RELIGION (RELI)

REL127 Catholicism and Ideology in the Hispanic World
Catholicism has played a number of roles in the cultural politics of the Hispanic world, appearing as a place of national being, resistance, and conservatism. In this course, we will read a number of texts from different periods and national contexts with a view to understanding how writers and intellectuals from Spain, Latin America, and the U.S. engage with Catholicism and the historical conditions under which they do so.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-LAST
Identical With: RL&L127, LAST127
Prereq: None

REL151 What is Religion? Shamans, Kool-Aid, and the First Amendment
Were the people who drank the Kool-Aid at Jonestown brainwashed, or did they die for a noble cause? How do evangelical Christians read the Bible, and does it have anything to do with their support for Trump? Can theology help us be better environmentalists? What’s the relationship between gender, shamans, and Stalin? What exactly does the First Amendment protect? This class will introduce you to the ways in which we study religions by reading critical case studies about the Peoples Temple, Mongolian shamanism, Jerry Falwell, ecospirituality and freedom of religion court cases. This is not a survey of world religions, and once you’ve taken What is Religion?, you’ll know why we don’t teach that at Wes. You will also have a critical set of intellectual tools for understanding the role of religion in the contemporary world.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: AMST261, AFAM141
Prereq: None

REL151F What is Religion? Shamans, Kool-Aid, and the First Amendment (FYS)
Were the people who drank the Kool-Aid at Jonestown brainwashed, or did they die for a noble cause? How do evangelical Christians read the Bible, and does it have anything to do with their support for Trump? Can theology help us be better environmentalists? What’s the relationship between gender, shamans, and Stalin? What exactly does the First Amendment protect? This class will introduce you to the ways in which we study religions by reading critical case studies about the Peoples Temple, Mongolian shamanism, Jerry Falwell, ecospirituality and freedom of religion court cases. This is not a survey of world religions, and once you’ve taken What is Religion?, you’ll know why we don’t teach that at Wes. You will also have a critical set of intellectual tools for understanding the role of religion in the contemporary world.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Prereq: None

REL201 Introduction to the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament)
This course approaches the Hebrew Bible within its historical context while considering its literary, philosophical, and artistic legacy. Students will be exposed to the main historical strands of biblical criticism, while also engaging with the challenges of interpreting the Bible as modern readers: How and when did the Hebrew Bible come to be, and what relevance might it hold for us today? By beginning at the beginning and proceeding systematically through the Hebrew Bible, students will hone their skills as readers and interpreters of the Bible as a canon. Students will consider questions of the texts’ function, universality, and authority, and will be encouraged to explore the wide range of biblical interpretations in literature, music, and the fine arts from antiquity to the present day.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RELI
Identical With: MDST203, CJST244, COL237, WLIT281
Prereq: None

REL203 Jews & Judaism: Race, Religion, Culture
What is a Jew? Are Jews white? Must a Jew believe in God? What is at stake when defining someone as a Jew? Using sources ranging from the Hebrew Bible to contemporary films, this course examines various facets of Jewish life, paying special attention to contesting definitions of Jewishness as race, religion, and culture. Building on a chronological discussion of Jewish history, we will ask theoretical questions such as the relation between gender and biblical interpretation, the relevance of religious law in contemporary society, and the challenges of diasporic thinking to national sovereignty.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: CJST203
Prereq: None

REL204 Judaism(s): Religion, Power, and Identity in Jewish History
This course will offer students an intensive survey of the major currents in Jewish social, political, intellectual, and religious history, while focusing in particular on what it means to be a Jew in the 21st-century. The course explores how Jews are a culture, ethnicity, nation, nationality, race, religion, and more and how Jewishness gets constructed differently across different times and contexts. The course looks both locally and globally at the plurality of Jewish identities. Students will read primary historical texts from prominent Jewish thinkers and writers, as well as texts written about Jews by non-Jews.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: CJST241
Prereq: None

REL205 Dharma, Karma, and Living with the God/dess/es: Hindu Lives
Through fiction, autobiography, biography, art, a comic book, a city, and a village, this course explores some of the myriad understandings of what it is to be Hindu. In an effort to introduce students to Hindu culture and religion, a number of approaches shall engage the questions, What is Hindu dharma? and What is it to be Hindu? The class will also investigate the issue of ‘Hinduism,’ a term created in the 19th century to identify a Hindu ‘religion’ rejected by many 21st-century Hindus. This issue expresses just one of many arising from the Indian experience of contact with the West. Overall, the course immerses students in the lives of Hindu individuals and communities so that we, as a class, can draw our conclusions about Hindu practices and meanings in different political, mythic, social, and cultural contexts.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Prereq: None

REL206 Neo-Confucian Chinese Philosophy
This course will present critical discussion of issues central to Neo-Confucian (11th—19th centuries CE) philosophers that in many cases are still central in Chinese thought today. Topics will include the relation between knowledge
and action, Neo-Confucian conceptions of idealism and materialism, and the connection between Neo-Confucian philosophy and spirituality.

**Offering: Crosslisting**

**Grading: A-F**

**Credits: 1.00**

**Gen Ed Area: HA-PHIL**

**Identical With: PHIL259, CEAS256**

**Prereq: None**

**RELI207 Buddhist Psychology in Modern Perspective**

The Buddhist tradition preserves a sophisticated model of mind and behavior in the early literature of the Pali Canon, along with a profound set of practices for transforming human experience from unhealthy to healthy states. Much of this lore is of great interest to modern psychologists, scientific researchers, and philosophers of mind, and is having an impact on a wide range of contemporary fields. This course begins with a survey of the core ideas of Buddhist psychology as they are presented in classical texts, then goes on to explore how these ideas are influencing the work of mental health professionals, cognitive scientists, social scientists, and others.

**Offering: Host**

**Grading: A-F**

**Credits: 1.00**

**Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI**

**Prereq: None**

**RELI207F Who is the Dalai Lama? (FYS)**

This First Year Seminar introduces the institution of the Dalai Lama of Tibet and the individuals who have filled that role from a wide range of sources and perspectives. Topics include regional histories of Buddhism; the unique Tibetan tradition of recognized reincarnations (tulkus) and the Buddhist philosophical principles that support it; and a survey of prominent Dalai Lamas from the 15th century to the present day. The seminar examines the activities of the current Dalai Lama in his role as traditional Buddhist teacher, political leader, and international superstar, through the lenses of the PRC government media, Indian exile communities, and the modern West. Later classes will also address issues of Western and Chinese forms of Orientalism and myth-making about Tibet. Readings include the writings of past and current Dalai Lamas as well as supporting secondary literature.

**Offering: Host**

**Grading: OPT**

**Credits: 1.00**

**Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI**

**Identical With: CEAS217F**

**Prereq: None**

**RELI208 The Buddha: His Life and Teachings**

Few human beings have had as much impact upon the world as Siddhartha Gautama Shakayamuni, known to us as the Buddha. This course looks closely at the world he inhabited, the ways he transformed it, and the body of work left behind after a lifetime of teaching. Beginning with challenges of interpretation and literary sources, the course consists of equal parts historical and doctrinal investigation of the classical texts of the Pali Canon. We seek to get a sense of both the man behind the myth and the meaning of his message, while appreciating in the process the extent to which all such investigation is shaped by one’s own cultural and historical viewpoints.

**Offering: Host**

**Grading: A-F**

**Credits: 1.00**

**Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI**

**Prereq: None**

**RELI211 Religion, Peace, and Violence: Muslim, Hindu, Christian, and Secular Politics**

Why did Martin Luther King Jr. believe that Christianity could cure American racism, while Malcolm X thought the religion promoted it? If Islam is a religion of peace as advocated by many Muslims, how do we understand the so-called Islamic State’s reign of terror? How has Hindu nationalism led to violence against Muslims and Christians if Mahatma Gandhi demonstrated the essential tolerance of Hindu traditions? Secularists often claim that removing religion from politics creates a more peaceful society, yet the most violent states in the past century have been professedly secular ones.

This seminar looks to explore the complexities of present-day religions and politics by investigating specific case studies in Egypt, India, France, and the U.S. While developing a better understanding of Muslim, Christian, Hindu, and secular traditions (no background in these necessary), we will develop analytic tools to critically comprehend the political dynamics of modern religions and the religious dynamics of contemporary politics.

**Offering: Host**

**Grading: A-F**

**Credits: 1.00**

**Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI**

**Identical With: MDST214**

**Prereq: None**

**RELI212 Introduction to the New Testament**

This course invites students to engage the text of the New Testament and other early Christian writings while becoming familiar with critical issues surrounding their composition, authorship, and reception. Students will be expected to demonstrate the following: acute engagement with the New Testament as an ancient text, ability to articulate (though not necessarily to agree with) viewpoints other than one’s own, an understanding of the formation of the New Testament, and an appreciation of the New Testament’s history of interpretation. Issues that will also be covered in this course include the study of the historical Jesus, the canonicity of the New Testament, extra-New Testament texts, interpretive strategies, and various issues involving the New Testament and race, sexuality, slavery, and gender.

**Offering: Host**

**Grading: A-F**

**Credits: 1.00**

**Gen Ed Area: HA-RELI**

**Identical With: MDST214**

**Prereq: None**

**RELI213 Refugees & Exiles: Religion in the Diaspora**

Recent years have seen the on-going tragic refugee crisis, with millions of people being displaced because of war and ecological disasters. That this crisis also has religious overtones is evident by the so-called travel ban in the United States or the rhetoric used by right wing leaders across Europe. This course deals with the meaning of refuge, exile, and diaspora through three perspectives: philosophical, historical, and literary. A variety of case studies—including the contemporary refugee crises in the Middle East, the black transatlantic, and the destruction of the temple in the Hebrew Bible—will raise for us various questions: What does it mean to be violently forced to leave one’s home? How is it possible to make sense of such a tragedy? What creative power can diaspora muster to the rescue of culture? This course is a Service Learning course in cooperation with WESU 88.1 FM Middletown. Each student’s final project will be a radio show based on an analysis of a selected refugee crisis. To learn more and listen to last year’s shows visit https://reli213.site.wesleyan.edu.

**Offering: Host**

**Grading: A-F**

**Credits: 1.00**

**Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI**

**Identical With: CJST214**

**Prereq: None**
RELI214 Buddhism and the Body: Desire, Disgust, and Transcendence
This is a course about the body and the various ways that Buddhists have constructed, disciplined, despised, and venerated the human body. We will explore the Buddhist body in its various incarnations: the disciplined monastic body of monks and nuns, the hyper-masculine body of the Buddha, the sacred corpses of saints, the body given away in sacrifice, the body as marker of virtue and vice, the sexual body, the body transformed in ritual, and the body as understood in Buddhist medicine. Careful attention to ancient and modern Buddhist writing should enrich our understanding of what it means to inhabit a human body.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: FGSS215
Prereq: None

RELI215 Politics and Piety in Early Christianities
The first four centuries of the Christian era will illustrate the lively twists and turns of social experimentation that set the stage for the emergence of the Christian religion. This course will be concerned with fundamental arenas of intellectual and social conflict, including constructions of Christian myths of apostolic origins and authority; the appropriation of the Jewish epic; the challenge of gnosticism; the domestication of Greek philosophy; interpretations of sexuality and gender; experiences of martyrdom and prosecution; theological reflections on human nature and society; and the ways Christians were seen by Romans. The objective will be to grasp the beginnings of the Christian religion as a human achievement of cultural consequence.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: MDST215, CCIV212
Prereq: None

RELI216 Jesus Through Jewish Eyes
In this course, we explore the visual and textual representations of the vexed relation between Jews and Christians throughout history. Looking at the various ways in which Christianity and Judaism define themselves vis-à-vis the other allows us to understand what mechanisms of cultural appropriation, subversion, and hidden polemics are at work. Special attention will be given to the figure of Jesus as a point of artistic and theological contention. How do artistic representations change our understanding of religious themes? What is at stake for each religion in the encounter with the other? What are the political implications of theological debates? Is this dialogue needed, or even possible, in our post-secular age?
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: CJST216
Prereq: None

RELI217 Jewish Graphic Novels
This course will explore issues in Judaism and the Jewish experience through the medium of the graphic novel. Students will not only gain proficiency in critically reading graphic novels and sequential art, they will also gain a grasp on some of the major issues in Jewish history including (but not limited to) immigration, life in America, the Holocaust, and Israel/Palestine.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RELI
Identical With: CJST243
Prereq: None

RELI218 The Cosmos of Dante's Comedy
This course provides an in-depth introduction to Dante Alighieri's 14th-century masterpiece as a point of entry to the history of Western literature, philosophy, and science. The core of the course consists of an intensive study of Dante's encyclopedic poem in relation to the culture and history of Medieval Europe. Major topics include: representations of the afterlife; the soul's relation to the divine; concepts of modernity and antiquity in the Middle Ages; notions of authorship and authority during the 13th and 14th centuries; vernacular poetics and the medieval genre system; the culture and materiality of manuscripts in the Middle Ages; gender and genre in Dante and the 12th- to 14th-century lyric; intertextuality and imitation; classical and medieval language theory; the role of the classics in the Middle Ages; Dante's concepts of governance; myth and theology in Dante's Christian poetics; and the reception to Dante's work from the 14th-century to present. The course combines a close analysis of Dante's literary strategies with exercises in critical writing and in multimedia translation and adaptation, aimed at prompting critical reflection on the ways in which present cultural practices are built upon the practices of the past. This course is conducted in English; no previous knowledge of Italian is required.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: RL&L226, ITAL226, COL234, MDST226
Prereq: None

RELI220 Modern Christian Thought
This course will provide an introduction to the field of Christian thought by exploring the relationship between conceptions of God and conceptions of selfhood, from St. Augustine through liberation, feminist, evangelical, process, and eco-theologies. How do the ways people think about God reflect, support, or interrupt the ways they think about the human subject? And what sorts of ethics, communities, and political decisions do these models underwrite?
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RELI
Identical With: COL220
Prereq: None

RELI221 Islam and Muslim Cultures
This course provides an introduction to Islamic traditions and Muslim societies. No background is required. Using a variety of in-depth case studies, the course familiarizes students with many of the beliefs and practices Muslims associate with Islam and examines commonalities and diversity in how Muslims live their religion. While paying particular attention to peoples and places in South Asia, the Middle East, and the U.S., the course will demonstrate how contemporary Muslim communities exist within global networks that shape local and transnational religion, cultures, and politics.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Prereq: None

RELI221F Islam & Muslim Cultures (FYS)
This course provides an introduction to Islamic traditions and Muslim societies. No background is required. Using a variety of in-depth case studies, the course familiarizes students with many of the beliefs and practices Muslims associate with Islam, and examines commonalities and diversity in how Muslims live their religion. While paying particular attention to peoples and places in South Asia, the Middle East, and the US, the course will demonstrate how
contemporary Muslim communities exist within global networks that shape local
and transnational religion, cultures, and politics.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Prereq: None

RELI222 Identity and Jewish Literature: Sexuality, Race, and Gender
What, if anything, is Jewish literature? What, if anything, does it tell us about
the history of the people called Jews? This course explores those questions
through a variety of sources from Jewish writers, including Sholem Aleichem,
Cynthia Ozick, Franz Kafka, I.B. Singer, and others (flexible based on student
interest). Through these readings, we will explore how Jewish literature relates
to broader questions of sexuality, race, gender, colonialism, etc., as well as
specific questions of Jewish history, like the Holocaust and the state of Israel. All
works will be read in translation and no previous knowledge of Jewish studies or
Judaism is required.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-CJST
Identical With: CJST222
Prereq: None

RELI224 Zen Buddhism Across East Asia: Teaching and Practice
In this course, we will examine Zen/Chan Buddhism in history and in its
contemporary practice. We will trace how Zen Buddhism sprouted from Chinese
religious traditions in the Tang Dynasty (618-907), flourished in the Song Dynasty
(906-1279), and then spread to other East Asian countries such as Japan and
Korea. Then, we will pay attention to the ways in which Zen Buddhism found
its way to modern Western society, through figures such as D. T. Suzuki and
Okakura Kakuzo since the 19th century.
Course readings consist of primary sources of Zen Buddhism, which are available
in English translation. A wide range of texts will be read closely, from early
manuscripts discovered in Dunhuang to contemporary works inspired by Zen
Buddhism, supplemented by secondary scholarship. We also investigate how Zen
Buddhism has been expressed in garden designing, poetry, tea ceremony, and
as a way of life in contemporary Western society. A field trip to a Zen meditation
center will be organized during the course.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: CEAS228
Prereq: None

RELI224F Zen Buddhism Across East Asia: Teaching and Practice (FYS)
In this course, we will examine Zen/Chan Buddhism in history and in its
contemporary practice. We will trace how Zen Buddhism sprouted from Chinese
religious traditions in the Tang Dynasty (618-907), flourished in the Song Dynasty
(906-1279), and then spread to other East Asian countries such as Japan and
Korea. Then, we will pay attention to the ways in which Zen Buddhism found
its way to modern Western society, through figures such as D. T. Suzuki and
Okakura Kakuzo since the 19th century.
Course readings consist of primary sources of Zen Buddhism, which are available
in English translation. A wide range of texts will be read closely, from early
manuscripts discovered in Dunhuang to contemporary works inspired by Zen
Buddhism, supplemented by secondary scholarship. We also investigate how Zen
Buddhism has been expressed in garden designing, poetry, tea ceremony, and
as a way of life in contemporary Western society. A field trip to a Zen meditation
center will be organized during the course.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Prereq: None

RELI225F Socialist Utopias: Transcendence and Religion in Communist States
(FYS)
Socialism is a political system predicated on building a better future by
transcending the present. But what kind of utopias were imagined in and
by actual socialist states like the Soviet Union? Why was atheism so central
to Marx’s vision of socialism, and what kinds of futures did communists
imagine were possible, once religion was removed from society? What kinds
of transcendence did communists imagine would exist once they transcended
religion? What kinds of religious practices were enabled despite and sometimes
because of the state’s repression of organized religion? We will read some
Marx, some Soviet science fiction as well as ethnographies, ranging from studies
that explore how communism is and isn’t a religion, how former atheists
became missionaries, how some religious communities survived communism,
how mangos became Mao’s relics, how Vietnamese spirit mediums channel Ho
Chi Minh, and what kinds of imaginaries can flourish in post-socialist ruins like
Moscow and Silicon Valley.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: REES225F
Prereq: None

RELI228 Classical Chinese Philosophy
Topics in this critical examination of issues debated by the early Confucian,
Daoist, and Mohist philosophers will include the nature of normative
authority and value, the importance of ritual, and the relation between personal and social
goods.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-PHIL
Identical With: PHIL205, CEAS261
Prereq: None

RELI229 Tibetan Religion
This course serves as an introduction to major themes of Buddhist thought and
practice within the cultural and historical framework of Tibet and the wider
Himalayan world. In doing so, it examines various approaches to the study of
religion and questions traditional definitions of categories such as ‘religion’ and
‘Buddhism’ themselves. Beginning with a close study of Patrul Rinpoche’s classic
19th-century guide to Tibetan Buddhism, the early part of the course focuses
on the doctrinal foundations of the tradition. This is followed by a historical
and more critical examination of Tibetan religious history, proceeding from
Buddhism’s Indian antecedents and its initial arrival in Tibet during the seventh
century through the present day. The course will explore a wide range of Tibetan
religious cultures and practices including Buddhist ethics, systems of monastic
and ascetic life, ritual activities, sacred geography and pilgrimage, lay religion,
as well as the status of Tibetan Buddhism under Chinese occupation and in
the West. The majority of readings will consist of primary texts in translation, and
will concentrate on Tibet’s rich narrative literary tradition. These will be
supplemented by secondary literature on the study of religion and Tibetan
Buddhism.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: CEAS343
**RELI230 Cinematic Encounters: Muslims and/in/of the West**
Examining contemporary films by Americans, Britons, Egyptians, Indians, Pakistanis, and Afghans offers the opportunity to challenge the simplistic binaries of West vs. Islam upon which popular representations often rely. Themes that will be explored include Muslim emigration, European imperialism and colonialism, religion and secularism in the formation of national identity, terrorism and state violence, representation of gender differences, and the problem of multiple identities. Films will include 'The Kingdom of God,' 'The Battle of Algiers,' 'Of Gods and Men,' 'Baby Doll Night,' 'The Beauty Shop of Kabul,' 'Restrepo,' 'Khuda ke Liye,' 'My Name is Khan,' 'Babel,' 'AmericanEast,' and 'Brick Lane,' plus episodes of 'Battlestar Galactica.'

Offering: Host  
Grading: A-F  
Credits: 1.00  
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI  
Prereq: None

**RELI232 Religions of China: The Ways and Their Power**
In this course, we examine the religious worlds of China from antiquity to the present. Not only will we read key works of Chinese philosophy from the Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist traditions, we will also investigate how these traditions find expression in art and architecture, poetry and prose, and in the lived realities of Chinese history. In this exploration of Chinese religions, we will pay special attention to the question of what 'counts' as religion, to the role of the state in defining and establishing Chinese religions, and to the power of new religious movements to intervene dramatically (and sometimes violently) in Chinese history.

Offering: Host  
Grading: A-F  
Credits: 1.00  
Gen Ed Area: HA-RELI  
Identical With: CEAS344  
Prereq: None

**RELI239 Modern Shamanism: Ecstasy and Ancestors in the New Age**
The wise and mysterious native shaman has long held a particular fascination for Western scholars of religion, but does this figure even exist? What does it mean to be a practicing shaman today? Beginning with Eliade's definition of 'archaic ecstasy,' we examine the idea of the shaman, their role in the New Age movement, and the challenges faced by contemporary indigenous shamans, from negotiating international intellectual property rights law to Ayahuasca tourism and environmental activism. Course materials are supplemented by A/V materials from the instructor's fieldwork in Siberia.

Offering: Host  
Grading: OPT  
Credits: 1.00  
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI  
Identical With: REES282  
Prereq: None

**RELI240 Religion in the Roman Empire**
This course is an introduction to the religious practices of ancient Rome, from the Republic to the Empire and its conversion to Christianity. Attention will be given to the gods and their veneration, divination and sacrifice, religion and the family, religion and the state, and official attitudes toward foreign cults.

Offering: Host  
Grading: A-F  
Credits: 1.00  
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI  
Prereq: None

**RELI242 Introduction to Buddhist Thought and Practice**
This course will introduce significant aspects of Buddhist thought and practice, primarily as it manifested through the literature of India, South Asia, and East Asia. It begins with an overview of the historical Buddha's life and the development of early Buddhist ideas and practices. The course then introduces the Mahayana or Great Vehicle tradition that began to emerge around the first century BCE, as well as later forms of esoteric Buddhism known as Tantra. The course concludes with the development of modern Buddhism in Asia and its manifestation in the West. Readings consist mainly of primary Buddhist texts in translation, which are supplemented as necessary by works of secondary scholarship. The course broadly examines the topics of Buddhist philosophy and ethics, monastic and ascetic life, meditation and ritual practices, and the material culture of Buddhist societies, including artistic traditions, architecture, and book culture.

Offering: Host  
Grading: OPT  
Credits: 1.00  
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI  
Prereq: None

**RELI250 Islamic Movements and Modernities**
The so-called Islamic State once grabbed headlines daily with criminal acts primarily committed against other Muslims, but also against non-Muslims. Its violence overshadowed even al-Qaeda and the Taliban in media coverage. This seminar will track the development of these groups as well as the many more Islamic movements that reject violence and seek peaceful social change. Indeed, many Muslims object to the name 'Islamic State' because they recognize the group as neither Islamic nor a legitimate state. The seminar examines how specific Muslim communities in the Middle East, Europe, South Asia, and the U.S. have engaged the modern conditions of Western imperialism, nationalism, and globalization and shaped their own forms of modernity. The seminar also investigates the increasingly digital, transnational, and intercultural realms of Muslim experiences.

Offering: Host  
Grading: A-F  
Credits: 1.00  
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI  
Prereq: None

**RELI255 Heretics and Heresy**
What is religion all about? Is it fundamentally about belief, truth, or God? About understanding, revelation, or salvation? Is religion about one's origins, identity, or destiny? Is it about what one does or is supposed to do? How would we ever know? And who gets to say so? This class will explore the emergence of 'heresy'--notions of error--in the construction of religious belief and practice in ancient Christianity, and how 'heretics' became central to the way Christianity defined itself in relation to Jewish and Greco-Roman religious traditions. We will examine these issues, in part, by reading a number of remarkable, and recently discovered 'heretical' texts from antiquity and early Christianity, including the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Mary, the Gospel of Judas, the Gospel of Truth, and the Cologne Mani Codex.

Offering: Host  
Grading: A-F  
Credits: 1.00  
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI  
Prereq: None

**RELI259 Islam and/in the West**
Is there a clash of civilizations between Islam and the West? What distinguishes the two and why the conflict? This course, which assumes no familiarity with Islam, explores these questions and the assumptions underlying them. Through a historical and thematic exploration, we will delve into the notions of difference and the interests these have served, as well as the cultural, religious, and political dimensions of interaction at specific historical moments. These will include Arab
Religion (RELI)

imperialism, the Crusades, the Spanish Reconquista, European imperialism, Zionism, Islamist revivalism, Western Muslims, and the War Against Terror.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Prereq: None

RELI266 Buddhism and Social Justice
In this course students will get a basic introduction to Buddhism, covering major concepts including interdependent origination, suffering, not-self, and Buddhist ethical practices. Through major historical texts, we will establish a uniquely Buddhist basis for social justice. Historical texts to be covered include the Dhammapada, Therigatha, Jataka Tales, and Shantideva’s A Guide to the Bodhisatva’s Way of Life. We will discuss major philosophical questions such as, ‘how can we strive for change, while simultaneously accepting things as they are?’ ‘How do we respect the importance of identities while denying the existence of a self?’ ‘If the world will always be imperfect, why bother trying to improve social conditions?’ We will then discuss contemporary applications of Buddhism for social change, and compare these with non-Buddhist approaches. Modern texts include ‘Soaring and Settling’ by Rita Gross, ‘Freedom in Exile’ by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, ‘Burdened Virtues’ by Lisa Tessman, and ‘Strength to Love’ by Martin Luther King Jr.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Identical With: PHIL266, FGSS263
Prereq: None

RELI268 Black Religions in the Americas
This course will focus on the African-based religious systems that cultivated traditional ways to survive slavery, white supremacy, and state violence. We will focus on Vodou in Haiti, Regla de Ocha (Santeria) and Palo Mayombe in Cuba, Obeah in Jamaica, and aspects of Black religions in the US. We will discuss questions of method and themes of political resistance, orality, secrecy, magic, ‘authenticity,’ commodification, and the ethics of representation. We will also look at the Black church and especially the rise of the Pentecostal movement in African and Afro-Caribbean spaces, as well as visionary Black religious thought.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: AFAM387, LAST268, ANTH267
Prereq: None

RELI275F Religions Resisting Modernity (FYS)
In the early days of the 20th century, Max Weber foresaw that with the rise of capitalism and modernity, the world would become increasingly disenchanted. Now, with the turn of the 21st century, people all over the world experience capitalism as a realm of enchantment. In Malaysia, ghosts possess factory workers; in South Africa, capitalism produces zombies; and in Bolivia, mines eat their miners. Instead of Weber’s ‘iron cage,’ we live in a world of ‘voodoo economics’ where Korean shamans conduct ceremonies to bless new businesses, Russian psychics curse business competitors, and prosperity theology preaches that God will make you rich. This class explores the enchantment of the financial sphere, combining theory on the disenchantment of modernity (Max Weber) and commodity fetishism (Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, William Pietz) with ethnographic accounts of how capitalism and the economy become mystified and enchanted.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: RL&L275F
Prereq: None

RELI277 Ethics After the Holocaust
The philosopher Theodor Adorno declared, ‘To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric.’ The Holocaust is a challenge to our understanding of modern society, ethics, and what it means to be human after Auschwitz. In this course, we will investigate how the Holocaust orients contemporary discussions on questions of guilt, forgiveness, and evil. What does it mean to remember, to forgive, and to forget? Can one ethically represent the Holocaust in art? We will explore these questions using various sources, including works by Hannah Arendt, Adorno, and Emmanuel Levinas, as well as museums, memorial sites, and cinematic representations.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: CJST272, GRST266
Prereq: None

RELI275F Religions Resisting Modernity (FYS)
Why did some Native Americans turn to dance while resisting federal troops? Why do creationists reject evolution? Why do some French Muslims wear a veil when their mothers didn’t? Why did Gandhi insist that Indian nationalists spin their own thread? Throughout the last century, resistance has risen to modernity, and religion has played an increasingly important role in challenging the globalization of modern Western values. This seminar will explore how Europe transformed itself into a modern society with worldwide influence. Then it will investigate how the Lakota Sioux, Christian creationists, and Mohandas Gandhi each have used religion in an attempt to resist some aspect of modernity, either outside the Western world or within it. No background in the study of religions is necessary. Ultimately, the course will challenge our very understandings and expectations of modernity.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: RL&L275F
Prereq: None

RELI276 The Gospels and Jesus
In this examination of the history and literature of the earliest writings about Jesus, attention will be given to the literary forms used in the composition of
RELI280F Mixed in America: Race, Religion, and Memoir (FYS)
This first-year seminar course examines the history of mixed-race and interfaith identities in America. Using the genre of the memoir as a focusing lens, we will look at the various ways that Americans of mixed heritage have found a place, crafted an identity, and made meaning out of being considered ‘mixed.’ How has being multiracial or bi-religious changed in the course of history in this country? What has occasioned these changes, and what patterns can we observe? We will explore questions of racial construction; religious boundary-making; rites of passage; gender, sexuality, and marriage; and some literary and media representations of mixed-heritage people.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: AFAM282F
Prereq: None

RELI278 American Jewish Humor
This course is a look at American Jewish history through one particular lens— that of the peculiar phenomenon of Jewish humor. There is a long history of Jews and humor that has nothing to do with the immigrant experience in America, but the immigrant experience in America nonetheless has a great deal to do with the humor that has been produced by Jews in this country, particularly in the 20th century. We will read some historical background on American Jewish humor and some humor theory as our foundation for our understanding of film viewings, short stories, stand-up comedy performances, and musical recordings. By looking at the way Jewish humor changed throughout the 20th century, we should, in the end, be able to chart the way the lives of American Jews were changing and have a deeper understanding of the American Jewish experience.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: CJST278
Prereq: None

RELI279 Liberation Theology and Pentecostalism in the Americas and Africa
This course tackles the question: If liberation theology advocates a preferential option for the poor, why do the poor in Africa and the Americas often choose evangelical Protestantism? For evangelical Christianity, the common good is a by-product of the righteous lives of believers as they enact the outward signs of personal salvation. This course examines both religious thought and analysis of various Christianities of the Americas and Africa, with particular attention to the ways religious thinkers and communities grapple with and resolve questions of human rights, evangelizing race, and structural inequalities that arise in the recent era of globalization and neoliberal capitalism. Other topics will include the prosperity gospel, the growth of Christian NGOs, gender and machismo, and spiritual warfare. Case studies will include readings on the U.S., Colombia, Brazil, Haiti, and Zimbabwe.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: LAST306
Prereq: None

RELI280 Mixed in America: Race, Religion, and Memoir
This course examines the history of mixed-race and interfaith identities in America. Using the genre of the memoir as a focusing lens, we will look at the various ways that Americans of mixed heritage have found a place, crafted an identity, and made meaning out of being considered ‘mixed.’ How has being multiracial or bi-religious changed in the course of history in this country? What has occasioned these changes, and what patterns can we observe? We will explore questions of racial construction; religious boundary-making; rites of passage; gender, sexuality, and marriage; and some literary and media representations of mixed-heritage people.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: AFAM282, AMST242

RELI282 Religion and the Scientific Imagination
Where do we get the idea that science and religion are opposed to one another? What did Darwin do to classic proofs of the existence of God and how have those proofs bounced back? What sort of evidence do theologians marshal in support of their hypotheses, and what sort of spiritualities do scientists generate in support of theirs? What do neuroscientists think they’re finding when they measure the neural activity of meditating monks? What are the ‘new atheists’ so annoyed about? How do cosmologists talk about the origins of the world, and how do climate scientists talk about its end? In this class we will explore the many ways ‘religion’ and ‘science’ have interacted, conflicted, collided, and combined with one another—in an effort to move beyond the frankly boring ‘debates’ between them.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: SISP282
Prereq: None

RELI288 Buddhism in America: The Dharma Comes to Main Street
The American understanding of Buddhist ideas and acceptance of Buddhist practices, which has been growing slowly for some time, has quickened significantly in the last few decades. In this course we examine this process, from its early phases in the 19th century, through the impact of population displacement and increasing spiritual diversity in the 20th century, to the virtual explosion in the current century of creative engagement between Buddhism and a wide range of fields. We cover such topics as environmentalism; physical and mental health; issues of conflict resolution, social justice, race, and gender; practices relating to optimal performance, end-of-life care, and prison ministry; and the emerging fields of cognitive science, contemplative studies, and the philosophy of mind.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

RELI289 Indigenous Religions: Politics, Land, Healing
From wise old shamans to heroic pipeline protestors, the media is full of romantic representations of indigenous religion, but what do you really know beyond the stereotypes? If indigenous religion is just religion practiced by indigenous people, is it a category at all? Since the first days of colonialism the question of whether or not the ‘natives’ have or are capable of having religion has had political consequences. This class introduces students to the historical and political contexts within which indigenous peoples practice their...
religions, and critically engages with popular stereotypes. Using ethnography, fiction, critical theory, and the instructor’s own fieldwork materials, we will examine some of the criteria by which indigenous religious practices have been romanticized or judged lacking by outsiders: What does an oral tradition sound like? What does it mean to engage in place-based religion? What is a ‘noble savage,’ what are sacred sites, animate landscapes, and what are some of the ways indigenous peoples really do relate to the environment in radically different ways? What are some of the contradictions and complications of multiculturalism and the politics of recognition when it comes to indigenous populations? While this is not a survey course, students will be introduced to case studies of indigenous religious practices from North America, Australia, and Siberia.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: RELI291
Prereq: None

REL291 From Jerusalem to Ground Zero: Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Sioux, and Hindu Notions of Sacredness
Many Jews, Christians, and Muslims view Jerusalem as a ‘sacred’ place. But what does this mean? How does a place—or an object or person—become sacred, holy, revered? Is Ground Zero sacred? If so, how do we compare the destruction of an office building that makes part of Manhattan sacred and Native American efforts to protect venerated sites from ‘development’ that they describe as ‘desecration’? Does the term ‘sacred’ even translate in other languages? When does a stone sculpture become an embodiment of a Hindu deity?

Using examples such as Jewish, Christian, and Muslim views of Jerusalem, Lakota Sioux recognition of revered places and wicasa wakan (medicine men), and Hindu engagements with divine images, this seminar will explore these questions.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Prereq: None

REL292 Reason and Revelation: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion
With the dawning of modernity, Europe’s colonial and scientific adventures opened a distinction of mutual suspicion between theology and philosophy. Broadly speaking, ‘philosophy of religion’ is the effort to evaluate the claims of revelation and reason in terms of one another. We will examine some of the major texts within this field, whose authors include deep skeptics, committed Christians, committed anti-Christians, secular and nonsecular Jews, feminists, ethicists, idealists, empiricists, Romantics, and liberationists. Themes include proofs of God’s existence—along with refutations of those proofs and rebuttals to those refutations—the problem of evil, religious ethics, religious experience, the possibility of a universal religion, ‘divine’ racism, the gender of God, the ecocidal tendencies of Abrahamic theology, and the role theology might or might not play in efforts toward ecological, sexual, and racial justice.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RELI
Identical With: PHIL282
Prereq: None

REL299 Imagining Communities: National Religions and Political Rituals
From the Catholic-Protestant troubles in Northern Ireland, Christian nationalism in Serbia, Hindu-Buddhist conflict in Sri Lanka, and the Taliban in Afghanistan, religious nationalism often produces virulent and violent conflict. Yet the Virgin of Guadeloupe is a national symbol of Mexico, Catholicism was central to the Polish Solidarity movement, and America defines itself as ‘one nation under God.’ How are we to understand the relationship between religion and national identity, and how do political rituals, both religious and secular, help form communities? Popular media and political science analysis define religious nationalism as dangerous and secular nationalism as good. We will investigate this claim over the course of the semester by asking what the study of religion and ritual can bring to the topic. Are religious and secular political rituals really as different as they seem? We will read and discuss the classic social theories of Samuel Huntington, Benedict Anderson, Emile Durkheim, Victor Turner, Clifford Geertz, and Talal Asad, and these readings will be interspersed with case studies that illustrate how these theories help us understand the world. Case studies include the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the arrest and trial of the punk band Pussy Riot in Russia, and the Yasukuni shrine in Japan, where the souls of kamikaze pilots and World War II war criminals are enshrined. In addition, students will pick a case study of their own for a research project. This project will be conducted through multiple small assignments over the course of the semester that will be combined into a final research paper and class presentation.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: RELI299
Prereq: None

REL301 Jesus and the Gods: Christianity and the Religions of Antiquity
This course will focus on the politics and methods of comparison in order to reveal how thinkers have described the myths and practices of early Christianity as they relate to the religions of ancient Israel, Greece, and Rome. In reading carefully a wide range of ancient texts and modern scholarly discussions, we will be thinking on several levels at once. That is, we will learn about the gods and ritual practices of ancient Greece and Rome and also think critically about the agendas of the many writers—from Plato to Thomas Jefferson and beyond—who described them for their own purposes. How did Jesus of Nazareth come to be understood as a god, who dies and rises, in a world brimming with gods? Why was he remembered as a philosopher and a martyr, like Socrates? How—and with what motives—did writers throughout history compare Jesus with the priests and kings of ancient Israel or with the gods and goddesses of the Hellenistic Mystery Religions? What is the place of Demeter, Isis, and Osiris in the history of religion? How did early Christians understand their rituals of death and resurrection in terms of rebirth, salvation, and martyrdom? Considering themes and theories of piety and sacrifice, purity and prophecy, wisdom and narrative, ethics and philosophy, mythmaking and cultural critique, we will ask how the politics of comparison and classification have shaped not only our understanding of Jesus and Judaism, ancient Greece and Rome, but also the construction of ‘Judaism’ and ‘Christianity’ as religions—and the very category of religion itself.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Prereq: None

REL305 Pantheologies: Animal, Vegetable, Mineral, World
Pantheism teaches that the world itself is divine. The idea seems simple enough, yet it has suffered extraordinary ridicule at the hands of western philosophers and theologians, who have considered ‘matter’ to be lifeless, dark, and feminine (which is to say, as different as possible from ‘God.’) This course will explore this generalized panic over pantheism—in particular, the anxieties it encodes over gender, race, nationality, and class, and the contribution such anxieties have made to an unequally distributed attack on the ‘environment.’

Seeking an alternative to our raced and gendered ecocidal metaphysic, the course then turns to contemporary pantheologies. To what extent are
recent theories of cosmology, complexity, and materiality setting forth subtle pantheisms? What are the feminist, anti-racist, and ecological stakes of these theories? Properly conceived, what is pantheism; is it ultimately distinguishable from atheism; and what use are any of these platforms in developing an ethic and politic of environmental justice?
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: FGS5304, SISP305
Prereq: None

RELI307 Ritual
Religion can be defined through beliefs or traditions or texts, but it always takes physical form through ritual. Ritual is the one universal in religion, but the question of how to understand ritual is possibly the most contested question in the study of religion. Can a ritual be read like a text? How do symbols produce effects, and how should we understand these effects? What is performative speech and how does it work? How does ritual behavior reflect and shape social relationships? This course introduces students to the major approaches to the study of ritual. The readings draw heavily, but not exclusively, on anthropological approaches to ritual, both classic texts and recent innovative approaches focusing on language and embodiment. Students will pick a ritual that they are interested in and will attend that ritual several times over the semester, conducting practical fieldwork exercises and applying the theories we read in class. The assignments culminate in a paper in which students will be required to analyze ‘their’ ritual using the theory we read together in class. For these assignments, students are encouraged to define ritual broadly and creatively. The goal of the class is to gain an understanding of theoretical approaches to ritual by applying these theories to the social world around them.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: ANTH303
Prereq: None

RELI308 Funny, You Don’t Look Jewish: Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Judaism
This course will give advanced students the opportunity to engage deeply with current issues in Judaism, including race, gender, and sexuality. In both the U.S. and Israel, issues of Jewish whiteness (or not), straightness (or not), and maleness (or not) dominate conversations about the direction Judaism will take in the 21st century and how Judaism can remain relevant in an increasingly globalized and secularized world.

Students in this course will read contemporary scholarship on those who have been traditionally pushed to the margins of Judaism and will be asked to wade into murky ethical waters as they think about the power of naming and who has the authority to determine ‘in’ and ‘out.’
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: ANTH303
Prereq: None

RELI309 Scoundrels, Sinners, and Saints: Approaches to Buddhist Life Writing
This seminar will examine a variety of religious biographies and autobiographies in order to evaluate the significance of life writing in the Buddhist traditions of Asia. Materials will cover a broad range of historical periods, from early medieval to modern, and geographic regions, including South Asia, East Asia, the Himalayas, and Tibet. Topics include the structure, function, style, production, and reception of biographies and autobiographies, as well as more thematic questions of religious transmission, soteriology and praxis, formations of self-identity, gender, and the relationships of biographical literature to art and pilgrimage. Readings include primary Buddhist texts in translation supplemented by secondary scholarship on hagiography and sainthood, literary theory, narrative constructions of the self, and Buddhist history.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Prereq: None

RELI312 Indigenous Religion and the New Age: Inspiration or Appropriation?
Is imitation the sincerest form of flattery? This course examines the way in which indigenous religious practices, images, and ideas become appropriated into New Age religion. In GOD IS RED, Native American philosopher Vine Deloria Jr. argued that indigenous religion is superior to western Christianity and the Christian West has much to learn from it, but many indigenous people understandably object when their practices are copied by outsiders, decontextualized, and used to make a profit. Where is the line between respectfully learning from and disrespectfully appropriating? Why are indigenous practices so appealing to the New Age? How do New Age desires intersect with the needs and desires of contemporary indigenous practitioners, as well as national legal structures and neo-liberal economies? What are the contexts within which decontextualized indigenous practices and ideas become re-contextualized as New Age? We will read and deconstruct the classic manifesto of New Age spirituality THE TEACHINGS OF DON JUAN, examine the Ayahuasca patent case, and consider questions of intellectual property, cultural appropriation, and spiritual tourism.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: CHUM312
Prereq: None

RELI314 Buddhist Traditions of Mind and Meditation
This seminar surveys a range of Buddhist meditation practices in the context of traditional theories of mind, perception, and cognition, with an emphasis on the traditions of South Asia, East Asia, and the Himalaya. Beginning with canonical descriptions of the mind and its variety of mental states, the course will then examine early scriptural expositions on the two principal types of meditation techniques: tranquility or concentration meditation (samatha) and insight meditation (vipasyana). Next will be an examination of techniques for cultivating compassion and the view of emptiness that were central to the later Indian traditions of the Mahayana or Great Vehicle. The course will finally turn to the elaborate systems of Tantra that developed in India and spread through Tibet, which incorporate the visualization of deities and recitation of mantras. Readings will include both primary Buddhist canonical works and commentaries by contemporary Buddhist teachers in English translation as well as secondary scholarship on the historical context of Buddhist meditation systems, cognitive theory, and ritual practice.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Prereq: None

RELI315 Ethics and Action in the Buddhist Cosmos
We often think about nirvana, or ‘enlightenment,’ as the ultimate goal of Buddhist practice. But the reality is much more complex. Buddhist traditions imagine a huge range of positive outcomes for moral behavior: immediate material benefits, rebirth in a better body or in a wealthier family, and enjoyment of gold-paved heavens or eternally blissful Pure Lands.

In this seminar we will read Buddhist scriptures, commentaries, biographies, narrative anthologies, and scholarly works that trace the many ways of thinking
about ethics, action, and rebirth in the vast Buddhist cosmos. We will tour Buddhist heavens and hells, Pure Lands and political dystopias, as well as the complex worlds of Buddhist modernity. Along the way we will begin to think about key issues in the study of religion: narrative and ethics, magic and material culture, cosmology and sacred presence, modernity and globalization.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: CEAS345
Prereq: None

RELI317 Colonizing Space: Exploration, Extraction, and Inhabitation
On March 26, 2019, Vice President Mike Pence directed NASA, under the authority of the president, to ensure that the US be the first nation to return to the moon, and to do so ‘by any means necessary.’ In this shocking appropriation of Malcolm X’s call to black liberation, Pence announced an uncompromising endeavor to secure American sovereignty in the face of the technological advancements of China, Israel, and India—not to mention the perennial aeronautic rival of Russia. Considering the persistent underfunding of scientific research in the US, fulfilling this presidential injunction will require NASA to cooperate with private corporations like lunar minder Moon Express and Planetary Resources, along with aspirational Mars-colonizers SpaceX and Blue Planet. This course will track the ideological and colonial history of the space race before coming to terms with the scientific, corporate, and legislative landscape that enables its contemporary expression. It will explore the mythological underpinnings, narrative imaginings, and theological justifications for unfettered exploration and inhabitation in order to interrogate the possibility of an ethically and ecologically sustainable space program.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: ENVS317, SISP327
Prereq: None

RELI318 Awesome Cinema: Religion, Art, and the Unrepresentable
How does one represent the unrepresentable? In particular, how might a medium like cinema, founded on recording the visible world, move us to sense something beyond human experience? Various artistic, religious, and religiously artistic traditions use mystery, horror, surprise, disgust, and pleasure to evoke the uncanny, the majestic, the terrifying, and even the sublime in us. This class examines how filmmakers prompt audiences to feel awe (which might be awesome, awful, or both) and how that relates to religious engagement with the nonrational. Noting parallels in painting, ritual, architecture, and other means of expression, we consider how art structures emotion, perception, and cognition to exceed representation of the known. This class will examine how aliens, avatars, black holes, death, deities, demons, saints, saviors, superheroes, and nature have been conduits to that which appears to escape reason. Films will include ‘Arrival, ’ ‘Interstellar, ’ ‘The Exorcist, ’ ‘Jai Santoshi Maa, ’ ‘Passion of Joan of Arc, ’ ‘Ten Canoes, ’ and ‘Yeelen.’

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-FILM
Identical With: FILM318
Prereq: RELI151 OR FILM307

RELI319 Zionism: A Political Theology
This seminar examines the political theology of Zionism by focusing on the intersections of secular aspirations and theological notions embedded in the ideology and practice of the national Jewish mission.

To this end, the seminar is designed to explore the modern concept of political theology. In analyzing a range of selected primary and secondary sources, it will also bring this concept to bear on an understanding of the Zionist secular adaptations of theological concepts, such as heresy, faith, inner experience, and redemption. Finally, the seminar will focus on how this type of political-theology informed the national Jewish language, symbolism, literature, social institutions, and social and political imagination.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: CHUM319, CJST319
Prereq: None

RELI348 Magic, Sex, and Scholasticism: Tantric Traditions in Asia and Beyond
The word ‘tantra’ conjures many images: ritual feasts on illicit substances, sexual union in the service of religious transformation, alchemical journeys, and explorations of the erotic, the terrifying, and the sublime. But what precisely did tantra look like in practice? Were the worlds of tantra imagined by marginal outcasts? Monastic elites? Or were they just the wild fantasies of Western imperialists?

In this course, we will immerse ourselves in the worlds of tantra, through scriptures, ritual manuals, and art. We will read scholarship on tantra to probe the social and philosophical contexts in which tantra thrived. Finally, we will investigate the history of Western encounters with and appropriations of tantra, from Aleister Crowley to Sting.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RELI
Identical With: FGSS348
Prereq: None

RELI351 Debate and Destruction: Jews and Christians in the Middle Ages
This course will consider relations between the Jewish minority and their Christian neighbors in England before the Jews’ expulsion in 1290. We will also look at how the Jews are depicted in subsequent Christian writing. We will read texts originally written in Hebrew, French, and Latin (all in translation) as well as English, giving us a sense of the conversations that took place between two groups that were both inextricably bound together and set apart by centuries of conflict and persecution. Among the issues we will explore are the popularity of Jewish-Christian debate as a literary form, the Crusades, gender roles and gender fluidity, Jewish and Christian apocalyptic programs, and the curious afterlife of Jews in Middle English literature.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: ENGL351, MDST351, CJST351
Prereq: None

RELI373 Religion, Science, and Empire: Crucible of a Globalized World
The development of modern science—and of modernity itself—not only coincided with the rise of European imperialism, it was abetted by it. Meanwhile, religion was integral to both the roots of European science and Western encounters with others. This class will explore how the intersections of religion, science, and empire have formed a globalized world with examples of European engagement with the Americas, Middle East, and, particularly, India from the age of Columbus through to the space race. We will examine how the disciplines we know today as biology, anthropology, archaeology, folklore, and the history of religions all crystallized in the crucible of imperial encounter and how non-Westerners have embraced, engaged, and resisted these epistememes.

Offering: Host
REL379 Christianity and Sexuality
This course will explore a range of Christian teachings on, attitudes toward, and technologies of sex and sexuality. We will read medieval and modern theologies of gender and sex, as well as contemporary historical, sociological, cultural, and literary studies. Points of focus will include confession, mysticism, marriage, celibacy, queer and trans* practices, politics, identities, and reproductive justice.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: FGSS309, MDST379
Prereq: None

REL391 Religion and the Social Construction of Race
In this course we examine aspects of the intersections between race and religion in a number of historical and social contexts. We place at the center of our discussions the question of how race and religion are co-constructed categories that function as a prism through which people come to understand and experience their own identities and those of others. We will privilege interpretations that emphasize (1) the intersectionality of race and religion as a process in which power plays a pivotal role; and (2) the means through which communities form collective identities. We will read a range of historical analysis and primary source materials from the U.S. and the Caribbean. After a theory module, we will examine a colonial-era captivity narrative, antebellum pro-slavery document, missionary works, analyses of anti-Semitism, works on Rastafari, Haitian Vodou, Jonestown, the Christian White Supremacy movement, as well as the contemporary U.S. relationship to the Middle East.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: AFAM280, AMST391
Prereq: None

REL393 'If there is no God, then everything is permitted?' Moral Life in a Secular World
In Fyodor Dostoevsky's The Brothers Karamazov, Dmitri Karamazov famously poses the question of what would happen to mankind 'without God and immortal life,' asking whether this means that 'all things are permitted.' Made famous by Dostoevsky, the question of whether we can be moral without God has always haunted secularism and has consistently been the most vocal criticism of unbelief. From papal condemnations of secularism and 'godless Soviets,' to the contemporary consensus that belief in God is evidence of moral goodness and its absence a sign of a broken ethical barometer, the assumption has been that transcendental authority is all that stands between us and moral abyss. When the atrocities committed by 'totalitarian' regimes are cited as evidence of this, it is only the most radical articulation of a broader narrative of secular modernity.

One of modernity's master narratives is that people go from being under the care of the church to being under the care of the state, and our focus will be on historical cases where the question of secular values was explicitly engaged by the state. We will examine individual and collective articulations of morality in three prominent models of secularism: American civil religion, French laïcité, and Communist official atheism. What constitutes the moral foundation of a world without God? Can religion's moral and spiritual function be performed by a different kind of belief system?
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST395, REES344
Prereq: None

Religion (RELI)
RELI392Z ‘If there is no God, then everything is permitted?’ Moral Life in a Secular World

In Fyodor Dostoevsky’s The Brothers Karamazov, Dmitri Karamazov famously poses the question of what would happen to mankind ‘without God and immortal life,’ asking whether this means that ‘all things are permitted.’ Made famous by Dostoevsky, the question of whether we can be moral without God has always haunted secularism and has consistently been the most vocal criticism of unbelief. From papal condemnations of secularism and ‘godless Soviets,’ to the contemporary consensus that belief in God is evidence of moral goodness and its absence a sign of a broken ethical barometer, the assumption has been that transcendental authority is all that stands between us and moral abyss. When the atrocities committed by ‘totalitarian’ regimes are cited as evidence of this, it is only the most radical articulation of a broader narrative of secular modernity.

One of modernity’s master narratives is that people go from being under the care of the church to being under the care of the state, and our focus will be on historical cases where the question of secular values was explicitly engaged by the state. We will examine individual and collective articulations of morality in three prominent models of secularism: American civil religion, French laïcité, and Communist official atheism. What constitutes the moral foundation of a world without God? Can religion’s moral and spiritual function be performed by a different kind of belief system?

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST395Z, REES344Z
Prereq: None

RELI395 The Anthropology of Religion

What do we study when we study religion? We can observe practices, record speech, examine objects and actions—but what do these things tell us? If religion is about belief, what can we say about belief from documenting actions? Perhaps we must conclude that religion is not about belief, but if so, are in danger of ‘explaining away’ the very phenomena we seek to understand? This course will introduce students to a cross-cultural, comparative perspective on religious practice and belief in order to critically reflect on the role of methodology and research design in the study of religion and the social sciences more broadly. How do we know what we know? How do we plan research in order to find out what we want to know? The course has a significant methods component. Students will be expected to do field research exercises in a local religious community and prepare a methodology research proposal for a fictional or real project as a final assignment. Methodological exercises will be interspersed with ethnographic texts that allow us to reflect on how religion is studied, experienced, and explained. Students planning theses or other research projects with an ethnographic component, in any social science field, may use the class and the final assignment to conceptualize and plan their projects.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: ANTH395
Prereq: None

RELI398 Majors Colloquium in Religious Studies

This seminar provides an opportunity for majors to reflect even more critically upon the theories, methods, and discourses that constitute the academic study of religion. We will be concerned with current studies in history and the history of religions, the interpretation of texts, anthropology, feminist theory, and post-colonial theory. Our task is to understand and assess how scholars of religion make critical judgments. The seminar will explore how scholars operate within disciplinary communities, choose their topics, engage interlocutors, and weigh issues of emic and etic interpretation. We will seek to identify and evaluate each scholar’s principles of selection, means of description, stipulation of evidence, use of comparative categories, and methods and models of argumentation.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Prereq: RELI151

RELI401 Individual Tutorial, Undergraduate

Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

RELI402 Individual Tutorial, Undergraduate

Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

RELI403 Department/Program Project or Essay

Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

RELI404 Department/Program Project or Essay

Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: Host
Grading: Cr/U

RELI407 Senior Tutorial (downgraded thesis)

Downgraded Senior Thesis Tutorial - Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor. Only enrolled in through the Honors Coordinator.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

RELI408 Senior Tutorial (downgraded thesis)

Downgraded Senior Thesis Tutorial - Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor. Only enrolled in through the Honors Coordinator.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

RELI409 Senior Thesis Tutorial

Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

RELI410 Senior Thesis Tutorial

Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

RELI411 Group Tutorial, Undergraduate

Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

RELI412 Group Tutorial, Undergraduate

Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

RELI420 Student Forum

Student-run group tutorial, sponsored by a faculty member and approved by the chair of a department or program.

Offering: Host
Grading: Cr/U
RELI466 Education in the Field, Undergraduate
Students must consult with the department and class dean in advance of undertaking education in the field for approval of the nature of the responsibilities and method of evaluation.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

RELI467 Independent Study, Undergraduate
Credit may be earned for an independent study during a summer or authorized leave of absence provided that (1) plans have been approved in advance, and (2) all specified requirements have been satisfied.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

RELI468 Independent Study, Undergraduate
Credit may be earned for an independent study during a summer or authorized leave of absence provided that (1) plans have been approved in advance, and (2) all specified requirements have been satisfied.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: None
Prereq: None

RELI469 Education in the Field, Undergraduate
Students must consult with the department and class dean in advance of undertaking education in the field for approval of the nature of the responsibilities and method of evaluation.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: None
Prereq: None

RELI491 Teaching Apprentice Tutorial
The teaching apprentice program offers undergraduate students the opportunity to assist in teaching a faculty member's course for academic credit.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

RELI492 Teaching Apprentice Tutorial
The teaching apprentice program offers undergraduate students the opportunity to assist in teaching a faculty member's course for academic credit.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

RELI495 Research Apprentice, Undergraduate
Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: Cr/U

RELI496 Research Apprentice, Undergraduate
Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: Cr/U