

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (RELS)

Course Descriptions

RELS 120 Philosophy and Religion 3 Credit Hours

An examination of how basic concerns of philosophy impinge on questions of religious beliefs. Using philosophical texts, the course will explore such questions as the following: Does God exist? Does human life have a purpose? How can we know whether religious claims are true?

RELS 201 Religions of the World 3 Credit Hours

A study of religion in essence, in manifestation, and in relationship with the other dimensions of culture. Surveys major world religions.

RELS 313 African American Religious Experience 4 Credit Hours

Full Title: African American Religious Experience This lecture course presents a survey of African American expressions across diverse religious traditions including Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, and will explore contested forms of spiritual expression such as secularism and new religious movements. The course tracks these experiences from the late 18th to the 21st century in light of the contemporaneous context of social, political, and economic forces in the United States. No prerequisites. (YR).

RELS 327 Gods, Myth and Worship 4 Credit Hours

Full Course Title: Gods, Myth and Worship in Classical Art- This course examines the way that gods, goddesses, heroes, and myths are depicted in Greek and Roman art, and how they were central to the religious and cultural life of these civilizations. We study the art, architecture, literature, and archaeology of ancient Greece and Rome as we explore how religious priorities, social needs, and political ideologies shaped the artistic choices behind the representations of deities and legendary figures and stories. (OC)

RELS 333 Intro to Gospel Music 4 Credit Hours

This course explores the history and aesthetics of Black sacred music within cultural context. Major figures (Thomas A. Dorsey, Mahalia Jackson, The Winans Family, Kirk Franklin), periods (slavery, Great Migration, Civil Rights movement), and styles (folk and arranged Negro spirituals, congregational songs, and gospel songs - traditional to contemporary) will be studied through recording, videos, film and at least one field experience. Underlying the course is the theory (Mellonee Burnim and Pearl Williams-Jones) that gospel music is an expression of African American culture that fuses both African and European elements into a unique whole. (OC).

RELS 335 Women in Medieval Art 4 Credit Hours

Women have often been regarded as the second sex of the middle ages due to the misogynistic attitudes of that era. Recent scholarship, however, has unearthed a significantly more complex picture. Through a study of visual representations of women in medieval art, this course will examine women's roles in the creation and patronage of art and literature, economic and family issues, and women's participation in new and innovative forms of religious piety. (OC).

RELS 338 State Feminism in the Modern Middle East 4 Credit Hours

Starting in the late 19th Century governments in the Middle East began responding to calls to open new opportunities for women in society, less for the benefit of women than for the benefit of "the nation" and the men who led it. By the middle of the 20th Century women's movements across the region were pushing for full equal rights, testing the original limits of state feminism. This is the story of that process and its complicated legacy.

RELS 341 Religion and Literature 3 Credit Hours

An investigation of the ways in which religious ideas and practices have informed works of literature, and vice versa. Surveying a variety of genres and themes, the course will focus mainly on British and/or American literature and its engagement with Judeo-Christian religion, though some attention may be devoted to other literary and religious traditions (e.g., ancient and medieval texts, European and world literature, Islam and Eastern religions).

RELS 346 Bible and Western Tradition 3 Credit Hours

A detailed study of major episodes from the Bible, first as a literary work, and second as it is reflected in both poetry and the visual arts during the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Included are selected works by such masters as John Donne, George Herbert, and John Milton in poetry and Michelangelo, Raphael, and Leonardo da Vinci in painting and sculpture.

RELS 349 The Bible In/As Literature 3 Credit Hours

This course will study selected readings from the Bible, first in regard to their own literary, historical, and cultural contents, and then in regard to their reception, interpretation, and reapplication by later literary tradition. Biblical selections may cover both the Old and New Testaments as well as Apocryphal traditions, while readings from later non-biblical texts will be drawn from various literary periods.

Prerequisite(s): (COMP 106 or COMP 220 or COMP 270 or COMP 280 or Composition Placement Score with a score of 40 or Composition Placement Score with a score of 107) and (ENGL 230 or ENGL 231 or ENGL 232 or ENGL 233 or ENGL 235 or ENGL 236 or ENGL 237 or ENGL 239 or ENGL 200)

RELS 355 Religion and Politics 3 Credit Hours

The primary focus of the course is on political movements or systems that take a religious form or have a religious base or use a religiously-rooted ideology. Possible themes or cases covered include the Catholic Church as a political system, Evangelical politics in America, religious uprisings, and Islamic political movements. (AY)

RELS 3634 History of Islam in the US 4 Credit Hours

This course traces the long history of Islam and of Muslims in the United States (1730s-present), paying careful attention to the interaction among Muslims across the dividing lines of race, gender, immigrant generations, sect, political orientation, and class, and between Muslims and other Americans. (OC).

Restriction(s):

Can enroll if Class is Sophomore or Junior or Senior or Graduate

RELS 365 Introduction to the Qur'an 4 Credit Hours

This course is an introduction to the Qur'an. This class will cover the historical and the cultural factors in which the Qur'an appeared. The class will also examine some of the major themes covered in the Qur'an such as gender, science, pluralism, worldview and so forth. Also, will cover major schools of interpretations and methodologies ranging from the literary to the scientific. The class will be conducted in English and knowledge of Arabic is desired but not required. No prerequisites. The class will consist of lectures, discussions, and movies. This course is a Project Based Learning centered on a major project and/or on a research question related to the topic of the class and will imply hands-on work for a good portion of the semester. The project can be local or international community-driven and will connect to real-life experiences.

RELS 367 Religion and Resistance 4 Credit Hours

This course examines how religion and spirituality as a cultural expression has been instrumental in influencing social, political, and economic thought and the action of violent and nonviolent resistance. In such, African Americans have affirmed their humanity, their citizenship, and have exerted mechanisms of protest and change that have in-kind influenced similar thought and activity around the globe. When contemporary students are aware of this history at all, it is often without the knowledge or understanding of the various forms of resistance and the range of reason and spirituality behind this activity. The course will present key figures and movements as well as forms of resistance as religious and/or spiritual activity and thought. (AY).

RELS 385 Philosophy of Religion 4 Credit Hours

A philosophical examination of basic religious problems, such as the nature and grounds of religious belief, the existence and nature of God, human immortality, the relations of religion and science, and the nature of religious language. Students electing this course must have successfully completed a previous course in philosophy or have permission of the instructor.

Prerequisite(s): PHIL 100 or PHIL 120 or PHIL 233 or PHIL 234 or PHIL 240 or PHIL 253 or PHIL 301 or PHIL 302 or PHIL 303 or PHIL 304 or PHIL 305 or PHIL 310 or PHIL 315 or PHIL 320 or PHIL 365 or PHIL 340 or PHIL 335 or PHIL 350 or PHIL 369 or PHIL 371 or PHIL 375 or PHIL 380 or PHIL 390 or PHIL 441 or PHIL 442 or PHIL 445 or PHIL 485 or PHIL 490 or RELS 120

RELS 388 LGBTQ Religious Experience 4 Credit Hours

This course explores intersections of religion, spirituality, and faith with sexuality and gender. We center LGBTQ journeys within diverse faith traditions, including, but not limited to, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, land-based religions, new spiritual movements, and interfaith work. Assignments create room for students to engage traditions that are not covered in the course readings. The course highlights intersections at three levels of analysis: the individual or personal level (how do LGBTQ identities intersect with religious freedom and practice?), the community level (how do LGBTQ people experience belonging and rejection in diverse faith communities?), and the institutional level (how do the structures of these belief systems shape the life chances of LGBTQ people in society?). (YR).

RELS 390 Topics in Religious Studies 3 Credit Hours

Examination of problems and issues in selected areas of religious studies. Title in Schedule of Classes will change according to content. Course may be repeated for credit when specific topics differ. Junior standing required.

Restriction(s):

Cannot enroll if Class is Freshman or Sophomore
Can enroll if Level is Undergraduate

RELS 393 Black Women, Rel & Spirituality 4 Credit Hours

This lecture course surveys descriptive and critical literature relevant to the religious and spiritual experience and thought of African diasporic women. Studying religiosity and spirituality among this population helps students understand this influential, culturally-constructed world view of Black women as they engage in a variety of institutions including healthcare, economic activity, the criminal justice system, politics, and social relationships. The course gives particular attention to Black feminist and Womanist literature on these topics. (F).

Restriction(s):

Cannot enroll if Class is Freshman

RELS 401 Religion in Contemp US Culture 3 Credit Hours

The purpose of this course is to provide people in contemporary multi-religious America foundational information about beliefs and practices of several of the world's religions sufficient to engage in inter-religious dialogue. Special emphasis will be given to changes the American religious landscape after 1965 with the passage of new immigration laws. The course will combine lectures and visits to a variety of Metropolitan Detroit religious centers including Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Sikh, Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and Native American. (S).

RELS 404 Medieval Mystical Writers 3 Credit Hours

A study of the genre of mystical writing as it was developed and practiced throughout the Middle Ages and in 14th century England particularly. Attention will be given to the historical, religious, and cultural contexts that enabled and were created by mystical texts. In addition, the course will explore how traditional and contemporary trends in the fields of religious and literary studies can be brought to bear on the genre of mystical writing. (OC)

Prerequisite(s): (COMP 106 or COMP 220 or COMP 270 or COMP 280 or Composition Placement Score with a score of 40 or Composition Placement Score with a score of 107) and (ENGL 200 or ENGL 230 or ENGL 231 or ENGL 232 or ENGL 233 or ENGL 235 or ENGL 236 or ENGL 237 or ENGL 239)

RELS 440 Religion and Culture 4 Credit Hours

What is religion and how does it shape us? This course begins to answer these questions by exploring religious diversity around the world through the lens of a variety of topics in the anthropology of religion. These include sacred symbols, ritual and rites of passage, prayer, shamanism, witchcraft, and spirit possession. We examine changing approaches to the study of religion and address the myriad ways religion intersects with other aspects of social life including kinship, food, and politics. Students end the course by conducting their own ethnographic research of a religious event, ritual specialist, or sacred place. (AY). (W, AY).

RELS 455 Religion in Society 4 Credit Hours

This course focuses on religion as a social institution and its role within the U.S. The course addresses the purpose, structure, and beliefs of various religions as well as, the impact of religion on issues of gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality, individual health/wellness, social support, political attitudes, and the environment. Students cannot receive credit for both SOC 455 and SOC 555. (OC, YR).

Prerequisite(s): SOC 200 or SOC 201

Restriction(s):

Can enroll if Level is Undergraduate

RELS 498 Independent Study 3 Credit Hours

This course provides an opportunity for qualified students interested in Religious Studies to pursue independent research under the direction of a qualified faculty member. The project must be defined in advance, in writing, and must be a topic not currently offered in the regular curriculum.

Prerequisite(s): HUM 201 or PHIL 120

Restriction(s):

Can enroll if Class is Junior or Senior

*An asterisk denotes that a course may be taken concurrently.

Frequency of Offering

The following abbreviations are used to denote the frequency of offering: (F) fall term; (W) winter term; (S) summer term; (F, W) fall and winter terms; (YR) once a year; (AY) alternating years; (OC) offered occasionally