

Religious Studies (REL)

REL 200 Introduction to the Study of Religion (3 credit hours)

Historical, theoretical, and methodological introduction to the study of religion. Critical analysis of development of the discipline of Religious Studies. Preparation for all advanced study in Religious Studies theory and method, as well as training to study religious traditions of the world.

GEP Global Knowledge, GEP Humanities

Typically offered in Fall and Spring

REL 210 Religious Traditions of the World (3 credit hours)

Major Eastern and Western religious traditions with attention to their basic teachings and practices as well as to the historical, geographical, social, and political settings in which they have arisen and developed.

GEP Global Knowledge, GEP Humanities

Typically offered in Fall and Spring

REL 220 Religion in the Contemporary World (3 credit hours)

Engagement of diverse religious traditions with the contemporary world. Examination of topics such as religion and the environment, science, women and gender, the state, justice and conflict.

GEP Global Knowledge, GEP Humanities

Typically offered in Fall and Spring

REL 230 Asian Religions (3 credit hours)

Asian religious traditions in comparative perspective. Religious and cultural history through literature, film, and art of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Afghanistan, China, Japan, Korea, and other countries in the region. Doctrine, practice, teaching tales, and issues of change and conflict.

GEP Global Knowledge, GEP Humanities

Typically offered in Fall and Spring

REL 240 Religion and Popular Culture (3 credit hours)

Representative people, movements, and thought in contemporary religion within the context of popular media and the debates surrounding them.

GEP Humanities

Typically offered in Fall only

REL 298 Special Topics in Religious Studies (3 credit hours)

Selected studies in religion that do not appear regularly in the curriculum. Topics will be announced for each semester in which the course is offered.

REL 309/SOC 309 Religion and Society (3 credit hours)

Religious beliefs, practices and organizations addressed as social phenomena. Structural functionalism, conflict and subjectivism as theoretical orientations for understanding influences between religion and society. Relationship of religions to family, government, and economy and to social divisions, conflict and change.

P: 3 credits in SOC at the 200 level

GEP Humanities, GEP Social Sciences

Typically offered in Fall and Spring

REL 311 Introduction to the Old Testament (3 credit hours)

Study of Old Testament books [=Hebrew Bible, HB], examining their content, background and development. Comparisons of the biblical material with other Ancient Near Eastern literature. Assessment of contributions from archaeology and literary studies for clarifying the text. No prior knowledge of the subject matter is required.

GEP Global Knowledge, GEP Humanities

Typically offered in Fall and Spring

REL 312 Introduction to the New Testament (3 credit hours)

Literary and historical study of the New Testament in its Jewish and Greco-Roman contexts. Special attention to distinctive characteristics of the Gospels and their relationships, early controversies with Judaism and the emergence of church structure and teaching.

GEP Global Knowledge, GEP Humanities

Typically offered in Fall and Spring

REL 314 Introduction to Intertestamental Literature (3 credit hours)

Intertestamental literature in the context of Jewish history, institutions and beliefs of the Intertestamental Period (ca. 300 B.C.-ca. 100 A.D.)

GEP Global Knowledge, GEP Humanities

Typically offered in Spring only

REL 317 Christianity (3 credit hours)

Development of Christianity from its origins to the present; events, persons, ideas, beliefs and practices which were most significant in this development.

GEP Global Knowledge, GEP Humanities

Typically offered in Fall and Spring

REL 320/HI 320 Religion in American History (3 credit hours)

Representative people, movements and thought in the major religions within the context of American society and culture.

GEP Humanities, GEP U.S. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, GEP U.S. Diversity

Typically offered in Fall only

REL 323 Religious Cults, Sects, and Minority Faiths in America (3 credit hours)

In this course, we examine religious cults, sects, and minority faiths in America, such as the Latter Day Saint movement, Jehovah's Witnesses, the holiness-charismatic movement, and the Unification Church. Origins, development and teachings of these groups within the context of American culture and religion will be discussed.

GEP Humanities, GEP U.S. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, GEP U.S. Diversity

Typically offered in Spring only

REL 327 Issues in Contemporary Religion (3 credit hours)

Responses of contemporary Western religious thinkers to critics of religion and to challenges posed by the 20th century including the Nazi Holocaust, social injustice (liberation theologies - black, feminist, Third World), ecological crisis, threat of nuclear warfare, and conflicts between religions.

GEP Global Knowledge, GEP Humanities

Typically offered in Spring only

REL 331 The Hindu Tradition (3 credit hours)

Basic religio-philosophical concepts, social institutions, and individual practices of Hindu civilization from earliest Vedic times to the present. Focus on major traditions: Action (karma), Knowledge (jnana), and Devotion (bhakti), with emphasis on disciplines (yoga), myth, symbol, art.

GEP Global Knowledge, GEP Humanities

Typically offered in Fall and Spring

REL 332 The Buddhist Traditions (3 credit hours)

History and structure of the Buddhist tradition analyzed through the "three jewels": the Buddha, the Monastic Community (sangha), and the Teachings (dharma). Emphasis on fundamental religio-philosophical concepts, social history and ritual practices of Southern Buddhism, early Mahayana development, and Tantric ideals. Growth of the traditions in China and Japan.

GEP Global Knowledge, GEP Humanities

Typically offered in Fall only

REL 333 Chinese Religions (3 credit hours)

Survey of Chinese religions from prehistoric times to present. Confucianism, Daoism, primary Buddhist schools in China, spirit possession, divination and popular religious worship.

GEP Global Knowledge, GEP Humanities

Typically offered in Fall and Spring

REL 334 Japanese Religions (3 credit hours)

Survey of various strands of Japanese religious life from prehistoric times until present. Kami worship; primary Buddhist schools in Japan; Japanese Christianity; Confucianism; and New Religions.

GEP Global Knowledge, GEP Humanities

Typically offered in Spring only

REL 340 Islam (3 credit hours)

Introductory survey of the Islamic religious tradition. Examination of the primary historical, literary, and theological sources for Islamic religious thought in global contexts. Topics include the Prophet Muhammad, the development of the early Muslim community, Islamic religious practice, Sunni and Shi'i Islam, Sufism, theology, law and Islamic art and architecture.

GEP Global Knowledge, GEP Humanities

Typically offered in Fall and Spring

REL 343/AFS 343 African American Religions (3 credit hours)

History of religions among Americans of African descent from the period of the development of the transatlantic slave trade to the present. Exploration of the complex ways religion has shaped the lifeworld of African Americans.

GEP U.S. Diversity, GEP U.S. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, GEP Humanities

Typically offered in Spring only

This course is offered alternate odd years

REL 350 Judaism (3 credit hours)

A survey of Jewish religious traditions from the bible through the present day. Evolution of major religious ideas through classical texts including torah, Talmud, philosophical and mystical literature, and contemporary fiction.

GEP Global Knowledge, GEP Humanities

Typically offered in Spring only

REL 380 Emotion and Religion (3 credit hours)

The application of theories of emotion and specific emotions (such as wonder, grief, anger and fear) to the study and practice of religion and to the relationship of religion to race, gender, class and politics.

GEP Humanities, GEP Interdisciplinary Perspectives

Typically offered in Fall only

REL 383 Religion, Globalism, and Justice (3 credit hours)

Issues and problems in religion and societies since 1945. Historical, theoretical, sociological, and cultural approaches to globalism and religion. Inquiry into the role of ethical reasoning in religious debates on the problem of globalization.

GEP Global Knowledge, GEP Humanities

Typically offered in Spring only

REL 402/HI 402 Early Christianity to the Time of Eusebius (3 credit hours)

Growth and diffusion of early Christianity from the end of the first century up to the time of Eusebius and the conversion of Constantine (early fourth century); Christianity in its Greco-Roman environment; Roman policy towards Christianity; heterodox Christian movements; anti-heretical writings; orthodox institutions of authority. Students may not receive credit for both REL /HI 402 and REL/HI 502.

Prerequisite, one of: REL 312, REL 317, or HI 207.

GEP Global Knowledge, GEP Humanities

Typically offered in Fall only

REL 407/HI 407 Islamic History to 1798 (3 credit hours)

The history of the Islamic Near East to 1798. Topics include the East Mediterranean before Islam, Muhammad and the development of Islam, sources of Muslim civilization, Islamic law, science, philosophy, art and architecture, Islam in Spain, India, Asia and Africa, the Crusades, the Ottomans, Islam and Europe. Credit will not be given for both REL/HI 407 and REL/HI 507.

Prerequisite: 3 hrs HI or REL 300 or above

GEP Global Knowledge, GEP Humanities

Typically offered in Fall only

REL 408/HI 408 Islam in the Modern World (3 credit hours)

Evolution of modern Islam from 17th century to the present. Primary emphasis on North Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. Pre-modern Islamicate empires, reform and revival. Historical origins of current issues in the Islamic world. Students cannot receive credit for both REL/HI 408 and REL/HI 508.

Prerequisite: 3 hours of history or religious studies

GEP Global Knowledge, GEP Humanities

Typically offered in Fall only

This course is offered alternate even years

REL 412 Advanced Readings in the Christian Gospels (3 credit hours)

Close study of the varieties of gospel writings, both canonical and non-canonical, in early Christianity. Analysis of the constituent features of the gospels (parables, healing narratives, sermons), and their "pre-history"; the use of the gospels in the reconstruction of the life and ministry of Jesus; and critical methods in gospel research. Students may not receive credit for both REL 412 and REL 512.

P: REL 312 or REL 317

GEP Global Knowledge, GEP Humanities

Typically offered in Fall and Spring

REL 413 The Life and Letters of the Apostle Paul (3 credit hours)

Intensive study of the apostle Paul and his writings in their historical, literary and religious contexts. Sources for the life and ministry of Paul; the structure and theology of the Pauline and deuterio-Pauline epistles; the influence and image of Paul in early Christianity; and contemporary controversies and issues in the study of Paul. Students may not receive credit for both REL 413 and REL 513.

P: REL 312 or REL 317

GEP Global Knowledge, GEP Humanities

Typically offered in Fall only

REL 423 Religion and Politics in America (3 credit hours)

Issues and problems in religion and politics in the United States since 1900. Historical, theoretical, sociological, and cultural approaches to religion and politics. Inquiry into the relations between religion and the state. Responses of religious traditions to American social and political issues. Students cannot receive credit for both REL 423 and REL 523.

Prerequisite for REL 423: one 300-level course in religion, philosophy, or history

GEP Humanities, GEP U.S. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, GEP U.S. Diversity

Typically offered in Spring only

This course is offered based upon demand

REL 424 Religion and Politics in Global Perspective (3 credit hours)

An interdisciplinary investigation of interfaces between religion and politics in select global hotspots. Possible topics include governmental systems, constitutional law, war, disaster, and development.

Prerequisites: For REL 424, 3 credits in one or more of the following:

ANT, COM, HI, IS, PS, REL, SOC; for REL 524, graduate standing.

Prerequisite: 3 credits in one or more of the following: ANT, COM, HI, IS, PS, REL, SOC

GEP Global Knowledge, GEP Humanities

Typically offered in Fall only

REL 471/STS 471 Darwinism and Christianity (3 credit hours)

Evolutionary biology and Christianity. Darwin's evolutionary theory; neo-Darwinism; conflicts between evolutionary theory and Christian thought; methodological parallels and differences between science and religion; proposals for divine action in an evolutionary world.

Prerequisite: One course in religious studies, biological sciences, philosophy of science, or history of science. Credit is not allowed for both REL 471 and REL 571.

GEP Humanities, GEP Interdisciplinary Perspectives

Typically offered in Fall only

REL 472/WGS 472 Women and Religion (3 credit hours)

Historical, literary, and theological sources dealing with portrayals of women and women's religious experience in several religious traditions of the world through different historical periods, from ancient to modern. Impact of feminist theory on the academic study of religion; methodological issues surrounding the study of women's religious history; role of religion in shaping attitudes toward women and their status in society. Students cannot receive credit for both REL/WGS 472 and REL/WGS 572.

Prerequisite: one course in religious studies or women's and gender studies

GEP Humanities

Typically offered in Spring only

This course is offered alternate odd years

REL 473/WGS 473/REL 573/WGS 573 Religion, Gender, and Reproductive Technologies (3 credit hours)

Examines comparative religious ethics concerning gender marriage, parenthood, children, and the relationship of human beings to the "natural". Relates these views to new and emerging reproductive and genetic technologies. Compares the internally diverse perspectives of three major religious traditions with regard to their interpretations of these technologies. Analyzes the impact of particular uses of these technologies on the rights of women and girls. Students cannot earn credit for more than one of: REL 473, REL 573, WGS 473, WGS 573.

Prerequisite: One 3 cr course in Philosophy (PHI) or Religious Studies (REL) or Women's and Gender Studies (WGS). Credit is not allowed for more than one of REL 473, WGS 473.

Typically offered in Fall only

REL 482 Religion and Conflict (3 credit hours)

Critical and theoretical inquiry into religious violence and nonviolence. Source materials on violence and nonviolence from histories and texts. Case studies of inter- and intra-religious conflict and violence, including both US and non-US religious traditions. Conflict resolution and role of religion in peacebuilding. Politics and public policy of religion, violence, and conflict. Credit cannot be earned for both REL 482 and REL 582.

Prerequisite: A 300 or above level Religion course

GEP Global Knowledge, GEP Humanities

Typically offered in Spring only

REL 489 Interpretations of Religion (3 credit hours)

Theory and method in the study of religion. Historical survey of the discipline of religious studies. Investigation of the major schools of interpretation and themes of study. Application of methodologies to historical and sociological case studies, involving both US and non-US religious traditions. Students cannot receive credit for both REL 489 and REL 589.

P: One course in religion, philosophy, anthropology, history, or sociology.

GEP Global Knowledge, GEP Humanities

Typically offered in Fall and Spring

REL 496 Seminar in Religious Studies (3 credit hours)

Advanced research and writing in selected topics; application of contemporary and historical methods for the study of religion; hermeneutic theory. Open primarily to Religious Studies majors and minors

Prerequisite: 300-level course in Religion

REL 498 Special Topics in Religious Studies (1-6 credit hours)

Detailed investigation of selected topics in religion. Topics determined by faculty members in consultation with head of the department. Course may be used for individualized study programs.

Prerequisite: 6 hours REL

REL 502/HI 502 Early Christianity to the Time of Eusebius (3 credit hours)

Growth and diffusion of early Christianity from the end of the first century up to the time of Eusebius and the conversion of Constantine (early fourth century); Christianity in its Greco-Roman environment; Roman policy towards Christianity; heterodox Christian movements; anti-heretical writings; orthodox institutions of authority. Students may not receive credit for both REL /HI 402 and REL/HI 502.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing

Typically offered in Fall only

REL 507/HI 507 Islamic History to 1798 (3 credit hours)

The history of the Islamic Near East to 1798. Topics include the East Mediterranean before Islam, Muhammad and the development of Islam, sources of Muslim civilization, Islamic law, science, philosophy, art and architecture, Islam in Spain, India, Asia and Africa, the Crusades, the Ottomans, Islam and Europe. Credit will not be given for both REL/HI 407 and REL/HI 507.

Prerequisite: Graduate Standing

Typically offered in Fall only

REL 508/HI 508 Islam in the Modern World (3 credit hours)

Evolution of modern Islam from 17th century to the present. Primary emphasis on North Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. Pre-modern Islamicate empires, reform and revival. Historical origins of current issues in the Islamic world. Students cannot receive credit for both REL/HI 408 and REL/HI 508.

Prerequisite: Graduate Standing

Typically offered in Fall only

REL 512 Advanced Readings in the Christian Gospels (3 credit hours)

Close study of the varieties of gospel writings, both canonical and non-canonical, in early Christianity. Analysis of the constituent features of the gospels (parables, healing narratives, sermons), and their "pre-history"; the use of the gospels in the reconstruction of the life and ministry of Jesus; and critical methods in gospel research. Students may not receive credit for both REL 412 and REL 512.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing

Typically offered in Fall and Spring

REL 513 The Life and Letters of the Apostle Paul (3 credit hours)

Intensive study of the apostle Paul and his writings in their historical, literary and religious contexts. Sources for the life and ministry of Paul; the structure and theology of the Pauline and deuterio-Pauline epistles; the influence and image of Paul in early Christianity; and contemporary controversies and issues in the study of Paul. Students may not receive credit for both REL 413 and REL 513.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing

Typically offered in Spring only

REL 523 Religion and Politics in America (3 credit hours)

Issues and problems in religion and politics in the United States since 1900. Historical, theoretical, sociological, and cultural approaches to religion and politics. Inquiry into the relations between religion and the state. Responses of religious traditions to American social and political issues. Students cannot receive credit for both REL 423 and REL 523.

Prerequisite for REL 523: graduate standing

Typically offered in Spring only

REL 524 Religion and Politics in Global Perspective (3 credit hours)

An interdisciplinary investigation of interfaces between religion and politics in select global hotspots. Possible topics include governmental systems, constitutional law, war, disaster, and development.

Prerequisites: For REL 424, 3 credits in one or more of the following: ANT, COM, HI, IS, PS, REL, SOC; for REL 524, graduate standing.

R: Graduate Standing

Typically offered in Fall only

REL 571/STS 571 Darwinism and Christianity (3 credit hours)

Evolutionary biology and Christianity. Darwin's evolutionary theory; neo-Darwinism; conflicts between evolutionary theory and Christian thought; methodological parallels and differences between science and religion; proposals for divine action in an evolutionary world. Credit is not allowed for both REL 571 and REL 471.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing. Credit is not allowed for both REL 571 and REL 471.

Typically offered in Fall only

REL 572/WGS 572 Women and Religion (3 credit hours)

Historical, literary, and theological sources dealing with portrayals of women and women's religious experience in several religious traditions of the world through different historical periods, from ancient to modern. Impact of feminist theory on the academic study of religion; methodological issues surrounding the study of women's religious history; role of religion in shaping attitudes toward women and their status in society. Students cannot receive credit for both REL/WGS 472 and REL/WGS 572.

Prerequisite: Graduate Standing

Typically offered in Spring only

This course is offered alternate odd years

REL 573/WGS 573/REL 473/WGS 473 Religion, Gender, and Reproductive Technologies (3 credit hours)

Examines comparative religious ethics concerning gender marriage, parenthood, children, and the relationship of human beings to the "natural". Relates these views to new and emerging reproductive and genetic technologies. Compares the internally diverse perspectives of three major religious traditions with regard to their interpretations of these technologies. Analyzes the impact of particular uses of these technologies on the rights of women and girls. Students cannot earn credit for more than one of: REL 473, REL 573, WGS 473, WGS 573.

Prerequisite: One 3 cr course in Philosophy (PHI) or Religious Studies (REL) or Women's and Gender Studies (WGS). Credit is not allowed for more than one of REL 473, WGS 473.

Typically offered in Fall only

REL 582 Religion and Conflict (3 credit hours)

Critical and theoretical inquiry into religious violence and nonviolence. Source materials on violence and nonviolence from histories and texts. Case studies of inter- and intra-religious conflict and violence, including both US and non-US religious traditions. Conflict resolution and role of religion in peacebuilding. Politics and public policy of religion, violence, and conflict. Credit cannot be earned for both REL 482 and REL 582.

R: Graduate Standing

Typically offered in Spring only

REL 589 Interpretations of Religion (3 credit hours)

Theory and method in the study of religion. Historical survey of the discipline of religious studies. Investigation of the major schools of interpretation and themes of study. Application of methodologies to historical and sociological case studies, involving both US and non-US religious traditions. Students cannot receive credit for both REL 489 and REL 589.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing

Typically offered in Fall and Spring

REL 598 Special Topics in Religious Studies (1-6 credit hours)

Detailed investigation of selected topics in religion. Topics determined by faculty members in consultation with head of the department. Course may be used for individualized study programs. Students cannot receive credit for both REL 498 and REL 598 unless the topic is different.

Typically offered in Fall, Spring, and Summer