, the course involves learning various social theories. Religion and violence are both studied as social phenomena that are defined through developments of rituals, traditions, scriptures, laws and politics in relation to local and regional conditions of environment, materials, history, and economy. The course uses case study examples from both ancient and modern societies.

PW: Global Engagement, Social and Behavioral Sciences

**REL130 Religion, Politics, and the Law**

*PWGE, SB*

Hours 3

In this introductory-level course, we consider how religious belief conflicts with, realigns, or reinforces political identity, community, and belonging. How do leaders and institutions (states, churches, synods, courts) respond to these interactions? How might they try to contain, respond to, or co-opt them? What happens if they cannot? To explore these questions, we will focus on legal systems and codes. How has the law become a site in which these conflicts and re-alignments play out? What can the law do, and what are its limitations?.

PW: Global Engagement, Social and Behavioral Sciences

**REL207 Media Studies of Religion**

*SB*

Hours 3

This course draws on social science research in media studies, communication studies, internet studies, sociology, media anthropology and religious studies to explore the relationship between media and religion. Using examples from video games, television, film, social media, and the internet, the course analyzes the ways religion and various forms of media work together to shape social, cultural, economic, and political development.

Social and Behavioral Sciences

**REL215 Religion and Literature**

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Hours 3

This course will examine literary texts from across several genres (such as historical fiction, poetry and essays, magical realism, and graphic novels) that present religion in various social, political, and geographical contexts. These diverse literary case studies all emphasize religion's sociopolitical and rhetorical functionality, complicating traditional notions of religion as an internal or belief-based phenomenon. Over the course of these readings, students will also trace critical interventions into issues of authority, voice, and identity.

Literature

**REL220 Survey Of Asian Religion**

*HU*

Hours 3

Introductory survey of the major religious traditions of Asia, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Shinto.

Humanities

**REL223 Holocaust Historical Perspecti**

Hours 3

Examination of this event, and scholarship on it, from various historical and critical perspectives.

**REL224 Judaism**

*HU*

Hours 3

A study of some of the leading schools and interpreters of Judaism and a review of modern developments including the Holocaust and the State of Israel.

Humanities

**REL226 African Diaspora Religions***HU*

Hours 3

Examination of African influence throughout the Americas (e.g., Candomblé in Brazil, Vodou in the Caribbean, African-American religions in North America), focusing on the interplay between religion, culture and politics.

Humanities

**REL231 Religious Existentialism***HU*

Hours 3

This course surveys the history of a very influential school of modern, Western religious thought called religious existentialism. We will review the major texts, authors, and themes of this eclectic movement. The course will include study and discussion of texts by Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky, Buber, Heidegger, de Beauvoir, Sartre, Fanon, Derrida, Cixous and Zizek.

Humanities

**REL234 Women And Religion**

Hours 3

The role and place of women in several religious traditions, ancient and modern.

**REL236 Islam***HU, PWGE*

Hours 3

An introduction to the traditions of Islam, including their history, texts, intellectual debates, and contemporary practices.

Humanities, PW: Global Engagement

**REL237 Self, Society, & Religions***PWES, SB*

Hours 3

This course offers a survey of social scientific theories used to explain how societies use religion to construct the self and reproduce social structures and institutions.

PW: Exec Systems Structures, Social and Behavioral Sciences

**REL238 Philosophies Of Judaism**

Hours 3

Survey of major philosophical formulations of the nature and role of Jews and Judaism, written by select Jewish thinkers.

**REL240 Apocalypse In Popular Media***HU*

Hours 3

Examines contemporary depictions of apocalypse and dystopia in popular media.

Humanities

**REL241 American Religious History***HI*

Hours 3

This course surveys the development and change of religious communities, ideas, and movements in America and the social, cultural, economic, and political developments that affected them from the period before European colonization of North America to the present.

History

**REL245 Honors Hist. Religions of Amer***UH*

Hours 3

This Honors course offers a survey of religious themes and movements in American culture from the period before European colonization to the present.

University Honors

**REL310 REL Goes to the Movies**

Hours 1

This one credit course involves monthly films, discussions, and attending either the annual Day or Aronov Lecture.

**REL311 English Bible As Literature***W*

Hours 3

Analytical and critical study of a number of books of the Bible; each book is examined and evaluated as an example of a particular literary genre. Writing proficiency is required for a passing grade in this course. A student who does not write with the skill normally required of an upper-division student will not earn a passing grade, no matter how well the student performs in other areas of the course.

Writing

**REL315 Digital Humanities in Religious Studies***EXP*

Hours 3

This cross-disciplinary course introduces students to the methods of the digital humanities by applying those methods to the study of religion. Students will learn a variety of digital methods and tools and apply those to data drawn from religious studies. Students do not need a background in computing or religious studies.

Experiential Learning

**REL321 Religion & Identity in South Asia***PWGE, USGC, W*

Hours 3

Investigates the intersections of various social divisions and identities with religious labels and practices by analyzing case studies from South Asia.

PW: Global Engagement, US and Global Citizenship, Writing

**REL322 Tales from Asia: Told and Retold in Film and Popular Culture**  
*EXP, W*

Hours 3

This core writing course analyzes retellings of ancient tales within contemporary popular culture, investigating versions of two specific stories, the Ramayana and Journey to the West, to address issues surrounding myths and cultural identity and the ways people adapt stories for various ideological purposes, including the politics of translation, adaptation, and classification. Writing proficiency is required for a passing grade in this course. A student who does not write with the skill normally required of an upper-division student will not earn a passing grade, no matter how well the student performs in other areas of the course.

Experiential Learning, Writing

**REL336 Islam and the West**  
*PWGE, W*

Hours 3

Media coverage of Muslims in the United States and Europe often focus on some kind of comparison or contrast between Islam and "the West." This course examines how ideas of Islam and the West have been co-constructed. Writing proficiency is required for a passing grade in this course. A student who does not write with the skill normally required of an upper-division student will not earn a passing grade, no matter how well the student performs in other areas of the course.

PW: Global Engagement, Writing

**REL341 Theories of Myth**  
*PWES, W*

Hours 3

From Hercules to Achilles, to Odysseus, and from Oedipus Rex to Medea, myths of the ancient Greek world are as popular today as they were thousands of years ago. Why do we re-tell those ancient myths today? What makes something a myth? What's the difference between a myth and a story? How did scholars try to explain the origin and function of myths? Do we produce myths today? The course will address those questions by looking at several myths of the ancient Greco-Roman world but also will look at the theories scholars developed in order to understand those stories. The course examines the history of differing theories of myth, conceived as a sub-type of narrative. Writing proficiency is required for a passing grade in this course. A student who does not write with the skill normally required of an upper-division student will not earn a passing grade, no matter how well the student performs in other areas of the course.

PW: Exec Systems Structures, Writing

**REL347 Jewish-Christian Relations**  
*PWGE, W*

Hours 3

Critical examination of the 2,000-year-old relationship focusing on areas of commonality and difference. Writing proficiency is required for a passing grade in this course. A student who does not write with the skill normally required of an upper-division student will not earn a passing grade, no matter how well the student performs in other areas of the course.

PW: Global Engagement, Writing

**REL360 Individual Research**  
*EXP, SP*

Hours 1-3

Supervised research of the student's choice. May be repeated for a maximum of 9 hours for differing topics. Speak with the professor before registering.

Experiential Learning, Special Topics Course

**REL361 Individual Research**  
*SP*

Hours 1-3

Supervised research of the student's choice. May be repeated for a maximum of 12 hours for differing topics. Speak with the professor before registering.

Special Topics Course

**REL365 Internship in Religion in Culture**  
Hours 3

Students with Junior or Senior standing engage in a work-based learning experience by interning in a professional setting. In consultation with the REL Undergraduate Director, the student will be tasked with locating an approved internship site to work, learning from the internship supervisor, and implementing a broad range of skills and content from the academic study of religion. The internship placement must be approved by the REL Undergraduate Director and internship site supervisor. Students are strongly recommended to consult with the REL Undergraduate Director one semester prior to the time of a proposed internship in order to find opportunities, discuss site feasibility, and coordinate preliminary logistics.

**REL370 Adv Study Religion and Communication**  
*SP*

Hours 3

Specific context will be determined by faculty responsible for the course that semester. May be repeated for a maximum of 9 hours for differing topics.

Special Topics Course

**REL371 Adv St Religion and Conflict**  
*SP*

Hours 3

Specific context will be determined by faculty responsible for the course that semester. May be repeated for a maximum of 9 hours for differing topics.

Special Topics Course

**REL372 Adv Std Religion and Context**  
*EXP, SP*

Hours 3

Specific context will be determined by faculty responsible for the course that semester. May be repeated for a maximum of 9 hours for differing topics.

Experiential Learning, Special Topics Course

**REL400 Religious Studies Honors Thesis***EXP*

Hours 3

REL 400 is an independent research course in which the student conducts Honors Thesis research under the guidance of a thesis advisor. Research projects will include the development of an original research question; in-depth research into relevant secondary and primary sources; a prospectus outlining the proposed thesis; a 15-25 page long essay with reference notes and annotated bibliography; and an oral presentation of the research. Students will meet regularly with the thesis advisor throughout the semester during which the course is undertaken. Talk to the REL advisor for more information.

Prerequisite(s): Permission of the Instructor

Experiential Learning

**REL410 Religion and Genocide***PWES*

Hours 3

Explores the phenomenon known as genocide by examining its relationship to the religion in both its institutional and theological frameworks.

PW: Exec Systems Structures

**REL415 Religion in the American South***EXP, PWES, W*

Hours 3

This Writing course will look at the roles and implications of myths and rituals in the American South, using the UA campus as its own case study and talking about how notions of "the past" come to be invented in different ways for different social purposes through memorials and monuments. Because the course carries the Core "W" designation, an important component of the seminar is the culminating term paper, which we will take through the writing process throughout the semester. This includes brainstorming, drafting, peer editing, and revising. Writing proficiency is required for a passing grade in this course. A student who does not write with the skill normally required of an upper-division student will not earn a passing grade, no matter how well the student performs in other areas of the course.

Experiential Learning, PW: Exec Systems Structures, Writing

**REL419 Adv Studies in Myth and Ritual***W*

Hours 3

Examination of the theories and methods used to study the relations between religious narrative and behavioral systems, with a focus on myth and ritual. Writing proficiency is required for a passing grade in this course. A student who does not write with the skill normally required of an upper-division student will not earn a passing grade, no matter how well the student performs in other areas of the course.

Writing

**REL420 Gospel Of Mark***W*

Hours 3

Investigates the Gospel of Mark through the disciplines of contemporary biblical, literary, and cultural criticism. Writing proficiency is required for a passing grade in this course. A student who does not write with the skill normally required of an upper-division student will not earn a passing grade, no matter how well the student performs in other areas of the course.

Writing

**REL436 Making Islam: Debating Authenticity and Authority***PWES, USGC*

Hours 3

This course is a study of how various agents (both Muslim and non-Muslims, in the United States, the Middle East, and around the world) construct, debate, and refute ideas about Islam in popular culture and academic sources. Students will pay particular attention to how scholars attempt to make sense of such diverse accounts, the assumptions that they make, and the roles that they play in debates over the nature of Islam.

PW: Exec Systems Structures, US and Global Citizenship

**REL440 Theories of Religion**

Hours 3

Examines classic and contemporary theories of religion such as functionalism, structuralism, Marxism, and psychoanalysis. Emphasis may vary with each offering.

**REL455 Popular Culture and Religion Seminar**

Hours 3

A seminar on method in the study of religion and popular culture based in the ongoing projects of seminar participants.

**REL460 Individual Research***EXP, SP*

Hours 1-3

Supervised research of the student's choice. May be repeated for a maximum of 12 hours for differing topics. Speak with the professor before registering.

Experiential Learning, Special Topics Course

**REL461 Individual Research***SP*

Hours 1-3

Supervised research of the student's choice. May be repeated for a maximum of 12 hours for differing topics. Speak with the professor before registering.

Special Topics Course

**REL480 Seminar in Religion and Conflict**

*PWGE, SP, USGC*

Hours 3

This course will analyze critically the various ways people engage elements identified as religion in relation to conflict, using one or more examples of particular conflicts. These conflicts involve many elements, such as nationality, ethnic/linguistic identity, gender, and occupation, so the critical analysis will address the ways aspects of society commonly identified as religions frequently intersect with these various divisions, both rhetorically and practically. Throughout this study, students will theorize about the relations between various aspects of human experience and the different representations of these relationships in both society and scholarship. Specific context will be determined by faculty responsible for the specific section of a course.

PW: Global Engagement, Special Topics Course, US and Global Citizenship

**REL490 Senior Capstone Seminar**

Hours 3

A seminar offered spring semester of each year for seniors pursuing a major or minor in religious studies or minor in Judaic studies. The professor and subject of the seminar rotate through the four areas of the curriculum. Required of all majors and minors in the Department. May be repeated for a maximum of 9 hours for differing topics.