

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (REL)

REL 100 Introduction to World Religions 3

This course introduces major religious traditions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. We will begin with a brief survey of theoretical approaches to the study of religion. Topics of study will include each tradition's historical origins, conceptions of the sacred, rituals and practices, and contemporary trends.

MAC: MAC Global and Intercultural

REL 101 Introduction to Religious Studies 3

Inquiry into religion through consideration of forms, patterns, categories, symbols, and practices which characterize various religious experiences.

MAC: MAC CritThink Hum and Fine Art

REL 102 Faith, Culture, and Community in Greensboro 3

Introduces students to study of religion, with emphasis on religious/cultural diversity in Greensboro/Guilford County. It provides students with an understanding of major religious/cultural groups in the area through site visits, readings, lectures, and guest speakers, as well as develops foundational college skills and familiarity with key programs on campus.

MAC: MAC Foundations

Prerequisites: Must have fewer than 60 credits to enroll or can enroll by Written Permission.

REL 103 Sex, Death, and Spirituality 3

Evaluates answers to the question, "Is love stronger than death?" Examines love, death, and the body in thinkers belonging to one or more religious traditions. May be repeated if topic changes.

MAC: MAC CritThink Hum and Fine Art

REL 104 Religion, Ritual, and the Arts 3

A study of how myths and stories are used in ritual and the arts. The specific traditions treated will vary.

MAC: MAC Global and Intercultural

REL 105 Islam and Popular Culture: Ms. Marvel, Movies, and Hip-Hop Hijabis 3

Explores how Muslim Americans express their religious identities through comic books, hip hop, movies, and other forms of popular culture.

MAC: MAC Global and Intercultural

REL 108 Religion and Food 3

This course will explain and compare Hindu, Jain, Christian, Jewish and Muslim foodways and evaluations of food. In the process of this comparative study, we will appraise how each of tradition conceptualizes wellness, and evaluates eating, feeding, overeating, dieting and fasting to promote or impede upon wellness.

MAC: MAC Health and Wellness

REL 109 Religion and Popular Culture 3

This course introduces critical issues in and approaches to religion and popular culture from around the world. Examining a series of case studies drawn from film, television, popular music, video games, and consumer culture, it considers what counts as religion and how people use spirituality in their daily lives.

MAC: MAC Global and Intercultural

REL 111 Introduction to Asian Religion 3

Comparative study of Asian religions and their contributions to modern religious self-understanding, focusing critically and evaluatively on such patterns of expression as myth, ritual, and social forms.

MAC: MAC Global and Intercultural

REL 112 Spirituality, Health, and Wellness 3

This course examines the intersections of spirituality, health, and wellness across diverse cultures and religious traditions.

MAC: MAC Health and Wellness

REL 113 Supernatural Encounters 3

Concepts of the "supernatural" have shaped religious imaginaries of cultures/societies throughout history. To gain insights into historical/cultural contexts of these concepts, this course surveys beliefs/practices associated with supernatural beings and forces. The scope of this survey will include, but not be limited to Eastern, Western, and Indigenous Religions.

MAC: MAC Foundations

Prerequisites: Must have fewer than 60 credits to enroll or can enroll by Written Permission.

REL 115 Religion and Science 3

This course is a study of the relationship between religion and science. Primary but not exclusive emphasis will be placed on the religion-science debates as they have developed in relation to modern science and understandings of Western theism.

REL 132 Religious Diversity in America 3

American religion has been defined by immigration and new religious movements, creating a staggering array of religious communities in the United States. This course introduces the diversity of religions in the United States and focuses on the difference between encounter, tolerance, religious creativity, and pluralism.

MAC: MAC Civics and Community

REL 190 Introduction to Scriptural Language 1-3

Introduction to the language of a major scriptural tradition, such as Hebrew, Chinese, Tibetan, or Sanskrit. Emphasis on writing system, grammar, and vocabulary.

Notes: May be repeated when topic changes.

REL 201 The Bible in Western Culture 3

Study of significant themes and issues in the Bible and their expression in the religious literature and history of Europe and America.

MAC: MAC CritThink Hum and Fine Art

REL 204 New Testament and the Origins of Christianity 3

Study of the New Testament texts in their historical, sociological, and literary contexts.

MAC: MAC Global and Intercultural

REL 207 Critical Thinking about Religion, Faith and Spirituality: Selected Topics 3

Exploration of ways in which religion, faith and spirituality have been understood in the context of the eclipse of religion in Western culture from the Enlightenment to the present.

MAC: MAC CritThink Hum and Fine Art

REL 209 Elements of Christian Thought 3

Investigates the coherence of Christian accounts of such topics as incarnation, trinity, creation, evil, sacraments, the body, and salvation.

MAC: MAC Global and Intercultural

REL 210 Christianity to the Reformation 3

Study of classic Christian texts, symbols, rituals, and social movements to the dawn of the Reformation.

MAC: MAC Global and Intercultural

REL 212 Christianity from the Reformation to the Present 3

Examination of a range of themes in the history of Christian thought from the sixteenth century to present, through reading of a variety of texts representative of Christian traditions.

MAC: MAC Global and Intercultural

REL 217 The Synagogue 3

The synagogue has been and remains the center of Jewish life. This course will explore the nomenclature, history, architecture, art, and literature of the synagogue in ancient, medieval, and modern times.

REL 218 Chinese Religion 3

A study of the religions of China in the classical and modern periods focusing on thought, ritual, social structure, and aesthetics.

REL 220 East Asian Religions 3

A study of the religions of East Asia in the classical and modern periods focusing on thought, ritual, social structure, and aesthetics.

MAC: MAC Global and Intercultural

REL 221 Buddhism 3

Introduction to the origin, development, and impact of Buddhism in Asian cultures. Focus on religious doctrines, forms of community, religious practices, techniques, art and iconography, and the implications of the Buddhist perspective for the contemporary world in both Asia and the West.

MAC: MAC Global and Intercultural

REL 223 Hinduism 3

Introduction to the Hindu religious tradition, its myths, rituals, music, social structure, and philosophical thought.

MAC: MAC Global and Intercultural

REL 224 Yoga: Theory And Practice 3

This course will introduce the broad array of mental and bodily disciplines and philosophies that fall under the term “yoga”. Exploring foundational texts and contemporary yoga communities, we will identify and compare how various strands of yoga understand, define and pursue holistic wellness through bodily and mental disciplines.

MAC: MAC Health and Wellness

REL 225 Islam 3

Introduction to origins of Islam and its development as a world religion focusing on doctrine, ritual practices, and community structures.

MAC: MAC Global and Intercultural

REL 226 Approaches to the Qur'an 3

Study of significant themes and stories of the Qur'an, with an emphasis on diversity of interpretations.

MAC: MAC CritThink Hum and Fine Art

CIC: CIC College Writing

REL 229 Introduction to African American Religions 3

Examination of the diverse beliefs and practices of African American religious traditions and their development in the Americas.

REL 231 Religion in America 3

Diverse religious traditions and thinkers that have played a significant role in the history of the United States from Native American beginnings to the present.

MAC: MAC Civics and Community

REL 233 Witches, Spirits, and Metaphysicalism in America 3

This course focuses on the traditions of paganism, the occult, and metaphysicalism in the US. We will learn about New England witches, Black conjure, spiritualist seances, and the flowering of New Age and Neopaganism in the twentieth century. We will also consider how these traditions relate to institutional religion.

MAC: MAC CritThink Hum and Fine Art

REL 234 Religion and Race in the Americas 3

This course focuses on race as a component of religious experience as well as the role of religion in “racialization.” We will focus on the Iberian categories of “bad blood,” Afro-Atlantic religions, Nation of Islam, Mormons and whiteness, and the role of Christianity in American white supremacy.

REL 236 Politics and Religion 3

This course examines politics and religion in North America, Europe, and Asia. The class also focuses heavily on building foundational academic skills and acquainting students with university services and learning resources.

MAC: MAC Foundations

Prerequisites: Must have fewer than 60 credits to enroll or can enroll by Written Permission.

REL 240 Modern Judaism 3

A survey of key topics in modern Judaism.

REL 245 Video Games and the Problem of Evil 3

Using a wide range of topics, analytical theories and methods, as well as ethical perspectives, the course introduces students to the concept of evil, digital media, networked society and consumer culture through the critical interpretation of video gaming.

MAC: MAC CritThink Hum and Fine Art

REL 246 Science Fiction & Spirituality 3

This course explores the intersection of religion and science fiction in works like Star Wars, Star Trek, Dune, and The Matrix. Topics include creation myths, ritual, and redemption, examining how religious themes and fan cultures shape sci-fi narratives and reflect diverse spiritual perspectives in speculative worlds.

MAC: MAC CritThink Hum and Fine Art

REL 247 Fandom and Religion: Rituals, Texts, Communities 3

Drawing on conceptual frameworks and case studies, students in this course will examine parallels between religion and fandom to identify and explore how fandoms may resemble, constitute or replace religion in contemporary life.

MAC: MAC Written Communication

REL 248 Comparative Religious Ethics 3

Comparative study of the ethical teachings of two or more Western and non-Western religious traditions focusing on the diversity within and among traditions and their effects on modes of life.

REL 249 Religion and Public Health 3

This course examines both the compatibility and conflict between religious perspectives and the scientific foundations of public health. Emphasis will be focused on the cultural influence of religion on individual and community attitudes toward health care practices and how these influence achieving and maintaining public health goals.

MAC: MAC Health and Wellness

CIC: CIC College Writing

REL 250 Religious Traditions and Care of the Earth 3

Examination of the thought, ethics, and practice of major religious traditions and worldviews with regards to the care of the earth. Emphasis on non-Western, indigenous, and ecofeminist traditions.

MAC: MAC CritThink Hum and Fine Art

REL 251 Topics in Religious Social Ethics 3

Inquiry into the social teachings of diverse religious traditions with respect to such current topics as economic development and social justice, human rights, democracy, freedom, human well-being and the environment.

Notes: May be repeated for credit when topic varies.

REL 254 Religion in Traditional Societies 3

Study of religion in traditional societies in which the basic question "What is it to be human?" is raised by entering into the diverse symbolic worlds of native Americans, Africans, or others.

REL 255 Spirituality and the 12 Steps 3

This course will address Alcoholism and other substance use disorders on society and individuals. The course will critically examine the dynamics of substance use disorder with an emphasis on the history, spirituality, and practice of 12-step recovery as developed by Alcoholics Anonymous. Interfaith influences on the 12-steps will be considered.

REL 259 Philosophy of Religion 3

Arguments concerning God's existence, the problem of evil, God's foreknowledge and human freedom, the analysis of divine attributes, immortality and the soul.

REL 270 Digital Religion 3

This course examines "digital religion", the ways people use new media technologies to practice religion. This course will prepare students to navigate cross-cultural climates in an increasingly digital world by familiarizing them to the range of ways religious expression takes place.

REL 275 Religion and Media 3

Aimed at majors and non-majors alike, this course will provide students both with a conceptual or theoretical understanding of what is "media" and what is "religion", while also working through case studies that explore the wide range of applications for such a study.

REL 298 Thinking About Religion 3

Critical reflection on the academic study of religion. Evaluation of theories of religion drawn from the social sciences, humanities, and religious traditions themselves through their application to case studies.
CIC: CIC College Writing

REL 301 Early Christianity 3

Development of various kinds of Christian beliefs and practices from the second to seventh centuries. Focus on primary sources.
CIC: CIC College Writing

REL 303 Christianity in Byzantium 3

Explores the formation of Orthodox Christianity from the sixth to the twelfth century. Topics include liturgy, icons, church architecture and decoration, saints' cults, monasticism, and lay practice.
CIC: CIC College Writing

REL 305 Religions of the Greco-Roman World 3

Study of themes in Judaism, Christianity, and pagan religious movements of the Mediterranean world from Alexander to Constantine.
CIC: CIC College Writing

REL 310 Christianity and the Construction of Gender 3

Study of the role of categories of male and female in the creation and maintenance of Christian notions of holiness, authority, and hierarchy in historical perspective.

CIC: CIC College Writing
Notes: Same as WGS 310.

REL 311 Topics in Biblical Studies 3

Examination of specific biblical texts, themes, or interpretations in the context of Jewish and Christian religious traditions or in terms of significant literary or historical issues.

CIC: CIC College Writing
Notes: May be repeated for credit when topics vary, with permission of instructor.

REL 314 Saint and Society in the Early Middle Ages 3

Examination of the concept of sanctity and of the rise and function of the veneration of holy men and women in Christian tradition from the fourth to the seventh century.

CIC: CIC College Writing

REL 317 Islam and the Construction of Gender 3

Study of the role of gendered categories in the creation and maintenance of Islamic notions of piety, authority, and community.

CIC: CIC College Writing

REL 323 Religious Movements and Communities: Selected Topics 3

Selected topics will bring to bear historical, analytical, theological, and ethical tools to understand religious movements. Faculty and topics will vary.

CIC: CIC College Writing

Notes: May be repeated when topic varies.

REL 324 Philosophical Issues in Religion 3

Modes of philosophical reflection, groups of human conceptuality and their relation to the truth of religious claims.

CIC: CIC College Writing

Notes: May be repeated for credit when topic varies.

REL 330 Major American Religious Thinkers 3

Topics to vary. Analysis and evaluation of major works by an American religious thinker, e.g., Jonathan Edwards, or works exemplifying a particular intellectual movement, e.g., the Puritan Christian Enlightenment.

CIC: CIC College Writing

REL 332 Contemporary African American Religious Thought 3

Explores the variety of contemporary African American religious thought: Buddhist, Christian, Islamic, Judaic, and New World Yoruba. The relation between religious racial identities is a primary focus.

CIC: CIC College Writing

REL 333 Religion and Psychology 3

Presents classic Western and/or Asian psychological theories of religion and shows how various religious traditions understand the human psyche.

CIC: CIC College Writing

REL 334 American Cults 3

This course will explore the history of schismatic religious groups, anti-cult hysteria, and controlling religious authority in American history by focusing on Jonestown, Waco, and NXIVM. This course asks who gets to call a religion a cult, and whether the term is a useful category for cultural analysis.

CIC: CIC College Writing

REL 336 Native American Religions 3

In this class we focus on Native American fights for sovereignty and control of sacred lands in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. We also consider how Native Americans are using religion, ritual, and spirituality as a mode of identity formation in contemporary America.

REL 337 Enslaved Religion 3

We will look at how enslaved people remade Christianity and how many enslaved people rejected Christianity and continued to practice their own traditions, from Islam to the Afro-Atlantic religions of the African Diaspora. We will also read cultural theories of "power," in both the material and spiritual sense.

REL 355 The Religious Discourse of Civil Rights 3

Explores Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish involvement in American racial reform in the twentieth century.

CIC: CIC College Writing

REL 360 Joy and Suffering 3

This seminar will introduce both ancient and contemporary Christian, Jewish, and Buddhist perspectives on suffering and joy, and place these perspectives in conversation to find shared and unique approaches to two concerns at the heart of the human experience.

REL 368 Religion in South Asia: Selected Topics 3

Selected aspects of religion in South Asia. Possible topics include ritual, myth, festivals, and pilgrimage in Jainism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, or other religions of the Indian subcontinent.

CIC: CIC College Writing

Notes: May be repeated for credit when topic varies.

REL 370 Religions of Iran: Selected Topics 3

Explores selected aspects of Iranian religions. Possible topics include Zoroastrianism, Sufism, Twelver Shi'ism, and the Babi and Baha'i faiths.

CIC: CIC College Writing

Notes: May be repeated up to three times as the topic varies.

REL 371 Topics in Islam: Islamic Thought, Culture, and History 3

Explores specific topics in Muslim thought, culture, or history. Topics vary and may include studies in hadith, mysticism, philosophy, or literature.

CIC: CIC College Writing

Notes: May be repeated for up to 9 hours of credit when topic varies.

REL 375 Religion and Popular Culture: Selected Topics 3

This course examines the relationship between religion and popular culture. We will read foundational texts in the field of religious studies, explore academic writings on the intersections of religion and popular culture, and watch, listen, discuss, and critically analyze television, film, music, sports, celebrity, and other popular cultural movements.

CIC: CIC College Writing

REL 376 Religion and Media: Selected Topics 3

This course will select topics relevant to the study of religion and media. Through case studies emerging from traditions of the east and west, historical and contemporary, students will develop skills to articulate how religion and media combine to express and shape human thinking and behavior.

REL 380 Videogaming and Death 3

Death has always been a part of videogames: a way of dividing up playtime, effort, and accomplishment. Through a combination of reading about and playing games this course offers a hands-on approach to studying videogaming as an academic pursuit and what that can teach us about death and dying.

REL 382 Topics in Christian Thought 3

Examination of an issue in Christian thought or history.

CIC: CIC College Writing

Notes: May be repeated for credit when topic varies.

REL 400 Topics in Religious Studies 3

Study of role, nature, and function of selected social forms of religious life through cross-cultural comparison or intensive study of one religious tradition.

Notes: May be repeated once for credit.

REL 401 Tutorial 1-3

Directed program of reading, research, and private instruction.

CIC: CIC College Writing

Prerequisites: Permission of instructor.

REL 402 Tutorial 1-3

Directed program of reading, research, and private instruction.

Prerequisites: Permission of instructor.

REL 403 Tutorial 1-3

Directed program of reading, research, and private instruction.

Prerequisites: Permission of instructor.

REL 404 Tutorial 1-3

Directed program of reading, research, and private instruction.

Prerequisites: Permission of instructor.

REL 410 Senior Seminar 3

Colloquium on a unifying theme or major recent work in Religious Studies. Topic will vary with instructor.

CIC: CIC College Writing

Prerequisites: REL 298. RELS major; Required of all seniors;

Notes: May be repeated for up to 9 hours of credit when topic varies.

REL 411 Thinking Through Religion 3

Critical reflection on the academic study of religion. Evaluation of theories of religion drawn from the social sciences, humanities, and religious traditions themselves through their application to case studies.

CIC: CIC College Writing

REL 420 Internship in Religious Studies 3

Practical experience in a variety of professional settings. Includes 10 hours per week at internship site, plus regular meetings with a faculty advisor.

REL 493 Honors Work 3-6

Honors Work.

Prerequisites: Permission of instructor. 3.30 GPA in the major, 12 s.h. in the major;

Notes: May be repeated for credit if the topic of study changes.

REL 503 Topics in Religious Studies 3

Study of role, nature, and function of selected social forms of religious life through cross-cultural comparison or intensive study of one religious tradition.

Notes: May be repeated once for credit.

REL 695 Independent Study 1-3

Directed program of reading, research, and individual instruction.

Prerequisites: Permission of department head and instructor.