

Religion, Comparative (REL)

REL 101. Rethinking Religion: Introduction to the Study of Religion. (3)

Although religion plays important roles in shaping societies and individual lives, people often feel ill equipped to understand it. In this course, you will "rethink" religion by learning to think about it in more complex ways. You will see how internally diverse a religion can be, how religion intersects with other kinds of identities, and how religion operates in the public realm, not simply as a personal concern. Perhaps most importantly, you will cultivate the ability to engage empathetically with worldviews different from your own. IIB. PA-3B. CAS-B.

REL 177. Independent Studies. (0-6)

REL 201. Methods for the Study of Religion. (3)

Classical and contemporary theories of the nature, origin, and function of religion in human society. Required for majors and minors in comparative religion. ADVW. PA-1C. CAS-W.

Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

REL 203. Global Religions of India. (3)

Explores the major religions of India and their growth outside India. Asks how these religions have contributed to the religious pluralism of America. Also asks how Asian American and non-Asian American practitioners of these religions have changed the way that religion is practiced in India and other parts of Asia. IIB, IIIB. PA-3B, PA-4B. CAS-B.

Cross-listed with AAA 203.

REL 223. Introduction to Buddhism. (3)

Introduces Buddhism with a focus on South Asia. Is Buddhism a religion or a philosophy? Is the Buddha a human or a god? If monks and nuns are supposed to be celibate, how has the religion survived so long? Explore these questions through the eyes of different Buddhist cultures who have different ideas about the importance of marriage, family, the accumulation of wealth, and whether what they do is "religion" or a way of life that renders the gods irrelevant. PA-3B, PA-4B. CAS-B.

REL 226. Introduction to Islam. (3)

Origin and early history and rapid spread of Islam as a world faith, development of Muslim theology and culture, major groups and thinkers, and problems and issues of the present.

REL 241. Religions of the American Peoples. (3)

A wide-ranging introductory survey of ways that different religions practiced in the United States may shape the lives of your future colleagues, clients, or neighbors in areas including dress, diet, sexuality, finances, health, attitudes toward science and technology, and the lived experience of time (routines, holidays, life-cycle events). You'll gain critical perspective on how people construct and negotiate their religious identities. And you'll investigate an issue, challenge, or opportunity that religion creates in whatever field of work you are preparing to enter. IC. PA-4B. CAS-B.
Cross-listed with AMS.

REL 275. Introduction to the Critical Study of Biblical Literature. (3)

Surveys origins, historical development, content of texts, both canonical & non-canonical, that contributed to the formation of the Bible against the background of the advent & continuing development of modern literary and historical-critical methods. IIB. PA-3B. CAS-B.

REL 277. Independent Studies. (0-6)

REL 286. Global Jewish Civilization. (3)

How did the Jewish people persist through the vicissitudes of enslavement, conquest, dispersion, and return, over the course of three thousand years of history? In this course, we will study of the encounter between Jews and the cultures and lands in which they lived, through a consideration of Jewish sacred texts and literature, spanning the globe from Ancient Mesopotamia to modern America. IIB, IIIB. PA-3B, PA-4C. CAS-B.

REL 305. Becoming Christianity. (3)

Students will learn how a sect became an enduring "religion" in its own right, how sects make their case for legitimacy, establish group identities, wrestle with factions and disunity, and eventually transcend ethnic boundaries so thoroughly that a former sect comes to reside among peoples who were once excluded from its original group. CAS-B.

Cross-listed with HST 305.

REL 306. History of Christian Thought. (3)

A survey of the history of Christian thought that introduces the major intellectual issues throughout Christian history, including understandings of God, evil, human nature, and salvation. Examines the diversity in Christianity between and within Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant traditions. Explores the interaction between intellectual developments and historical context. CAS-B.

Cross-listed with HST 306.

REL 313. Marriage Across Cultures. (3)

This class engages feminist theory and gender studies to explore the consequences of different types of marital formations (polygamous as well as monogamous) for the lives of women and men in selected Western and non-Western cultures. IC. PA-4B. CAS-B.

Cross-listed with WGS.

REL 314. Social and Religious History of the Jewish People. (3)

Cultural, social, and religious history of Jews in Europe, America, and the Middle East since Enlightenment with emphasis on 20th century and in the context of the larger society and culture. IIB. PA-3B. CAS-B.

REL 316. The Age of the Reformation. (3)

The religious revolutions of the 16th century, both Protestant and Catholic, in their social, political, and religious contexts. Topics chosen from: medieval reform movements and heresies; popular religion; the debates about clerical celibacy, free will, and the priesthood; social discipline and the modern state; family and women; the missions to the New World; the witch craze and the Inquisition.

Cross-listed with HST 316.

REL 330. Religion, Sex, & Gender. (3; maximum 6)

Do people have gender-specific ways of experiencing religious life? Learn how gender and sexuality shape a person's religious life. See how organized religion is in turn shaped by the lived experience of humans with gendered and sexualized bodies. Apply feminist and queer theory to selected case studies in order to analyze how religions respond to people and how people respond to religion. CAS-B.

Cross-listed with WGS 330.

REL 331. Paul and the Beginnings of Christianity. (3)

History, institutions, and thought of early Christianity in the first two centuries, C.E., including the letters of Paul and early interpreters of Paul.

REL 333. Religion, Dress, and Status. (3)

Displays of status through constrictive dress and gender segregation will be explored with reference to religion, gender, and class. Course will explore the topic through selected case studies, several of which involve Islamic cultures.

Cross-listed with WGS.

REL 336. Reconstructing Jesus. (3)

There are a lot of Jesuses out there; the divine savior, the wandering Jewish preacher, the apocalyptic prophet, the revolutionary, the moral philosopher—each one someone's reconstruction. How do we get to the Jesus of History, and what does that even mean? Students explore the intellectual and methodological problems in reconstructing a historical figure — none more influential than Jesus of Nazareth.

REL 340. Internship. (0-20)**REL 341. Protestantism and the Development of American Culture. (3)**

History and symbolic structure of American Protestantism and its role in the development of American culture.

Cross-listed with AMS 341.

REL 342. Religious Pluralism in Modern America. (3)

Historical and cultural analysis of religious communities of the U.S. of primarily non-European origin. Includes African American, Native American, Latino, and Middle Eastern and Asian traditions, including Islam. IC. PA-4B. CAS-B.

REL 343. African-American Religions. (3)

An historical survey of the formulation and expression of African-American religions from slavery to the present, including culturally specific forms of Christianity and Islam, as well as reinventions and reinterpretations of African traditions.

Cross-listed with CRE.

REL 355. Religion and Law. (3)

Students will work with legal briefs, theories, and case studies drawn from a range of traditions, such as Islamic, Jewish, Hindu, and Christian, to examine how law and religion are constituted and used to construct, challenge, or complicate identities. Case studies will focus on controversial cases in the US and other parts of the world. Also analyzed will be the changes to law and religion brought by modernization such as the effects of secularization, technology and new media, colonial/post-colonialism, and human migration.

REL 360. Interdisciplinary Special Topics. (1-4; maximum 8)

Course of study on a selected topic examined from the perspective of two or more disciplines.

REL 365. Arabian Gulf Economies in Social Transition. (6)

Since the discovery of oil in twentieth-century Arabia, the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates have seen remarkable social, cultural, political, and economic shifts. In visits to Dubai, Muscat, and Abu Dhabi, this program will introduce students to the intersection of the religious, cultural, and economic climates of both the United Arab Emirates and the Sultanate of Oman to foster the importance of Arab culture and Islam to the pursuit of a successful emerging, developed, and specialized economy in the Middle East. Through site visits, conversations with experts and locals, as well as personal experiences, students will evaluate how culture is preserved, lost, and transformed in Oman and UAE in the course of engaging in local and global business. As a result of this experience, students interested in foreign affairs, human cultures, global politics, and global economies will be uniquely skilled to succeed in the Arabian Gulf context. This course is only offered as part of a credit workshop. PA-4B, PA-4C. CAS-B.

REL 373. Religion after Communism. (3)

Explores the relationship between Religion and Socialism, focusing especially on the Soviet Union and China. In both, religion suffered severe repression under communist regimes, followed in recent decades by the revival of Orthodox Christianity in Russia, Islam in Central Asia, and various religions in China, with significant impact on society and politics in all. Examines the significance of religion in these countries for understanding international relations and media representation. CAS-B.

REL 376. Global Jihadism. (3)

Introduces and examines the development of contemporary Jihadi-Salafi movements such as al-Qa'ida and ISIS in comparison with movements such as Hamas and Hizbullah. Evaluates the changing interpretations of Islamic tradition, law, and religious practice each movement manifests. Particular attention is paid to a critical analysis of the writings and multimedia productions of these movements in response to modernization, secularization, and global historical and socioeconomic circumstances.

REL 377. Independent Studies. (0-6)**REL 402. Basic Structures in the History of Religions. (3)**

Investigations of categories, types, and forms developed for the study of religions, such as the Sacred, the Holy, myth, initiation. SC.

REL 470A. Havighurst Colloquium. (3)

Exploration of significant issues related to Russian and post communist affairs. Each semester focuses on a central theme or topic that is examined through presentations, readings, research, discussion, and writing. May be repeated once for credit with only 3 hours counting towards the history major.

Cross-listed with ATH 436/536; CLS 436; HST 436/HST 536/536; POL 440/POL 540/540; and RUS 436/536.

REL 477. Independent Studies. (0-6)**REL 480. Independent Reading for Departmental Honors. (1-6)****REL 677. Independent Studies. (0-6)**