

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

RELI 111 - INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN RELIGIONS

Credits: 3

Introduction to the structures of African religions through readings. Topics include community, cosmology, ritual, ethical values, magic, witchcraft, spirit possession, contribution to nationalism, social change, religion and art, and transplantation of African Religions in the Americas.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 113 - INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIANITY IN AFRICA

Credits: 3

An introductory reading course examining the dynamics of African Christianity from the early church to the present. Course will include studying the African church during the Patristic era, the Colonial period, Prophetic Movements, nationalism, racial tensions, the role of women, and the emergence of a distinct theological voice.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 125 - INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL HEBREW I

Credits: 3

An introduction to Biblical Hebrew (two semesters) with emphasis on grammar and vocabulary.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 127 - INTERMEDIATE BIBLICAL HEBREW I

Credits: 3

Readings in the Hebrew Bible as well as in some unvocalized texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls. Review of grammar and vocabulary.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 157 - RELIGION AND HIP HOP CULTURE IN AMERICA

Credits: 3

Hip Hop culture has changed how life is discussed and conducted. However, one of the under-explored dimensions of Hip Hop culture involves its religious sensibilities. Using lectures, discussions, films, and video presentations, this course explores Hip Hop culture's religious dimensions through its musical language-rap music.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 158 - LIBERATION THEOLOGIES

Credits: 3

This course seeks to acquaint students with examples of liberation theology, as they relate to the following issues: racism, sexism, classism, and environmental destruction. Attention is given to the context, construction, form, and aims of Latin American liberation theology, Black theology, Feminist theology, and Theology in the Intersections.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 164 - WHO IS (NOT) A JEW?

Credits: 3

Explore problems with identity-- ethnic, political, spiritual-- in the case of the other Jew. Consider themes of anti-Semitism and philo-Semitism, insider and outsider, tradition and innovation. Examine competing views purveyed through diverse media such as literature, film, art, and music. Selected texts from St. Paul, Shakespeare, Dickens, Marx, George Eliot, Freud, Chagall, Cynthia Ozick, Bob Dylan, and Woody Allen. This course is limited to first-year students only, any others will be removed from this course. **College:** School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

Restrictions: Must be enrolled in one of the following Class(es): Sophomore, Freshman

RELI 170 - FRESHMAN SEMINAR: RELIGION AND VIOLENCE**Credits: 3**

Seminar explores the nexus of religion and violence as it appears in sacred traditions, as it played out historically, and as it occurs in the contemporary world. Discussions and readings include sociological, psychological, philosophical, and political approaches to religion itself, to violence in general, and particularly religious violence.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 209 - INTRODUCTION TO JUDAISM**Credits: 3**

Post-biblical Judaism reflected in ancient rabbinical (legal space and non-legal) literature, feminism, medieval Jewish philosophy with special emphasis on Maimonides, and modern developments such as Hasidism, Musar, liberal Judaism, and Zionism.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 210 - ETHICS IN JUDAISM**Credits: 3**

What-if anything-is right, good, and just about our intentions and actions? The course surveys urgent questions raised in Jewish philosophy concerning law, morality, and politics. Topics include freedom and frailty, gender and government, emotions and reasons, suffering and hope. Readings in translation ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary writings.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 223 - QUR'AN AND COMMENTARY**Credits: 3**

Survey of the major themes of the Qur'an and selected types of commentary on it from the early Islamic period until the present day.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 225 - REVOLUTIONARY ISLAM: SHI'ISM**Credits: 3**

This course will cover Shi'ism at an introductory level, focusing upon the Imami (Twelve) and Ismai'ili branches of Shi'ism but also including the so-called Ghulat sects.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 240 - BLACK RELIGIOUS THOUGHT**Credits: 3**

This course will examine 20th century Black religious thought and its influence on Black life and praxis. The course is structured thematically. The themes are: Black Nationalism, Christianity Inspired Praxis, Black Existentialism and Humanism. We will explore central themes such as evil, suffering, scriptural imagery, and liberation.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 270 - INTRODUCTION TO THE BLACK CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES

Credits: 3

Much of what has historically taken place within Black communities has been shaped by Black Christian churches. These churches are resources for those interested in understanding religious expression and activism within the Black community. This course provides an introduction into the history, thought, and worship of the major Black denominations.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 272 - RELIGION AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN HOUSTON

Credits: 3

Assess the role of religion for social change in Houston by illuminating the contributions of William Lawson, a local leader who worked with Martin Luther King. It first uncovers the underpinnings and antecedents of the civil rights movement in general before narrowing its focus on Houston in particular.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 282 - INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIANITY

Credits: 3

Multidisciplinary exploration of Christian religious experience, belief, and social reality with examples from Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe during the last two thousand years. Themes include search for lasting marks of identity amid change and diversity as well as the issue of Christianity's relation to processes of modernization and secularization. No prior background in religious studies required.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 286 - THE REFORMATION & ITS RESULTS

Credits: 3

Theology and church-state issues from 16th-century Reformation to 17th century; medieval background; Luther and Calvin, the Catholic Reformation; religious wars; Protestant orthodoxy; Pietist spirituality; Puritanism; and calls for toleration..

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

ELI 303 - THE CRAFT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Credits: 3

This course is an advanced survey that introduces the components of studying religion: textual interpretation, traditions and cultures, methodological analysis, and reflection on values. It is required for Religious Studies majors and encouraged for non-majors.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 312 - THE RELIGIOUS THOUGHT OF MARTIN L. KING, JR. AND MALCOLM X

Credits: 3

Although many figures played a prominent role during the Civil Rights Movement, Martin L. King, Jr. and Malcolm X made unique contributions. Their work sparked important conversation concerning the methods, goals, and consequences of struggle toward liberation. This course examines their religiosity, theological sensibilities, and the major themes which surface in their writings and public work.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 338 - THE CHURCH OF AFRICA

Credits: 3

A reading course designed to examine Christianity in Africa. Course materials and readings will address the development of the church from the Patristic era to the present, paying attention to theological developments, missionization, colonialism, nationalism, prophetic movements, race relations, the role of women, and social issues.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 340 - THEOLOGY IN AFRICA

Credits: 3

Introductory readings on theological thinking in Africa. Course will address methodological issues as well as constructive theological work on enculturation, social and economic justice, gender, health, and liberation. Read 5 major texts, write a major review, lead class discussions, discuss texts used, and write 20 page research paper.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 346 - LIBERATION THEOLOGIES II: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Credits: 3

Through readings, lectures, and class discussions, this course provides a survey of liberation theologies outside the United States. Primary attention is given to liberation theologies in Africa, Asia, South America, and the United Kingdom.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 348 - CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM IN AFRICA

Credits: 3

This course will focus upon the history and conflict of Christianity and Islam in Africa, with emphasis placed upon indigenous African developments, cultural and artistic themes, and conversion narratives as well as exploring the co-existence and conflict of the two major faiths of the continent.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 352 - JIHAD AND THE END OF THE WORLD

Credits: 3

The course will explore the connections between Jihad (both aggressive and non-aggressive) and apocalyptic beliefs in the Muslim tradition from the time of the Prophet Muhammad until the present day. Readings from the Qur'an, Bukhari, Ayatullah al-Khumayni, and Sayyid Qutb.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 356 - MAJOR ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY ISLAM

Credits: 3

This course will focus on the major issues confronting contemporary Islam including Islamic unity, the place of the Qur'an and traditions, human rights, Islamic feminism, da'wa, education, science and Islam, globalization and medical ethics.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 358 - HUMOR AND ENTERTAINMENT IN ISLAMIC SOCIETIES

Credits: 3

This course investigates humor and entertainment in Islamic societies from the early Islamic period to the 20th century. We will read and discuss texts from the Arabic, Persian, and Turkish literary traditions, and analyze their genres and entertainment values.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 370 - MEDICINE, MEANING, & MORALITY

Credits: 3

Introduce students to the medical humanities -- a relatively new field which addresses moral, legal, spiritual and religious problems spawned by the rise of high-tech medicine and high-stakes biomedical research. Materials include clinical case studies, film, and reader's theatre as well as historical, philosophical, literary, and theological writings.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 371 - MODERN JEWISH THOUGHT

Credits: 3

What is the role of God and spirituality in the modern world? How do modern Jewish thinkers reinterpret traditional religious concepts? Explore debates on textual criticism, historical representation, existentialism, and political theology in writings by Spinoza, Buber, Rosenzweig, Kook, Levinas, and Adler.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 373 - JEWISH MYSTICISM

Credits: 3

Surveys the historical development and central themes of Jewish mysticism. Moving from ancient Gnosticism to medieval Kabbalah to modern Hasidism, we critically reflect on the divine presence in the world, the cultivation of insight and magical powers, contemplative and restorative practices, charismatic authority, the anti-legalism of spiritual growth.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 385 - GOD, TIME AND HISTORY

Credits: 3

How is the passage of time given meaning, and what role--if any--is assigned to divinity in shaping the direction of events? Course explores various forms of recording and interpreting events, drawing from ancient Mesopotamia, Israel, and the Greco-Roman world--the cultures in which modern ideas of history began.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 390 - SEARCH FOR GOD IN THE POSTMODERN WORLD

Credits: 3

Explore forms of theistic religious experience, concentrating on the Western Christian tradition;

past and present cultural and philosophical challenges to traditional religious belief; the possibility of Christian faith and the struggle for justice and meaning. Additional 10-page research paper required.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 400 - HONORS IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Credits: Hours Variable

Honors thesis. Enrollment by approval.

Instructor permission required

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 401/402 - INDEPENDENT STUDY

Credits: Hours Variable

Multiple sections of this course are offered.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 424 - RELIGION AND POLITICS IN AFRICA

Credits: 3

This course explores religion and politics in Africa focusing on indigenous religions, Christianity, Islam, etc. Readings highlight historical developments, key documents in religion and politics, contemporary issues such as: religious freedom, separation of religion and politics, human rights, violence, race, gender, class, and the role of religion in reconstruction of public praxis.

Instructor permission required

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 425 - AFRICANA PHILOSOPHY & THOUGHT

Credits: 3

Read, discuss, and analyze African, African American, Caribbean, and other African Diaspora existential thought and philosophy. Explore history of philosophy in that context and major philosophical issues and voices.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 426 - RELIGION AND LITERATURE IN AFRICA

Credits: 3

Analysis of the religious imagination and gender issues in postcolonial literature in Africa focusing on Islam, Christianity, indigenous religions and African Initiated Churches. Religious and gender issues addressed include identity crises, power, class of cultures, modernity, cosmology, community, and socio-religious conflicts in a postcolonial world.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 429 - DEPARTMENT SEMINAR

Credits: 3

The team-taught Department Seminar critically examines the methodological questions and interpretive paradigms that have been central to the academic study of religion. Philosophical, ethical, textual, psychological, comparative and gender issues, among others, will be considered. Instructors and topics vary.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 430 - RELIGION & MODERN THERAPIES

Credits: 3

A survey of the historical development of the psychology of religion and its conversation with theology, comparative studies, gender studies, sociology, and anthropology. Topics include: mysticism, eroticism, conversion, feminism, psychobiography. Examples drawn from a variety of religious traditions. Readings include: Freud, Jung, Tillich, Erikson, Kristeva, Kakar.

Instructor permission required

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 433 - TIBETAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Credits: 3

Readings in Tibetan texts -- debates, philosophical treatises of various kinds, meditation texts for contemplative practice -- accompanied by supportive readings in English and discussion of the thematic issues raised by the material, with an emphasis on cultural awareness.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 440 - ISLAM'S MYSTICAL AND ESOTERIC TRADITION

Credits: 3

Explores the ascetic and Sufi aspects of Islam from the middle Islamic period until the present day. Readings from al-Ghazali, Ibn al-Arabi, Sa'di, Hafiz and Rumi.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 443 - MAIMONIDES "GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED"

Credits: 3

This course will closely read the classic text of Judeo- Muslim thought, Maimonides Guide for the Perplexed, in its historical philosophical and literary context. It will draw upon additional Jewish and Muslim sources as well.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 451 - PHILOSOPHIES & THEOLOGIES OF HISTORY

Credits: 3

Modern thought on meaning, direction of history; roots in eschatology, Augustine; flowering in progress, historicism: Hegel, Ranke, Burckhardt, Nietzsche, Troeltsch, Spengler, Heidegger, Toynbee; cultural echo (de Chirico, Proust, Mann, Robbe-Grillet, Bu[^]uel, Bergman, Fellini).

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 456 - HISTORY OF WESTERN CHRISTIANITY: REFORMATION TO THE PRESENT

Credits: 3

Spirituality, sociopolitical movements, and intellectual life in the West. Includes Luther, Calvin, Kierkegaard, Bonhoeffer, Barth, C.S. Lewis, Tillich, Marx, Nietzsche, and Jung.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 457 - MODERNITY, ANTI- AND POSTMODERNITY

Credits: 3

Modernity, Antimodernity, & Postmodernity as Styles of Religiosity. Exploration of the problem

of defining "modernity" and concepts. Includes contemporary sociological, political, and cultural theory (e.g. Baudrillard) in connection with typologies of religious experience and grouping from mainline through New Age.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 468 - GERMAN-JEWISH IDEALISM AND ITS CRITICS

Credits: 3

From the 18th century until 1933, writers imagined a symbiosis of Judaic and German philosophical and cultural ideas. Were they tragically deluded or guardedly optimistic? Discuss skepticism, romanticism, historicism, ethical monotheism, critical theory, and neo-conservatism. Readings selected from Mendelssohn, Spinoza, Cohen, Buber, Rosenzweig, Scholem, Benjamin, Arendt, and Strauss.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 470 - BUDDHIST WISDOM TEXTS

Credits: 3

Indo-Tibetan analyses of the mind and its functions, especially differing views on the role of reasoning and the nature of the "ultimate" in major philosophical schools of Tibet and India.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 481 - Gnostic GOSPELS SEMINAR

Credits: 3

Examines the second century's great debate between the Gnostic Christians and their opponents, the Christians who later became known as the "orthodox". The conflict concerned ideas about "correct" interpretations of the nature of Jesus and his relationship to God and the world. Nag Hammadi texts as well as Patristic literature will be analyzed by individual students.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 490 - AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE AND RELIGION

Credits: 3

In this seminar students will read and analyze African American literature in order to explore the various ways in which African Americans have understood and articulated the nature and meaning of African American religious experience and practice.

College: School of Humanities

Department: Religious Studies

RELI 491 - THEORY AND METHOD IN THE STUDY OF BLACK RELIGION

Credits: 3

Through an intense reading and analysis of select text, this seminar will give attention to "tools" for the study of Black religion made available through, for example, History of Religions, Philosophy of Religion (Pragmatism and the "Prophetic"), Phenomenology, Constructive Theology, Process Studies, and Social/Cultural History, Sociology of Religion.

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