COURSES FOR RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Religious Studies Courses

REL100 Intro To Religious Studies

HU

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

REL101 The Violent and the Sacred: Religion and the Problem of Human Suffering

HU

Hours 3

This introductory course examines the question of how do we academically study the socio-cultural constructs that we call "religion" and "violence" by examining theories & theorists of each as well as academic disciplines that study them, all in order to examine their possibly common elements and intersections. The course therefore examines theories of evil, violence, and hatred, using historical and contemporary case studies on such topics as terrorism and genocide.

Prerequisite(s): N/A

Prerequisite(s) with concurrency: N/A

Humanities

REL102 Intro to Religions of the World

HU

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

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.

Prerequisite(s): None.

Prerequisite(s) with concurrency: None.

Humanities

REL105 Honors Intro Relig Stdy

HU, UH

Hours 3

Honors version of REL 100.

Humanities, University Honors

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. In particular, we will focus on the ways that these concepts have been co-constructed, focusing on their varied relationships throughout history. We will look at uses of the terms in the history of science, the impact of the scientific revolution on understandings of nature and gender, the shifting significance of science and religion from scientists and philosophers who advocate for science as religion, and the use of the natural sciences (in particular cognitive science) in religious studies. We will analyze the varied ways (including in contemporary debates) in which these terms are used and the values implicit within these uses.

Humanities

REL124 Religion & Film in America
HU
Hours 3
Uses film as the way into understanding the religious scene in America’s broad set of ideas, symbols, social movements, and institutions that affect and are affected by the wider American culture.

Humanities

REL130 Religion, Politics, and Law
HU
Hours 3
This introductory level course examines the construction of religion through law, politics, and the nation-state. Students are introduced to the role of religion in liberal political theory, secularism, and the modern rise of the nation-state. Beginning with the Enlightenment, “religion” posed a challenge to liberal democracy in the West. This course tracks the history of how states have attempted to answer that challenge and the theories political thinkers have proposed. This course will be particularly helpful to students interested in religious studies, history, political science, law, and philosophy.

Humanities

REL208 Hinduism
Hours 3
This course comprises a broad, comprehensive, and interdisciplinary introduction to the practices and conceptions that people identify as Hinduism.

Prerequisite(s): None; it is recommended that students have already taken REL 100 and REL 102 but this is not required.

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

REL228 Hy Of Christian Thought
Hours 3
The major theological orientations that have shaped Christianity in various social and historical contexts.

REL234 Women And Religion
Hours 3
The role and place of women in several religious traditions, ancient and modern.

REL236 Islam
HU
Hours 3
An introduction to the traditions of Islam, including their history, texts, intellectual debates, and contemporary practices.

Humanities

REL237 Self Society & Religions
Hours 3
A survey of psychological and social theories used to study religion, drawing on different cultural and historical data of relevance to the approaches surveyed.

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 Contemporary Fil
Hours 3
Examines contemporary portrayals of the end times in popular films.

REL241 American Religious History
HU
Hours 3
This course offers a survey of religious themes and movements in American culture from the period before European colonization to the present. reactivate.

Humanities
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

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 within this discipline is required for a passing grade in this course.

Writing

REL321 Rel & Ident in South Asia
Hours 3
Investigates the intersections of various social divisions and identities with religious labels and practices by analyzing case studies from South Asia.

REL322 Tales from Asia: Told and Retold in Film and Popular Culture
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.

Prerequisite(s): None
Prerequisite(s) with concurrency: None
Writing

REL336 Islam and the West
W
Hours 3
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. We will study how terms central to the concept "the West," including modern, traditional, secularism, nationalism, and citizenship, have been developed in conversation with and contrast to understandings of Islam. Muslims in America and Europe continue to challenge and shape these categories and binaries through their practices, beliefs, and identities that have been interpreted, represented, and constructed in response to conceptions of the West. Writing proficiency within this discipline is required for a passing grade in this course.

Writing

REL340 Nietzsche and Religion
Hours 3
Examines the major writings on religion of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), with special attention to the relationship between religion, rhetoric, language, culture, and power.

REL341 Theories of Myth
Hours 3
Examination of the history of differing theories of myth, conceived as a sub-type of narrative.

REL347 Jewish-Christian Relations
W
Hours 3
Critical examination of the 2,000-year-old relationship focusing on areas of commonality and difference.

Writing

REL350 Religion in Colonial Empire
W
Hours 3
This course explores the role of colonial contact and the encounter between Europe and its others in the construction of religion as a category in the West.

Prerequisite(s): none
Prerequisite(s) with concurrency: none
Writing

REL351 Asian Religions in America
W
Hours 3
This course introduces the history and development of Asian religions in American culture. Topics will include immigrant groups, American-born converts, and the ways Asian religions have been represented and imagined in American culture. Writing proficiency within this discipline is required for a passing grade in this course.

Writing

REL360 Individual Research
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.

REL361 Individual Research
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.

REL370 Adv Study Religion In Religion and Communication
Hours 3
Specific context will be determined by faculty responsible for the course. May be repeated for a maximum of 9 hours for differing topics.
REL371 Adv St Religion and Conflict  
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.

REL372 Adv Std Religion and Context  
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.

REL373 Seminar Rel and Communication  
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.

REL400 RELIGIOUS STUDIES HONORS THESIS  
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

REL410 Religion and Genocide  
Hours 3  
Explores the phenomenon known as genocide by examining its relationship to the religion in both its institutional and theological frameworks.

REL415 Religion in the American South  
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.

Writing

REL419 Myth Ritual And Magic  
W  
Hours 3  
Examination of the theories and methods used to study the relations between religious narrative and behavioral systems. Writing proficiency within this discipline is required for a passing grade in this 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 within this discipline is required for a passing grade in this course.

Writing

REL430 Religion and Literature  
W  
Hours 3  
This course will examine religion and literature in light of what both discourses rely heavily on: namely, canon formation. From a critical starting point that views these two categories as socio-cultural products, we will discuss problems of authorship, readership, and canonicity with a particular eye toward the questions and implications of decisions that are made regarding what “counts” in literary or religious traditions.

Writing

REL436 Making Islam: Debating Authenticity and Authority  
Hours 3  
This course is a study of how various agents (both Muslim and non-Muslims) construct, debate, and refute ideas about Islam in popular culture and academic sources. We 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.  
Prerequisite(s): None

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.

REL450 Religion & Power in Colonial India  
Hours 3  
This course explores the ways Britons and South Asians imagined, debated, conspired, and coerced one another in the construction of “religion” during the colonial period of South Asian history.

REL460 Individual Research  
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.

REL461 Individual Research  
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.

REL480 Seminar Rel and Conflict  
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.
REL483 Seminar Rel and Context  
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.

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.