

RELIGION DEPARTMENT
2023 – 2024 Spring
COURSE OFFERINGS

UNDERGRADUATE COURSES:

REL 226/EAS 226: The Religions of China

(EM) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit
Total Course Enrollment: 30
Professor(s): Stephen Teiser
10:00am – 10:50am MW

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Religions of Asia

A thematic introduction to Chinese religion, ranging from ancient to contemporary. The first half focuses on classics of Chinese philosophy (Book of Changes, Analects of Confucius, Daoist classics, etc.). The second half utilizes journalism, ethnography, films, social media, and author interviews to consider contemporary China, popular movements, state control of religion, cosmology, gods, saints, divination, gender, and ritual.

REL 234/JDS 234/NES 206: Sacrifice: From Moses to the Modern Era

(HA) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit
Total Course Enrollment: 15
Professor(s): Liane Feldman
1:30pm - 4:20pm T

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Ancient Judaism, Christianity, and Greek and Roman Religions

This course is an interdisciplinary introduction to the idea of sacrifice in ancient Israel. We will examine sacrifice as a religious practice through literature, history, archaeology, and theology. Students will also study material artifacts related to sacrifice, and learn about the histories of excavating, acquiring, and curating those artifacts for public display. The focus of this course will be on ancient Israelite religion, but we will discuss related Mesopotamian, ancient Greek, Christian, and Jewish materials. At the end of the course, we will critically analyze multiple representations of sacrifice and temples in the modern world.

REL 236/NES 236: Introduction to Islam

(SA) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit
Total Course Enrollment: 75
Professor(s): Tehseen Thaver
11:00am – 11:50am TTH

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Islam

This course is a survey of Islamic civilization and culture in both historical and in contemporary times. We will cover major themes of Islamic religious thought including the Quran and its interpretation, the intellectual history of Islam, Sufism, Islamic law, and Muslim reform and revivalism. Through the utilization of both secondary and primary sources (religious and literary texts, films), we will examine Islam as an ongoing discursive tradition. In addition to gaining a solid understanding of the problems associated with the study of Islam, the successful completion of this course should also equip you with the tools required to analyze broader theoretical issues pertinent to the study of religion in general.

REL 251/HLS 251/MED 251: The New Testament and Christian Origins

(HA) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit
Total Course Enrollment: 65
Professor(s): Jonathan Henry
11:00am – 11:50am MW

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Ancient Judaism, Christianity, and Greek and Roman Religions

How did the earliest followers of Jesus understand his life and death? What scriptures did they read and how do those texts relate to the New Testament? What rituals did believers perform and where did they hold their secret meetings? How did women participate in leadership? How did early Christians think about the end of the world, and what did they do when Jesus did not return? Why did Jesus' followers suffer martyrdom? This course is an introduction to the Jesus movement in the context of the Roman world. We examine an array of relevant sources, such as lost gospels, Dead Sea scrolls, and aspects of material culture. Engage in dynamic discussions, critical analysis, and thought-provoking debates as we uncover the humble roots of a global faith.

REL 255: Mapping American Religion

(HA) Graded No Audit

Total Course Enrollment: 15

Professor(s): Nicole Turner

1:30pm - 4:20pm M

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Religions in the Americas

This course merges research in American religious history with the creation of an archive using digital and deep mapping practices. We will explore the politics of mapping, geography and race before delving into a place-based exploration of American religious communities during the late 19th century. The course aims to investigate the extant archives of Christian communities of the post-emancipation South: newspapers, convention and church minutes, encyclopedias, autobiographies and narratives, while applying strategies of historical analysis to explore the nature of the formation and transformation of American religious community. The course also examines concepts of race, place and power and how religion inflects these conceptions.

REL 257/AMS 397: Religion and Film

(HA) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit

Total Course Enrollment: 30

Professor(s): Garry Sparks

11:00am – 12:20pm MW

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Religions in the Americas

This is a course about how religion has been explicitly as well as implicitly depicted and engaged in feature films (vs. documentaries and other genres). While it is not a “world religions” survey taught with movies nor a find-the-Christ-character in films, this course aims to build upon and further expand understandings of specific (un)familiar religions and aspects of religion as (un)willingly portrayed and creatively engaged in notable movies. The movies selected for the course are considered significant with respect to director, script, music score, cinematography, and/or impact within the history of the development of film, influence in wider popular culture, etc., aside from any religious dimensions but then also because of how, why, and in what ways something is conveyed about a religion, a key religious aspect, or religion in general – either positively or negatively

REL 303: Biomedical Ethics

(EM) Graded na, npdf

Total Course Enrollment: 30

Professor(s): Timothy Jackson

1:30pm – 2:50pm MW

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Philosophical and Ethical Approaches to Religion

This course investigates ethical assumptions and problems in medicine, nursing, biomedical research and engineering. Readings are philosophical and theological, and we evaluate a host of perspectives on issues and cases. We first consider accounts of human life and biological evolution and how they bear on our understanding of God and neighbor. We then examine some key definitions, virtues, and principles. Next we address these topics: assisted reproduction, genetic control, abortion, euthanasia & the right to die, informed consent, paternalism, confidentiality, just allocation of scarce resources, limits on research protocols, and cloning.

REL 326: Buddhist Literature: Scripture in Stone

(HA) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit

Total Course Enrollment: 15

Professor(s): Jonathan Gold & Guy St. Amant

3:00pm – 4:20pm MW

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Religions of Asia

This course in Buddhist literature is centered around Borobudur, the largest Buddhist temple in the world, from ninth century central Java, Indonesia. Borobudur’s thousands of relief panels depict some of the most conceptually rich and historically important pieces of classical Buddhist literature. We will study this monumentalized literary corpus, and interrogate the choices made in representing Buddhist stories, principles and practices in different forms. And, we will place Borobudur in context, to develop broader understandings of the textual and physical worlds of premodern Buddhism across Asia.

REL 332/NES 313: Through Muslim Eyes: Lived Islam in Pre-Modern Times

(HA) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit

Total Course Enrollment: 30

Professor(s): Shaun Marmon

11:00am – 12:20pm MW

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Islam

How do we find a window into the lives of ordinary Medieval Muslims? How did the ethics, language and rituals of Islam inform their daily lives? What can we learn about emotions, struggles, material culture, relationships, and lived religion? Course materials include translated letters, petitions, contracts, court cases, tombstone inscriptions, graffiti, and excerpts from chronicles and legal texts. We will also make use of artefacts, images, archaeological evidence and coins. Two class sessions will be held in Rare Books and Special Collections. The class will make a field trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

REL 348/JDS 348: Who's out and who's in: Ancient Jews Defining Community, Belonging, and Identity

(SA) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit

Total Course Enrollment: 15

Professor(s): Yedidah Koren

1:30pm – 4:20pm W

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Ancient Judaism, Christianity, and Greek and Roman Religions

Defining the boundaries of a community inherently involves identifying those who belong and those who do not. In antiquity, Jews grappled with the contours of their community and of their people. Some sources envision pathways through which people who were not Jewish could integrate into their fold and become Jews. In parallel, other ancient Jews were focused on separating and differentiating themselves from other Jewish groups and individuals, marking them as Outsiders, and denying their legitimacy as Jews, cutting them off even from the afterlife and the final redemption. In this course we will analyze diverse frameworks employed in ancient Jewish texts to conceptualize "Otherness," to cultivate community, to establish group boundaries, and to define Jewish identity.

REL 364/ HUM 364/GSS 338: Love and Justice

(EM) Graded No Audit

Total Course Enrollment: 15

Professor(s): Eric Gregory

1:30pm – 4:20pm Th

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Philosophical and Ethical Approaches to Religion

Analysis of philosophical, literary, and theological accounts of love and justice, with emphasis on how they interrelate in personal and public life. Is love indiscriminate and therefore antithetical to justice, or can love take the shape of justice? What are the implications for law, politics, and social criticism? Particular attention will be given to discussions of virtue, tragedy, forgiveness, friendship, and happiness.

REL 382: Buddhist Stuff: Material Culture and Worldly Desire

(LA) No Audit

Total Course Enrollment: 15

Professor(s): Bryan Lowe

1:30pm – 4:20pm TH

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Religions of Asia

Our world is filled with stuff. Some people have too much. Others want more. Advertisers promise happiness through possessions, while psychologists tell us there's a limit to how much pleasure wealth can bring. Meanwhile trash heaps overflow, creating environmental disasters. How do we live in a material world? Do objects bring us happiness or cause hardship? What is the value of stuff? This class explores how Buddhists have responded to these questions over the last 2,500 years through readings as well as hands-on learning using rare books and precious works of art in the Princeton University Art Museum and Library collections.

REL 383: What is Scripture?

(EC) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit

Total Course Enrollment: 30

Professor(s): Seth Perry

11:00am – 12:20pm TTH

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Religions in the Americas

Satisfies Critical Approaches (CA) Requirement for Majors

What is (a) scripture? How does a text become one? How does scriptural authority succeed or fail, and for whom? We will explore these questions through 1) readings in religious studies and genre theory; 2) case studies of both "new" and "old" scriptures such as The Book of Mormon, Dianetics, and the Bible; and 3) activities designed to develop an understanding of scripturalization in social life beyond the realm of "religion." Emphasis will be on reading scripturalized texts as primary sources, investigating their internal logic, discursive influences, and rhetorical effects to think about how communities have formed around them.

REL 415 /NES 415: Islamic Political Thought

(EM) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit

Total Course Enrollment: 15

Professor(s): Muhammad Q. Zaman

1:30pm - 4:20pm M

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Islam

This seminar provides a survey of Islamic political thought from its beginnings in the 7th century to the present. What are the key debates in the history of Islamic political thought - on conceptions of government, on religion and politics, on power, on non-Muslims? How did political thought develop in various Arab, Iranian, and Indian contexts? What transformations has it undergone since the late 19th century? How does the legacy of political thought inform political and religious contestations among Muslims today? These are among the questions we will address in this seminar.

CROSS-LISTED:

ANT 217/HLS 216/REL 218: Anthropology of Religion: The Afterlives of Religion

(CDSA) Graded na, npdf

Total Course Enrollment: 15

Professor(s): Clayton Goodgame

1:30pm – 2:50pm TTH

While 20th c. proclamations on the death of religion were clearly ill-conceived, the concept of religion has languished in anthropology for some time. This course provides a post-mortem, while also exploring new ways of understanding the influence of mystery and divinity on social life. We begin with classic theories of religion and major critiques before exploring traditions like Orthodox Christianity, Santería/Ocha and Hinduism alongside UFO cultures and immortalist associations. Readings pair ethnography from the Mediterranean to Melanesia with new theoretical approaches, asking students to read religion and non-religion against the grain.

EGR 219/ENT 219/REL 219: Professional Responsibility & Ethics: Succeeding Without Selling Your Soul

(EM) Graded No Audit

Total Course Enrollment: 60

Professor(s): David Miller

11:00am – 11:50am TTH

The course objective is to equip future leaders to successfully identify and navigate ethical dilemmas in their careers. The course integrates ethical theory and practice with practical tools for values-based leadership and ethics in professional life (e.g., public policy, for-profit and non-profit, business, tech, and other contexts). It also considers the role of religion as a potential resource for ethical formation and decision-making frameworks. The class explores contemporary case studies and includes guest CEOs and thought leaders from different professional spheres and backgrounds.

ENV 204/REL 204/AMS 204: Religion and Ethics in Environmental Justice Activism

(CDSA) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit

Total Course Enrollment: 16

Professor(s): Ryan Juskus

1:30pm – 4:20pm W

To what degree has religion shaped the environmental justice movement? This course in environmental humanities and social sciences examines the impact of religious ideas, persons, practices, and institutions on the values and strategies of environmental, food, and climate justice activists. It also grapples with the significance of this impact for environmental thought and policy. Students engage with primary sources, media, scholarship, and community organizations to study cases in the US South, New Jersey, the tropics, and the planet as a whole, culminating in a collaborative project with a community partner.

HUM 290/REL 282: Jesus and Buddha

(EM) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit

Total Course Enrollment: 150

Professor(s): Jonathan Gold & Elaine Pagels

MW 12:30pm – 1:20pm MW

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Does NOT satisfy sub-field requirement; does count as departmental.

This course invites us to compare the stories, teachings, lives, deaths, and communities associated with Jesus and Buddha. While respecting each tradition's unique and distinctive sources, cultures, ideas and legacies, it invites us to deepen our understanding of each tradition by looking through the lens of the other. Course readings include accounts of the lives of Jesus and Buddha, what each taught about how to live and create society, and how they articulate the meaning of life and death, suffering and salvation.

JDS 202/REL 202: Great Books of the Jewish Tradition

(HA) Graded no Audit

Total Course Enrollment: 20

Professor(s): Ra'anan S. Boustan

11:00am – 12:20pm MW

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Ancient Judaism, Christianity, and Greek and Roman Religions

This course is intended to introduce students to the classical Jewish tradition through a close reading of portions of some of its great books, including the Hebrew Bible, the Midrash, the Talmud, the Passover Haggadah, Maimonides' Guide for the Perplexed, the Zohar, and Spinoza's Theological-Political Treatise. We will pay particular attention to the roles of reading and interpretation in forming the Jewish tradition.

PHI 211/REL 211: Philosophy, Religion, and Existential Commitments

(EM) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit

Total Course Enrollment: 999

Professor(s): Lara Buchak & Andrew Chignell

11:00am – 11:50am MW

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Philosophical and Ethical Approaches to Religion

The choice of a kind of life involves both fundamental commitments and day-to-day decisions. This course is interested in zooming out and zooming in: how should we adopt commitments, and how do we realize them in ordinary life? What is the purpose of life, and how can you fulfill it? Should you live by an overall narrative, or is your life just the sum of what you actually do? Are commitments chosen or given to you? Are the

decisions we think of as high stakes important at all? When should you relinquish what you thought were your deepest commitments? What should you do when commitments clash?

GRADUATE COURSES:

REL 504/HLS 504/CLA 519: Antioch and Dura Europos from the Seleucids to Late Antiquity

Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit

Total Course Enrollment 8

Professor(s): AnneMarie Luijendijk & Laura Nasrallah

1:30pm – 4:20pm T

Antioch, a city located in ancient Syria (modern Turkey), and Dura-Europos, a city in Syria (close to the modern Iraqi border) were characterized by religious diversity. From them comes a wealth of stunning mosaics, frescoes, and other archaeological evidence. These, and a rich literary tradition, help us to understand life in the cities. In this seminar we will join with students at Yale University who are taking the same course, to learn about these ancient cities and their social and religious history. Cultural heritage will also be addressed. Yale students will travel once to Princeton, and Princeton students will travel once to New Haven, to learn about the collections that each of our universities has due to early twentieth-century participation in excavations. There, and in our respective universities, we shall engage in new research into historical reconstructions of Antioch and Dura, focusing on the topic of religion and power, and using literary and material evidence.

REL 505: Studies in Religion in America: Religion in Modern American History and Culture

Graded */aud Total

Course Enrollment: 10

Professor(s): Judith Weisenfeld

1:30pm -4:20pm W

This course provides a broad introduction to major themes in and recent literature exploring the history of religion in modern American culture. Topics may include religion, politics, and law; empire, migration, and immigration; religious diversity; race and ethnicity; gender and sexuality; theological conflicts and transformations.

REL 507: Studies in Religion and Philosophy: Philosophical Method(s) in Practice

Graded */aud

Total Course Enrollment: 12

Professor(s): Gabriel Citron

1:30pm - 4:20pm F

This is a practical course in philosophical methods, intended principally for students who are doing philosophical work outside of the Philosophy Department. We will examine both the theory and practice of various key modes of philosophical argumentation, key non-argumentative philosophical 'moves', and key competing philosophical genres/styles (all while keeping an eye on the different aims that philosophical work can have). We will do this mainly by engaging with a range of case-studies – analyzing their mechanics, discussing the theory behind them, and actively experimenting with the various arguments, moves, and genres, ourselves. The course is intended to help you use these philosophical tools more consciously and effectively in your own work.

REL 509 /NES 510 /GSS 509: Studies in the History of Islam: Legal Categories and Social Realities

Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit

Total Course Enrollment: 10

Professor(s): Shaun E. Marmon

10:00am - 12:50pm T

This seminar explores the relationship between legal categories, especially categories of legal disability, and social and economic life in Medieval Muslim societies. We begin with "Being a Child" and conclude with "Being Dead." Readings include primary sources such as legal texts, chronicles, legal documents, coins and epigraphy. Classes in the Numismatics Collection and the Arabic manuscript collection at Firestone included.

REL 511: Special Topics in the Study of Religion: Inventing "Indians" and "Religion"

Graded */aud

Total Course Enrollment: 15

Professor(s): Garry Sparks

3:00pm – 5:50pm T

This course will explore how European thought since 1492 began to construe, theorize, and theologize about who and what were the Indigenous peoples of the Americas, namely as "Indians." In turn, this course will also explore how the encounter with Indigenous peoples of the Americas precipitated modern, comparative, and critical understandings of "religion." Finally, this course will examine how the study of key concepts deemed to be definitive of Indigenous religions (e.g., paganism, animism, fetish/totemism, shamanism, etc.) has played a unique role in modern theories of religion by non-Native and Native intellectuals.

REL 517: Culture, Society and Religion Workshop

Graded */aud

Total Course Enrollment: 20

Professor(s): Jenny Legath & Lauren Kerby & Suzanne van Geuns

12:00pm - 1:20pm MTW

Presentation and critical discussion of research in progress by participants, dealing with the study of religion in any field within the humanities and social sciences. Note: REL 517 (fall) and REL 517 (spring) constitute this year-long workshop. In order to receive credit, students must take the

course both semesters.

REL 519: Religion and Critical Thought Workshop

Graded */aud

Total Course Enrollment: 15

Professor(s): Denys Turner

2:00pm – 3:30p, T

A weekly, year-long workshop focused on current student and faculty research in religion and critical thought, designed primarily for graduate students working on dissertations and general examination essays on the philosophy of religion, religious ethics, and the role of religion in politics.

Note: REL 518 (fall) and REL 519 (spring) constitute this year-long workshop. In order to receive credit and/or a grade, students must take the course both semesters.

REL 524: Religion in the Americas Workshop

Graded */aud

Total Course Enrollment: 15

Professor(s): Nicole Turner

3:00pm - 4:20pm Th

A weekly, year-long workshop focused on the current research of visiting presenters, current students, and faculty in American religious history. Designed primarily for Ph.D. students in the field, but is open as well to undergraduate concentrators with a strong background in the study of American religion and culture.

Note: REL 523 (fall) and REL 524 (spring) constitute this year-long workshop. In order to receive credit and/or a grade, students must take the course both semesters.

REL 526: Religions of Late Antiquity Workshop

Graded */aud

Total Course Enrollment: 15

Professor(s): Yedidah Koren

12:00pm - 1:30pm T

A weekly, year-long workshop providing students in the Religions of Late Antiquity with the opportunity to present their current research for discussion. Note: REL 525 (fall) and REL 526 (spring) constitute this year-long workshop. In order to receive credit and/or a grade, students must take the course both semesters.

REL 530: Workshop in Islamic Studies

Graded */aud

Total Course Enrollment: 10

Professor(s): Tehseen Thaver

1:30pm – 3:00pm Th

A weekly year-long Religion workshop focusing on the research and writing of graduate students, faculty, and visitors in Islamic Studies. This workshop provides a forum for presentation of works in progress: drafts of dissertation chapters, dissertation proposals, seminar papers, conference papers, articles and book chapters. All Islamic Studies graduate students are encouraged to participate as presenters and as commentators. The workshop fosters collegiality and professional development. Note: REL 529 (fall) and REL 530 (spring) constitute this year-long workshop. Students must take the course both semesters to receive credit/grade.

REL 532: Studies in Chinese Religions: Popular Chinese Religion

Graded */aud

Total Course Enrollment: 10

Professor(s): Stephen Teiser

10:00am – 11:20am Th

Critical examination of enduring and recent scholarship on popular religion, ethnography, modern (20th century) religion, and modernity in China. Designed for graduate students preparing for general examinations or research in Chinese religion.

REL 534: Studies in Japanese Religions: Issues in Scholarship

Graded */aud

Total Course Enrollment: 10

Professor(s): Bryan Lowe

1:30pm – 4:20pm M

This seminar provides an intensive introduction to Japanese Religions past and present and examine key issues in scholarship. It is designed for those planning to take general exams, teach, or simply acquire a background in this field. Topics may include interactions of Buddhism with local religious culture; the emergence of Shinto; lay and monastic Buddhist practice; doctrinal issues; modern transformations of Buddhism; and religion-state relations. Readings are chiefly in English, supplemented by Japanese for those with sufficient language skills. Some topics may be chosen to accommodate participant research interests.

REL 536: Studies in Indian Religions: Buddhist Karma and Causality

Graded */aud

Total Course Enrollment:

Professor(s): Jonathan Gold

10:00am – 11:20am MW

This course examines classical Indian philosophical and narrative sources to interrogate Buddhist approaches to karmic causality. Main topics will be: problems of personal continuity; typologies of causes, conditions and results; agency and responsibility; confession and repentance; dedication of merit; and the path to liberation as a causal system. In addition, students will be asked to evaluate constructive scholarship that applies Buddhist karmic approaches to current concerns, including the instructor's work in progress.

REL 583/NES 551: Late Medieval-Early Modern Islam

Graded */aud

Total Course Enrollment: 10

Professor(s): Muhammad Q. Zaman

3:00pm - 5:50pm F

This seminar focuses on Islamic thought and society during the 17th and the 18th centuries. Our key concerns are two: to understand what Islam, and Islamic thought, looked like in the late medieval and the early modern world; and to think about how we should try to approach the study of Islam in that world. A good deal of our focus is on South Asia, though we also read about other regions, including Iran and the Arab Middle East. The required readings are in English. For those interested, some weeks might have supplementary readings in Arabic as well.

For more detailed information on each course, please visit:

<http://registrar.princeton.edu/course-offerings/>