

RELIGION DEPARTMENT
2022 – 2023 Fall
COURSE OFFERINGS

Undergraduate Program

REL 100: Religion and the Public Conversation
(CDSA) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit Total Course Enrollment 30
Professor(s): Jenny Wiley Legath
1:30pm – 2:50pm TTH Class

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

This course introduces students to the interdisciplinary study of religion and its engagement with society and culture. We will identify where and how religion operates in the public conversation, especially in, but not limited to, the United States. Classes will be focused around topics that intersect with religion in the public conversation such as place, media, race, body, art, and ethics. Students will develop recognition of the different ways people use religion to construct meaning, boundaries, and identity and will demonstrate the ability to engage in informed dialogue around issues of religion.

REL 235/NES 235: Holy War, Martyrdom and Sacrifice in the Islamic Tradition
(EM) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit Total Course Enrollment No Limit
Professor(s): Shaun Marmon
10:00am – 10:50am TTH Lecture/Precept

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Islam

How were just war, holy war, and martyrdom imagined and enacted over the centuries in Islamic societies? How do concepts of the afterlife inform attitudes towards war and martyrdom? We begin in the Late Antique world with a survey of noble death, martyrdom, holy war, and just war, in the Roman, Jewish and Christian traditions. We explore these topics in the Islamic tradition through case studies: the Arab conquests, the Crusades, Spain and the Reconquista, the Iran-Iraq war and contemporary jihadist movements. We use primary sources in translation (including fiction and poetry) and, for modern period, films and internet.

REL 244 /NES 244 /MED 246/HLS 241: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: Their Emergence in Antiquity
(EMHA) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit Total Course Enrollment No Limit
Professor(s): Moulie Vidas
11:00am – 11:50am TTH Lecture/Precept

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

This course traces the emergence of the traditions we now call Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: their first communities, texts, images, and values. Students will learn to examine their histories critically, identify patterns across traditions, uncover the way these traditions shaped one another, trace the developments of beliefs and practices from their earlier forms, and analyze the social and political factors that informed these developments.

REL 251/HLS 251/MED 251: The New Testament and Christian Origins
(HA) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit Total Course Enrollment No Limit
Professor(s): Lydia Bremer-McCollum
10:00am – 10:50am MW Lecture/Precept

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

How did Jesus' earliest followers interpret his life and death? What were secret initiation rites and love feast gatherings about? How did women participate in leadership? How did the Roman government react to this movement and why did Jesus' followers suffer martyrdom? How did early Christians think about the end of the world and what did they do when it did not happen? This course is an introduction to the Jesus movement in the context of the Roman Empire and early Judaism. We examine texts in the New Testament (the Christian Bible) and other relevant sources, such as lost gospels, Dead Sea scrolls, and aspects of material culture.

REL 261/CHV 261: Christian Ethics and Modern Society
(CEM) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit Total Course Enrollment No Limit
Professor(s): Eric Gregory
12:30pm – 1:20pm TTH Lecture/Precept

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

Satisfies Critical Approaches (CA) Requirement for Majors

With a focus on contemporary controversies in public life, this course surveys philosophical and theological perspectives on the ethos of liberal democracy oriented toward rights, equality, and freedom. For example, what do Christian beliefs and practices imply about issues related to feminism, racism, nationalism, and pluralism? What is the relationship between religious conviction, morality and law? Special emphasis on selected political and economic problems, bioethics, criminal justice, sexuality, the environment, war, immigration, and the role of religion in American culture.

REL 280/EAS 281: Zen Buddhism
(CDEM) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit Total Course Enrollment 60
Professor(s): Bryan Lowe
11:00am – 11:50am TTH Lecture/Precept

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Religions of Asia

Most people have heard of Zen Buddhism, but what is it? Who gets to define it? This class looks at Zen in China, Korea, Germany, Japan, Vietnam, and the United States through a range of methods from reading classic texts to studying ethnographic accounts. By considering Zen in different times and places, we explore how a religion is shaped by its political and cultural environs. We examine tensions between romanticized ideals and practices on the ground and grapple with how to study complicated and sometimes troubling traditions. Topics include myths, meditation, mindfulness, monastic life, gender, war, and death.

REL 313/SAS 313: The Making of Hinduism: Diversity, Continuity, and the Religious Worlds of Premodern India
(HA) Graded No P/D/F, Audit Total Course Enrollment 30
Professor(s): Guy Amant
11:00am – 12:20pm MW Class

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Religions of Asia

Hinduism is often regarded as one of the world's most ancient living religions, and its oldest scriptures were composed more than 3000 years ago. It may therefore come as a surprise that people did not start calling themselves Hindus until the 15th century. How should we understand the late appearance of this term as a self-referential category, and what does it tell us about religion in South Asia? In this course, we will trace Hinduism's roots from the earliest period up to the 15th century, examining not only continuity in religious thought and practice but also diversity in the traditions that came to form a single Hindu community.

REL 324: Mind and Meditation
(EC) Graded No Audit Total Course Enrollment 25
Professor(s): Jonathan Gold
1:30pm – 4:20pm M Seminar

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Religions of Asia

This course examines the philosophy, history, and methods of Buddhist meditation. Primary readings will be Buddhist works on the nature of the mind and the role of meditation on the path to liberation (nirvana). We will ask how traditional Buddhist views have been reshaped by modern teachers, and we will interrogate the significance of current research on meditation in the fields of neuroscience, psychology and the philosophy of mind. In addition to other coursework, students will be practicing meditation and keeping a log and journal.

REL 365 Catholics in America
(HA) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit Total Course Enrollment No Limit
Professor(s): Madeline Gambino
1:30pm – 2:20pm TTH Lecture/Precept

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Religion in America

In this course we explore the institutional, devotional, cultural, and social history of Catholics in America focusing on such themes as church/state relations, religion and politics, gender, race, and sexuality, Catholicism in popular culture, relations between laity and hierarchy, and social reform.

REL 399: Junior Colloquium
Graded No P/D/F, Audit Total Course Enrollment 15
Professor(s): Seth Perry
11:00am – 12:20pm WF Class

Required Colloquium for Junior Majors

First semester junior majors participate in a colloquium with a member or members of the faculty. In addition to assignments throughout the term that prepare majors to research and write a junior paper (JP), students are expected to produce a five to seven-page JP proposal.

Graduate Program

REL 502 Philosophy and the Study of Religion

Graded **/aud* Total Enrollment 20

Professor(s): Leora Batnitzky

10:00am – 12:50pm F

The impact of modern philosophical ideas on the academic study of religion: naturalism, phenomenology, hermeneutics, genealogy, ideology, social construction, and epistemic injustice, among other philosophical movements, as well as the complex interplay between constructions of religion, race, and gender.

REL 505: Studies in Religion in America: Reading and Writing American Religious History

Graded **/aud* Total Enrollment 10

Professor(s): Wallace Best

1:30pm - 4:20pm W

This course introduces for an in-depth analysis the most important and influential texts written on American and African American religious history over the last half century. These texts have shaped the narrative structures, historical frames, and the theoretical assumptions that have had the most profound impact on the field of religious studies. The aim of the course is to be particularly attuned to the structure of argument and the use of evidence with the understanding that the mastery of these two aspects account for their influence. The aim of the course, then, is to read as much for structure as for content.

REL 511 Special Topics in the Study of Religion: Trends and Approaches in Qur'anic Studies

Graded **/aud* Total Enrollment 10

Professor(s): Tehseen Thaver

1:30pm - 4:20pm F

This graduate seminar examines key scholarly trends, debates, and conversations in the field of Qur'anic Studies over the last three decades or so. It explores themes including debates over the Qur'an's origins, Qur'an and Late Antiquity, the Qur'an's commentarial tradition, Qur'an and translation, the Qur'an in multiple regional contexts, and Qur'an and modernism. A major thrust of this course will be on connecting a study of the Qur'an with broader questions and conversations in the Humanities on related themes such as hermeneutics, language, orality and experiential elements of scripture.

REL 517 Culture, Society and Religion Workshop

Graded **/aud* Total Enrollment 20

Professor(s): Jonathan Gold

12:00pm – 1:20pm M

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 518 Religion and Critical Thought Workshop

Graded **/aud* Total Enrollment 15

Professor(s): Eric Gregory

10:00am – 11:30am TH

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 523 Religion in America Workshop

Graded **/aud* Total Enrollment 10

Professor(s): Seth Perry

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. The workshop is 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 525 Religions of Late Antiquity Workshop

Graded **/aud* Total Enrollment 10

Professor(s): Staff

TBA

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 529 Workshop in Islamic Studies

Graded */aud Total Enrollment 10

Professor(s): Tehseen Thaver

12:00pm – 1:30pm 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 533/EAS 535: Readings in Japanese Religions: Buddhist Exchange between the Continent and Japan

Graded */aud Total Enrollment 10

Professor(s): Bryan Lowe

1:30pm - 4:20pm TH

This seminar explores exchange between Japanese and continental (China and Korean) Buddhism. We read primary sources and secondary scholarship including transmission narratives, hagiographies, and pilgrimage records to show how Buddhism in East Asia was facilitated by exchange and to move beyond nation-centered narratives. Significant time is spent on translation, as well as research methods and tools necessary for the study of premodern Japanese Buddhism. Readings require basic familiarity with classical Chinese or kanbun.

REL 555: Introduction to Coptic Language and Literature

Graded */aud Total Enrollment No limit

Professor(s): Lydia Bremer-McCollum

11:00am – 12:20pm TTH Class

This course offers an introduction to Coptic language and literatures. The class will provide the foundational grammatical and linguistic concepts to build elementary Coptic reading competency (with focus on the Sahidic dialect primarily but not exclusively). Through course examples and group reading, students will gain exposure to a broad Coptic corpus including Nag Hammadi literature, martyr literature, monastic texts, magic or medical recipes, and other documentary texts. The course will also introduce students to the tools and resources of Coptic studies - dictionaries, grammars, as well as digital humanities resources.

Cross-Listed Courses:

AAS 365/REL 362 Migration and the Literary Imagination

(LA) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit Total Course Enrollment 20

Professor(s): Wallace Best

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Does NOT satisfy a traditions requirement; does NOT count as departmental.

1:30pm – 4:20pm F Seminar

This course will explore the various meanings of The Great Migration and mobility found in 20th century African American literature. Through careful historical and literary analysis, we will examine the significant impact migration has had on African American writers and the ways it has framed their literary representations of modern Black life.

CLA 422/ HUM 422/ REL 422 Roman Religion: Sources and Methods

(HA) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit Total Course Enrollment 15

Professor(s): Dan-El Padilla Peralta

1:30pm – 4:20pm M Seminar

What was/is Roman religion? Our main focus in this course will be the nature, variety, and geographic range of the source material for religious practice in the Mediterranean world of the Roman Republic and Empire (6th c. BCE-5th c. CE). We'll examine how, and with what repercussions, Roman religion set the terms for and changed in response to Rome's expansion into a Mediterranean empire. Finally, we'll think about the place of "Roman religion" in the global history of religion, and the usefulness of the term "religion" to characterize how the Romans related to their gods.

HIS 423/AFS 424/REL 423 The History of Christianity in Africa: From St. Mark to Desmond Tutu

(HA) Graded No PDF Total Course Enrollment 12

Professor(s): Jacob Dlamini and Jack Tannous

1:30pm – 4:20pm T Seminar

This course will trace the history of Christianity in Africa from the first to twentieth centuries. We will focus on issues as diverse as the importance of Christians from Africa in the development of central Christian doctrines and institutions, the medieval Christian-Muslim encounter, the modern missionary movement, colonization and decolonization, the role of the church in freedom struggles, and more. We will ask the questions: How does studying the history of Christianity in Africa de-center Europe and the European experience in the history of Christianity? And: What would a global history of Christianity, pre-modern and modern, look like?

NES 240/REL 240 Muslims and the Qur'an
(EM) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit Total Course Enrollment 50
Professor(s): Muhammad Q. Zaman

Area of Study Stream Requirement: Islam
10:00am – 10:50am MW Lecture/Precept

A broad-ranging introduction to pre-modern, modern, and contemporary Islam in light of how Muslims have approached their foundational religious text, the Qur'an. Topics include: Muhammad and the emergence of Islam; theology, law and ethics; war and peace; mysticism; women and gender; and modern debates on Islamic reform. We shall examine the varied contexts in which Muslims have interpreted their sacred text, their agreements and disagreements on what it means and, more broadly, their often competing understandings of Islam and of what it is to be a Muslim.

NES 507/REL 585 Muslim South Asia
Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit Total Course Enrollment 20
Professor(s): Muhammad Q. Zaman
1:30pm – 4:20pm T Seminar

This graduate course seeks to provide the participants with a broad introduction to major intellectual trends in the history of Islam in South Asia from the early nineteenth century to the present. We focus on the work of select individuals and discuss their writings in the context of their intellectual, social, cultural, and political milieu. Translations and exegeses of the Qur'an, Islamic law, politics, and social thought are among the themes on which we focus.

SAS 345/REL 345: Islam in South Asia through Literature and Film
(LA) Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit Total Course Enrollment 30
Professor(s): Sadaf Jaffer
11:00am – 12:20pm WF Class

This course is a survey of Islam in the Indian subcontinent. We begin with the earliest Muslim descriptions of India and the rise of Persian poetry to understand how Muslims negotiated life at the frontiers of the Islamic world. Next we trace patterns of patronage and production at the Mughal court and the development of Urdu as a vehicle of literary composition including a discussion of the Progressive Writer's Movement and the "Muslim Social" genre of Hindi cinema. The course concludes with an examination of contemporary novels from Bangladesh and Pakistan. Students will gain an informed perspective on Islam beyond the headlines.

For more detailed information on each course, please visit:

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