

## Religious Studies

PROFESSORS **Raphael** (Chair and Sophia and Nathan S. Gumenick Professor of Judaic Studies), **Holmes** (Walter G. Mason Professor of Religious Studies), **Morreall**, and **Sonn** (William R. Kenan, Jr., Distinguished Professor Humanities). ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS **Beach**, **Daise** (on leave 2008-2009), **Fitzgerald**, and **Galambush**. ASSISTANT PROFESSORS **Gupta** and **Vose**. VISITING PROFESSOR **Polaski**. VISITING INSTRUCTOR **Danner**.

### Requirements for Major

Majors in religious studies will study several major traditions and theories about the nature and function of religion. Consultation with a department advisor is expected.

#### Required Credit Hours: 30

**Core Requirements:** 391; 2 courses from 210, 211, 212; 1 course from 203, 204; 2 courses from 213, 214, 215; 3 additional courses in the 300 or 400 range, and 1 additional course in religious studies. (201 is not required for the major.)

**Major Computing Requirement:** Students can fulfill the Major Computing Requirement by passing any of the following courses with a C- grade or better: 302, 305, 317, 318, 322, 326, 328, 332, 334, 340, 345, 346, 358, 361, 391, 495/496.

**Major Writing Requirement:** Students can fulfill the Major Writing Requirement by passing any of the following courses with a C- grade or better: 211, 302, 304, 305, 309, 322, 326, 330, 332, 342, 391, 495/496.

### Requirements for Minor in Religious Studies

#### Required Credit Hours: 18

**Core Requirements:** 18 credit hours and must include two courses in the 300 or 400 range. Consultation with a departmental advisor is expected.

### Requirements for Minor in Judaic Studies

Required Credit hours: 18 (of these, no more than 7 credits (including RELG 211) may be below the 300 level, and classes must be drawn from at least three departments). For a complete list of the approved courses, refer to the Interdisciplinary Studies section of the course catalog.

### Areas of Study

**Introductory Studies in Religion:** 150 and 150W. Freshman Seminar; 201. Intro to Religion; 203. History and Religion of Ancient Israel; 204. Christian Origins; 210. Intro to the History of Christianity; 211. Intro to the History of Jewish Thought; 212. Intro to Islam; 213. Intro to Hinduism; 214. Intro to Buddhism; 215. History of Religion in East Asia; 221. Religion and Ethics.

**Biblical Studies:** 203. History and Religion of Ancient Israel; 204. Christian Origins; 205. Reading the Bible in Hebrew I; 206. Reading the Bible in Hebrew II; 302. Torah; 304. The Hebrew Prophets; 305. Biblical Wisdom: Job and Proverbs; 357. The Letters of Paul; 358. Jesus and the Gospels.

**Studies in Asian Religions:** 213. Intro to Hinduism; 214. Intro to Buddhism; 215. History of Religion in East Asia; 360. Gods and Goddesses of India; 361. Modern Hinduism; 365. Buddhism in China; 366. Buddhism in Japan.

**Studies in Islam:** 212. Intro to Islam; 317. Women in Islam; 318. Islam in the Modern World.

**Studies in Religious Ethics:** 221. Religion and Ethics; 321. Ecology and Ethics; 322. Medicine and Ethics; 323. Warfare and Ethics.

**Studies in Western Religious History and Thought:** 330. Significant Books in Western Religion; 332. Religion and Society in the Medieval West; 334. The Protestant and Catholic Reformation; 335. Modern Religious Thought; 338. Death; 340. Roman Catholicism Since 1800.

**Studies in American Religion:** 326. Judaism in America; 345. Religion in American Life and Thought to 1840; 346. Religion in American Life and Thought: 1840 to the Present; 347. Sects, Cults and Small Denominations in America; 348. African American Religion.

**Judaic Studies:** 211. Intro to the History of Jewish Thought; 302. Torah; 304. The Hebrew Prophets; 309. The Holocaust; 310. Topics in Judaic Studies; 315. Judaism in the Greco-Roman World; 326. Judaism in America; 327. Sexuality, Women and Family in Judaism; 328. Midrash: Jewish Interpretation of Scriptures; 329. The Rabbinic Mind.

**Special Studies:** 208. Topics in Religion; 308. Topics in Religion; 310. Topics in Judaic Studies; 481, 482. Independent Study in Religion; 495, 496. Honors.

### Description of Courses

#### 150/150W. Freshman Seminar.

*Fall and Spring (3-4) Staff.*

Seminars offered annually. Although topics vary, the sections emphasize close reading of texts, discussion and writing. 150W course fulfills the lower-division writing requirement.

#### 201. Introduction to Religion.

*(GER 4C) Fall (3) Fitzgerald.*

A cross-cultural and comparative study of religion, exploring various theories of religion, its origin, nature and interpretation, including an analysis of contrasting views of deity, cosmic and social order, the human problem, theodicy, moral norms and authority, and conceptions of liberation and salvation. Open to freshmen and sophomores only.

#### 203. History and Religion of Ancient Israel.

*(GER 4B,5) Fall and Spring (3) Galambush, Staff.*

A study of the history and traditions of ancient Israel, with emphasis upon the setting, transmission, context and theological self-understanding reflected in biblical texts.

#### 204. Christian Origins.

*(GER 4A,5) Fall and Spring (3,3) Polaski.*

A study of the origin and development of earliest Christianity. The course focuses on the New Testament and other ancient documents with attention to the Greco-Roman historical contexts of the emerging Christian faith.

#### 205. Reading the Bible in Hebrew I.

*Fall (3) Zahavi-Ely. Prerequisite: HBRW 102.*

Review of grammar followed by readings in various genres of Biblical literature. Emphasis on syntax, vocabulary and style of the Hebrew Bible. This course introduces the student to methods of modern biblical interpretation. (Cross listed with HBRW 101)

#### 206. Reading the Bible in Hebrew II.

*Spring (3) Zahavi-Ely. Prerequisite: HBRW 201 or RELG 205.*

Further readings and analyses of selected biblical passages. (Cross listed with HBRW 202)

#### 208. Topics in Religious Studies.

*Fall or Spring (3,3) Staff. (Not offered 2008-2009)*

Selected topics and issues in Asian Religions, Islam, Ethics, and Western Religions' History and Thought. Consult the schedule for the topic descriptions in up-coming semesters. This course may be repeated for credit if there is no duplication of topic. (Formerly RELG 307)

#### 210. Introduction to the History of Christianity.

*(GER 4A) Fall and Spring (3,3) Beach.*

An introduction to Western Christianity that focuses upon selected periods, critically important movements and events, theological developments and institutional changes, with attention to the relationship between Christianity and currents in the wider culture.

**211. Introduction to the History of Jewish Thought.**

(GER 4A,5) Fall (3) Raphael.

A study of the biblical origins of Judaism followed by an examination of representative literature from critical periods in the history of Jewish thought: rabbinic, medieval and modern. (Formerly RELG 303)

**212. Introduction to Islam.**

(GER 4B) Fall and Spring (3) Sonn.

A study of the origins, major ideas, practices, institutions and development of Islam within the context of Muslim history. Students may not take both this course and RELG 150: Islam for credit. (Formerly RELG 300)

**213. Introduction to Hinduism.**

(GER 4B) Fall and Spring (3,3) Gupta.

A study of the major developments and principles of Hinduism, beginning with the Vedic period. Topics include: the changing conceptions of sacrifice; the inquiries into the nature of the self; the nature of the ultimate; the role and development of devotion; mythology; ritual and its functions; the influence of Buddhism and Islam; and the character of Hinduism in modern India. (Formerly RELG 311)

**214. Introduction to Buddhism.**

(GER 4B) Fall (3) Vose.

A study of the history, doctrines, practices, and various manifestations of the Buddhist tradition. The course begins with the social and religious context out of which the Buddha emerged, progresses to an exploration of Buddhism's philosophical basis, and traces the spread of Buddhism from India and its later developments in Nepal and Tibet, Southeast Asia, and China and Japan. (Formerly RELG 312)

**215. History of Religion in East Asia.**

(GER 4B) Spring (3) Vose. (Not offered 2008-2009)

Introduction to the religious systems of China and Japan, including the literatures, histories, thought patterns and practices of the major schools of Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism and Shintoism. (Formerly RELG 313)

**221. Religion and Ethics.**

(GER 7) Fall and Spring (3,3) Danner.

An introductory study of western religious ethics. The course examines the relationships between religious belief and ethics in biblical, Jewish, Roman Catholic, Protestant and humanistic writings. The course emphasizes analytic and critical thinking skills.

**250. Readings in Religious Texts.**

Fall or Spring (1-3) Staff. Prerequisite: Completion of 202-level language. Consent of the instructor is required. (Not offered 2008-2009)

Reading and interpretive study of religious texts in their original languages. Among the languages are Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, Latin and Sanskrit.

**275W. University Seminar.**

Fall and Spring (4) Staff.

A reading-, writing-, and discussion-intensive seminar. Topics vary by semester and by instructor. Restricted to transfer students and co-enrolled students receiving a grade of "C-" or better in the seminar will have satisfied the lower-division writing requirement. This course does not fulfill the Freshman Seminar requirement.

**302. Torah.**

(GER 5) Spring (3) Galambush.

A study of the first five books of the Jewish and Christian Bibles, including questions of their composition, literary genres, historical setting, and their place in the communities that preserved them. (Formerly RELG 355)

**304. The Hebrew Prophets.**

Spring (3) Staff. Prerequisite: RELG 203 or consent of instructor. (Alternate years)

A study of the function and message of the prophetic books of the Hebrew Bible.

**305. Biblical Wisdom: Job and Proverbs.**

Spring (3) Zahavi-Ely. Prerequisite: RELG 203 or consent of instructor.

A study of the wisdom literature of Ancient Israel, with emphasis on Job and Proverbs. The literature will be examined within its historical, intellectual and cultural context. The course focuses on the distinctive religious and humanistic characteristics of Israelite wisdom.

**308. Topics in Religious Studies.**

Fall and Spring (3,3) Staff. Often a prerequisite.

Selected topics and issues in Asian Religions, Ethics, Islam, and Western Religions' History and Thought. Consult the schedule for topic descriptions in up-coming semesters. This course may be repeated for credit if there is no duplication of topic.

**Topics for Fall 2008:**

**Buddhist Philosophy.** Vose.

**Spring 2009:**

**Islamic and Jewish Mysticism.** Raphael and Sonn..

**309. The Holocaust.**

Fall (3) Raphael. (Not offered 2008-2009)

A study of religious and ethical aspects of the destruction of European Jews under Nazi rule. Readings include descriptions of these events and responses by Jews and Christians focusing on meaning, religious self-understanding, responsibility and divine and human justice. Open to juniors and seniors only. (Formerly RELG 351)

**310. Topics in Judaic Studies.**

Fall or Spring (3) Staff. There is often a prerequisite or consent of instructor required.

A study of selected topics in Jewish history, life and thought. Consult the bulletin for topic description in up-coming semesters.

**315. Judaism in the Greco-Roman World.**

Fall (3) Polaski.

This course will examine the religion of Judaism as it existed in Palestine and the Mediterranean world during the Hellenistic and early Roman periods (ca 331 BCE – 73 CD). (Cross listed with CLCV 321)

**317. Women in Islam: Tradition and Change.**

(GER 4B) Spring (3) Sonn.

A study of the changing status and role of women in Muslim society. The course focuses on the relationship between religion and culture as they shape the lives and options of women in traditional society, in the modern period and in the contemporary Islamic experience. (Cross listed with WMST 317)

**318. Islam in the Modern World.**

(GER 4B) Fall (3) Sonn.

After a review of basic Islamic belief, practice, and development, this course focuses on sociopolitical circumstances underlying the dynamism and diversity of modern Islamic thought. Special emphasis will be given to political aspects of modern Islamic thought.

**320. Pagans and Christians in the Roman World.**

Fall (3) Donahue.

This course considers the encounter between Roman religious and political institutions and the rise of Christianity, from the first through the fourth centuries A.D. Primary emphasis on Roman response to Christianity, from persecution to conversion, through Roman and Christian sources. (Cross listed with CLCV 320)

**321. Ecology and Ethics.***(GER 7) Spring (3) Staff. (Not offered 2008-2009)*

A study of the moral and religious aspects of such problems in human ecology as pollution, overpopulation and resource depletion. The course relates these issues to religious perspectives on human nature, responsibilities to the earth and to future generations.

**322. Medicine and Ethics.***(GER 7) Fall (3) Danner.*

A study of moral and religious problems arising in such biomedical issues as abortion, human experimentation, euthanasia, genetic engineering, organ transplants and behavior control. Not open to freshmen.

**323. Warfare and Ethics.***(GER 7) Spring (3) Danner.*

A study of moral and religious issues in warfare, including classical and contemporary views. The course focuses on such topics as pacifism, just war and nuclear weapons.

**326. Judaism in America.***Fall (3) Raphael. (Alternate years) (Not offered 2008-2009)*

A study of the arrival of the Jews in America, the development of the religion in the new world, and the contemporary Jewish experience in America. (Formerly RELG 341)

**327. Sexuality, Women and Family in Judaism.***Spring (3) Raphael, Staff. (Alternate years) (Not offered 2008-2009)*

This course will examine sex and sexuality, marriage, divorce and family life in the Bible, Rabbinic literature, Kabbalah, Hasidism and American Judaism. (Formerly RELG 306)

**328. Midrash: Jewish Interpretation of Scriptures.***Spring (3) Raphael. (Not offered 2008-2009)*

An examination of various types of Jewish interpretation of biblical texts. The course will explore not only the changing modes of commentary from Talmudic to modern times, but also the changing concerns of the commentators themselves. (Formerly RELG 339)

**329. The Rabbinic Mind.***Spring (3) Daise. (Not offered 2008-2009)*

A study of how biblical religion became Judaism. An exploration of the impact of the Talmudic rabbis - the ways they changed existing communal practice, understood their own authority to initiate such change, and consequently transformed Jewish self-understanding.

**330. Significant Books in Western Religion.***Spring (3) Holmes.*

A writing-intensive study of selected significant works in western religion patterned upon the Great Books Program and its discussion method. Since its content changes annually, students may repeat this course once.

**332. Religion and Society in the Medieval West.***(GER 4A) Fall (3) Beach. Prerequisite: RELG 210 or RELG 331 or consent of instructor.*

A study of Christianity from 600-1500 C.E., with special attention to the eastern and western European cultural and social settings of medieval Christian thought, belief, life and institutions. The course emphasizes primary sources, discussion, writing and qualifies for Med-Ren major.

**334. The Protestant and Catholic Reformations.***Spring (3) Beach. (Alternate years)*

A study of personalities, institutional changes and theological movements in European and British Christianity from the Reformation through the 18th century. Includes Lutheranism, Calvinism, Anabaptism, Protestant Radicalism, the Roman Catholic Reformation, the English Reformation and Methodism and the Evangelical Revival.

**335. Modern Religious Thought: The Enlightenment to the Present.***(GER 7) Fall (3) Morreall.*

A critical examination of important texts in modern Jewish and Christian thought concerning the nature, origin, interpretation, and justification of religion. Texts selected from the writings of Moses Mendelssohn, Abraham Geiger, Mordecai Kaplan, Rudolf Bultmann, John A. T. Robinson, Joseph Fletcher, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Gustavo Gutierrez, and John Dominic Crossan.

**338. Death.***(GER 7) Fall (3) Staff. (Not offered 2008-2009)*

A study of biblical, Jewish, Christian, Eastern, humanistic and psychic claims about death and an afterlife, and of historical and contemporary views of the limits and responsibilities inherent in mortality.

**340. Roman Catholicism Since 1800.***(GER 7) Fall (3) Morreall. (Not offered 2008-2009)*

Themes studied include church and state relations and political liberalism, the social encyclicals, papal authority and the infallibility debate, the development of dogma, Liberal Catholicism, Neo-Thomism, Modernism, Vatican II and liberation theology.

**342. Comedy, Tragedy, and Religion.***Spring (3) Morreall.*

This course begins with an analysis of comedy and tragedy, and an analysis of the comic and tragic visions of life. Then it examines the world's major religions in light of their comic and tragic elements.

**345. Religion in American Life and Thought to 1840.***(GER 4A) Fall (3) Holmes.*

A study of the beliefs and development of religious groups in the United States, including the transplanting of English and continental religion; the rise of evangelicalism, voluntarism and disestablishment; the emergence of restorationist groups; and segments on religion in Virginia, Williamsburg and at William and Mary.

**346. Religion in American Life and Thought: 1840 to the Present.***(GER 4A) Spring (3) Fitzgerald.*

A study of topics such as religion and immigration; the churches, slavery and African American religion; the Social Gospel, Darwinism and Biblical criticism; church life, worship and architecture; and religions in 20th-century America.

**347. Sects, Cults and Small Denominations in America.***Fall (3) Holmes. (Not offered 2008-2009)*

An examination of the development and teachings of minority groups differing from the mainstream of American religion, such as Adventism, Mormonism, Pentecostalism, and certain traditionalist, restorationist, holiness and exotic movements.

**348. African American Religion.***Fall (3) Staff. (Not offered 2008-2009)*

A historical survey of the Afro-American religious experience that will examine African antecedents, slave religion and the development of Black churches and religious organizations from the colonial period to the present.

**349. Worship and Architecture.***Fall (3) Holmes.*

A study of architecture and worship in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Topics include architectural styles; ornamentation and interior design; forms of worship in synagogues, liturgical and non-liturgical churches, and megachurches; eucharistic theories and ritual dress. Students attend several services of worship.

**357. The Letters of Paul.**

*Spring (3) Staff. Prerequisite: RELG 203 or RELG 204 or RELG 210 or consent of instructor.*

A study of the letters of Paul. The course will focus on the mission and message of Paul set in the context of Greco-Roman culture. It will also consider the influence of Paul's theology in the later centuries. (Formerly RELG 403)

**358. Jesus and the Gospels.**

*(GER 5) Spring (3) Polaski. Prerequisite: RELG 203 or RELG 204 or RELG 210 or consent of instructor.*

A study of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and the multicultural, historical, and political settings in which they were composed. The course will also address similar gospels excluded from the canon and the issues pertaining to historical Jesus.

**360. The Gods and Goddesses of India.**

*Spring (3) Gupta. Recommended: Prior course in Asian religion or consent of instructor.*

This course explores the development, character, and function of the gods and goddesses of India by looking at a variety of mythological, historical, and ethnographical sources.

**361. Modern Hinduism.**

*(GER 4C) Spring (3) Gupta. Prerequisite: RELG 213 or consent of instructor.*

A study of classical Hindu traditions in interaction with westernization and modernization. The course emphasizes 19th- and 20th-century figures, including leaders of current cults. (Formerly RELG 411)

**365. Buddhism in China.**

*Fall (3) Staff. Prerequisite: RELG 214. (Not offered 2008-2009)*

This course is designed to be a focused examination of the history of Chinese Buddhism. Its goals also include increasing the students' understanding of Chinese culture as well as basic methodologies in the study of religion.

**366. Buddhism in Japan.**

*Spring (3) Staff. (Not offered 2008-2009)*

This course is designed as a focused examination of the history of Japanese Buddhism. Its goals also include increasing the students' understanding of Japanese culture and basic methodologies in the study of religion.

**391. Theory and Method in the Study of Religion.**

*Fall and Spring (3,3) Morreall. Restriction: Majors ONLY.*

This course surveys the dominant methods of studying religion and the theories on which they are based. The perspectives may include the anthropological, feminist, historical, literary, philosophical, phenomenological, political, psychological and sociological.

**†481. Independent Study in Religion.**

*Fall (1-3) Raphael. Prerequisite: Consent of chairperson.*

A program of extensive reading, writing and discussion in a special area of religion for the advanced student. Students accepted for either course will arrange their program of study with appropriate members of the department.

**†482. Independent Study in Religion.**

*Spring (1-3) Raphael. Prerequisite: Consent of chairperson.*

A program of extensive reading, writing and discussion in a special area of religion for the advanced student. Students accepted for either course will arrange their program of study with appropriate members of the department.

**†495-496. Honors.**

*Fall, Spring (3,3) Raphael.*

Students admitted to senior Honors in Religion will be responsible for (a) reading and research supervised by a faculty member designated by the chair, (b) presentation of an Honors essay acceptable to the examining committee and submitted two

weeks before the last day of classes of the student's graduating semester; and (c) satisfactory performance in an oral examination based on the Honors essay and related background. Consult the chair for eligibility, admission and continuance requirements. For College provisions governing the Admission to Honors, see catalog section titled Honors and Special Programs.